

Behavior IEP Goals — Preschool & Pre-K

15 measurable goals written to IDEA standards. Replace [student] and [date]; adjust criteria to the student's baseline.

Behavior goals at this age should target a replacement skill, not just reduce a behavior — teaching a preschooler to hand over a “break” card matters more than counting tantrums. Frequency counts fit short, discrete behaviors (hitting, grabbing); duration fits ongoing ones (tantrums, refusal to transition).

SELF-REGULATION & COPING

1. During a transition from a preferred activity, [student] will use a visual cue (first/then card) to move to the next activity without a tantrum, in 4 of 5 observed transitions.
2. When frustrated, [student] will use a taught calming strategy (deep breath, squeeze toy) with adult prompting, in 4 of 5 opportunities.
3. [student] will remain in a designated area (circle time, table) for [X] minutes with no more than 1 verbal redirection, across 3 consecutive observations.
4. [student] will identify a feeling (happy, sad, mad, frustrated) using a picture or word when asked, with 80% accuracy across 4 of 5 trials.

FOLLOWING DIRECTIONS & ROUTINES

5. [student] will follow a 1-step direction from an adult within 10 seconds without physical prompting, in 4 of 5 opportunities.
6. [student] will complete a 2-step direction (“put away the toy and sit down”) with no more than 1 verbal reminder, in 4 of 5 opportunities.
7. [student] will follow the classroom's daily visual schedule with 1 or fewer redirections per activity, across 3 consecutive days.
8. [student] will transition between activities within 2 minutes of the transition cue, in 4 of 5 observed transitions.

REPLACING CHALLENGING BEHAVIOR WITH COMMUNICATION

9. Instead of crying, hitting, or grabbing to get a preferred item, [student] will request the item using a picture card, sign, or word, in 4 of 5 opportunities.
10. When [student] wants a break from an activity, [student] will hand an adult a “break” card instead of engaging in the target behavior, in 4 of 5 observed opportunities.
11. [student] will tolerate a 30-second delay between requesting and receiving a preferred item without engaging in the target behavior, across 3 consecutive sessions.

GROUP PARTICIPATION & IMPULSE CONTROL

12. [student] will participate in a group activity (circle time, small group) for [X] minutes without leaving the area, across 3 consecutive observations.
13. [student] will wait for a turn during a group activity, using a visual timer or cue, without grabbing, in 4 of 5 opportunities.
14. [student] will keep hands and body to self during a whole-group activity for [X] minutes, with no more than 1 physical redirection, across 3 consecutive observations.
15. [student] will respond to “stop” or “no” from an adult by pausing the behavior within 10 seconds, in 4 of 5 opportunities.

Using These Behavior Goals at Preschool & Pre-K

Replacement behavior beats behavior reduction alone

Teaching what TO do — hand over a break card, use a word — works better long-term than only tracking what not to do. Write the replacement skill into the goal, not just the target behavior.

Match the measurement to the behavior

Frequency counts fit quick, discrete behaviors like hitting or grabbing. Duration fits ongoing behaviors like tantrums or refusal to transition.

Visual supports usually are the intervention

First/then boards, visual schedules, and choice boards often do the actual work; the goal measures whether the student responds to them, not whether they exist.

Set criteria from a baseline, not a guess

Collect a few days of real frequency or duration data before the IEP meeting, then set “4 of 5” or “80%” slightly above what you actually observed.

Every criterion here (4 of 5, 80%, 30 seconds) is a placeholder. Behavior has no universal benchmark the way reading or math does — replace each number with one drawn from a week of real baseline data for this student.

Tired of rebuilding these forms every year?

IEP Goal Writer also drafts your BIP and FBA sections from the same student profile — free to try at iepgoalwriter.pro