

If Dismissal is the Answer, What Questions Should We Be Asking?

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Region 10  
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Learning Outcomes

- List areas to review when considering dismissal from speech services.
- Explain areas that should be covered with the staff, parent and/or the student when dismissal from services is being considered.
- Explain best practices involved in dismissal of students.
- Writing SMART goals for better, data-driven decision making

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*Think in terms of the student story you are telling*

- You begin the story with an **evaluation** and report
- You produce the table of contents with the student **PLAAFP**
- You outline the story with the **goals**
- You critique the story with your **data** and **progress monitoring**
- You end the story with student success - **dismissal**

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### Always begin with the end in mind

- Explain evaluation data – *AND PROCESSES* from the very first IEP meeting
- Outline what will happen from the beginning of therapy to the end of therapy (no timelines required, just facts)
- Continue this discussion at each subsequent IEP meeting as well
- Forward movement focus – if progress is not happening, examine reasons why and *adjust often*

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### Best Practices that lead to justified dismissals

- Thorough evaluation and a well written report that provides information in all areas of suspected disability
- Well written PLAAFP – at a minimum, the PLAAFP should contain:
  - Student needs in academic and/or functional skill area
  - Impact of student disability on the involvement in the general education curriculum
  - Documentation of the student current levels of performance, which serve as baseline data to measure subsequent progress
  - Information that informs the development of annual goals and the appropriate special education services and supports required to meet stated goals
- Goals that *target skills* required to be successful in the current academic environment, and selected based on most significant student need
- *Targeted skills* should be reflective of academic expectations within the educational environment
- Team collaboration is imperative

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### Items to look at first

- Ownership
- Goal Setting
- Incentives
- Strengths – Know your students!

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## Ownership

- Give sense of control
- Harness student interests
- Give students responsibility – have students take their own data
- Encourage self-reflection
- Offer varied experiences

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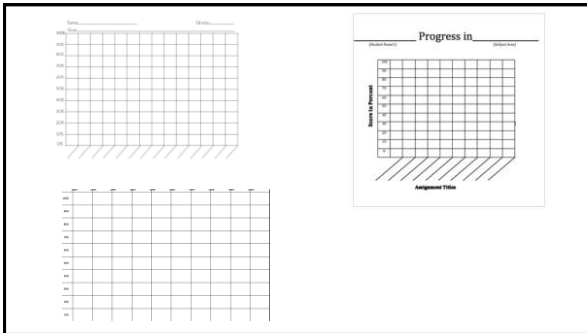
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## Goal Setting

- Set goals high, yet at attainable levels
- Define objectives
- Let students help you develop goals and objectives
- Ask students what is important to THEM
- Include student in progress monitoring/have them monitor their own progress

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## Incentives

- Create a threat-free environment
- Offer rewards
- Give praise **when earned**
- Give distinct feedback and offer chances for improvement
- The "3 Ms"
  - **M**otivating
  - **M**eaningful
  - **M**emorable
- Make it **FUN**

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## Strengths

- Use positive competition
- Set up for success based on those strengths
- Manage their anxiety
- Track progress in a way that is understandable and visual

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## Questions to ask **YOURSELF**

- What is your relationship like with your students?
- How much choice do you actually give them?
- Do you rely too heavily on extrinsic motivation?
- Do your words contribute to a **growth** mindset?
- What are you doing to make your content relevant to the the lives of your students?

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If those things do not improve performance, and you are still considering dismissal.....THEN WHAT?

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### Ethical Guidelines (ASHA 2016)

- ASHA Ethical Principle 1, Rules K, L, M
- Individuals who hold the Certificate of Clinical Competence shall evaluate the effectiveness of services provided, technology employed, and products dispensed, and they shall provide services or dispense products only when benefit can reasonably be expected.
- Individuals may make a reasonable statement of prognosis, but they shall not guarantee—directly or by implication—the results of any treatment or procedure.
- Individuals who hold the Certificate of Clinical Competence shall use independent and evidence-based clinical judgment, keeping paramount the best interests of those being served.

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### Key Elements

- Duration of services
- Intensity of services
- Mode of service
- Review of evaluation data
- Focus of service
- Setting
- Individualization
- Pattern of service delivery
- Capacity of student for change (longitudinal view)
- Analysis and dynamics of the situation
- Continuity

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### Duration of services

- How long has student been in treatment? (how many therapists?)
- How long has student been in treatment for current goals/objectives?

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### Intensity of service

- How frequently do they attend therapy?
- Have alternative intensity levels been utilized?
- For how long?

