



**pennsylvania**  
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES

OFFICE OF DEVELOPMENTAL PROGRAMS  
BUREAU OF AUTISM SERVICES

# Goal Attainment Scaling (GAS) Manual

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**Goal Attainment Scale (GAS):**

an individualized approach for establishing and measuring the attainment of goals/objectives for people with varying levels of disability and support needs

See [Appendix A: Progress Reporting and Responsibilities](#)

***This manual should serve as a reference*** when completing and determining levels of attainment on the Goal Attainment Scale (GAS) chart. GAS is an individualized approach for establishing and measuring the attainment of goals/objectives for people with varying levels of disability and support needs. Each chart includes one goal/objective and establishes a range of criteria to measure and reports on outcomes.

Effective October 1, 2017, all providers who are required to develop goals and objectives (and report on progress) will implement GAS. Please see Appendix A “GAS Progress Reporting and Responsibilities” to determine if you are expected to implement GAS for the participant(s) you support.

**This manual will review the following steps:**

1. *Identifying and Prioritizing Skills and Needs*
2. *Determining Stage of Learning*
3. *Developing Goals and Objectives*
4. *Creating the GAS chart*
5. *Implementing and Determining Level of Attainment*

## SECTION 1: IDENTIFYING AND PRIORITIZING SKILLS & NEEDS

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All services within the Adult Autism Waiver are designed to assist the participant in meeting their desired goals and needs. In order to accomplish this and prior to creating GAS charts, providers develop goals and objectives as a form of measurement to meet these expectations.

When going through this process, it is important to consider key factors that can affect the outcomes and the prioritization of the goals and objectives.

Throughout the process, providers should:

1. Gain an understanding of the participant’s needs that are functional and meaningful in the context of their daily environments, based upon the participant’s priorities, future vision and desired outcomes.
2. Use person-centered processes that:
  - a) are mindful and respectful of the participant’s and the team’s priorities
  - b) balances the targeted needs for support from informal and formal assessments
  - c) ensures that the final outcome is a solid indication of what the

participant and the team believe are important to the participant in current and future circumstances (e.g., wanting a job, wanting to live in an apartment with a roommate) but considers how benchmarks to reach the final outcome can be addressed now

3. Acknowledge that planning for, and implementing, instruction should be ecologically based and specific to the participant's desired environments and situations
4. Use natural opportunities to practice and acquire new skills
5. Be realistic given the amount of support and balance outside of service delivery

Based upon best instructional practices and feedback provided by BAS, it is recommended that the participant only works on 3-5 objectives per plan year, per service. Focusing on objectives is not to limit participant and providers, rather to ensure the expectations for them are manageable. Because of this, if a need and justification is identified for there to be more than 3-5 objectives, this option can be considered. Ultimately, the expectation is that the team will collaborate and prioritize the goals/objectives, taking into account what the participant desires.

## SECTION 2: DETERMINING STAGE OF LEARNING

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Supports will be most successful when there is a match between instructional strategies and a participant's current stage of learning related to the behavior or skill. It is important to understand the participant's baseline related to the goal/objective in order to develop a good GAS chart and coinciding instructional plan. See Appendix B for examples of the stages of learning described below.

### Three Stages of Learning:

#### 1. Skill Acquisition: Can't Do, Won't Do

GOAL: performing the skill or behavior with improved levels of accuracy, significant prompts or supports often required

EXAMPLE: *Shawn's parents have always attended to Shawn's needs without expecting Shawn to participate because "it is just easier that way." However, Shawn wants to eventually live on his own and, upon observation, it is noted that Shawn does not know how to prepare simple meals and has all his meals prepared and brought to his room.*

See [Appendix B: Stages of Learning Examples](#)

**Determining the stage or level of learning:**  
use the **Guiding Questions** to help determine the stage or level of learning

## 2. Skill Fluency: Can Do, but Not Quickly/Easily or Can Do, but Still Prompt Dependent

GOAL: increasing the speed of responding or performing the skill smoothly

EXAMPLE: *It was observed that Shawn can complete all the steps. He requires prompts but the latency between prompts has decreased. If left to follow a recipe independently, Shawn will either stare at the recipe (and not do anything without someone telling him what to do) or will just start getting random ingredients out and become confused and start self-talking until redirected.*

