Progress Monitoring at a Glance

A practical introduction to tracking your child's progress for families.

A Note for Families

Progress monitoring is how schools find out whether supports are working. The reports and graphs can be hard to read, but they are some of the most useful information you will receive. This guide explains what to look for. It is a starting point, not a substitute for individualized guidance.

What Is Progress Monitoring?

Progress monitoring is the regular collection of data to see whether a student is moving toward a goal. It is used in MTSS interventions and for IEP goals. For students with IEPs, the plan states how progress will be measured and how often you will receive reports, often alongside report cards.

> DEA PERSPECTIVE
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> **Data should drive decisions.**
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> Progress monitoring only matters if someone acts on it. When the data shows a student isn't growing, the plan should change. Waiting a full year to find out something isn't working costs a child valuable time.

Reading a Progress Graph

Baseline	Where your child started before the intervention or goal began.
Goal Line	The path from the baseline to the goal. It shows where your child should be over time.
Data Points	Individual measurements, usually collected weekly or every few weeks.
Trend Line	The overall direction of the data. Compare it to the goal line to see if your child is on track.

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When Progress Stalls

- Ask to see the actual data and graphs, not just a summary.
- Ask how long the current approach has been in place.
- Request a meeting to discuss changing the intervention, frequency, or provider.
- Ask whether a new evaluation or added support should be considered.

Common Misconceptions

MYTH	WHAT PARENTS SHOULD KNOW
Passing grades mean IEP goals are being met.	Grades and IEP goals measure different things. A student can pass classes while making little progress on their goals.
"Progressing" on a report means my child is on track.	Ask for the numbers. A general rating doesn't show whether progress is fast enough to reach the goal.
I have to wait until the annual review to raise concerns.	You can request a meeting at any time if the data shows a problem.

Need Help Making Sense of the Data?

Every child is different, and no guide can replace individualized support. If you would like help reading progress reports, understanding graphs, or deciding on next steps, schedule a consultation with Distributed Education Advocacy.



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