



Quarterly Newsletter

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Data is Our Friend, Not Foe

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What a perfect topic for our October newsletter! Similar to the Sunday scaries, the idea of data collection can spook even the most seasoned educator. It's time to dispel those fears and become a master of manageable progress monitoring by not feeling burdened to reinvent the wheel. Instead of shooting in the dark, here are a few strategies to empower you in future student-centered, data-driven IEP meetings.

- High-quality data collection starts with high-quality goals. Creating specific, measurable, attainable, relevant, and time-bound goals, AKA SMART goals, will be your golden ticket.
- Review with your team how the data is being taken. If there are multiple individuals taking data on the same goal, ensure consistency on what is being observed and how it is being recorded, so nothing is lost in translation.
- [Google Forms](#) is a great option for collaborative collecting.
- Here is one of my favorite keys for recording communication data from [Language First](#):

V = verbal	X = max	R = repetition	H = hand over hand	P = PROMPT
S = visual	D = mod	M = model	A = approximation	SS = sign support
T = tactile	N = min	C = cue	L = increased latency	AO = auditory only

- Flip the script. Instead of perceiving data collection as time-consuming, recognize it as a time-saver. You won't be scrambling for answers or justification of future goals, present levels, additional support, or services needed when you have data at the ready. Acknowledge that you are frontloading, and your future self will thank you.
- Similarly, celebrate data for having your back. When you are providing high-quality education or related services, your work speaks for itself through the data you share with the team. Even if a student is not making progress, the data can show you relevant trends or illuminate other areas of concern, making it possible to re-evaluate and strategize as a team.
- Think growth! We want to see it! The best feeling in the world is walking into an IEP meeting with a visual representation of the student's progress. In education, it can be difficult to step back and see the impact you have on a day-to-day basis. Cumulative data of student growth will not only elicit those feel-good brain chemicals at the moment but act as a model for future success.