

## **Guidelines for Developing Standards–based IEP**

Standards-based IEP approach is a recent strategy in the IEP development process. The following guidelines, gathered from a literature review on this topic, should be helpful.

- Gain a thorough understanding and knowledge of the grade-level academic standards. Knowledge on the standards will help identify how the student's disability impacts learning in the general curriculum.
- Recognize that IEP's aligned to standards help students gain the skills needed to be successful in the required state assessment. When IEP's are aligned to state standards, classroom instruction emphasizes skills required in the state assessment.
- Adapt the standards for students with significant disabilities so that they are meaningful and attainable. Students with significant disabilities may be working at introductory skill levels related to general curriculum content standards and the IEP should reflect this.
- Collaborate with general education colleagues regularly on what they are doing in specific grades and content areas. Assess what skills your student needs to learn to access content areas and lessons.
- Realize that there is no need to have a one-to-one correspondence for each content standard linking to an IEP goal. The team should consider each academic content area, but every unit of the curriculum does not need to have a goal. Focus should be on priorities for academic learning and skills needed to access the broader curriculum.
- Recognize that all IEP objectives may not align with academic standards. In addition to academic goals, students may require some functional goals based on identified needs in the areas of personal living, self-determination, social skills, communication, and motor areas. These are essential objectives for the student and need to be retained.

Adapted from: *Striking a Balance Between IDEA and NCLB for Students with Significant Disabilities* by Padmaja Sarathy.