## 3. Skill Maintenance/Generalization: Can't Continue Long-Term Use Of or Can Only Complete Skill One Way

GOAL: retaining and using the skill or behavior consistently and outside of the instructional universe

EXAMPLE: *In school, Shawn learned how to follow a recipe and prepare a simple meal to full independence. However, he has only remembered how to make macaroni and cheese and will make it when his mom is home, but when his dad is home, he seems to be unable to remember the steps to preparing the meal.*

### Guiding Questions to help determine the level:

- Consider how YOU complete the skill or how the participant's peers perform this skill? How often?
- Does the participant engage in other skills/behaviors when prompted to begin?
- Does the participant rely on others to begin or finish the skill?
- Does the participant know when they have completed the skill?
- If the participant does not have this skill/behavior, what would happen?
- Is it realistic for the participant to learn this skill/behavior independently or will some support always be needed?

The stages of learning are fluid and fading from one stage to another and may be needed within one GAS chart. For example, a participant may start at the skill acquisition stage of learning but may learn all the steps by Quarter 3, so for the remaining of the plan year, there will be emphasis on fluency. Please see Appendix B for examples of fading between stages of learning within one GAS chart.

## SECTION 3: DEVELOPING GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

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### Goal Category

Every goal must fall into one of the four categories:

- ♦ ADL
- ♦ Social/Communication
- ♦ Behavior
- ♦ Employment/Education

The goal category must be included as part of the goal phrase, written in parentheses after the goal phrase.

See [Appendix D: Goal Categories](#)

Remember, it is imperative to have a prioritized goal and solid objective in order to develop a viable GAS chart. That is, the goal needs to be meaningful and functional to the participant while the objective needs to be measurable and observable.

### 1 skill, 1 goal, 1 objective, 1 GAS Chart

**Goals** are global statements that are typically written as an annual measure. Goals should be prioritized as an outcome of the assessment process based on participant needs.

### Goal Category

Every goal must fall into one of the four categories (ADL, Social/Communication, Behavior, and Employment/Education) and be included as part of the goal phrase written in parentheses. For example: “Meal Prep (ADL).”

If objectives are being followed and implemented by BSS and are reflected within the BSP as a Desired Behavioral Outcome, they automatically go under the “Behavior” category. If it is unclear what category the goal falls under, please connect with other members of the team and choose the best category based upon the intent of the goal.

*For example, initially one might assume a transportation goal may fall under ADLs. However, consider what the intent of the goal is. Perhaps the intent of the transportation goal is to teach the individual the skill of riding the bus in order to permit for their overall independence (ADL), or perhaps the individual needs to learn this skill in order to keep their employment position at the grocery store downtown because his mother is no longer able to drive him (Employment/ Education).*

**Tip regarding goal phrase identification:** If the goal is based upon a routine and the purpose is to teach all of the skills as one routine, instead of listing each skill individually and creating separate goals/objectives, then it may be appropriate to have a broader goal phrase.

**Objectives:**

appropriate steps to reach the long term goal that are clearly linked to the needs identified within the individual's Individual Support Plan

See [Appendix C: Goal and Objective Cheat Sheet](#)

**EXAMPLE OF A GOAL**

Sally's goal related to her need for support in purchasing is:

GOAL PHRASE: Purchasing (ADL)

GOAL STATEMENT: Sally will use the next dollar strategy (i.e., using single dollar bills to pay by adding an additional dollar to account for the change).

**Objectives** reflect benchmarks or steps toward a goal and contain three components:

- a) **Condition:** when (situation) /where (environment) the individual is expected to perform the skill, natural trigger
- b) **Behavior:** what is expected of the participant written in clear, measurable and observable terms
- c) **Criteria:** how well the participant must perform the skill or mastery for the objective to be met (including prompting or independent, how much/ how often and for how long)

**EXAMPLE OF AN OBJECTIVE**

When shopping at the grocery store and given a wallet with one dollar bills, Sally will use the next dollar strategy (i.e., using single dollar bills to pay by adding an additional dollar to account for the change) with only one instructor prompt for 3 out of 4 grocery trips for 12 consecutive weeks.

It is important that the goals and objectives developed encourage the participant to actualize their desired outcomes.

