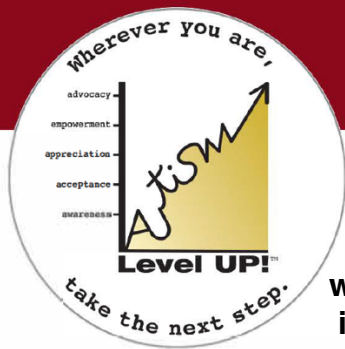


A Starting Place ...

CW / TW: compliance-focused, control-based, commonly used & ableist educational goals that represent outdated and harmful educational practices

While designing our Leveled UP! Checklist for Writing Individualized Goals, we googled (apparently doom googled) “writing IEP goals to reduce challenging behaviors.” The following eight objectives are taken verbatim from the webpage that was the top hit. We know that these are the types of goals that parents and education teams have easy access to and therefore it is these kinds of goals that are often viewed as being representative of best educational practices. *Top hit? Must be good, right?* We assure you that they are NOT good! These objectives violate every aspect of our Non-Negotiable Steps to Creating Individualized Goals (page 6). We are sharing them here **ONLY** so we can walk you through the process of Leveling UP! problematic IEP objectives. THEY ARE NOT TO BE USED!

1. Throughout the school environment while using a five-piece token board with a visual of his rules (follow directions and have a safe body) listed at the top, _____ will follow both of his rules (follow directions and have a safe body) to earn all five of his tokens for each half-hour period, in group and 1:1 academic sessions, in 80% of trials probed in 4/5 observations for at least a 2 month period before the expiration of this IEP, as measured by observations and performance assessments.
2. When _____ becomes upset, frustrated, or angry, he will use a self-regulation/coping strategy (movement break, deep breathing, quiet space break, deep pressure/heavy work activity, etc.) to avoid engaging in an unexpected behavior, with one reminder, on 4 out of 5 opportunities, as measured by observations and documentation.
3. _____ will refrain from aggression (i.e., hitting, kicking, pushing) 100% of the day, across all environments, with all adults and children as measured by special education event data, over 8 consecutive weeks.
4. _____ will improve his self-regulation skills as demonstrated through utilizing a tool (e.g. inner coach, sensory support, calming break) to aid in regulating to an expected emotional state (e.g. green zone – which is when we feel calm, happy, content, and focused) with one adult reminder on 8 out of 10 instances in a small group setting, as measured over two week period
5. _____ will improve insight on regulation as demonstrated by identifying the instances where he/she could have benefited from utilizing a tool to aid in regulation and determine what tool would have been beneficial for each instance with 80% accuracy.
6. When presented with a problem (non-preferred task, frustrating situation, criticism/correction), _____ will accurately determine the size of the problem (big problem, little problem) and determine the appropriate emotional response (take a break, talk with teacher, take a deep breath, replace frustration with good thoughts, etc.) and return to task at hand in 4 out of 5 trials as measured by teacher charted data.
7. Through the use of Self-Monitoring checklists, _____ will reduce instances of Passive Non-Compliance (becomes purposely and increasingly distracted through ignoring tasks, demands, or staff directives) to an average of 20% of intervals or less, both across all educational environments and within each educational environment, as measured across a one week period.
8. During a 20 academic task, _____ will respond to staff directives in an expected manner within 1 minute and with one reminder on 4 out of 5 trials, as measured by teacher observation and data.



Jacquelyn is transparent about who she is. Many of you can imagine that any (and all) of those eight objectives (page 1) could have been written for her during her school years. Heck, it's not too difficult to imagine that some misguided people would think Jac still needs to work on attaining such objectives. Jac's the same person, after all. Her profile (page 5) hasn't changed. Jac has intense regulatory needs and is prone to explosive physical behaviors when she becomes dysregulated.

So, let's have a look at these goals from Jacquelyn's perspective, the most critical perspective to consider as they are supposed to be Jac's goals. CW: Some very appropriately placed swear words, for emphasis. Jac's initial response was even more colorful- but we edited the document to make it more palatable to a general audience. Still not quite a "G-Rating."

