



Preamble



Whether for Individualized Family Service Plans (IFSP) or Individual Education Plans (IEP) for infant, toddler, preschool-age child, or family or care provider, a functional, participation-based outcome or goal reflects the daily life of a particular young child with disabilities and/or their families. The outcome/goal addresses a child's or family's desired behavior or activities not otherwise evident in their day-to-day life and interactions. It is based on recent assessment information, and promotes the child's active engagement in activities of home or school or community, independently or with others, and provides a clear example of what the child or parent/caregiver will be able to do of a practical (functional) nature, following special instruction or support.

Laws and Evidence

Given: The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) (2004) requires that early intervention services under Part C for infants and toddlers be provided in natural environments, and...

Given: Early childhood special education services under Part B for preschool-age children be provided in least restrictive environments and...

Given: Natural and least restrictive environments should refer to settings that are natural or normal for the child's siblings or same-age peers who do not have disabilities . . . where children without disabilities spend their time. . . . and that provide ample learning opportunities for development and attention to individual needs. . . and that can result in learning and development, and...

Given: Over the past ten years, rapidly emerging research evidence about children's early development and learning has shown the effectiveness for achieving positive and functional outcomes for children when they are actively engaged and participating in everyday routines and activities as part of family and community life with parents, care-providers and typically developing peers and siblings.

Therefore: To the greatest extent possible, the early intervention/education experiences for young children with disabilities should be provided in collaboration with family and staff who interact with the children in family homes, community preschools, child care centers and homes, Head Start programs and other inclusive learning environments for young children.

Functional Participation-based IFSP/IEP Outcomes/Goals

A PRACTITIONER'S RESOURCE

*All documents jointly produced by Nebraska Departments of Education
& Health and Human Services*

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Policy on Reporting Requirements

Given: Nebraska Department of Education (NDE) and the U.S. Department of Education Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) place strong emphasis on targeted outcomes for young children with disabilities that are most closely associated with positive results for all children, those that are predictors of success in school and in later life and...

Given: It is imperative to improve educational results of children with disabilities to close or narrow the gap, and more closely align with the progress and performance of their typically developing peers, and...

Given: It is NDE's obligation to report annually the percentage of young children with disabilities who reach or maintain functioning at a level comparable to same-age peers for a) positive social relationships, b) knowledge and skills for language and literacy, and c) ability to take action to meet their needs (independence) and...

Given: The primary contribution of family in supporting children's success is acknowledged through the OSEP requirement for NDE to report annually the percentage of families who report they can effectively communicate children's needs and help their children develop and learn.

Therefore: Nebraska's Early Development Network (EDN) and Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE) services will be developed to assure that children are making measurable progress in development and their functioning in daily routines with family and peers as a result of the services provided.

Recommended and Evidence-based Practices

Given: Recommended practices from professional organizations and evidence from research studies encourage:

*Information to support IFSP/IEP development and measurement of child/family progress is gathered in natural settings, observing children engaged in real activities, with people they know.

* Goals and interventions are individualized for each child based on: (a) the child's current behavior and abilities across relevant domains instead of the child's diagnostic category; (b) the family's view of what the child needs to learn; (c) interventionist and specialist views of what the child needs to learn; and (d) the demands, expectations, and requirements of the child's current environments.

*Meaningful outcomes are targeted for the child that build upon the child's current skills and behaviors and promote membership and participation with others.

*Adults provide environments that foster positive relationships including peer-peer, parent-child, caregiver-child and parent-caregiver relationships.

*The IFSP/IEP informs family and professional decisions about day-to-day learning opportunities for children.

*Early intervention programs are learning focused - with parents and caregivers as well as children as the primary learners
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*Teams provide families with a primary contact person and work together to make decisions about the child's strengths, needs and progress.

*Targeted outcomes are functional indicators of success for prioritized concerns related to the child's development, independence and social competence and not isolated skills or test items.

Therefore: Targeted outcomes/goals that are most predictive of children's success in school and/or in everyday life will become the heart of Nebraska's IFSP/IEPs for young children with disabilities.

THEREFORE: Targeted outcomes/goals and plans for intervention on IFSP/IEPs for young children with disabilities birth to age 5 in Nebraska will reflect the suggestions outlined in the following series of four documents:

- Preamble for Functional Participation-based IFSP/IEP Outcomes/Goals
- Characteristics of Functional Participation-based IFSP/IEP Outcomes/Goals
- Assessments for Functional Participation-based IFSP/IEP Outcomes/Goals
- Functional Participation-based IFSP/IEP Meetings

*These documents and references can be found at:
<http://www.education.ne.gov/ECH/>
<http://ectc.education.ne.gov/>
<http://www.education.ne.gov/edn/>
<http://www.pti-nebraska.org/>

