



Are These Goals SMART?

A Parent's Checklist to Meaningful
IEP Goals

You Deserve to Feel Empowered in Your Child's IEP Meetings

As a parent, you know your child best. But when it comes to IEP meetings and goal-setting, it can be overwhelming to speak up—especially when the language feels too complex, and the process feels out of your hands.

That's where I come in.



I'm Flor De Amelia, IEP Coach and Parent Empowerment Guide. Through IEP Coaching with FlorDeAmelia, I help parents like you confidently advocate for your child's unique learning needs.

Whether you're new to the IEP journey or just need help making sense of the goals written on paper, I'm here to ensure you have clarity, courage, and a clear plan.

In this free resource, I'll guide you through a practical checklist to help you determine if the goals in your child's IEP are truly SMART—and meaningful.



Why This Matters?

You've likely heard the phrase ***"Trust the process"***—but what if the process feels confusing, rushed, or unclear?

As a parent, you are a vital part of your child's IEP team. Yet too often, you're handed a document full of educational jargon and broad statements, and expected to approve it with confidence. That's not okay—and that's why you're here.

This checklist will help you look at IEP goals with clarity, so you can speak up when something doesn't feel right and know what to ask for when it comes to your child's learning.



What Makes a Goal SMART

Before you can assess your child's IEP goals, let's break down what **"SMART"** really means in the IEP world:

S	Specific	Is the goal clearly defined and focused on a single skill or need?
M	Measurable	Can progress be tracked with data (numbers, percentages, frequencies)?
A	Achievable	Is it realistic for your child's current level and support system?
R	Relevant	Does the goal align with your child's needs, not just a generic standard?
T	Time-Bound	Is there a clear deadline or timeframe for mastering the goal?

What SMART Goals Really Look Like

How to tell if your child's goals are actually actionable

IEP goals must be more than good intentions. They should follow the SMART framework—Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-bound.

Let's break it down with examples:

Not SMART	SMART
"Will improve behavior"	"Will use a break card in 4/5 opportunities to avoid escalation for 6 consecutive weeks."
"Will increase reading comprehension"	"Will answer 4 out of 5 literal WH-questions from a grade-level passage with 80% accuracy over 3 consecutive data collection periods."
"Will be more social"	"Will initiate peer interaction during structured group activities on 3 of 4 days per week, for 4 weeks."



TIP: A SMART goal doesn't just sound specific—it gives you a way to know if it's working.



The SMART Goal Checklist

Print or screenshot this before your next IEP meeting.
Use this checklist to evaluate each individual goal in your child's IEP:

Specific

- ☐ Is the goal focused on a clearly defined skill or behavior?
- ☐ Is the language free from vague phrases like "improve," "increase," or "get better at"?

Measurable

- ☐ Can progress be tracked in data, numbers, or observations?
- ☐ Does the goal specify how success will be measured and by whom?

Achievable

- ☐ Is the goal realistic given your child's current strengths and challenges?
- ☐ Does the data support this level of progress?

Relevant

- ☐ Is the goal directly connected to your child's unique learning needs?
- ☐ Does it reflect your child's IEP evaluation or current priorities?

Time-bound

- ☐ Does the goal include a timeframe for achievement (e.g., weeks, months, quarters)?
- ☐ Are there clear benchmarks for reviewing progress?



Guided Reflection Page

Take a moment. These questions are just for you.
You know your child best. Use this space to reflect before your next IEP
meeting:



What strength of my child's is not reflected in any goal?



What concern of mine has not been addressed in these
goals?



What's one question I want to ask the IEP team about goal
alignment?



How can I follow up on this conversation to ensure progress
is monitored?

Bonus: Red Flags to Watch For

Trust your instincts—these are signs to ask more questions.



	Goals are written in vague language without data.
	Goals don't align with what the evaluation report says.
	There's no baseline information to measure growth from.
	Every goal is generic or copy-pasted across students.
	No clear person is assigned to track the goal's progress.
	You're told "we'll work on it" without a written plan.



You don't have to be an expert to be effective.

As a parent, your insights and advocacy are essential to creating an IEP that truly supports your child. This SMART Goals Checklist is just the beginning. The more you understand the language and structure behind IEP goals, the more confidently you can partner with your child's team to create real progress.



Flor De Amelia Hoffman

You're now holding a powerful tool—a checklist that can completely change how you approach your child's IEP goals.

But like any tool, its power lies in how you use it.

You could stop here and get some clarity... or you could take it further and truly master the art of SMART IEP goals—knowing exactly what to look for, what to ask for, and how to rewrite goals that actually support your child's growth.

Think of this checklist as the key to a better IEP, and now it's time to learn how to drive the process with full confidence.

If you want to go deeper and learn how to apply this checklist step-by-step to your child's unique situation, I'd love to invite you to my advanced training where I break it all down for you—with real examples, templates, and guidance.

Let's unlock your full advocacy power—join the next IEP Coaching Session with FlorDeAmelia.

JOIN THE CLASS NOW