

Relationship of Quality Practices to Child and Family Outcome Measurement Results

Anne Lucas, Kathi Gillaspay, Joicey Hurth and Christina Kasprzak
with support and assistance from Betsy Ayankoya, Grace Kelley, and Jim Henson

The purpose of this document is to assist states in identifying ways to improve results for children and families participating in Part C early intervention services through implementation of quality practices. The table below lists key quality practices that, when implemented, will have direct impact on child and family outcomes. The key quality practices selected were based upon the ***Agreed Upon Practices for Providing Early Intervention Services in Natural Environments***, a consensus document developed by a Workgroup on Principles and Practices in Natural Environments (February 2008 sponsored by an OSEP TA Community of Practice – Part C Settings: <http://www.nectac.org/topics/families/families.asp>) and from the Basic Guidelines for personnel preparation from the Division of Early Childhood’s ***Personnel Standards for Early Education and Early Intervention: Guidelines for Licensure in Early Childhood Special Education*** (DEC Recommended Practices in Early Intervention/Early Childhood Special Education, 2000). Although all quality practices identified in these 2 documents potentially impact child and family outcomes, only key quality practices that either have the most direct impact on the specific outcomes (indicated with a star) or have a lesser, yet still direct, impact on specific outcomes (indicated with a check mark) are included in the table below.

States might use this document in a variety of ways including:

- **Analyzing local early intervention program child and family outcome data to determine where improvement in program practices might be needed** - For example, one local early intervention program’s data might reflect that families are consistently reporting that the program has not assisted them in knowing their rights. The state could subsequently request the program to review whether or not those key quality practices identified as impacting the parent’s knowledge of rights are being implemented as intended. Improvement activities around those quality practices that are not being implemented as expected could be developed.
- **Analyzing statewide child and family outcome data and developing statewide improvement activities** - A state might find that data related to children meeting their needs does not meet their statewide target. In reviewing local early intervention program data, the state discovers that several key practices are consistently not happening (IFSP outcomes and strategies are focused on test items and skills rather than being functional; a child’s progress toward meeting child outcomes are not reviewed as part of service delivery visits). As a result, the state develops improvement activities to address these areas of practice that impact results.
- **Orienting local early intervention programs/providers to the expected practices needed to improve child and family outcomes** – States and/or local early intervention programs might review and jointly discuss the indicators and related practices as the basis for orienting early intervention providers and improving understanding about what practices are expected to improve the results of child and family outcomes.

- **Conducting a self-assessment of statewide and/or local performance on each of the indicators and related practices** – The state and/or local early intervention programs can use this document as a self-assessment of the degree to which they are implementing the practices for each indicator. Space has been provided for documentation of reflections and comments.

States and local early intervention programs are encouraged to use this document in any way that they deem appropriate. Revisions to the document are acceptable and ideas for improving the document are welcome.

Effective Practices	Family Outcomes			Child Outcomes		
	Know rights	Communicate Child's Needs	Help Child Develop & Learn	Relate to Others	Use Knowledge & Skills	Meet Needs
1. Communicate with the family about the purpose of EI and reflect the following focus throughout the IFSP process and ongoing intervention: "Early intervention provides supports and services to assist families and caregivers in enhancing their child's learning and development to assure his or her successful participation in home and community life."						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Describe the rationale for services in natural environments, and that children learn best when interested and engaged in everyday experiences and interactions with familiar people. 			√			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explain the 3 global functional child outcomes and family outcomes including their relationship to the purpose of EI how the child outcomes can be used for designing strategies to help children successfully participate in natural learning environments. 	√	√	√	√	√	√
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Balance listening to the family with sharing information. 		√				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explain how family members are experts in understanding their child and family circumstances and interests. 		√	√			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Let the family know that you are interested in exploring their concerns and working with them to find solutions. 		√	√			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> When discussing supports, ask the family if they would like to be put in contact with other families in early intervention or family organizations that offer support. 	√	√	√			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Describe each step of the IFSP process, including its purpose, and what service delivery might look like. 		√	√			
<u>Reflections and Comments:</u>						

