



Pre-K Teach & Play Practice Point

Writing and Graphing Social Reciprocity

Content developed by [Kristie Pretti-Frontczak, Ph.D.](#) and [Barbara Avila, M.S. RDI](#)

Before we can think about graphing, or summarizing a child's performance by any method, we need to go through the ABC formula for writing a meaningful goal (or objective, or benchmark).

And to identify a meaningful goal, we have write a present level where we define and clarify the current situation and establish a baseline level of performance.

For example, in our present level we need to:

- **Define** what is meant by social reciprocity (SR) so we can use the phrase without it being jargon.
 - For example, social reciprocity is the back and forth between at least two people. Some refer to this as “serve and return”. It is the back and forth engagement that is unique to those two people and not scripted or cued. It is the essence of relationship building. We know who we are connected to, comfortable with, and friends with by the rhythm we can feel between us in our back and forth exchanges. By strengthening social reciprocity, children gain the ability to engage in lifelong learning, with and by others, and to form critical relationships.
 - You might also like the phrases, *social interactions* and/or *social engagement*. If these become the heart of the behavior, they would need to be defined.
- **Clarify** what the child is currently doing, and what is developmentally appropriate, which also suggests individually appropriate:
 - SR with whom?
 - Familiar and/or unfamiliar others
 - Single or multiple others
 - Adults and/or peers
 - SR under what sort of conditions?
 - Level of distractions present (none to high amount)
 - Introduction of joint attention to objects (no objects to many objects)
 - Shift attention to other events/stimuli/objects and back to the adult (not required to required)
 - Dimensions of SR behavior desired?
 - Level of independence (e.g., cued to not cued)
 - Accuracy
 - Non-verbal and/or verbal
 - Maintain, initiated, and/or Initiate and/or maintain
 - Endurance (e.g., number of exchanges)



ABC Formula

Even though it is an ABC formula, try starting with the “B” by systematically asking a series of questions.

Question: What is the desired behavior (B) and is it IEP worthy?

B = Initiate and/or maintain social reciprocity

Question: With whom and where?

A = With **familiar adult** (some might call this criteria too because we are specific regarding who the child has to have social reciprocity with).

Keep in mind, the “A” can change between the goal and the objectives/benchmarks to scaffold going from one adult to several and eventually to peers.

A = When there are ____ (no, few, some, many) distractions.

Notice the continuum from none to few to many...just another way to scaffold.

Question: Which dimensions of behavior?

C = Accuracy - independently (not cued)

C = Accuracy - non-verbally

Examples of non-verbal communication include, but aren't limited to: facial expressions, body language, body contact, eye contact, personal space, reaching, giving, pointing, coordinated looks, following gaze, following a point, and showing.

C = Endurance - for two or more consecutive exchanges (i.e., each exchange includes a non-verbal response from the child and from the adult)

Question: What will convince the team?

C= Three times a day, for 7 consecutive days.

Final statement, where the ABC pieces are put together

When with a familiar adult, in a setting with limited distractions, child will independently initiate and/or maintain social reciprocity using non-verbal communication for two or more consecutive exchanges, three times a day, for seven days of data collection.



Examples:

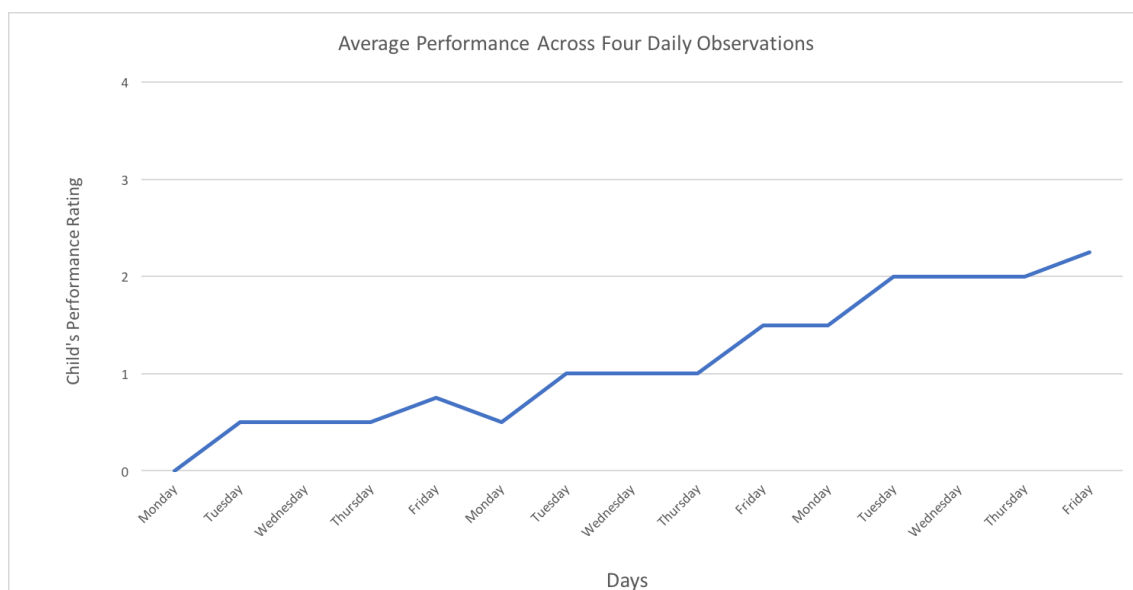
- The adult sits next to the child, the child looks at the adult, the adult smiles, and the child smiles back.
- The adult waves to the child, the child looks at the adult, the adult waves again, the child continues to look at the adult.
- The child reaches for the adult, the adult holds out their arms, the child looks at the adult, the adult takes the child by the hand.
- The child grunts standing near the adult, the adult imitates by grunting back, the child laughs, and the adult smiles and grunts again.

Then to graphing....

Y axis = Child's performance using a Goal Attainment Scale

- 0 = much less than expected (did what was already noted in the present level)
- 1 = somewhat less than expected (only one exchange, needed cued, needed no distractions, and/or not multiple times a day)
- 2 = met expectation inconsistently (independently engaged in two exchanges with at least one familiar adult but not multiple times a day)
- 3 = met expectation consistently (independently, non-verbally, two exchanges at least three times a day with at least one familiar adult)
- 4 = exceeded expectations (more than two exchanges for more than three times a day; used verbal communication to engage in SR; engaged in SR with more than one adult and/or with peers; engaged in SR with many distractions; engaged in SR when objects were presented; engaged in SR when shifting attention was required)

X axis = time (in days)





Instructional Scaffolding and Support:

- Avoid/limit having children need to shift their attention away from the interaction with the familiar adult to an object, another person, and/or event
- Avoid introducing objects as part of the exchange; child is learning to prioritize the interaction with the familiar adult, make decisions about the exchange, and shift attention away from distractions back to adult
- Avoid/limit distractions, directions, and corrections
- Give sufficient wait times for the child to initiate/respond/continue the exchange
- Follow child's lead when they are "all done"; Read a child's body language and then be the one to end it first... our goal is to leave the child wanting more interaction rather than leaving because they are overwhelmed

Social Reciprocity Instructional Resources:

<https://developingchild.harvard.edu/resources/5-steps-for-brain-building-serve-and-return/>

<http://synergyaautismcenter.com/why-we-must-teach-social-reciprocity-in-small-manageable-doses/>

Disclaimers

- *In the U.S., some states use IFSPs through Pre-K and must adhere to Part C and Part B rules of IDEA. Depending upon state rule, IFSP/IEP goals may look slightly different.*
- *Goals written on an IEP must be measurable and not solely measured by a student's progress on objectives or benchmarks, which may or may not be required in a given state.*
- *The following example may be considered a goal, an objective, or a benchmark depending upon state/district rules, assessment data, PLAAFPs, and the child's age/ability.*

For **training** on writing legally defensible and meaningful IEP goals, contact Dr. Kristie Pretti-Frontczak at <http://kristiepf.com/>.

For additional **free resources** designed to elevate your IEP goal writing skills, access the rest of the Pre-K Teach & Play IEP Toolkit at <http://prekteachandplay.com/shop/iep-toolkit/>