Remember, Individualized Goals must:

- * Affirm the person's identity/ies
- * Address the person's priorities
- * Take into consideration the person's individual preferences and neurodevelopmental differences when designing supports to facilitate growth / attainment

With that basic framework in mind, please read the original objectives (blue text) with Jacquelyn's inserted thoughts in red.

1. Throughout the school environment while using a five-piece token board with a visual of his (wow... his?? we get to fill in a name, but the pronouns are chosen? Very individualized, indeed. Hey authors of this s#!+...your bias is showing – news flash, we're not all boys. I mean, ... forget multiple genders, you haven't even grasped that there are two? YIKES. I'll be removing the pronouns for you. It's really not that hard) rules (follow directions and have a safe body) listed at the top, JACQUELYN will follow both rules (follow directions and have a safe body) to earn all five tokens for each half-hour period, in group and 1:1 academic sessions, in 80% of trials probed in 4/5 observations for at least a 2 month period before the expiration of this IEP, as measured by observations and performance assessments (well this is really concrete and helpful... what are the directions? how can my body be safe in this space? with humans like this thinking these things are useful and meaningful goals that will do anything to support me or teach me or help me engage).

2. When JACQUELYN becomes upset, frustrated, or angry (which conveniently for me... would be assessed as NEVER happening), JACQUELYN will use a self-regulation/coping strategy (movement break, deep breathing (So I can further mess up my rib cage, thereby causing further unpredictability and discomfort and extreme ampage likely to fall into a dysregulated range based on what I need to engage), quiet space break, deep pressure/heavy work activity, etc.) to avoid engaging in an unexpected behavior (please, humans, don't get me started on unexpected behaviors. You are the most unpredictable beasts I have ever known), with one reminder, on 4 out of 5 opportunities (but on the 5th... you better believe I'm letting this s#!+ fly), as measured by observations and documentation.





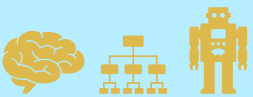


3. JACQUELYN will refrain from aggression (i.e. hitting, kicking, pushing) 100% of the day, across all environments, with all adults and children as measured by special education event data, over 8 consecutive weeks (because these goals are REALLY going to support this?? And, here, I thought they were trying to create all out meltdowns with this s#!+...and btw, how does this go along with the fact that goal #2 asserts that 1 out of 5 times I can skip engaging in deep breathing garbage to avoid unexpected behaviors??... surprise humans...it's going to be a very aggressive release given the constraints in place. I assure you).
4. JACQUELYN will improve self-regulation skills as demonstrated through utilizing a tool (e.g. inner coach (This just sounds so neurotypically make believe and ineffective...), sensory support, calming break) to aid in regulating to an expected emotional state (e.g. green zone – which is when we feel calm, happy, content, and focused (Emotional state? How can YOU have an expected emotional state for me when I do not have expected emotional states for myself? How can I have expected emotional states for myself when I do not experience your made up, socially constructed, fluffy emotions? Yes. They are made up. It's true. You can't argue you – you made up the fact that there is an inner coach for regulating, too. Come on.)) with one adult reminder on 8 out of 10 instances in a small group setting, as measured over two week period (Irony...you forgot a period here...).
5. JACQUELYN will improve insight on regulation as demonstrated by identifying the instances where he/she (OOOOOH! WOW... he/she! You got that slightly less wrong but still very wrong on 1 out of 6 opportunities) could have benefited from utilizing a tool to aid in regulation and determine what tool would have been beneficial for each instance with 80% accuracy (Oh please. The adults involved here couldn't possibly determine an appropriate tool to aid in regulation with any accuracy at all because the methods they would suggest for me would be biased by what works for them... though I highly doubt any of them go review game tape with their "inner coach" ever... and I'm certainly not wasting the world inside my head on that s#!+, but anyway...how am I supposed to know what actually works for me in different situations when all I'm offered is crap).
6. When presented with a problem (non-preferred (SPELLING! BIG PROBLEM) task, frustrating situation, criticism/correction), JACQUELYN will accurately determine the size of the problem (big problem, little problem) (We most certainly won't agree on what things are big problems... I assure you! And guess what? It doesn't matter what size you think my problem is – it matters the degree to which it is a problem for me and whether I have access to tools, information, strategies and competent partners to support me in SOLVING the problem. Ima go out on a limb and tell you that you're a part of the problem... 80% of the time on 100% of my days across 100% of my environments) and determine the appropriate emotional response (take a break, talk with teacher, take a deep breath, replace frustration with good thoughts (OMG...usually I rip on deep breaths, but this is just hysterical. Really... replace frustration with good thoughts?), etc.) and return to task at hand in 4 out of 5 trials (What is this? A clinical research study?) as measured (with 0% possibility of a single percentage of accuracy) by teacher charted data.
7. Through the use of Self-Monitoring checklists, JACQUELYN will reduce instances of Passive Non-Compliance (becomes purposely and increasingly distracted through ignoring tasks, demands, or staff directives) to an average of 20% of intervals or less, both across all educational environments and within each educational environment, as measured across a one week period. (I don't even know what this means or understand what you're trying to say so I'm going to have to ignore this one out of overwhelm due to uncertainty).