Effective Practices	Family Outcomes			Child Outcomes		
	Know rights	Communicate Child's Needs	Help Child Develop & Learn	Relate to Others	Use Knowledge & Skills	Meet Needs
2. Gather information from the family regarding: their interests; important people and places in their lives; their concerns, priorities, and resources; and what's working/what's challenging in participating in everyday routines and activities. (NOTE: Gathering information from the family occurs overtime and prior information is reviewed and revisited with the family throughout the IFSP process).						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discuss how information gathered from the family is used in planning the assessment and in developing IFSP outcomes, strategies and services. 	√	√	√	√	√	√
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use open-ended questions that encourage the family to share their thoughts and concerns; ask strength- and interest-based questions. 		★	√			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discover family preferences for sharing and receiving information as well as the family's teaching and learning strategies they prefer to use with their child. 		√	√			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Begin gathering functional information about the child's participation in everyday activity settings within routines and across settings using the 3 global outcomes. 		√	√	√	√	√
<u>Reflections and Comments:</u>						
3. Throughout the IFSP process and ongoing intervention, provide written prior notice at all appropriate times, obtain parent consent for evaluation/assessment and IFSP services, and ensure procedural safeguards are fully explained.						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> At intake, explain how EI has rules and procedures that providers must follow. 	√					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> At intake, review with the family procedural safeguards provided in the program materials and inform them you will review them at different points throughout the process. 	★					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> At intake, explain confidentiality. Make sure that the family knows they should only share information they are comfortable sharing. 	★					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> When explaining procedural safeguards, ask the family if they have any questions and if information is clear and understandable. Ask, "Do you have any questions about why we need to do it this way?" 	√					
<u>Reflections and Comments:</u>						

Effective Practices	Family Outcomes			Child Outcomes		
	Know rights	Communicate Child's Needs	Help Child Develop & Learn	Relate to Others	Use Knowledge & Skills	Meet Needs
4. Evaluate and assess the functional needs and strengths of the child in all areas of development and the child's functional performance in the 3 global outcomes, to identify needs and appropriate services to meet those needs.						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ask engaging questions that invite the family to share their perspective and use prompts and observations to encourage the family to describe their child's behavior, skills, engagement, and functional participation across settings and situations. 		√	√	√	√	√
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Help the family decide how they want to participate in their child's evaluation and assessment. 	√	√				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Make a list with the family of specific questions they would like answered. 		√	√			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inform the family that information they share about their child's skills is very important since they see their child in multiple settings and over time. 		√	√			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use multiple procedures including parent report, observations of children in typical routines, formal and informal assessment tools, and clinical judgment when conducting evaluation and assessment. 		√	√	√	√	√
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Summarize assessment results in terms of the child's social relationships, use of knowledge and skills, and taking actions to get his or her needs met in everyday routines and activities across settings and situations and compare child's skills and abilities to age expectations. 			√	√	√	√
<u>Reflections and Comments:</u>						
5. The family and early intervention providers collaboratively review information obtained through parent interview and child assessment and identify functional, measurable and developmentally appropriate IFSP outcomes (for child and family) that: a) focus on participation in everyday routines and activities; b) are based on family concerns, priorities, and interests; and c) are developmentally appropriate and reflect the child's functioning across settings.						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explain that the family is an equal member of the early intervention team and the various roles that the family might play in the IFSP meeting. 	√	√	√			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ask the family who they would like to invite to the IFSP meeting. 	√					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assure that the synthesis of present levels of the child's development across all domains is functional and focused on skills, strengths, and behaviors 		√	√	√	√	√