Once goals and objectives are determined and written, a GAS chart is developed and instructional plans and strategies will also need to be developed. Specifically, this includes the development of the supports that are needed to assist the participant in reaching the goal/objective. Grounded in Applied Behavioral Analysis (ABA), a specific, planned method by which to present a new skill and encourage skill building is warranted. This plan should be communicated to all persons supporting the participant, including the family.

FOR EXAMPLE:

**GOAL PHRASE:** Morning Routine (ADL)

**GOAL STATEMENT:** Chrissie will follow all steps of her morning routine (shower, get dressed, dry hair, eat breakfast, brush teeth, pack lunch, and leave on time)

**OBJECTIVE:** After waking up to the sound of the alarm clock on days that she works, Chrissie will follow all steps of her morning routine (shower, get dressed, dry hair, eat breakfast, brush teeth, pack lunch, and leave on time) 4 out of 5 work days with less than 3 verbal prompts for one quarter.

See [Appendix C: Goal and Objective Cheat Sheet](#)

[Appendix D: Goal Categories](#)

[Appendix F: GAS Template in Excel](#)

[Appendix G: GAS Template in Word](#)

[Appendix H: Instructions for GAS Chart Development](#)

For additional guidance on the development of goals and objectives, please review Appendix C “Goal and Objective Cheat Sheet” and Appendix D “Goal Categories.”

## SECTION 4: CREATING THE GAS CHART

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After you identify the stage of learning and develop a well-written goal and objective, the next step is to create the GAS chart.

*Every effort should be made to use the Microsoft Excel version of the GAS chart prior to using the Microsoft Word version.*

*To access the GAS templates, please visit [Appendix F “GAS Template\\_Excel Version”](#) or [Appendix G “GAS Template\\_Word Version.”](#)*

*Programs designed for MAC (Numbers, Pages) are not recommended. Within the excel version, specific functionalities are embedded along with guidance for each section as well as automatically copy duplicate sections to minimize user error. Additionally, one excel file can include up to 5 GAS charts. These features are not available in the Microsoft Word version.*

The following contains guidance for what information is needed in each section regardless of the version used. A copy of these instructions can also be found in [Appendix H](#).



## Demographics

- **Participant Name:** Enter the first and last name of the participant.
- **Service:** Enter the name of the service from the following options (Day Habilitation, Residential Habilitation, SSD/ Behavioral Specialist, SSD/ Systematic Skill Building, SSB/ Community Support, Supported Employment, Transitional Work Services).  
**Note:** The following services are exempt from GAS: Assistive Technology, Community Transition Services, Counseling, Family Support, Home modifications, Job Finding, Nutritional Consultations, Respite, Speech/Language Therapy, Supports Coordination, Temporary Supplemental Services, Vehicle Modifications, and Vocational Assessment.
- **Plan Effective Date:** Enter the participant's plan effective date as mm/dd/yy. This can be located in HCSIS, on the blue bar of the participant's ISP page). If unable to locate, contact the participant's Supports Coordinator.
- **Person Completing GAS Chart:** Enter the first and last name of the person completing GAS chart.
- **Provider Agency:** Enter the provider agency of the person completing GAS chart.
- **GAS Chart Development Date:** Enter the GAS chart development date as mm/dd/yy. If the chart is revised, please update this section to reflect the most recent date, as needed.

## Goal/Objective

For additional guidance regarding BAS expectations, please review Goal/Objective Cheat Sheet, Goal Category Resources, and Best Instructional Practices Manual uploaded to MyODP.

- **Goal Phrase:** Enter the goal phrase
- **Goal Statement:** Enter the goal statement, which will be the same as the "behavior" in the objective. In the Excel template, this information will automatically copy to the "Behavior" section of the objective.
- **Goal Category:** Enter the goal category from the following options (Social/Communication, ADL, Behavior, Employment/Education).
- **Annual Objective – Condition:** Enter the condition of the annual objective following the BAS template.

- **Annual Objective – Behavior:** Enter the same information as the “Goal Statement.” In the Excel version, you will be unable to edit this information unless changes are made to the “Goal Statement.”
- **Annual Objective – Criteria:** Enter the criteria of the annual objective following the BAS template. In the Excel version, this information will automatically copy to “Quarter 4, Level 0” on the GAS chart.
- **Concerns Related to the Goal/Baseline:** Enter information to describe how the participant is currently performing the skill as it relates to the criteria (e.g. if the criteria reflects % on a task analysis, baseline should do the same). Baseline will be entered into Quarter 1, Level -2 within the GAS chart, but in the Excel version, it will NOT automatically copy. Additional information pertinent to the goal/objective may be captured here as well.

