

El: Purpose of IFSP Child Outcomes

In a Nutshell...

Many of us were trained in the “medical model”testing to find out what the child *can’t* do within a specific domain or discipline, and then teaching the child to do it. The failed test item became the discipline specific goal. What we know now is that we spent a lot of time working on things that weren’t necessarily relevant to the child or family and weren’t helping the child to participate better in their everyday lives, e.g. teaching the child to balance on one foot....versus teaching the child to walk to the snack table. While both of these are “gross motor skills” this is NOT what’s important. What is important is the child’s participation and engagement in the routine....the child needs to have an independent way to get to the snack table in order to participate in that everyday routine or activity. Goals that relate to real life situations are important to families; important to teachers; and vital to children. Families, caregivers and teachers will see the value of working on relevant, specific and measurable IFSP outcomes.

Key principles to consider...

1. **Specific:** It is clear to everyone exactly what skill or behavior we’re talking about--*real life situations*.
2. **Measurable:** It is obvious to everyone when the goal will be met and under what conditions.
3. **Relevant:** The goal is part of an everyday routine; not a “discipline specific” goal shoved into a routine.
4. **Tied to a Priority:** The goal is related to something important to the family/teacher. It is not a test-driven outcome, no jargon.

Why is the purpose of child outcomes so important?

Writing functional goals is a nationally agreed upon principle (NECTAC). IFSP outcomes must be functional (real life) and based on child engagement, family and teacher needs and priorities. The key is for families, caregivers and teachers to own the outcomes. Families, caregivers and teachers provide children with learning opportunities all day every day...they need to see the relevance of the outcomes to what is happening in their daily routines.

NDE/DHHS A Practitioner’s Guide, December 2012

Reference Documents/Materials

- [Tips/Techniques for Participation-Based Outcomes](#)
- [Family Resource Support Guide](#)
- [IFSP web](#)
- [RBI 101 FAQ](#)

Samples

- [Moving from the RBI to IFSP](#)
- [Outcome examples](#)

Regulations

- [Rule 52](#)
- [SC manual](#)

Tools

- [7 steps to writing functional outcomes](#)
- [IFSP Outcome Quality Checklist](#)