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### Mode of Service

- Are the services of the SLP a duplication of services provided elsewhere? (self contained classroom, preschool program? Resource classroom?)
- Alternative modes of service tried? (group, individual, short sessions for more days, longer sessions for fewer days)
- Have alternative modes been tried for sufficient time period?

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### Evaluation Data?

- Does evaluation reflect accurate diagnosis?
- Are goals/objectives appropriate?

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### Focus of Service?

- Based on the educational performance of the student in their current placement, is there an educational need for services to be continued?
- Are treatment methods appropriate for the diagnosis of the student?
- What has been the student's level of response to treatment methods?
- Within the scope of treatment, has student been able to advance to the next level of treatment protocol?
- Is treatment being provided at the appropriate level for the student?

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### Setting

- Have a variety of settings been utilized? (group, individual, integrated, collaborative, consultative)
- What does the student miss in the general education class while in speech?
- Have alternative times been tried? (early in day, late in day, after recess, before lunch, etc.)
- Is SLP working with regular and/or special education teachers to assure curricular and/or instructional modifications are implemented if they are needed?

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## Individualization

- Are curricular and/or instructional accommodations identified and implemented if needed?
- Is the therapy *truly individualized* based on student need and not on therapist need or school need?
- Has the student been asked what is important to him/her?
- Has student been asked what THEIR GOAL(s) is/are?

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## Pattern of Service Delivery

- How has treatment been provided in the past?
- What has been the focus of treatment in the past?
- Have there been frequent gaps in service? (Student frequently absent? Lack of consistent service provider? Student moves frequently?)

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## Capacity of Student for Change (Longitudinal View)

- Has student been more responsive at times?
- Patterns of regression or progression?
- When has student been most responsive?
- Flat response level over time?
- How do others providing services/instruction regard child's progress?
- Does therapy provide motivational incentives?
- Does SLP maximize treatment when progress has been achieved?

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## Analysis of Dynamics

- Is the SLP basing dismissal of student on the student's personality traits?
- Is the SLP basing dismissal of student due to dislike of the student, parents, situation with the teacher?
- Have other situational dynamics influenced the recommendation of dismissal?

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## Continuity

- Are other service providers reinforcing what the SLP is doing in treatment? In isolation?
- Are teachers?
- Are parents?

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## Parent Conversations

- Always "begin with the end in mind" (refer to previous slide)
- Have graphic and understandable data!
- Involve the student in data taking
- Teacher Input
- Administrative Support

27

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### Begin with the end in mind

- Lay ground work from the beginning (very first IEP) for reduction in service delivery time
- This allows the parent to think “transition” rather than “cut off”
- Recognition that all students are different, and will progress at different rates of success
- Discuss the need for self monitoring and practice outside of the school day

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### Change your language

- *“It is time to return John to the classroom”*  
rather than
- *“It is time to dismiss John from speech services”*

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### Have data!

- **Data driven** conversations provide a foundation of fact, a complete picture
- Provide clarity (not subjective)
- Ensure that thought and consideration were put into the decision making process, and **all stakeholders** were included in the discussion
- **Data** provides protection for the student as well as the professional (facts do not lie)

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## Teacher input

- Advantages of the general education or special education classroom setting
  - Peer modeling
  - Trusted setting
  - Skills more easily practiced
  - Generalization of skills across curriculum
  - Utilization of teacher **data** collection (grades, projects, etc.)

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## Teacher Input

- Duplication of services
  - Is the student receiving similar services within the least restrictive environment already?
  - Is there a way to make communication a part of goals in another area?
  - Frame goals in another setting so all see the value of the communication piece across the entire school day, which places **emphasis/focus on communication** within the primary disability category, allowing for more generalization/carryover of desired skills. EX:
    - "student will verbally express \_\_\_\_\_," or
    - "student will clearly state the main idea of a passage \_\_\_\_\_" (does it align with the TEKS?)

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## Administrative Support

- Inform your administrator PRIOR to the meeting if you expect push back or concern
- Give your administrator all the **data** in an organized format
- Provide administrator with talking points (verbally discuss AND provide in easy to read/follow written format)
- Discuss any issues that you expect may arise during the meeting
- Encourage the administrator to communicate with the teacher(s) prior to the meeting (staffing prior to meeting is an excellent idea in these situations)

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## Emotional Intelligence (EQ)

- **Self Awareness** – ability to recognize your own emotions, and the effect your emotions have on other people
- **Self Regulation** – ability to regulate and manage your emotions “in the moment”
- **Motivation** – being motivated to react by internal factors and not external factors
- **Empathy** – having the ability to understand how others are feeling and the ability to respond appropriately based on that information
- **Social skills** – dealing with people at all levels of emotion in a way that reflects that YOU have control of YOU

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## Analyze

- Think these thoughts FIRST
  - What part of this situation can I own?
  - How can I soften my reaction toward this person so I honor their opinion, despite how they react?
  - If I knew this conversation was being recorded and shared with someone I greatly respect, how would that change my reaction?

