

# Applications of RICH Theory to IEP Goals and BIP Goals

## IEP GOALS

There are really only two critical variables within every individualized education plan (IEP): (1) Is the plan *meaningful*, and (2) is the progress of the plan *measurable*—M&M. As long as IEP teams keep the focus on these two variables, almost everything else will fall into place. While it may seem simple enough, anyone who works in special education can tell you it is anything but. In fact, for many parents, IEPs have a reputation for being pretty awful.

When we take a step back and look at the IEP process, we can see why this may be the case. Most IEP meetings lose sight of their purpose due to cumbersome procedures, jargon-filled legalese, and the Herculean effort of getting all the necessary information from team members in a timely manner. When IEPs lose their way, meetings become confrontational, and very little benefit is achieved on behalf of the student.

When parents and IEP team members are struggling to see eye to eye on what is best for the student, I have found the inclusion of RICH theory brings everything back into perspective by making our efforts more meaningful. On the next page is a table to help IEP teams and parents who may be stuck when it comes to using special education services. The table uses the domains of human happiness and fulfillment from the RICH theory and cross-references them with common areas of difficulty for students eligible for special education. This table is more of an exercise and planning tool for savvy special educators and parents who really want to focus on the M&M of IEPs.

## RICH IEP GOAL-PLANNING SAMPLE

	<i>Meaningful?</i>	<i>Measurable?</i>
IEP goal in math	How are the math goals helping the student access resources? How are the math goals helping the student in relationships? How are the math goals helping the student become more competent in math? How are the math goals helping the student keep healthy habits?	How will we know progress is being made or not made? How will you present this information graphically?
IEP goal in reading	How are the reading goals helping the student access resources? How are the reading goals helping the student in relationships? How are the reading goals helping the student become more competent in reading comprehension? How are the reading goals helping the student keep healthy habits?	How will we know progress is being made or not made? How will you present this information graphically?
IEP goal in communication	How are the communication goals helping the student access resources? How are the communication goals helping the student in relationships? How are the communication goals helping the student become more competent in interpersonal communication? How are the communication goals helping the student keep healthy habits?	How will we know progress is being made or not made? How will you present this information graphically?
IEP goal in behavior	How are the behavioral goals helping the student access resources? How are the behavioral goals helping the student in relationships? How are the behavioral goals helping the student become more competent in age-appropriate behavior? How are the behavioral goals helping the student keep healthy habits?	How will we know progress is being made or not made? How will you present this information graphically?

While this table is pretty straightforward, I have found it to be a useful tool when IEP meetings lose their focus on the child. At the end of the day, any goal that considers the RICH domains and can be displayed graphically is a high-quality goal in special education.