

# Present Levels of Academic Achievement and Functional Performance

Division of Early Intervention and Special Education  
Services

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**PRESENTED BY**

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## Intended Outcomes

By the end of the session, participants will be able to:

- Identify sources of data in creating a robust Present Levels of Academic Achievement and Functional Performance (PLAAFP).
- Name and describe the types of input and stakeholders necessary in developing a PLAAFP for a student with a disability.
- Describe how to craft a PLAAFP.
- Review and analyze samples PLAAFPs to ensure alignment to requirements.





## Presentation Outline

1. Quantitative and Qualitative Data Sources
2. Integrating Family, Student, and Local Education Agency Input
3. Preschool and School-Age Present Levels of Academic Achievement and Functional Performance



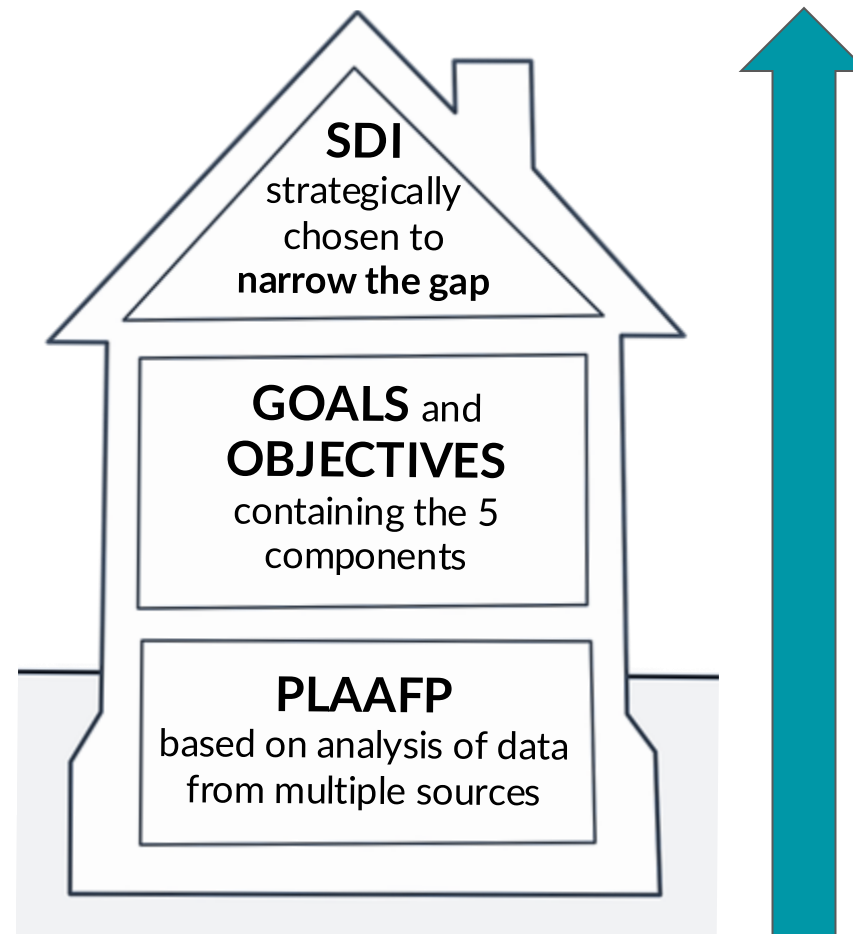
## 1. Quantitative and Qualitative Data Sources

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# Quantitative and Qualitative Data Sources

- Participants will understand the role of different types of data in the development of the PLAAFP.
- Participants will select and analyze appropriate data for different areas of need.

# Building an Effective IEP with Quantitative and Qualitative Data Sources



# What's Included in a PLAAFP?

- PLAAFPs include:
  - Instructional grade level
  - Reflects student performance in relation to grade level standards and age-appropriate expectations
  - Information on use of skills, strategies, and supports in multiple contexts
  - Objective and reliable
  - Includes multiple sources of data, including discussion of formal and informal data

