



Functional and Non-Functional Examples

Did you know that the term “*functional*” appears over 30 times in [IDEA 2004](#), yet remains undefined?

Here’s a **definition** teams can use:

Functional behaviors are those a child needs to participate in all/most daily activities, and those which will increase the child’s independence and ability to adapt to his/her environment.

Here are a few **examples** of *functional* and *non-functional* behaviors based upon this definition.

FUNCTIONAL

- Child holds objects with one hand while the other hand manipulates
- Child manipulates objects with two hands, each hand performing a different movement
- Child pairs a label/name, a symbol, and/or an action of one object, person, and/or event, to another
- Child moves through the environment independently
- Child remains with or near a group of familiar adults and peers for the duration of an activity
- Child uses words, phrases, and sentences to inform

NON-FUNCTIONAL

- Child stacks three one-inch cubes
- Child cuts with scissors
- Child rote counts to ten
- Child walks on a balance beam for five steps alternating feet
- Child sits in designated area at circle for 15 minutes
- Child produces /t/ /b/ and /p/ sounds in isolation