See [Appendix E:](#)  
*Chart Date*  
*Guidance*

## GAS Chart Information

Every cell in the GAS chart must be completed following steps 1 – 9b.

Exceptions: If a new service is added in the middle of a plan year that requires a GAS chart to be developed, the GAS chart should begin in the quarter the service started. This means the previous quarters will remain blank

**Example:** The Plan Effective Date is 3/4/17 but SSB is not added until 9/1/17. Therefore quarters 1 and 2 would remain blank as the service start date is in quarter 3.

See [Appendix F:](#)  
*GAS Template in*  
*Excel*

[Appendix G:](#)  
*GAS Template in*  
*Word*

[Appendix H:](#)  
*Instructions for*  
*GAS Chart*  
*Development*

*The following four pages contain illustrations of the  
GAS chart completion steps 1 – 9b.*

**STEP 1:** Enter the start and end dates for each quarter. Remember: these dates align with the Plan Effective Date. Please review the “QSR Dates” resource for more information.

Level of Attainment	Quarter 1 Dates: Enter start and end date for Quarter 1	Quarter 2 Dates: Enter start and end date for Quarter 2	Quarter 3 Dates: Enter start and end date for Quarter 3	Quarter 4 Dates: Enter start and end date for Quarter 4
Much less than expected -2			1	
Somewhat less than expected -1				
Expected level of outcome 0				
Somewhat more than expected +1				
Much more than expected +2				
Level of Attainment per quarter				
Comments				
Instructional Decision				

**STEP 2:** Enter the baseline information under Quarter 1, Level -2. This information should align with what is entered under “Concerns Related to the Goal.”

**STEP 3:** Enter the “criteria” information from the objective. With the excel version, it will automatically copy.

Level of Attainment	Quarter 1 Dates: ____	Quarter 2 Dates: ____	Quarter 3 Dates: ____	Quarter 4 Dates: ____
Much less than expected -2	Enter Baseline Information	2		
Somewhat less than expected -1				
Expected level of outcome 0			3	Copy and paste “Annual Objective Criteria” here
Somewhat more than expected +1				
Much more than expected +2				
Level of Attainment per quarter				
Comments				
Instructional Decision				

**STEP 4:** Enter the expected outcome for quarters 1-3. Remember: This is considered the “goal” for each of the quarters and should have incremental progress to move toward the overall progress for the year, which will be captured on Quarter 4, Level 0.

Level of Attainment	Quarter 1 Dates: ____	Quarter 2 Dates: ____	Quarter 3 Dates: ____	Quarter 4 Dates: ____
Much less than expected <b>-2</b>				
Somewhat less than expected <b>-1</b>				
Expected level of outcome <b>0</b>	Enter Expected Outcome for Quarter 1	Enter Expected Outcome for Quarter 2	Enter Expected Outcome for Quarter 3	
Somewhat more than expected <b>+1</b>		4		
Much more than expected <b>+2</b>				
Level of Attainment per quarter				
Comments				
Instructional Decision				

**STEPS 5, 6 & 7:** Enter the criteria to indicate what it would look like for the participant to attain more or less progress for each quarter. Some information will be duplicated as noted below. On the excel version, it will automatically copy to their respective match.