# Academic Area (Reading, Math, and Writing) PLAAFP Standards for Various Groups

- Students K-21:
  - Singular grade; no multi-grade spans.
  - The current instructional level of performance may also note if the student is performing in the “early, mid, or late” state of a singular grade level, if appropriate. For example, “mid 8<sup>th</sup> grade.”
  - Early learning areas of need, such as early literacy and early numeracy, should not be included in an IEP for a student enrolled in kindergarten or above.
- Students participating in the Alternate Framework:
  - Singular grade; no developmental ranges
  - The current instructional level of performance may also note if the student is performing in the “early, mid, or late” state of a singular grade level, if appropriate. For example, “Mid 8<sup>th</sup> grade.”
  - Students participating in the Alternate Framework must have at least one grade-aligned goal in reading, writing, and math.
- Preschool and Pre-K students:
  - Developmental ages or ranges.
  - For preschool and pre-k students a developmental age/range is often an appropriate and helpful way to describe present levels and should be used when appropriate.



# Nonacademic Area PLAAFP Standards for Various Groups

- Included but not limited to fine and gross motor, speech and language, social-emotional/behavioral:
  - A grade level is not required, but the PLAAFP must provide a comparison to typical peers (i.e., below same-aged peers).
  - An age or grade equivalency is not expected for a health PLAAFP



## PLAAFP Data

- Provides the foundation for:
  - Identifying student strengths and needs
  - Analyzing progress trends over time
  - Selecting accommodations, supplementary aids, supports, and interventions
  - Setting ambitious, attainable IEP goals and objectives
  - Developing student-centered transition activities

# Types of Data

## Quantitative

Numeric data, such as:

- Standard scores
- Percentiles
- Grade or age equivalences
- Percent accuracy
- Rates (e.g., words read per minute or number of questions asked per hour)

## Qualitative

Descriptive data, such as:

- Structured observations
- Teacher/Provider input
- Family/Student input
- Work samples and artifacts

## Both

- Necessary for an effective PLAAFP
- Critical for academic and functional skills
- Must be integrated and analyzed

# Quantitative Data

## Sources:

- Individual standardized assessments
- Standardized assessments (e.g., MCAP, Dynamic Learning Systems – Alternate Assessment, benchmarks)
- Screening assessments (e.g., iReady, Dibels, etc.)
- CCR standards
- Curriculum based measures
- Individualized data collection records (e.g., IEP goal progress monitoring data, behavior plan data, secondary transition activities progress monitoring data)

## Uses:

- Determine instructional grade level
- Prioritize skills for instructional focus
- Establish baselines for progress monitoring
- Set criteria for goals

## Best Practices:

- Combine information from multiple sources
- Interpret standard scores thoughtfully
- Analyze specific skills demonstrated, patterns and types of errors, etc.

# Qualitative Data

## Sources:

- Structured observations
- Teacher/Service provider reports
- Family/Student reports
- Work samples and artifacts

## Uses:

- Describe HOW the student applies skills
- Reflect effort, compensatory strategies, response to supports
- Identify family/student priorities, concerns, and strategies

## Best Practices:

- Provide specific, detailed observations
- Focus on skills and behaviors, not traits
- Gather information in advance



# Putting the Pieces Together

Skill Performance Area	Possible Quantitative Data Sources	Possible Qualitative Data Sources
<b>Performance on grade-level academic skills/standards</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Standardized assessments and benchmarks</li> <li>● Classroom-based assessments</li> <li>● CBM and other probes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Work samples</li> <li>● Teacher observations</li> <li>● Family report</li> </ul>
<b>Mastery of foundational/below grade level skills</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Intervention data</li> <li>● CBM and other probes</li> <li>● IEP progress reports</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Work samples</li> <li>● Teacher observations</li> <li>● Family report</li> </ul>
<b>Performance on functional skills</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Teacher/therapist data collection records</li> <li>● Criterion-referenced assessments and checklists</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Teacher/therapist observations</li> <li>● Family report</li> </ul>
<b>Impact of accommodations and supports</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Probes/data records of performance with and without accommodations</li> <li>● Implementation data</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Teacher/therapist observations</li> <li>● Family report</li> <li>● Student report</li> </ul>

# Qualitative and Quantitative Data Sources

## Considerations for Students with Significant Cognitive Disabilities:

- Include information on grade-level and instructional level performance from formal and classroom-based assessments
- Recognize the limitations of standardized assessments for students with sensory, motor, and communication disabilities. Supplement with individualized skill measures and qualitative information
- Describe adaptations and supports the presentation of information and the student's method of responding (e.g., eye gaze, verbal vs. written)
- Include qualitative descriptions of use of skills in a variety of contexts



