(The Speechie Show Ep.7)

Welcome to the Speechie Show! Being a speech language pathologist often means having too much work and not enough planning time. To beat the overwhelm, we’re bringing you the tricks and tools that will make your job a little bit easier.

**Carrie:** Hey everybody welcome to the Speechie show. Today we are here with Maureen Wilson from thespeechbubbleslp.com and we are talking about smart goals and goal writing. How are you today Maureen?

**Maureen:** I am good how you are doing.

**Carrie:** Doing good. I'm really hoping that this is working so. If you are watching...oh no it says we don't have any watchers yet. Ok were doing this on a new platform. We're using the be live.tv platform so hopefully you can see both of us and we will be asking some questions and getting some input soon. But today we're going to be talking about how to make your goal writing easier and better so that you can track your goals more easily as well. Ooh it says we have some people, ok. So, the three of you that are watching right now, I need you to do something. We want to make sure that you can see both of us. Can you see Maureen and me, Carrie? If you can go ahead and type a comment in just saying that you can see us because we want to know if it’s working.

Alright so while we're doing that, I am Carrie Clark from SpeechandLanguageKids.com. If you haven't watched the show before, this is The Speechie Show. We do this once a week where I interview another speech-language pathologist and we talk about a topic of interest. Alright, Michelle said she can hear us, thank you Michelle.

So today of course we are here with Maureen Wilson. She is going to introduce herself in just a moment but for those of you who are watching, go ahead and write in a comment, what is the hardest type of goal or type of skill for you to write goals for. Which goals/skills are you struggling the most with your goal writing? Write that in as a comment so that we can address those as we go along.

**Maureen:** Yes definitely.

**Carrie:** Alright, Maureen, tell us about yourself and what you got to give away today.

**Maureen:** Well I am Maureen Wilson and I author the blog TheSpeechBubbleSLP.com. I also have a teacher pay teachers store where I sell products that I create to help other speech-language pathology professionals make their life easier and today I'm going to give away my rubrics bundle. So, it’s a method of data collection and the bundle includes language and social language rubrics to help make your data tracking life easier.

**Carrie:** Yay, I love rubrics. We're going to talk about that more here in just a little bit and I'm giving away two free months in my membership program which is called The Speech Therapy Solution and it is videos and support and answering questions and all kinds of help for your job as a speech language pathologist. Alright, I see Natasha is on here too, welcome Natasha. Ok so we're going to go ahead and talk about the 5 points that we're going to get to today which will help you make your goal writing easier.

So, the first one we're going to talk about today is thinking about your goal in terms of what happens if a student moves to a new speech language pathologist. Maureen, tell us how that is important for goal writing.

**Maureen:** So when you're writing your goals, something to always be cognizant of is what happens if your student moves away. That means that someone else is going to read this goal, understand what you're trying to track, understand what the cut off is for mastery, understand what cut off is for correct and incorrect response. When I first started out I wrote goals for me to understand and then I did have a student moving and I got a phone call saying "what were you looking to do here?". So being the young fresh out of grad school SLP I was like Oh no, I didn't think about another SLP if they moved. So, when I write a goal I always read it back to myself. I did not know this student. I did not know their test scores. I didn't know what they were being put in therapy for. So be cognizant of how someone else looks at it, helps you realize if it is a good goal or not. If it is well defined or not.

**Carrie:** Perfect, I love that. So, the first thing we want to think about is your goal good enough that someone else could pick it up and do exactly what you are intending to do and know all that information, so that is perfect. Ok so if you guys have questions as we go along or if there is a skill that you have trouble writing goals for and you want us to give you some tips on that, go ahead and type those in the comments. Type in what kinds of skills you're struggling with, any questions you have and also don't forget to share this Facebook live with anyone that you think needs some help with goal writing. Or just share it on your personal timeline so that other people can find us as well.

Alright so the next point we're going to talk about is trying to make sure that your goal is not too complex. Maureen tell us more about that.

**Maureen:** So, when we're writing goals we tend to want to make sure that we're targeting everything that we need too and sometimes what happens is what I call goal smashing. Mash two or three objectives into one goal and then you’re left with a goal that has the student answering a yes/no question using a certain kind of prompt and they need to respond with que's and without and there’s kind of four objectives smashed into one. So, when you make goals too complex it’s almost making the goal unachievable for the student. Then you're just setting them up for failure because they're not going to be able to meet this goal with all these different parameters smooshed in there. So, making sure the goal is simple enough that it's highlighting the are you are trying to collect data on. So, your overall goal you can kind of make a little broad, make specific and put your different areas in there, but you got to make sure your objectives are clear and concise, otherwise it’s just going to be the goal that keeps floating around as they may get one part. Now they have to search for the other three and that goal just keeps cycling around and around.

