### Essential Elements of Short Term Objectives & Benchmarks

**Note:** While not required, short-term objectives/benchmarks continue to be a useful component of an IEP by providing intermediate gauges of progress toward the overall goal.

**Key Question:** What are the intermediate steps or major milestones needed to achieve the goal?

**Purpose:** To outline measurable, intermediate steps between the child's baseline data established in the PLAAFP and the annual goal.

**Definitions:**
- **Short term objectives:** intermediate steps to a goal
- **Benchmarks:** major milestones to a goal

**Key Characteristic:** Short Term Objectives
- measurable
- minimum of 2 per goal
- a logical breakdown of the major components of the annual goal
- general indicators of progress, not a detailed instructional plan
- include time frame, conditions, behavior, criteria
- may be sequential or parallel
- comprehensive

**Key Characteristic:** Benchmarks
- measurable
- minimum of 2 per goal
- expected performance level
- major milestones or precursor steps
- sequential
- include time frame, condition, behavior

**Writing Strategy**
Describe the behavior the child will be doing when the short-term objective or benchmark is achieved.