1. Quantitative and Qualitative Data Sources

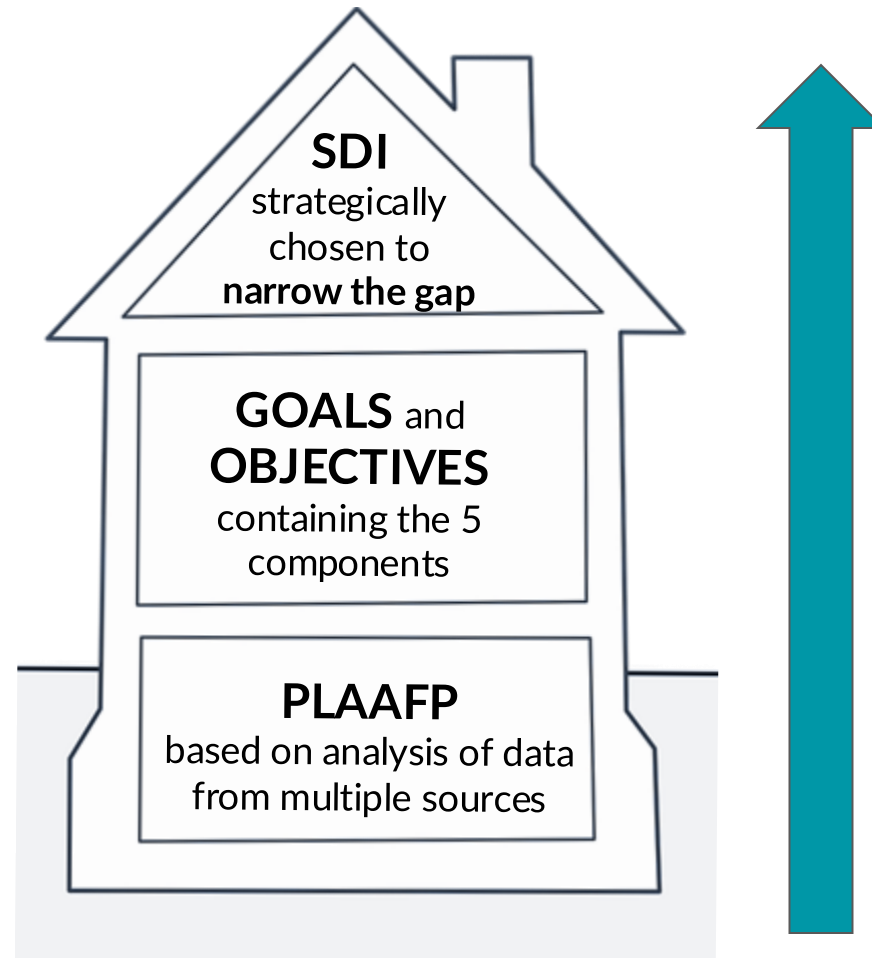
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# Integrating Family, Student, and Local Education Agency (LEA) Input

- Participants will identify the impact of utilizing input from a variety of IEP team members (including special educator, family, the student themselves, as appropriate, and LEA representatives) to develop PLAAFPs which accurately describes all aspects of the student's learning experience.
- Participants will incorporate a variety of input to strengthen PLAAFP narratives.

# Importance of Input and an Accurate PLAAFP





## Legal Requirements of Including Diverse Input

“To meet its substantive obligation under IDEA, the **IEP team must offer** an IEP that is ‘a fact-intensive exercise (that) will be **informed not only by the expertise of school officials, but also by the input of the child’s parents.**’ *Endrew F. v. Douglas County School District*, 580 U.S. (2017).”

Excerpt from MSDE DEI/SES Technical Assistance Bulletin #19-01: Improving Outcomes for Students with Disabilities: Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment (revised November 2019).