**Carrie:** Yeah. I think one of the things that was really helpful for me to figure out as a school speech language pathologist is that you don’t have to write a goal or a bench mark for every skill that the child is lacking every year. So, you can prioritize out, especially if you have a student who makes very slow progress or really needs to focus down on one thing to get it. You could just say ok here's the top 3 things we're working on this year, everything else is taking a back burner until we get those big things out of the way. So I thing that was helpful for me of making my goals not so complex cause I didn't feel like I had to put in everything they were lacking.

**Maureen:** That's really common with a lot of people. We want to work on everything. We want to fix everything, but we're kind of limited sometimes on what we can do so it’s kind of figuring out how to curtail some things.

**Carrie:** Absolutely, absolutely, wonderful. Ok so the next thing we want to look at is how we are...the set amount of time. So, is it realistic for the student to meet what we're setting forth in the amount of time that we have? Let’s talk about that.

**Maureen:** What you just said is a perfect Segway into this. We want to fix everything, but typically IEP's therapy plans are written for a calendar year. So, when you're writing your goals and let’s say you have a 5-year-old who has a lot of phonological processes or a lot of articulation errors and you know you could write 13 objectives for this student. But can you realistically help them meet every single one of those in a years’ time frame.

**Carrie:** Probably not.

Maureen: Unless you have a magic want and if you do I would love to borrow it...not going to happen. So, we need to kind of prioritize. I always like to think what are my top 3. You can usually pick 3 within a year and that means you can have as much time as you need for each one. If you have to think you're getting what maybe one or two sessions per sound before you need to give a report, it’s not enough time. Making sure that you're writing achievable goals but time friendly goals. A little thing that I picked up is say you've got a student that has a whole bunch of things to work on, pick your top 3 and on the next IEP, in the comment section, you can always write: If student achieves said objectives before the end of the IEP you can do an amendment or say these areas will be addressed. So, you can kind of ...it’s kind of nice because you can remind yourself what you're going to work on. You can have it written in there so that oh if they achieve these goals it doesn't mean that they are done with therapy.

**Carrie:** Yeah. Well I think that’s reassuring to parents as well because I've had meetings where the parents are like what about this other thing that they need to work on and your like, I know they need to work on it. I promise I do, but it’s just on the back burner until we can get the bigger picture kind of settled. So, that can be reassuring to parents to see ok they haven’t forgotten about these skills, they're just working on some other stuff first.

**Maureen:** That's right. Got to get the base work done first.

**Carrie:** Yeah. I think one of the things that comes up in a lot of schools are the smart goals and that's the acronym smart S.M.A.R.T. And if you guys are not familiar with that, that is that your goal should be Specific, Measurable, Attainable, which is this time sensitive one which is can they actually meet it, and the Realistic and Time Bound. So, if your school does work with the smart goal system then this is playing right into that as well.

Ok for those of you who are watching live be sure you stay on. We have two giveaways to do at the end of this show and that will come up in just a couple minutes. Also, make sure that you are sharing and commenting if you have any specific types of goals that you’re struggling, or skills that you're struggling to write goals with.

**Maureen:** Love to help you out!

**Carrie:** I think I'm having a little bit of sound trouble on here. It was cutting out a little bit so I'm going to reiterate in case anyone, in case people can hear me better. So, what she's saying is if you write a goal saying they have to use a specific tool, so let’s say the EET tool, if you write that goal and then that child moves to a different school district, then that school is going to have to buy that tool and that therapist is going to have to use that tool regardless if she has the training or knowledge on how to use that. So, that's, you definitely don't want to write your goals around a specific tool and I think that goes with AAC devices as well. Cause if you write a goal that says they will use their dyno box, whatever, to request and then they don't have that at school that day then you don't have the ability to work on that goal that day which is not ideal.

Alright let's see...ok so we talked about the five points. We talked about making sure if your student moved and somebody else will be able to pick up the goal. We talked about making sure your goals are not too complex. Making sure they can realistically be achieved in that set amount of time. Making sure you don't need special materials or equipment to do the goal and then making sure that your goal is written in a way that makes it so that you have a way to collect data.

