



FUNCTIONAL GOAL-WRITING TEMPLATE

From the CEU "Your Programming Sucks, Let's Make It Better: Individualized Goals, Layered Skills, and Generalization by Design" · Instructors: Sean Yocum, MA, BCBA, LBA; Michael Carrero, BCBA, LBA

NO FLUFF. NO SUGAR-COATING. JUST RESULTS. · PRESENTED BY **HICKORY LEARNING GROUP**

RAD N BAD RULE

Fewer, more functional goals beat a list of milestones. If you can't say how a skill survives without therapy, the goal isn't ready.

HOW TO USE THIS: No goal leaves your desk until every box is filled in. If you can't say how the skill survives without therapy, the goal isn't ready.

1. WHY THIS GOAL?

- ☐ Family or learner priority it addresses:
- ☐ Which daily routine it improves:
- ☐ If the assessment item is the only reason, rewrite it

2. LAYERED SKILL

- ☐ Functional target (the end skill in real life):
- ☐ Prerequisite components taught inside this goal (not as separate goals):
- ☐ Plan for how components combine (e.g., chaining, or shaping the whole)

3. GENERALIZATION BY DESIGN

Component	Specify
Who must evoke it	Caregiver(s), teacher, peers
Where it must occur	Home routine, community, school
Materials and examples	At least 3 varied exemplars
What maintains it	The natural reinforcer in that setting

4. MASTERY CRITERIA

- ☐ Accuracy or independence level:
- ☐ Across at least 2 people and 2 settings
- ☐ Maintenance probe at least 2–4 weeks after mastery
- ☐ Reinforced by natural consequences, not only tokens

5. RED FLAGS

- ☐ Clinic-only skill
- ☐ Three separate goals that should be one
- ☐ Goals added to fill authorized hours
- ☐ Mastery based on one instructor, one chair, and one set of materials

THE RECEIPTS · REFERENCES

- Baer, D. M., Wolf, M. M., & Risley, T. R. (1968). Some current dimensions of applied behavior analysis. *Journal of Applied Behavior Analysis*, 1(1), 91–97. <https://doi.org/10.1901/jaba.1968.1-91>
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- Stokes, T. F., & Baer, D. M. (1977). An implicit technology of generalization. *Journal of Applied Behavior Analysis*, 10(2), 349–367. <https://doi.org/10.1901/jaba.1977.10-349>
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