Effective Practices	Family Outcomes			Child Outcomes		
	Know rights	Communicate Child's Needs	Help Child Develop & Learn	Relate to Others	Use Knowledge & Skills	Meet Needs
across settings rather than a recap of test scores.						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Highlight information about how the child relates to others, uses knowledge and skills and gets his/her needs met in these activities and how this information is used to develop meaningful and functional IFSP outcomes. Give concrete examples: "During the assessment process, you said you want Johnny to sit at the table with your family and eat finger foods. If we pick this as an IFSP outcome, it will be one way that Johnny is learning how to appropriately get his needs met." 				√	√	√
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discuss the outcomes the family wants to work on to enhance the child's development, engagement, social relationships, and independence in family and community routines and activities. 			√	√	√	√
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discuss the family outcomes that they want to include. 			√	√	√	√
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Write outcomes using active language that describe a desired and measurable end result including what the routine/activity/behavior should look like and where/when/with whom it should occur. 		√	√	√	√	√
<u>Reflections and Comments:</u>						
<p>6. The family and early intervention providers collaboratively identify strategies/activities and the necessary services and supports to achieve outcomes and enhance participation and learning in natural environments by: a) enhancing the family's capacity in supporting their child's learning and development between visits; b) building on the interests and strengths of the child and family; and c) designing frequency, intensity, and method for each service to be reasonable and not burdensome to the family.</p>						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Emphasize how caregivers and providers will work together, and who will do what. 			√	√	√	√
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify strategies that enhance the child's natural learning opportunities; use toys, materials, interactions and various locations that are familiar and of interest to the child and family. 		√	√	√	√	√
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Incorporate family strengths into strategies and activities that the family is comfortable implementing or put in place plans on how to build those skills. 			√	√	√	√
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider the need for assistive technology or other adaptations to enhance the child's participation in targeted daily routines and activities. 			√	√	√	√

Effective Practices	Family Outcomes			Child Outcomes		
	Know rights	Communicate Child's Needs	Help Child Develop & Learn	Relate to Others	Use Knowledge & Skills	Meet Needs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Remind the family and the other team members that the family can accept or reject any service at any time and still participate in other early intervention services. 	√					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure inclusion of measurable, functional criteria that any team member could use to review progress toward achieving IFSP outcomes. 		√		√	√	√
<u>Reflections and Comments:</u>						
7. During each early intervention visit, use the IFSP and discussions with the family about what worked/what was challenging since the prior visit to decide the priorities for and focus of the visit including: a) assisting the family in problem solving issues and challenges; and b) assisting the family in identifying naturally occurring learning opportunities.						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Before each visit, reflect on your own beliefs and values and how they might influence your suggestions and strategies with the family or caregiver. Behave as a guest in the family's home. 			√	√	√	√
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Listen, observe, model, teach, coach and/or join the ongoing interactions of the family and child. 			√	√	√	√
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Begin each visit by asking open-ended questions to identify significant family events or activities and how well planned routines and activities have been going. 		★	√			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourage the family to observe and assess the child's skills, behaviors, and interests, a continual part of on-going functional assessment. 		★	★	√	√	√
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reinforce the family on the strategies they use that support their child's learning, giving specific examples. 		√	★	√	√	√
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ask if there are any new issues and concerns the family wants to talk about. Explore if these concerns need to be address as new IFSP outcomes; if so, plan an IFSP review. 		★				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discuss and record family observations, on-going assessment information, and progress related to the 3 global functional child outcomes. 		√	√	√	√	√
<u>Reflections and Comments:</u>						