8. During a 20 academic task (a what?), JACQUELYN will respond to staff directives in an expected manner (I'm actually even hesitant to ask, but what exactly is the manner you expect here?) within 1 minute (LOL are they meaningful and relevant directives and do I know why and how they are (i.e., have you explicitly informed me in a way I can access) and have you provided your directives in an understandable way? I can have all the time in the world and if your message wasn't explicit in its content and explicit that it was a message being directed at me AND in a format I can process given the environment and my current regulatory state, the amount of time won't matter) and with one reminder (see previous comment...same questions apply) on 4 out of 5 trials, as measured by teacher observation and data

Some of you might be thinking that sure Jacquelyn would say those things as an adult but that she would not have said them as a school-aged person. If you are thinking those things, you could not be more wrong. These responses are very much in line with how Jac responded to nonsensical things throughout her childhood and adolescence. One exception would have been if a TRUSTED teacher or adult had told her she needed to work on such things, it is likely that she would have frozen and grinned. That presentation, the “freeze and grin,” is one that often occurs when Jac perceives something as unexpected or incongruent. A trusted person making such illogical and invalidating demands or setting such expectations meets that criteria.

In addition to these direct insights provided by Jac that can be used to help us realize her priorities, our framework requires that we also consider Jac's identities and neurodevelopmental differences. These are recorded on the Person in Context tool (person profile page). See next page for details.

This tool (page 5) is something that can be used to gather insights related to a person's preferences and profile even if they are not contributing to the conversation with words, spoken or otherwise. We strongly suggest that if you are supporting a nonverbal communicator, someone who uses presymbolic means to communicate, that a team of individuals who know the individual well take on the role of careful observers and really try to consider how the person experiences the world with respect to these components. Observe, build consensus, be curious, be willing to reconsider and revise- AND always keep the person at the center of the process.

