

## GOAL ATTAINMENT SCALING

### PROCEDURE AND ILLUSTRATIONS

Goal attainment scaling (GAS) is a system for assessing progress children and youth with Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD) make on individual goals across a specified time period. These goals are drawn from Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) or Individualized Family Service Plans (IFSPs) and established by teachers, related services professionals, family members, and in some cases the individual with ASD. In this process, staff from the National Professional Development Center on ASD (NPDC-ASD) collaborate with teachers/practitioners to identify three IEP/IFSP goals that have the highest priority for the individual with ASD and establish a five-point scale to measure child/student progress. An illustration of the five-point scale is found in the table below.

Table 1. Example Goal Attainment Scale

<b>Level Of Attainment</b>	<b>Goal 1: <i>Uses questions</i></b>	<b>Goal 2: <i>Completes work assigned independently</i></b>	<b>Goal 3: <i>Engages in playful social interaction with peers during play period</i></b>
Much less than expected -2	When given a model and prompted, will ask questions of adults.	Requires teacher prompts on at least 75% of the tasks assigned for independent work time.	Primarily is alone, unengaged, and inattentive to peers during recess.
Somewhat less than expected -1	When prompted, will ask questions of adults during 50% of the opportunities presented.	Completes 50% of work assigned during specified work time with appropriate supports.	Plays alone in close proximity to peers and watches their play for 50% of play period during recess.
Expected level of outcome 0	Independently asks questions to obtain information from adult in classroom during 80% of opportunities presented.	Independently completes work assigned during specified independent work time with appropriate supports for 80% of work sessions.	During recess, plays with at least one peer for 30% of the play period.
Somewhat more than expected +1	Independently uses questions with at least two different adults in classroom during 80% of opportunities presented.	Independently completes work and puts away materials after work task is completed for 80% of work sessions.	During recess, routinely plays with at least one peer for at least 50% of the play session.
Much more than expected +2	Independently asks questions of adults in classroom and in at least one other context during 100% of opportunities.	Independently completes tasks, puts materials away, and tells teacher he/she is done for 100% of work sessions.	During recess, routinely plays with two peers for at least 50% of the play session.
Comments			

(from Cardillo & Choate, 1994)

## Goal Attainment Scaling

### *Procedure for Developing a Goal Attainment Scale for Children and Youth with ASD*

1. Select three IEP/IFSP goals that have high priority for the child/student with ASD. These goals should be scaleable, in that a continuum of outcomes is identifiable. An example of a scaleable goal is: "Participant uses a question to obtain information in different contexts." Dichotomous goals which are answered as either "yes" or "no" should not be used. An example of a dichotomous goal is: "Learner makes an appointment with a vocational rehabilitation counselor."
2. Assign each goal an abbreviated title and in accompanying documentation, cross reference the actual goal from the IEP or IFSP. For example, a longer behavioral objective such as, "In the classroom, the learner will independently ask questions to obtain information 8 out of 10 opportunities," could be modified to the title, "Uses questions."
3. Specify the levels of attainment according to the numbering on the scale, which ranges from -2 to +2 with 0 being the expected outcome of the goal. The GAS will be completed in the fall and spring of the academic year. Specific information related to the scoring of each goal is described below.
  - a. The goal from the IEP or IFSP is the expected outcome for the objective which appears at the middle or "0" point on the continuum of outcomes. In the example above, the "0" on the continuum is that the learner asks questions 80% of the time or 8 out of 10 opportunities. The baseline or initial functioning level of the learner for a particular goal could be the -2 designation (much less than expected) on the continuum of Goal Attainment Guide.
  - b. Progress that is slightly below or slightly above the expected outcomes should be specified as -1 (somewhat less than expected) or +1 (somewhat more than expected). In the example above, the -1 on the continuum might be that the learner asks questions only 6 out of 10 opportunities. The + 1 on the continuum might be that the learner asks questions 8 out of 10 opportunities.
  - c. Progress that is much less or much more than expected should be designated for -2 (much less than expected) or +2 (much more than expected). In our example, the +2 on the continuum might be that the learner asks questions every time the opportunity arises or 10 out of 10 times.
4. Each of these scaling steps should be completed for the three IFSP/IEP goals. To complete this process, NPDC-ASD staff will meet with teachers/practitioners to prioritize goals and explain the need to predict a continuum of outcomes for individual children and youth with ASD.
5. Goal Attainment Scaling will be completed by NPDC staff and teachers/practitioners in the fall and again in the spring to assess student/child progress on expected outcomes for the three selected goals.

### **References**

- Cardillo, J. E., & Choate, R. O. (1994). Illustrations of goal setting. In T. Kiresuk, A. Smith, & J. Cardillo, (Eds.). *Goal attainment scaling: Applications, theory, and measurement* (pp. 15-37). Hilldale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.