



## THE IMPORTANCE OF DATA COLLECTION IN MEASURING PROGRESS

How do you know if your child is making progress from a specific therapy? The only way to really know is by collecting data.

Data collection should occur on a regular basis so that you and the therapy team can determine your child's progress on individual goals. When a therapist creates goals, the therapist or team should also create data sheets to record behaviors, attempts, and/or situational information. While service providers should certainly collect data, it is helpful too for parents to take data notes.

Data collection doesn't have to be complicated. Tracking progress can be as simple as making check marks when your child shows a certain behavior (for example, making eye contact with the parent while playing together). Sometimes, more detailed data collection is necessary, though, for example, when needing to document what is going on in a child's environment prior to and following a child's tantrum.

As a member of the team and as the parent of the child receiving services, make sure you understand how data will be collected, who will collect it, and when it will be analyzed and communicated to you. Further, make sure you understand what the data is telling you! Too often parents see numbers but do not understand what these numbers represent for their children. After all, data is of no use to anyone if it doesn't make sense toward the goals or if it isn't reviewed to determine if a goal has been achieved.

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