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## When Handling Difficult Conversations

- Remember your objective is the same (the child) –
- **MUTUAL PURPOSE**
- Listen
- Remain neutral
- **This is not about you – so don't make it about you**
- Remove any feelings that this is personal
- Be willing to compromise
- Regulate emotions
- Regulate body language
- Remain calm and respectful regardless
- Find common ground – again **MUTUAL PURPOSE**

36

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Strategies when faced with strong emotions in others (Otey 2014):

- Acknowledge the other has strong emotions
- Allow other to express, *but be careful about escalation*
- Recognize it as a sign the person may be feeling weak and helpless
- Focus on the task, not the person's anger
- Do not interrupt
- Ask questions to clarify
- Listen, listen, listen
- Reframe their message
- Structure the discussion
- Accept without agreeing or sharing their emotions
- Reward de-escalation
- Watch nonverbal cues--theirs and yours
- Chart--use visuals (when you let your students chart their own progress, this is great data to show to a parent!!)
- Take a break
- Respond to any possible portion of their demand that will de-escalate ("I know you are only wanting what is best for your child") – but mean it, otherwise, it is condescending)

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Types of Questions to guide conversations:

- **Closed questions** – where the questioner has a high level of control over the interaction
  - Invite short answers
  - Often involve a "yes" or "no" response
  - Request specific answer
  - Best when used to confirm accuracy of information or obtain agreement

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Types of Questions continued

- **Leading questions** – questioner leads to the answer he/she wants to hear. The questioner has high level of control over the interaction.
  - "Right" answer is embedded in the question
  - They suggest the answer
  - Sometimes called "contaminated" questions

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### Types of Questions continued

- **Why questions** – This type of question seeks the motivation or reasons behind some action or thought. Control could go either way depending on how the question is asked (tone, volume, pace)
  - Invasive
  - May lead people to respond defensively
  - May appear as if looking for blame
  - Generally, questioner has higher control due to possible defensive reaction

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### Types of Questions continued

- **Open-ended questions** – these questions are broad and do not limit responses – questioner has very limited control over the exchange
  - Like an essay question
  - Require thought prior to response
  - Require time to listen
  - Reluctant questioners may have difficulty generating such questions

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### Position ONE:

1. Position – what a person wants or demands (I, me, my). It is the **predetermined solution the speaker believes will best solve the problem from his/her perspective**. People tend to “take a stand” with their position. Positions seem logical and reasonable to the speaker. “Taking a position” takes person immediately from problem to solution (in their mind). **Position arguments tend to escalate conflict.**

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42

Position TWO:

2. Interests – the “why” behind a position. Interests motivate a person to take a particular stand. Interests are often intangible (recognition, respect, security). Usually there are several ways to satisfy interests. People negotiate issues because of the underlying interests they want to have addressed and satisfied.

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Position THREE (best outcome):

3. Problem based on combined interests – “Frame” or **create one** comprehensive statement which defines the problem based on the joint and individual underlying interests of all parties (we, us, together). Encourages all to think of possible options beyond their original position (solution). Defines the problem as one to be solved by *working TOGETHER*. Collaboration is the only way to reach your **MUTUAL PURPOSE**

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44

Points to take away:

**Outcome** (Mount 2014):

- \*Offer expert/professional opinion
- \*Utilize all **data** and information at your disposal
- \*Talk with confidence while you match your vocabulary with your audience
- \*Calculate obstacles **beforehand**
- \*Orderly and precisely present your information
- \*Make compromises, when necessary
- \*Exude compassion and kindness (patience, humility, gentleness, be kind to one another)

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## Developing “SMART” Annual Goals

**Specific** - based on the student’s Present Level of Academic Achievement and Functional Performance

**Measurable** - progress is objectively determined at frequent data points

**Achievable** - realistic, related to the most critical needs

**Results** -oriented and developed with educational standards outcome in mind

**Time-bound** - clearly defined beginning and ending dates

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46

## Goals need to be SMART

✓ **Specific** – exactly what we want student to be able to do (well defined, outcome is clear, adequate detail provided)

✓ **Measurable** – ex: 75 out of 100

✓ **Achievable** – ex: within 36 weeks; 12 months, etc.