[https://marylandpublicschools.org/programs/Documents/Special-Ed/TAB/19-01\\_Curriculum\\_Instruction\\_and\\_Assessment\\_Final\\_508\\_2022.docx](https://marylandpublicschools.org/programs/Documents/Special-Ed/TAB/19-01_Curriculum_Instruction_and_Assessment_Final_508_2022.docx)

## Collaborative IEP Team Input for PLAAFPs

- IEP team members work together, utilizing their knowledge and expertise of grade level standards and essential skills paired with their knowledge and expertise of the student's academic history, learning characteristics, and impact of their disability to identify gaps in skill development and the trajectory of skill acquisition
- Engages all participants in the collaborative decision-making process
- Ensures data collected from variety of sources
- Provides information which cannot be obtained from traditional standardized assessments
- Fosters positive, ongoing relationships with families
- Ensures skills targeted are important to all IEP participants
- Ensures all participants understand the process of IEP development, implementation, and evaluation
- Ensures IEP is reasonably calculated and legally compliant

# Parent and Student Input Contributions

## Parent/Family

- Family's priorities for learning and future goals for the student.
- Family's insights and concerns about student's skill development, learning progression, and progress.
- Impact of cultural, racial, or ethnic differences on collaboration, identification of instructional priorities, and other factors related to student's education.

## Student

- Student's priorities for learning and future goals.
- Student's individual strengths and interests.
- Student's experiences with accommodations and supplementary aids and services.

# Additional Participant Input

## Related Service Providers

- Knowledge of student's individual skill development related to behavior, communication, gross motor, fine motor, sensory, or other specific areas
- Knowledge of gap between same-age peers and individual student
- Knowledge of strategies to address skill gaps

## Transition Teachers or Other Transition Support Personnel

- Knowledge of the student's strengths and needs in relation to working towards post-secondary goals
- Knowledge of student's and family's future goals, and steps/skills needed to reach them

## Administrators

- Knowledge related to curriculum
- Knowledge of resources available at the student's school

## Additional External Participants Working with the Student (tutors, outside service providers, etc.)

- Additional data collected in supplemental instruction outside of school day
- Historical knowledge of student
- Knowledge of how the student performs skills in a different environment



# Strategies for Gathering Input

- Interviews with specific questions:
  - May have specific questions related to priorities, concerns, or other factors
  - May be adapted for students with disabilities to respond (read-to-text, answer choices, include picture cues, etc.)
  - Conducted by phone, in-person, or through a virtual meetings
- Surveys
  - Can be electronic or paper-based
- Documentation of ongoing conversations/communication log notes
- Information from family conferences or periodic IEP meetings
- Summaries of data analysis conversations with team
- Collaborative planning session notes

# Tips for Eliciting and Including IEP Team Member Input

- Establish a protocol and timeline for engaging stakeholders, including school-based personnel working with the student and families, to elicit input as part of the IEP development.
  - Who will be responsible for reaching out and gathering information?
  - How will information be gathered?
  - Consider the need for flexibility in scheduling meetings or conversations to gather this information.
- Ensure LEA representatives, related service providers, and other personnel understand their collaborative role in IEP development, including the collection and analysis of data to be included in the PLAAFP.
- Provide support and preparation for students to actively engage in the IEP process, including providing meaningful input for PLAAFP development.
  - Recognize student may need preparation related to purpose of the meeting.
  - Integrate strategies (communication, calming, engagement, etc.) to enable the student to participate in the meeting.
- Consider providing the family/family with resources prior to the IEP annual review to prepare for their participation and to provide input.

# Considerations for Eliciting Input for Students with Communication Challenges and/or Significant Cognitive Disabilities

- Input from the student should be incorporated.
- Use the student's accommodations and program modifications to adapt traditional input strategies:
  - Providing choice
  - Structuring a yes/no questions
  - Ranking preference
  - Utilize familiar assistive technology
- Incorporate other informal and formal data sources for input, such as classroom activities/assignments:
  - Activities identifying preferences and interests
  - Goal writing activities
- Collaborate with other team members to structure and adapt traditional methods (special educators, speech therapists, occupational therapists, physical therapist, transition teachers, LEA representatives, etc.)

