

Social Skills IEP Goals — High School

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

High school social goals should mirror the transition plan's setting — small talk with a coworker and small talk with a classmate use the same skill but different scripts, and the goal should specify which one the student is actually heading toward.

WORKPLACE & PROFESSIONAL SOCIAL SKILLS

1. [student] will engage in appropriate small talk with a coworker, classmate, or supervisor in an unstructured setting, in 4 of 5 observed opportunities.
2. [student] will introduce themselves and make appropriate conversation in a new social or professional setting, in 4 of 5 observed opportunities.
3. [student] will give and receive constructive feedback from a peer, coworker, or supervisor appropriately, in 4 of 5 observed opportunities.

MAINTAINING RELATIONSHIPS

4. [student] will maintain at least 1 peer relationship across the school year, with support fading, as reported by self, teacher, or family observation.
5. [student] will resolve a conflict with a peer or coworker independently, using a taught strategy, before requiring adult intervention, in 4 of 5 documented opportunities.
6. [student] will set and maintain an appropriate personal boundary in a social or work relationship, in 4 of 5 observed opportunities.

GROUP COLLABORATION & TEAMWORK

7. [student] will collaborate with a diverse group (unfamiliar peers, a mixed-ability team) to complete a shared task, contributing equitably, across 4 of 5 group tasks.
8. [student] will adapt their communication style to a group's needs (leading, supporting, compromising), with 80% accuracy across 4 of 5 observed group tasks.

SOCIAL PROBLEM-SOLVING & SELF-ADVOCACY

9. [student] will identify a socially difficult situation (peer pressure, exclusion, miscommunication) and select an appropriate response from at least [X] options, in 4 of 5 documented opportunities.
10. [student] will advocate for their own social or communication needs (e.g., needing directness, extra processing time) in a peer or workplace setting, in 4 of 5 observed opportunities.
11. [student] will independently seek support from an appropriate person when a social situation feels unsafe or overwhelming, in 4 of 5 documented opportunities.

DIGITAL & COMMUNITY SOCIAL SKILLS

12. [student] will maintain appropriate online communication in a professional or academic context (school email, group chat, a networking platform), across 4 of 5 observed instances.
13. [student] will recognize and respond appropriately to a socially risky online or in-person situation, with 80% accuracy across 4 of 5 discussions.

TRANSITION-READY SOCIAL INDEPENDENCE

14. [student] will identify and follow the unwritten social norms (appropriate topics, humor, personal space) of a specific postsecondary or workplace setting named in the transition plan, with 80% consistency across 4 of 5 observed opportunities.
15. [student] will navigate an unstructured social setting (a break room, a campus common area) without adult support, maintaining appropriate behavior, in 4 of 5 observed opportunities.
16. [student] will self-monitor their own social performance in a real-world setting using a self-rating tool, with 80% agreement with an outside observer, across 4 of 5 instances.

Using These Social Skills Goals at 9th – 12th Grade

Match the script to the setting

Small talk with a coworker and small talk with a classmate use the same underlying skill but different scripts — write the goal for wherever the student is actually headed.

Self-advocacy is now a social skill, not just a paperwork skill

Telling a supervisor “I need things explained directly” is a social interaction that has to be practiced, not assumed once the accommodation is written down.

Unstructured settings are where the real test happens

A student who does fine in a supported classroom group may struggle in a break room or dorm common area — write at least one goal for an unsupervised setting.

Online and in-person social skills don't automatically transfer

A student who communicates well in person may still need direct instruction for professional email or a school messaging platform.

Whenever possible, write the goal for the actual postsecondary or workplace setting named in the transition plan, not a generic “social situation.”

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