	Factors to Consider	My Experience
Physiological 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sleep Nourishment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Water, caloric intake Quantity, quality Health <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Illness, allergy, injury 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sleep is a major factor Extra hydration considerations: salt and water intake Feels changes in barometric pressure in many ways ranging from minor (e.g., feel pressure in head) to major (e.g., feel change in blood pressure; breathing and pulse). Food may be low from not sensing hunger EDS profile: flaring symptoms create fatigue, GI distress, and anxiety
Interoception 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Perception of Hunger Perception of Pain Perception of Arousal/Energy Perception of Emotion Perception of Needing to go to Bathroom 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does not sense feeling of hunger Pain is perceived differently (e.g., can feel difference or tightness, or warmth or see swelling, but it does not "hurt") Will often forget to go to the bathroom as it does not sense needing to go Cannot label emotions but can label arousal and energy levels
Sensory 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hypersensitivities / Hypo-sensitivities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sound, smell, taste, touch, visual, spatial, vestibular, proprioceptive Preference for Seeking or Avoiding Sensory Input <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Frequency, intensity, time, type 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hypersensitive to sounds (human voices/chatter, breathing, chewing, certain keyboard keys tapping, electronics and outlets buzzing, muffled music and TV e.g., through walls) Hypersensitive to smells (soup, food esp. fried food, cigarette smoke, perfume/cologne, air "fresheners," hairsprays/lotions) Hypersensitive to high levels of activity in my visual field Seeker of high impact/pressure/crashing/explosive When EDS symptoms flare and/or fatigue is greater, highly aware of small changes to bodily processes (e.g., heart rate)
Motor 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Muscle Tone Coordination/ Strength/ Endurance Bodily / Spatial Awareness Use of Mobility Support / Device Preference for Movement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Excellent motor skills (tone, coordination, strength) EXTREME need and preference to move Spatial awareness is outstanding Kinesthetic learner Sitting for long periods will amp up energy and I will disengage Can easily overdo my energy balance and need to focus on recovery / slowing down / pacing of movement
Cognitive 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Executive Functioning Abilities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Decision-making Processing and learning style Prior Experience / Interests Social Understanding Reliance on Routine/ Predictability 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Social understanding is well below age level and below what others would expect given my vocabulary - social is extremely fatiguing and not preferred Decision making and planning for preferred activities is excellent (for activities not preferred, it is terrible). High reliance on routine, predictability and familiarity of environment and activity Need to be able to see reason and logic in doing things
Communication 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Receptive Communication Abilities/Mean <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Non-verbal, symbolic Expressive Communication Abilities/Mean <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Non-verbal, symbolic 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Visual learner; auditory processing of speech is difficult and difficulty increases with more noise and in context of other conversations happening Expressive communication good - not able to express emotions or "feelings" in the usual made up words Prefers written communication such as texting, even when speaking is possible (energy saving; easier)
Social 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Social motivation Preferred social partners (may be specific or general - e.g., sibling, older kids, younger kids, those with shared interests, etc.) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Low social motivation... if any Does not desire social connections from activities or engagements Has few close partners and interaction with these partners is significantly different from others Preference for task-oriented content over small talk / social chit-chat



Individualized Goals

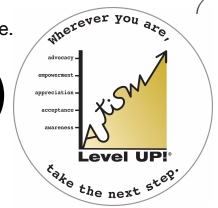
- **Affirm the person's identity/ies**
- **Address the person's priorities**
- **Take into consideration the person's individual preferences and neurodevelopmental differences when designing supports to facilitate growth / attainment**

Non-negotiable steps to creating individualized goals

1. <input type="checkbox"/>	<p>The goal is the person's goal and reflects their priorities. Depending on the person, this information can be determined by asking them directly, by collaborating with people who know them best, or by careful observation of them and how they navigate their days.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Goals ARE NOT speech's goals, OT's goals, etc. They are the person's goals.</p>									
2. <input type="checkbox"/>	<p>The goal is designed to support active engagement in environments, activities, relationships, etc. that are deemed meaningful by the person. Goals may focus on scaffolding skill development in areas which facilitate engagement and participation, such as:</p> <table><tr><td>- energy / emotional regulation</td><td>- adaptive skills</td><td>- self advocacy</td></tr><tr><td>- meaningful communication</td><td>- motor abilities</td><td>- organizational skills</td></tr><tr><td>- cross cultural understanding</td><td>- etc.</td><td></td></tr></table> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Goals are not focused on neuronormative standards. They are not aimed at "increasing or decreasing behavior" to make neurotypical people more comfortable.</p>	- energy / emotional regulation	- adaptive skills	- self advocacy	- meaningful communication	- motor abilities	- organizational skills	- cross cultural understanding	- etc.	
- energy / emotional regulation	- adaptive skills	- self advocacy								
- meaningful communication	- motor abilities	- organizational skills								
- cross cultural understanding	- etc.									
3. <input type="checkbox"/>	<p>The goal is written to include how partners will provide support and facilitate the person's attainment of their objectives. (e.g., goals might follow this template: Person will _____ when partner provides _____). Supports included are consistent with the person's preferences and accommodate their information processing differences. Supports may include things such as:</p> <table><tr><td>- honoring preferred communication methods</td><td>- giving space and time</td></tr><tr><td>- supporting unique regulatory strategies</td><td>- modeling skills</td></tr><tr><td>- modifying sensory properties of the environment</td><td>- offering choices</td></tr><tr><td>- creating and adhering to predictable routines</td><td>- etc.</td></tr></table> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Goals do not include control and compliance techniques disguised as "support" (e.g., token economies).</p>	- honoring preferred communication methods	- giving space and time	- supporting unique regulatory strategies	- modeling skills	- modifying sensory properties of the environment	- offering choices	- creating and adhering to predictable routines	- etc.	
- honoring preferred communication methods	- giving space and time									
- supporting unique regulatory strategies	- modeling skills									
- modifying sensory properties of the environment	- offering choices									
- creating and adhering to predictable routines	- etc.									
4. <input type="checkbox"/>	<p>Working towards and/or attaining the goal will support the person's self-knowledge and understanding (e.g., increase awareness of strengths and ability to advocate for necessary and rightful accommodations).</p>									

