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| s | Specific | Clearly stated descriptions of each goal element: the conditions, the academic or functional skill, the criterion for success, and the timeframe within which the criterion should be met |
| m | Measurable | Quantifiable by a defined standard that can be observed in some way, particularly so that any amount of change can subsequently be identified and/or evaluated |
| a | Actively phrased | Involving actions that are clearly observable (e.g., “Write a five-sentence paragraph.”) rather than implied (e.g., “Improve your writing.”) |
| r | Realistic | Practical but ambitious and challenging and based on relevant information (e.g., evaluation results, previous rates-of-growth, the student’s unique circumstances, IEP team members’ professional judgment) |
| t | Time-limited | Involves a specified timeframe within which the skill is anticipated to be mastered |

*Note: There are multiple versions of SMART in which the letters stand for different terms (e.g., ambitious for ‘A’ or relevant for ‘R’). The primary factor to consider when using any of them is to determine whether they will help develop better IEP goals.*

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| Condition | Target Behavior | Performance Criterion | Timeframe |
|  |  |  |  |