So, what we're going to do now is we're going to talk about favorite resources and Maureen is going to talk about her favorite way to collect data on goals that are not your typical 8 out of 10 trials. Something that is super measurable. So, what do we do if we have a goal or a skill that is not very measurable?

**Maureen:** When it comes to goals that are not really concrete that are cut and dry. Like articulation tends to be I love to use rubrics. They allow you to be concrete but still have some flexibility. You, typically with a rubric you'll have a scale. I use ones that have 1-5. One will state how much support they need with the goal to get that rating. I also attach a percentage range to it too because I still need that hard range to kind of help myself a little bit. But it allows you to be flexible. So, with social language goals these are phenomenal because if you've ever tried to take data on trying to maintain a conversation with topic, when the child is in their classroom setting, you can imagine the headache that comes with it. And then you’re taking tallies and you don't know if you're tallying the right thing. Was this a topic thing? It kind of starts to spiral out of control. If gives you a concrete way to take data on something abstract. So, this is also great for fluency goals. So, someone had asked about writing fluency goals. So, when it comes to taking data out of fluency goals as well, especially if you're looking for teacher input or perspective when they're not with you. This is super easy for teachers to use because they use them all the time.

**Carrie:** Can you give an example of what like the 1, 2, 3, 4 & 5 would represent on a goal like, you can do a fluency goal or whatever you're familiar with, but could you give an example of a rubric?

**Maureen:** Yeah. Say you're doing a rubric for...we'll use social language goal, we're having them ask questions. And you want to make sure this is carrying over into the classroom. So, you're in the classroom observing, and 1-5, your goal may be student will ask questions with...and then your 1-5 is going to be the different amount of supports they're going to need. So maybe 1 is they need constant prompting and ques to ask their conversational part of the question. 2 they might need maximum, so you're going to have those limits set. And then one can be 0-20% accuracy if you need a hard number. Whereas all the way up to 5 would be no more prompting or ques needed than a typical student would be...and that's your 80-100% range. So, I might be in there observing kind of taking some notes and I'll look back when I get done and say ok they needed me to remind them maybe 3-4 times...that’s falling into my more minimal to moderate range. Then I'll look at my rating skill to see where they are and plug in that number. I also, on rubrics it has a graft so I can kind of plot their progress which is nice too, especially for a parent. They kind of get overwhelmed when they see a lot of typing, a lot of numbers. It's easy to follow a trend line. So, that's what a rubric will kind of stand out to be. It will give you the 1-5 scale, parameters for each rating and then looking at the information you observed or collected, you can then plot out their progress. So, it's still a method of accurate collection, it's just not taking tallies and then counting up 58 single tallies to check their progress on your goal.

**Carrie:** Yeah so what I'm thinking is that you had a fluency student and you wanted to know how their fluency in the classroom when you're not in there. You could use a particular rating when you're not in there, let’s say 5 was that they had just a few disfluencies every day and 1 would be that they had a disfluency every time they spoke. And then you could kind of graduate through there, you know maybe there’s just ones every hour or a couple times a day. You could have it varied so that you have levels of how disfluent they are without the teacher having to go back to her desk and tally every time she hears it.

**Maureen:** Exactly, I'll ask how fluent they've been in the classroom. Do they hear it... (glitch in audio/video) ...do they speak maybe once in a while? It helps to kind of...because teachers are familiar with rubrics, it really kind of helps to transfer. You're not explaining how this data collection method works. It’s a 1-5, here’s what each rating is, where do they fall and the teachers like ok here. I have a day of the week where I go at the end of the day to all my teachers where I using rubrics to collect data for so it’s usually my consultation students. I'll kind of be like you know 1-5 and they can tell me their number. I'll usually keep that paper in my office just to kind of keep all the students’ paperwork with me and I'll be like 1-5 you know today was a 4. Write it down and on to my next classroom. So, it’s quick and easy. You got to love those things.

**Carrie:** Ok, so Susan said that she likes having these functional examples of rubrics. So, if you have a skill that you would want to hear how we'd make a rubric for, go ahead and type that in and we'll see if we can get to a couple of those. One of the other ones that I liked using rubrics for is the AAC. Especially if I am pushing into the classroom cause if I'm standing their hands on trying to help a child use his AAC device, I'm not going to go back and sit down and write my data. So, I'll do a 1-5 of how much support they needed to let’s say request snack. So was I doing full hand over hand or was I doing a tactile prompt. Or just a visual of pointing to the thing. Or just a verbal saying use your device. Or completely independent. So, that would be my 1-5 on an AAC goal.

Alright, are you still there Maureen?