Effective Practices	Family Outcomes			Child Outcomes		
	Know rights	Communicate Child's Needs	Help Child Develop & Learn	Relate to Others	Use Knowledge & Skills	Meet Needs
8. During each intervention visit, participate with the family or caregivers and the child in activities and /or routines as the context for promoting new skills and behaviors.						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Apply knowledge of current research and evidenced based practices in early intervention to the development and implementation of strategies and interventions with the child and family (e.g., participatory learning, strength and asset-based interventions, interest-based learning, parent-mediated practices, coaching practices, resource-based interventions, relationship-based intervention, responsive care-giving) 		★	★	★	★	★
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plan and match learning experiences, strategies and adaptations to individual characteristics of the child and family (e.g., work with Jason's aunt to help her feel more comfortable with him during bath time, so his mom can give his twin, Jack more attention). 			★	★	★	★
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify and implement strategies that enhance the child's participation in natural learning opportunities across routines and community settings. 		√	★	★	★	★
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use toys, materials, interactions and locations that are familiar, of interest to, and motivating for the child and family during intervention (e.g., help the mother get comfortable feeding the baby in different parts of the house so that they don't feel isolated from the rest of the family). 			★	★	★	★
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support and facilitate family and child interactions as primary contexts for learning and development (e.g., 5 year old brother crawls along the floor with toddler to find objects during playtime). 			★	★	★	★
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support parents' and caregivers' ability to implement strategies and activities within everyday routines and activities. 			★	★	★	★
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Incorporate family strengths into strategies and activities that the family is comfortable implementing or put in place plans how to build those skills. 			√	√	√	√
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement different strategies to support parents and caregivers, including modeling, problem solving, coaching and demonstration, based on individual child needs and parents' priorities. 			★	★	★	★
<u>Reflections and Comments:</u>						

Effective Practices	Family Outcomes			Child Outcomes		
	Know rights	Communicate Child's Needs	Help Child Develop & Learn	Relate to Others	Use Knowledge & Skills	Meet Needs
9. Jointly revise, expand, or create strategies, activities or routines to continue progress toward achieving IFSP outcomes and address any new family concerns or interest.						
• Support and encourage family decisions.		√				
• Focus recommendations on promoting child's participation in everyday family and community life.				√	√	√
• Together, plan next steps and/or revise activities and strategies to build on the child's and family's interests, culture, enjoyment, strengths and, to the extent appropriate, move the child toward age expected skills and behaviors.			√	√	√	√
• Try out new strategies or activities to be sure family members or caregivers can do them on their own.			★	√	√	√
• Determine if and what type of support from other team members is needed for the next steps.				√	√	√
• Update the IFSP to reflect any changes in strategies, supports, activities and referrals.				√	√	√
<u>Reflections and Comments:</u>						
10. As a team, jointly review IFSP outcomes and services (including frequency and intensity) through periodic IFSP reviews or annual IFSP meetings (and revise as necessary).						
• Review with the family questions, recommendations, or suggestions they wish to discuss with other service providers.		√				
• Conduct the review meeting and evaluate progress toward IFSP outcomes and the child's progress in the 3 global outcome areas. Ensure all IFSP outcomes, services, and supports are still needed, current and accurate. Make additions and revisions as needed.				√	√	√
• Discuss with the family their perspective about their ability to communicate their child's needs, help their child develop and learn, and know their rights. Identify any additional supports and resources that are needed to enhance the family's confidence and competence.	√	√	√			
<u>Reflections and Comments:</u>						

Effective Practices	Family Outcomes			Child Outcomes		
	Know rights	Communicate Child's Needs	Help Child Develop & Learn	Relate to Others	Use Knowledge & Skills	Meet Needs
11. Identify transition issues and discuss steps to prepare the family for choices / options at different transition points and to prepare the child for participating in the new setting when transition occurs.						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assure that the family understands the timeframe for transition from early intervention and when transition planning should occur. 	√					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Early in the relationship with the family, have conversations about what they want for their child's future after the early intervention program ends. 		√				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a transition plan which includes the outcomes and activities to prepare the child and family for success after early intervention. 			√	√	√	√
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discuss and provide written information about all options available to children and families at age three. Assist the family to explore and visit these options. 		√				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Jointly review the IFSP and revise/add outcomes and strategies based on these discussions. 				√	√	√
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Summarize and discuss all assessment information, including parent observations, by describing how the child is functions in the 3 global child outcomes across situations and settings and compare to age expectations. 		√	√	√	√	√
<u>Reflections and Comments:</u>						