



SMART goals

It is important to ensure that the goals developed for therapy are specifically tailored to address your child's needs. Writing SMART goals will help to achieve this:

S – Specific

A therapy goal that is specific clearly details what is expected of your child. This can include information about who is involved and where the goal should be achieved (e.g. home, school or playground). This extra information is particularly useful when your child is working on applying an existing skill in a range of contexts or with different people (generalisation). A specific therapy goal should be easily understood by any person involved in delivering therapy and not be ambiguous or vague.

Example: *Make 10 requests for items using visual support* is a more specific goal than *Improve communication*. *Complete 3 turns in a peer conversation during a social group session* is a more specific goal than *talk more with other children*.

M – Measureable

It is necessary for a goal to be measureable so that it can be evaluated at a set date at the end of the therapy plan. This information is useful to determine your child's level of progress, and will also aid in the development of new goals for the next therapy plan. A specific therapy goal (see above) will be easier to measure.

A – Attainable

Although a therapy goal is designed to challenge your child's abilities, it should be realistic and attainable in the time period set by the therapy plan. Unrealistic or unattainable goals will frustrate all parties involved and sometimes lead to a negative attitude towards therapy. Parents and therapists should work together when considering whether a therapy goal is attainable.

R – Relevant

For children with ASD who often have difficulties in a number of areas, it can be difficult to prioritise needs when developing a therapy goal. Ensure the goal is relevant for your child by considering his/her immediate needs or biggest challenges in everyday life. Bear in mind your child's current circumstances as well as any changes or significant events coming in the near future (for example starting kinder or school or an upcoming family holiday).

Example: *Johnny is very rigid about routine and gets anxious in new environments. His family have booked an overseas holiday for Christmas. A therapy goal or goals focused on preparing Johnny for this trip would be relevant.*



Smart Goals continued.....

T – Timely/Time-sensitive

A therapy goal should be bound to a time-frame because it creates commitment to meeting a deadline. This helps to focus therapy sessions including home-based therapy, and ensures that progress will be measured.

It is essential that your child's therapy plan has an agreed time frame with a specified date for when evaluation of therapy goals will take place. The time frame for your child's therapy plan will depend on a range of factors.

Further points to consider

- Goals should be written in clear, concise language and be easily understood by the reader.
- The number of goals included in a therapy plan will depend on a range of factors including your child's ability, length of time the plan is in place, and family circumstances; however 3 is generally considered a good number of goals for any therapy plan.
- Consideration should be given to your family circumstances and level of confidence when developing therapy goals, particularly if the therapist wants you to work on the same therapy goals at home. Sometimes it is useful for the therapy goals to be adjusted for the home environment so they are simpler.

Examples of SMART goals v Non-SMART goals

Non-SMART goals	SMART goals
Improve communication	Make 10 requests for items using visual support in a therapy session by 01/02/13
Talk more with other children	Complete 3 turns in a peer conversation during a social group session by 01/02/13
Improve handwriting	Write name with mature pencil grasp by the end of term 1
Complete classwork on time	Complete 3 activities within a 30 minute time period at school by the end of term 1
Join in playground activities at break time	Participate in peer-led playground games for 10 minutes each day by the end of term 2