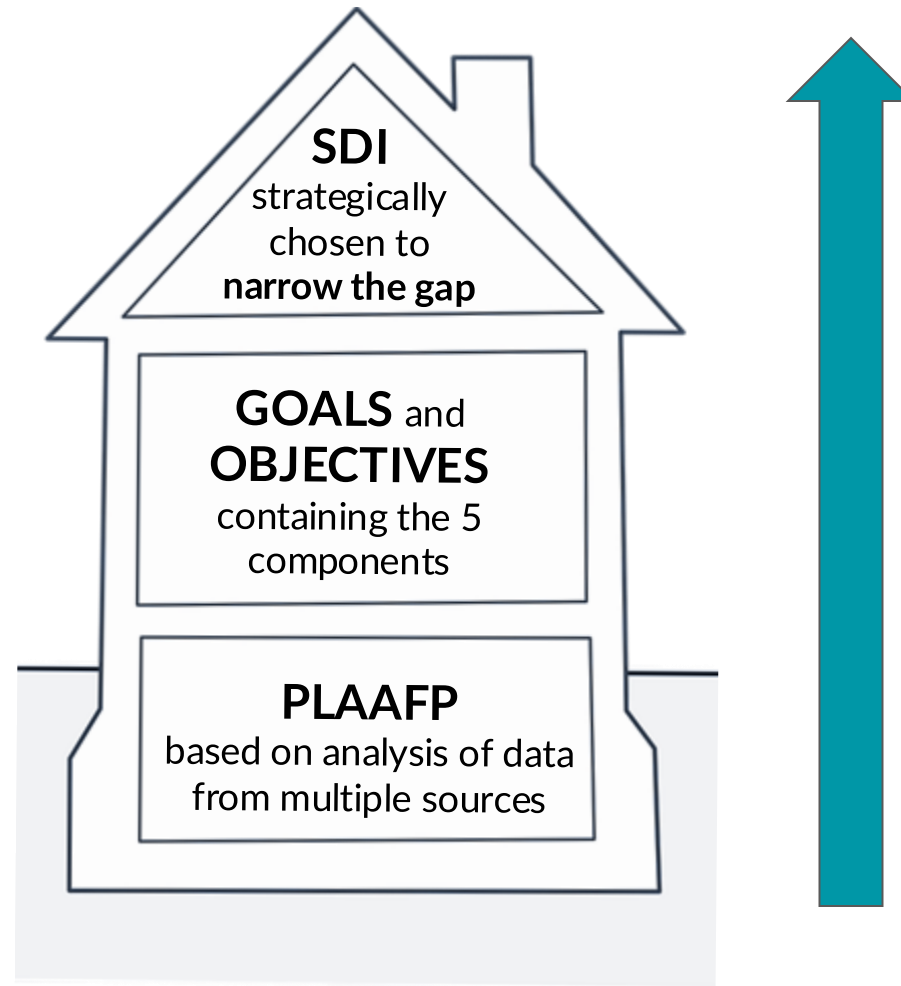


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## Preschool and School-Age Present Levels of Academic Achievement and Functional Performance

- Participants will be able to describe the major sections of the Preschool and School-Age Present Levels of Academic and Functional Performance and the impact of each in creating a holistic and well-rounded description of the student to inform instructional decision-making.

# Building an Effective IEP



## Parental Input

- The parental input section describes the parents concerns and priorities for their child's education, including immediate and long-term goals.
- This information can be gathered through conversations, interviews, surveys, etc.
- This needs to occur in advance of the meeting as well as discussed at the IEP team table.



## Students Strengths, Interests, Personal Attributes, and Accomplishments

May include:

- Areas of strength of the student
- A strength as compared to others
- An area of motivation or interest
- Personal attributes
- Personal accomplishments
- Interests currently and for post-secondary goals



# Drafting Strengths and Interest Statement Considerations

For students with significant cognitive disabilities, it's the same process!

- For all students, including students with a significant cognitive disability, strengths and interests should be considered across a variety of areas to motivate and engage the student and allow greater access to the curriculum.
- For a student with a significant cognitive disability, consider whether the student has a consistent and reliable means of communication that is used across various school settings and at home.
- Many students with a significant cognitive disability may not be at the same developmental level as their peers. As a result, they may have interests aligned more closely to those of a younger child.
- Be flexible and individualize statements to highlight information which will be impactful on the development of specially designed instruction to support the student.

## Engagement Activity

- Read the Present Levels of Academic and Functional Performance (PLAAFP) section of Alex's case study (pg. 3-5).
- Consider the following questions:
  - What are some of your initial thoughts about Alex's PLAAFP?
  - What elements of the PLAAFP helped you gain a better understanding of Alex's strengths and needs?
  - Is there any other information that you feel you would want to know in order to start planning specially designed instruction for Alex?
  - What are some strategies to obtain and incorporate input from all IEP team members, including parents?

## Contact Information

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## Session Evaluation



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