

Rosenkoetter, S. E. Ph.D., Squires, S. Parent. (2003) Writing Outcomes That Make a Difference for Children and Families. *Young Exceptional Children Monograph Series No. 5*, 51-60.

“The heart of the IFSP is the outcome statements, which define a planning team’s shared vision for the child and its subsequent step-by-step plan for achieving that vision.”

Professionals and families spend much time and energy mapping the path that team members will take to provide early intervention services. Outcomes make a significant impact at a critical time for infants/toddlers and their families. Outcomes that are meaningful to the family especially the child are very different from goals that may be very therapeutic. This article helps IFSP teams connect with the families’ daily lives.

The Thinking Process: 1)Discuss the developmental priorities of family members and services providers for the child, 2)discuss the concerns of the family about issues with any of their members that affect the child’s development, and 3)discuss their preferences for intervention emphasis during the next weeks and months. Discuss places where the child and family spend their time, activities they do, or wish to do, in those places. Write actual outcome statement beginning with the aim, stated as a proper noun and an observable, action verb. The aim is followed by the rationale to tell why this action will make a difference for the family and child. Include how evaluation of the outcome will be accomplished.

Questions to Evaluate Outcome Statements: 1) Do we know why we’re writing this or is the outcome important to the family? 2) Does outcome mesh with activities that the family chooses to do? 3) Have we explored informal, natural, and community-based support to determine whether they might accomplish developmental aims, rather than automatically listing more restrictive options? 4) Who will pay or provide? 5) Is the outcome written in language the family might use, rather than in professional jargon? 6) Does this outcome really matter to this child and family?

Some types of outcomes that do make a difference:

\*Child outcomes focused on the child in daily activities

- Child Development Outcomes
- Child Experience Outcomes
- Child Motivation Outcomes

\*Family outcomes focused on one or more members of the family in activities that influence child development

- Family Information/Resource Finding Outcomes
- Family Finance Outcomes
- Family Social-Emotional Support Outcomes
- Family enhancement Outcomes
- Family Personal Outcomes

\*Network and infrastructure outcomes focused on actions by one or more agencies in the service network/state administrative structure that supports early intervention.

- Further Assessment Outcomes
- Acquisition of Equipment or Materials Outcomes
- Personnel Outcomes
- Location and Coordination of Needed Services Outcomes
- Payment for Needed Services Outcomes
- Transportation Outcomes
- Training Outcomes

#### Summary

“Early interventionists need to evaluate the outcomes they write with families and, with the assistance of families, modify the content and language if their outcomes are found wanting.” The questions included in this article can assist the evaluation process.

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