**Maureen:** I am.

**Carrie:** Awesome. Ok so let’s go ahead and do our giveaways then. If you are watching with us live and that would be today on Monday, January 2nd. If you're watching the video later, you don't get to participate, but if you are watching live with us on Facebook right now at 1:38pm central time, then you get to participate. So, we're going to ask a question and the first two people to respond are going to win. So, the first one is going to get Maureen's giveaway. So, Maureen, tell me what, tell us what your giveaway is today.

**Maureen:** So my giveaway is going to be my rubric bundle. I have premade rubrics already set to go and they are audible too so if you have those odd ball goals you can still use them. Once is for general language goals and one is for social language goals. So, a lot of those are already done for you.

**Carrie:** Perfect. Are those the ones that you said there’s like a graph at the bottom?

**Maureen:** Yes, there is a graph.

**Carrie:** Oh Nice!

**Maureen:** Because I'm a visual person and I need to see what’s going on.

**Carrie:** Sure! Alright so if people would like that but they did not win the giveaway today, where can they find those for you?

**Maureen:** They can find them in my teachers pay teachers store. It is The Speech Bubble SLP. Just type it in and it will come up. And the social language rubrics are the first item you'll see once you log into a store.

**Carrie:** Perfect. And then the second person to answer the question correctly will win my giveaway and that is two free months in the speech therapy solution. And if you're not familiar with that, that is my membership program for speech language pathologists. You get a video library full of training videos, a worksheet library full of print and go therapy materials, plus weekly Q&A calls, and a Facebook group and monthly webinars. So, all kinds of support for you to make your job as a speech language pathologist a little bit easier. And the winner today gets two free months, but if you'd like to check out the information about that, you can go to speechandlanguagekids.com/join and that will take you over.

Alright, so here’s the question. Are we ready? First two people to answer is going to win. The question is, what is the M of S.M.A.R.T goals? The first two people to come up with the correct answer will win. The first one will win Maureen's prize and the second one will win my prize. And there is a bit of a delay so we're going to hang tight for a minute. Kristen says Measurable, you are correct Kristen. Alright Kristen gets the rubrics and Jennifer Proman was 2nd with Measurable. So, Jennifer you are going to get my membership. Alright Maureen, how do you want Kristen to contact you?

**Maureen:** You can send me an email at thespeechbubbleslp@gmail.com and I'll set you up with your rubric bundle.

**Carrie:** Perfect. And Jennifer you can email me at carrie@speechandlanguagekids.com and my assistant Kena will get you set up with your two free months in the membership. Lots of answers coming in. Thank you guys so much. Wow oh wait a minute, hang on. Ok so, I'm wondering if these are in the right order because now they are all mixed up. I think they came in the right order though. They're all mixed up on the feed now. Its fine we're good, we've got this guys. Ok let’s see so we hope that helps you today. We hope that helps you with figuring out how to write some goals that are measurable and easy to take data on. If you need more tools and tips you can join us in the speech therapy solution, my premium membership site for speech language pathologists. You can find that at speechandlanguagekids.com/join. And Maureen tell everybody where they can find out more about you and what you offer.

**Maureen:** You guys can find me at thespeechbubbleslp.com. That's my blog. There is a link there too (video is jumbled). If you have questions about the goal I am more than happy to help you out. I'm also available on Facebook at The Speech Bubble SLP and Instagram too. So, lots of different ways to find me.

**Carrie:** Perfect, wonderful. Well, thank you so much for joining us today. We really appreciate having you on.

**Maureen:** Thank You

**Carrie:** And join us next Monday afternoon, we will have Scott from BiLinguistics.com coming on and he will be talking about bilingual speech therapies. So, we've got some good stuff coming there and some more giveaways as well. So definitely join us on the Facebook page, we do this every Monday. Well thank you Maureen and thank you to everyone who joined us today and we'll see you next week.

***Thank you for joining us today on The Speech Show. We hope today’s tips have helped you feel a little less stressed and a little more confident about your work. If you’re looking for more stress busters and confidence boosters, we’d love to have you join us in The Speech Therapy Solution, where you’ll get access to a huge library of premium training videos and another library of print and go therapy materials. You can also get help with your tough cases by Carrie on the weekly Q&A calls, or by posting in the exclusive Facebook group. Plus, group members can join us for a monthly webinar that can be used for a continuing education credit. Head on over to SpeechandLanguageKids.com/join to check out all the amazing benefits of the speech therapy solution membership. Bye for now.***