Additional Considerations:

- 1. Measurability must be meaningful and not arbitrary.** "80% of opportunities" is not trackable in real life. The number of places and type of support the person accesses when using a skill to navigate their day is.
- 2. During the goal writing process, teams (including the person and their family / important people in their lives) should consider if the "goal" is an opportunity for growth for the person or if it is an opportunity for partners to grow and to create more inclusive and accessible environments for the person.**



Individualized Goal Plan: Jacquelyn (Jac/None/Any)

- * **Affirm the person's identity/ies**
- * **Address the person's priorities**
- * **Take into consideration the person's individual preferences and neurodevelopmental differences when designing supports to facilitate growth / attainment**

1	Goal Area: Engagement / Cross Cultural Understanding Objective 1- Jacquelyn will engage in learning activities at home and in the community WHEN partners ensure that the activities are designed to be meaningful - the rationale behind the activities and/or the logic for engaging in the activities is made explicit to Jacquelyn - AND partners clearly communicate the activity expectations in ways that make their flow and sequence predictable (e.g., visual schedules, bullet lists, opportunity to preview materials).
2	Goal Area: Physiological Needs / Organizational Skills Objective 1- Jacquelyn will plan for and meet physiological needs related to eating, going to the bathroom, and sleeping by actively using information-based strategies, such as schedules and calendar alerts, throughout the day WHEN partners support Jac's awareness of the impact of these physiological needs on Jac's ability to regulate and engage AND help to create accessible, written/visual systems for support.
3	Goal Area: Meaningful Communication Objective 1- Jacquelyn will seek information from others using multimodal communication methods (e.g., speaking, writing, or gesturing) to gain necessary information critical for supporting Jac's regulation and participation such as the duration of activities WHEN partners are responsive to all communication attempts AND use multimodal communication reciprocally to interact with Jac. Objective 2- Jacquelyn will use multimodal communication methods to advocate for Jac's needs related to sensory accommodations, movement needs, and predictability when the environment or activity is not a match for her profile WHEN partners are monitoring for the mismatch, are responsive to all communication attempts AND use multimodal communication reciprocally.
4	Goal Area: Energy Regulation Objective 1- Jacquelyn will experiment with "new to Jac" sensory-motor regulation strategies, reflecting on how they impact energy and if they are preferred WHEN partners introduce new sensory-motor strategies that are consistent with Jac's preferences of how to move (e.g., intensity) and WHEN partners provide a framework for reflecting upon these strategies. Objective 2- Jacquelyn will utilize preferred "new to Jac" sensory motor regulation strategies in home and community contexts when experiencing energy mismatches WHEN partners recognize signals of dysregulation, ensure that the "new to Jac" strategies are accessible, and when they orient Jac to them by using visual or written cues. Partners will respect Jacquelyn's decision to use (or not use) a strategy in any given context.

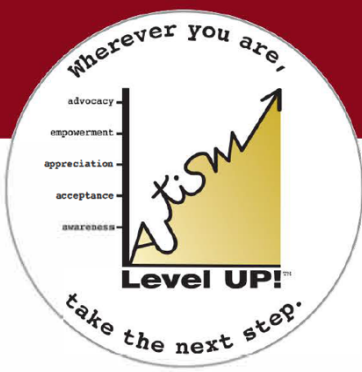
A few things-

The focus of all of these objectives is on support.