Level of Attainment	Quarter 1 Dates: ____	Quarter 2 Dates: ____	Quarter 3 Dates: ____	Quarter 4 Dates: ____
Much less than expected -2		<b>5a:</b> The information entered in Quarter 1, Level +1 gets copied and pasted here.	<b>6a:</b> The information entered in Quarter 2, Level +1 gets copied and pasted here.	<b>7a:</b> The information entered in Quarter 3, Level +1 gets copied and pasted here.
Somewhat less than expected -1		<b>5b:</b> The information entered in Quarter 1, Level +2 gets copied and pasted here.	<b>6b:</b> The information entered in Quarter 2, Level +2 gets copied and pasted here.	<b>7b:</b> The information entered in Quarter 3, Level +2 gets copied and pasted here.
Expected level of outcome 0				
Somewhat more than expected +1	<b>5a:</b> Enter progress that is slightly more than Quarter 1, Level 0 but less than Quarter 1, Level +2	<b>6a:</b> Enter progress that is slightly more than Quarter 2, Level 0 but less than Quarter 2, Level +2	<b>7a:</b> Enter progress that is slightly more than Quarter 3, Level 0 but less than Quarter 3, Level +2	
Much more than expected +2	<b>5b:</b> Enter progress that is slightly more than Quarter 1, Level +1 but less than Quarter 2, Level 0	<b>6b:</b> Enter progress that is slightly more than Quarter 2, Level +1 but less than Quarter 3, Level 0	<b>7b:</b> Enter progress that is slightly more than Quarter 3, Level +1 but less than Quarter 4, Level 0	
Level of Attainment per quarter				
Comments				
Instructional Decision				

## STEPS 8 & 9: Enter the criteria for the remaining cells on the chart

Level of Attainment	Quarter 1 Dates: ____	Quarter 2 Dates: ____	Quarter 3 Dates: ____	Quarter 4 Dates: ____
Much less than expected -2				
Somewhat less than expected -1	Enter progress that is slightly more than Quarter 1, Level -2 but less than Quarter 1, Level 0	8		
Expected level of outcome 0				
Somewhat more than expected +1			9	9a: Enter progress that is slightly more than Quarter 4, Level 0 but less than Quarter 4, Level +2
Much more than expected +2				9b: Enter progress that is slightly more than Quarter 4, Level +1
Level of Attainment per quarter				
Comments				
Instructional Decision				

## Level of Attainment

At this point, the GAS chart is complete and should be shared with all members of the team. Providers are responsible for maintaining copies in participant files. A data collection form should be developed as the goal/objective is implemented. The next section outlines how to determine level of attainment for each quarter.

## SECTION 5: IMPLEMENTING AND DETERMINING LEVEL OF ATTAINMENT

At the end of each quarter, identify the level of attainment, include applicable comments to justify the level, and make an instructional decision. The data collection form developed for each GAS chart will be the mechanism to determine the level of attainment. This information will be used to develop Monthly Progress Notes (MPNs) and Quarterly Summary Reports (QSRs.)

### Instructional Decision Options:

- ♦ No changes/continue instruction
- ♦ Improve motivation
- ♦ Improve/change antecedents/environment/materials
- ♦ Modify/simplify instruction
- ♦ Change staff delivery of skills
- ♦ Discontinue
- ♦ Other

See [Appendix I: Instructional Decisions](#)

- **Level of Attainment:** Identify and record the level of attainment (-2, -1, 0, +1, +2) that corresponds with where the participant falls at the end of each quarter

### Rules to Follow

- If data falls between two levels of attainment, score in the lower level
  - A score of +2 in a quarter = anything above and beyond the level of attainment for that quarter
  - A score of -2 in a quarter = anything less than the level of attainment for that quarter
  - As participants learn the skill, consider advancing through the stages of learning
  - Even if a participant masters a skill, it can remain on participant's plan until the new plan year. Consider that goal to be in "maintenance" phase to ensure the skill is retained
- **Comments:** Enter a brief summary to describe the general quality of the progress made or concerns that were identified throughout the quarter. This may include the total number of opportunities, their willingness to work on the goal, issues that were identified, etc.
  - **Instructional Decision:** Choose the best instructional decision from the following options (No changes/continue instruction, Improve motivation, Improve/change antecedents/environment/materials, Modify/simplify instruction, Change staff delivery of skills, Discontinue, Other). If "other" is selected or more than one decision is needed, provide details in the "Comments" section.

Once the participant's current progress is identified, the staff will need to determine how to move forward with the implementation of the goal. Please refer to Appendix I "Instructional Decisions" for additional clarity on making these data driven decisions.

## LIST OF APPENDICES

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**Appendix A:** Progress Reporting and Responsibilities

**Appendix B:** Stages of Learning Examples

**Appendix C:** Goal and Objective Cheat Sheet

**Appendix D:** Goal Categories

**Appendix E:** Chart Date Guidance

**Appendix F:** GAS Template in Excel

**Appendix G:** GAS Template in Word

**Appendix H:** Instructions for GAS Chart Development

**Appendix I:** Instructional Decisions