✓ **Relevant** – educationally relevant in the school setting (because we use current PLAAFP info, data collection, assessment data)

✓ **Time bound** – terms of the IEP

From The Blueprint: Powerful IEPs to Increase Student Achievement

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47

## Why SMART?

- They state desired future achievement for the student
- They assist in focusing on what student’s primary needs are through the present levels
- They help us define exactly what the “future achievement” looks like and how we will measure it

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48



## Goal Components

- By when?
- Who?
- Will do?
- What?
- How well?
- Under what condition(s)?

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49

## Model for Goal Writing

- Who** – student
- What** – what will student need to do? Is it measurable and observable?
- When** (timeframe) – how long does the student have to work on the goal?
- Where** (conditions) – setting, situation, materials
- How** (criterion) – to what level or degree must student perform? Level of mastery required?
- Assessment** – method used to measure progress/attainment of goal?

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## *“Measurable”* Annual Goals

❖ If a large number of needs are identified in the present levels, the IEP Committee must consider how each need impacts the student’s progress in the general education curriculum

Select the need that has the *greatest impact* on progress, and develop a goal to address that need.

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## Components of Measurable Goals

**Behavior:** Identifies the observable and measurable performance expected. Answers the question: What will you see the child perform/do?

**Criteria:** Identifies how much of the behavior the child is expected to perform for the goal to be met. Answers the question: To what level does the child need to perform the behavior?

**Condition/Quality:** Specifies under what conditions the behavior will occur, e.g., in what setting, using what materials, and/or with how much support will the behavior occur?

**Timeframe:** The amount of time it will take to attain the goal. Answers the question: How long will it take the child to perform the behavior to that level?

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Behavior/ Learner Performance	Criteria	Condition/Quality	Timeframe
Alphabetize Arrange Match Ask Bring Check Choose Compare Complete Contribute Create Define Describe Differentiate Explain Follow Generate Give Identify Include Initiate Label List	<b>Frequency</b> ___ each day ___ to ___ minutes each day ___ consecutive days Over ___ consecutive sessions Fewer than ___ minutes each week  <b>Duration</b> For ___ minutes For ___ repetitions in ___ (amount of time)  <b>Accuracy</b> ___% of the time With ___ accuracy Select ___ out of ___ trials No more than ___ errors With ___ errors  <b>Latency/Speed</b> ___ words per minute ___ letters per minute ___ seconds or less ___ seconds or less Within ___ minutes of a verbal prompt  <b>Intensity</b> With ___ pounds of pressure/force	<b>Location</b> During lunch In a large group In a small group In a 1:1 setting/situation During free/play time Across environments In the morning routine In the community  <b>Given:</b> Given ___ trials Given pictures Given unfamiliar material Given a topic Given a story starter Given a model Given a writing prompt  <b>Miscellaneous</b> With typical peers With adults With ___ software/computer program (do not name brand) With ___ grade vocabulary With low bands With use of ___ strategy or behavior With ___ grade level material  <b>Quality</b> Independently With prompting (verbal, visual, gestural, physical) In direct order With a main idea and (6) of details With no more than one reduction With a score of ___ from a rubric With ___% on a test	Per grading period Per six weeks Per nine weeks Quarterly Bi-monthly Every ___ weeks Every ___ sessions

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## Short Term Objectives (STO)

These objectives are may be **necessary for achieving the measurable annual goal**, and are presented at the **student's level of functioning** specific to (a) **condition** (b) **behavior** (c) **criteria**, and (d) **timeframe**.

*Note: STOs no longer a requirement and you may no longer be required to write them*

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### Think Outside the Box

- Are there more effective ways to write goals that will provide different measurements you need in specific situations?
  - Rubrics

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### What a Rubric Can Do

- Make data collection quick and easy
- Works well for hard to quantify goals
- Data is more understandable to teachers
- Data is easy for parents to comprehend
- Make data collection easier in large groups
- Allows for a percentage range rather than a concrete percentile average
- Helps you keep your data organized
- You know what you are actually taking data on (with prompts, without prompts, etc.)

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### Why I Like Them

- Set ranges and levels to track progress
- Great for working on carryover
- Great for teacher input
- Easy for parents to comprehend – can see WHAT you are doing and HOW you are doing it
- Can use the descriptors in your progress reports

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61

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62

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63

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