- 1) supports provided by partners in every day contexts to ensure Jacquelyn's access to, engagement in, and success within activities and environments that are meaningful to Jacquelyn
- 2) supports provided by partners to scaffold Jacquelyn's development of skills and abilities that are meaningful to her; not to "fix" Jacquelyn

There are 4 goals areas in this plan. FOUR. Read them. This is a daunting amount of work. We need to stop and reflect on what is realistic for a person to be working on. Consider yourself: how many things can you be actively working on at any one time and actually make meaningful progress?

Individualized Goal Plans should look different for people with different profiles and preferences. Jacquelyn prefers 3rd person language and has no pronoun preference. Jac's goals are written to reflect this. Some people's will be written in 1st person language. Some people's may be more of a bulleted list. Some people's may actually not be written with words at all - photos or graphics may depict their goals in ways that are meaningful and accessible to them. Always used person-preferred language, pronouns and naming when known.



Accountability • Progress Monitoring • Tracking • Measurability

We know there are systems and requirements that must be considered and met when writing and reporting on educational plans. We also know that any data tracking should be meaningful and reflect valuable information. Criteria must be clear and measurable (e.g., “80% of opportunities,” is not trackable in real life for any objective).

STEP 1: Fidelity of Support

When considering Progress Monitoring for individualized goals, the most critical step is reflecting on the “WHEN partners...” part of the goal / objective. The “WHEN partners...” part of the objective is the foundation of the learning opportunity. Without consistent implementation of targeted and validating support, attainment of the objective is not likely and often not possible. Therefore, any data collection or sampling should start with the question, “were identified supports implemented by partners?” If the answer is “yes,” moving onto considering tracking or measuring the individual’s performance or progress towards their goal is warranted (see step 2). If the answer is “no,” it is not a valid progress monitoring opportunity and data should not be collected, *IMPLEMENT Step 1*.

STEP 2: Tracking and Measuring

2a. Tracking
<u>What is it?</u> A framework for helping to reflect on what is happening during interactions and to determine the effectiveness of supports. A way to consider next steps.
<u>What does it look like?</u> A series of Yes / No questions that support the capture of what is really happening during learning opportunities in the context of the educational environment. Qualitative information / Stories / Examples that illustrate what is happening in interactions and activities.
<u>The Flow?</u> If the answer to the question posed in Step 1, “was support in place?” is “Yes.” Next ask: A. Is the support recognized by the learner? Y/N B. Is the support used / accessed by the learner? Y/N C. Is the support effective for its intended purposes? Y/N In addition, capture examples that provide details beyond the simple Y/N that will help to give a fuller understanding about what the implementation of support looks like and the effectiveness of that support for the learner.

Step 3: Evaluation

Evaluation involves reflection on the gathered tracking and measuring data to make a determination of progress and next steps. There are two aspects to consider.

1. Micro level- using the data collected to make changes to programming and supports for an individual learner.
2. Macro level- using data collected to consider trends across learners to determine trends across the learning environment related to implementation of supports and engagement of learners.

2b. Measuring
<u>What is it?</u> A system for quantifying change that can best be understood in the context of tracking information.
<u>What does it look like?</u> Often specific numbers are reported for “progress monitoring” purposes, but these numbers must be meaningful and can only be interpreted accurately in the context of tracking information. Quantitative data. Information that reflects “how many” of something.
<u>What are some meaningful indicators / examples?</u> These data points should relate to “why” the goal was written in the first place. For example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A regulation objective may focus on decreasing number of incidents of extreme dysregulation. • A communication objective may focus on frequency of requests to meet regulatory needs. • An organizational skills objective may focus on the number of times a strategy was accessed across a day. • An engagement objective focusing on the use of regulation, communication, and organizational skills above to participate in meaningful activities. In addition, to such frequency considerations, other indicators which may demonstrate meaningful change include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of contexts in which a skill is demonstrated • Number of partners with whom the skill is used
<u>Example of measurability embedded in a meaningful, individualized objective:</u> Jacquelyn will use multimodal communication methods to advocate for Jac’s needs related to sensory accommodations, movement needs, and predictability when the environment or activity is not a match for her profile WHEN partners are monitoring for the mismatch, are responsive to all communication attempts AND use multimodal communication reciprocally across home and community environments when needed