The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) require schools provide regular progress reports to parents of students with IEPs as often as report cards. For example, if schools issue report cards every nine weeks, progress reports on IDEA-entitled student's IEP goals should also be issued every nine weeks. The report should contain information about the student's progress on each annual goal in the IEP and whether the student is likely to reach the goal within the IEP time frame. This data is documented at the bottom of each IEP goal page. Parents could ask for progress reports more often if they would like, or could ask for an update of the child's progress on goals at any time.

Progress Monitoring is used to assess a student's performance and the effectiveness of the instruction being given. The data collected by progress monitoring helps guide IEP team decisions about instruction and services. Each goal page of Iowa's IEP form contains a section called Progress Monitoring Procedures, which should explain how data will be collected and used to make instructional decisions.

Steps for progress monitoring student goals:

- Determine the student's current level of performance
- Identify goals that will take place over time
- Measure the student's performance on a regular basis
- Compare the expected progress to actual student performance
- Consider changes to instruction or services when student progress toward goals is either not being made or the goal has been met

How often will data be collected for each goal?

It depends. How often data should be collected depends on what is being measured, how often measurement will be meaningful, and at what rate progress is expected. The IEP team should discuss these factors and determine if daily, weekly, bi-monthly, or some other interval is most appropriate for each goal. Behavior data is often collected daily; academic data is often collected once a week. The frequency that data is collected is related to how often measurable progress can be expected. It is also relates to how long it will take to get enough data to provide meaningful information. For example, any data collected only once a month would require an entire year of monitoring to get sufficient measurement points to make a valid decision because most goals require seven data points before there is sufficient data to make changes.

How will I know if my student is making progress?

In Iowa, a method commonly used for determining progress and deciding whether instructional changes are needed is known as the Four Point Decision Making Rule. This method uses a graph to show how a student is currently progressing on a goal, called the trend line, compared to how he or she is expected to perform in order to meet the goal on schedule, called the goal line.

The goal line on each graph represents the expected progress of the student during that goal period. It is drawn between the baseline score which is their Present Levels of Academic Achievement and Functional Performance (PLAAFP) and the expected score at the achievement of the goal.

The trend line connecting the data points should illustrate whether the student's scores are increasing, decreasing, or are inconsistent. This is where the Four Point Rule comes into play. If the data points fall below or above the expected rate of progress (the goal line) four times in a row, it indicates that instructional changes should be considered.

The data collected by progress monitoring helps guide IEP team decisions about instruction and services.

Graphing data points

Here, two sample graphs are shown to illustrate what graphed data points look like. Seven to twelve data points are needed to make statistically valid instructional decisions. Data must be collected regularly and frequently in order to have sufficient data points to make valid decisions.

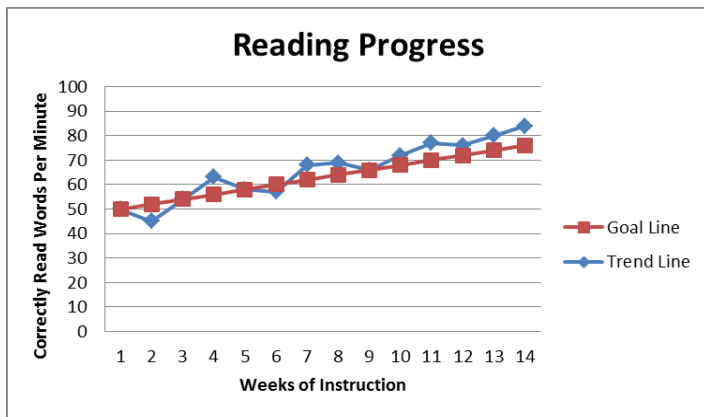### Figure 1

Reading Progress

Figure 1 Shows a trend line above the goal line. This indicates the student is making better than expected progress. The IEP team may want to consider setting a more challenging goal.
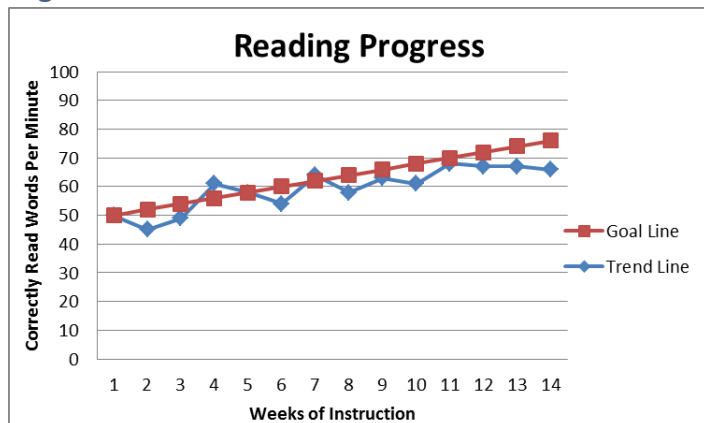
Figure 2

Reading Progress

Figure 2 Shows a trend line below the goal line. This indicates the student is not making progress as expected. The IEP team should consider whether an instructional change is needed to address the student's lack of progress.

What happens if the student's progress is not meeting expectations?

If the progress monitoring procedure indicates that the student isn't making appropriate progress toward his or her goals, then consider adjusting current teaching strategies and supports. Changes should be recorded as a phase line on the graph. Data collection will continue to determine the effectiveness of changes.

What are the benefits of progress monitoring?

- Documents student progress (or lack of it)
- Informs decisions about how students can be more effectively instructed
- Leads to more appropriate and effective instruction
- Supports better communication between educators and parents about the student's progress

One of the key aspects of progress monitoring is to use the data collected to make adjustments to the student's educational program that "fine tune" it in response to the student's performance. As a parent, your role includes:

- Making sure you are receiving regular progress reports from the school
- Asking questions if the data does not make sense to you
- Requesting a meeting with your child's teacher or IEP team to review the information and discuss options if you feel your child is not making sufficient progress

ASK Essential Questions

- How often will data be collected for each goal?
- What will good progress look like?
- What will happen if my student does not make enough progress?