

# Executive Function IEP Goals — Preschool & Pre-K

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

Executive function at this age looks like attention span, waiting, and simple routines — not planners or checklists. These 14 goals track the earliest building blocks: holding a 2-step direction, waiting for a turn, and trying again when something doesn't work.

## ATTENTION & TASK PERSISTENCE

1. [student] will attend to a preferred adult-led activity for [X] minutes without redirection, across 4 of 5 observed opportunities.
2. [student] will complete a simple 1-step task (put the toy in the bin) from start to finish without walking away, in 4 of 5 observed opportunities.
3. [student] will return to a task after a brief interruption, with 1 adult prompt or fewer, across 4 of 5 observed opportunities.

## WORKING MEMORY & FOLLOWING DIRECTIONS

4. [student] will hold a 2-step direction in mind long enough to complete both parts without it being repeated, with 80% accuracy across 4 of 5 trials.
5. [student] will remember and complete a familiar 2-step routine (wash hands, then sit down) without a reminder, in 4 of 5 observed opportunities.

## INHIBITION & SELF-CONTROL

6. [student] will wait for a turn or a brief delay, using a visual timer, before accessing a preferred item, in 4 of 5 observed opportunities.
7. [student] will stop an action when given a “stop” or “wait” cue, within 5 seconds, in 4 of 5 observed opportunities.
8. [student] will resist grabbing or interrupting when another person is talking or has a turn, in 4 of 5 observed opportunities.

## FLEXIBILITY & TRANSITIONS

9. [student] will transition from a preferred to a non-preferred activity using a visual or verbal cue, with no more than 1 redirection, across 3 consecutive observations.
10. [student] will accept a change to an expected routine (a different snack, a substitute) with no more than 1 redirection, in 4 of 5 observed opportunities.
11. [student] will try an alternative way to solve a simple problem (a puzzle piece, a block) when the first attempt doesn't work, in 4 of 5 observed opportunities.

## ORGANIZATION & INDEPENDENCE

12. [student] will find and retrieve a familiar item from a consistent, labeled location, in 4 of 5 observed opportunities.
13. [student] will put away materials in their designated spot after an activity, with 1 or fewer reminders, across 4 of 5 observed opportunities.
14. [student] will complete a 2-3 step visual routine (a first/then/then board) with decreasing adult prompting, across 4 of 5 trials.

# Using These Executive Function Goals at Preschool & Pre-K

## Waiting is a real executive function skill, not just compliance

Tolerating a delay with a visual timer builds the same inhibition skill that later supports impulse control in a classroom.

## A 2-step direction is a working memory task

Holding two instructions in mind at once is measurably harder than one — track it as its own skill.

## Trying again after failure is cognitive flexibility

A student who tries a different puzzle piece after the first doesn't fit is practicing the same flexibility skill needed for problem-solving later.

## Consistent, labeled locations build independence

A student who can retrieve an item from the same spot every time is practicing the organization skill a locker or backpack will require later.

Every criterion here (4 of 5, 80%) is a placeholder. Set the real numbers from this student's own baseline, observed across a few different routines.

### Tired of rebuilding these forms every year?

IEP Goal Writer also drafts your PLAAFP and progress notes from the same student profile — free to try at [iepgoalwriter.pro](https://iepgoalwriter.pro)