



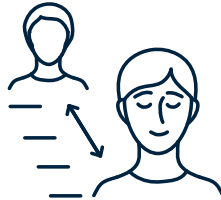
THE Life Skills Lady

For Students on the Autism Spectrum

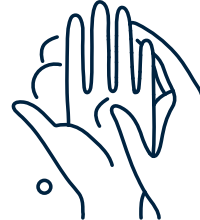
Viral Safety Skills: The New Essential Life Skills



Mask Wearing



Social Distancing



Hand Washing

Mask wearing, social distancing, hand washing and other viral safety skills are essential skills to attend school and participate in the community. Share this information with your school team to support your request to add specific viral safety skill goals into your child's IEP (Individualized Education Program).

The IDEA Supports Functional Skills

THE FIRST STATED PURPOSE OF THE INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES EDUCATIONAL ACT (IDEA) is "to ensure that all students with disabilities have available to them a free appropriate public education that emphasizes special education and related services designed to meet their unique needs and prepare them for further education, employment and independent living."

To that end, Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) must include statements describing your child's Present Levels of Academic Achievement and Functional Performance (PLAAFP)

The PLAAFP Regulation in the IDEA Sec. 300.320 (a):

(a) General. As used in this part, the term Individualized Education Program (IEP) means a written statement for each child with a disability that is developed, reviewed, and revised in a meeting in accordance with §§300.320 through 300.324, and that must include—

- (1) A statement of the child's present levels of academic achievement and functional performance, including—(i) How the child's disability affects the child's involvement and progress in the general education curriculum (i.e., the same curriculum as for nondisabled children); or (ii) For preschool children, as appropriate, how the disability affects the child's participation in appropriate activities;
- (2) (i) A statement of measurable annual goals, including academic and functional goals designed to—(A) Meet the child's needs that result from the child's disability to enable the child to be involved in and make progress in the general education curriculum; and (B) Meet each of the child's other educational needs that result from the child's disability ...

DEFINITION OF FUNCTIONAL PERFORMANCE The IDEA does not define functional performance. Functional achievement generally includes the areas of social competence, communication, behavior, personal management, and self-determination.

What does "functional" mean in the context of "functional performance" and "functional goals"?

Functional means nonacademic, as in "routine activities of everyday living." Commentary on the IDEA states "It is not necessary to include a definition of "functional" in these regulations because we believe it is a term that is generally understood to refer to skills or activities that are not considered academic or related to a child's academic achievement. Instead, "functional" is often used in the context of routine activities of everyday living."

Examples of Functional Skills are not included in the IDEA Regulations

However, IDEA Commentary clarifies that a child's IEP should be based on the child's individual and unique needs. The IEP describes what the school will provide, given the child's unique needs for specific functional skills. "We do not believe it is necessary to include examples of functional skills in the regulations because the range of functional skills is as varied as the individual needs of children with disabilities."

EVALUATING FUNCTIONAL SKILLS To measure a child's present levels of functional skills, the school must evaluate a child's functional skills. The evaluations must be in compliance with Sec. 300.304 (c) (1):

- (1) Assessments and other evaluation materials used to assess a child under this part—
 - (i) Are selected and administered so as not to be discriminatory on a racial or cultural basis;
 - (ii) Are provided and administered in the child's native language or other mode of communication and in the form most likely to yield accurate information on what the child knows and can do academically, developmentally, and functionally, unless it is clearly not feasible to so provide or administer;
 - (iii) Are used for the purposes for which the assessments or measures are valid and reliable;
 - (iv) Are administered by trained and knowledgeable personnel; and
 - (v) Are administered in accordance with any instructions provided by the producer of the assessments.