



Writing Family-Guided IFSP Outcomes

The IFSP Process: Referral Through Program Evaluation

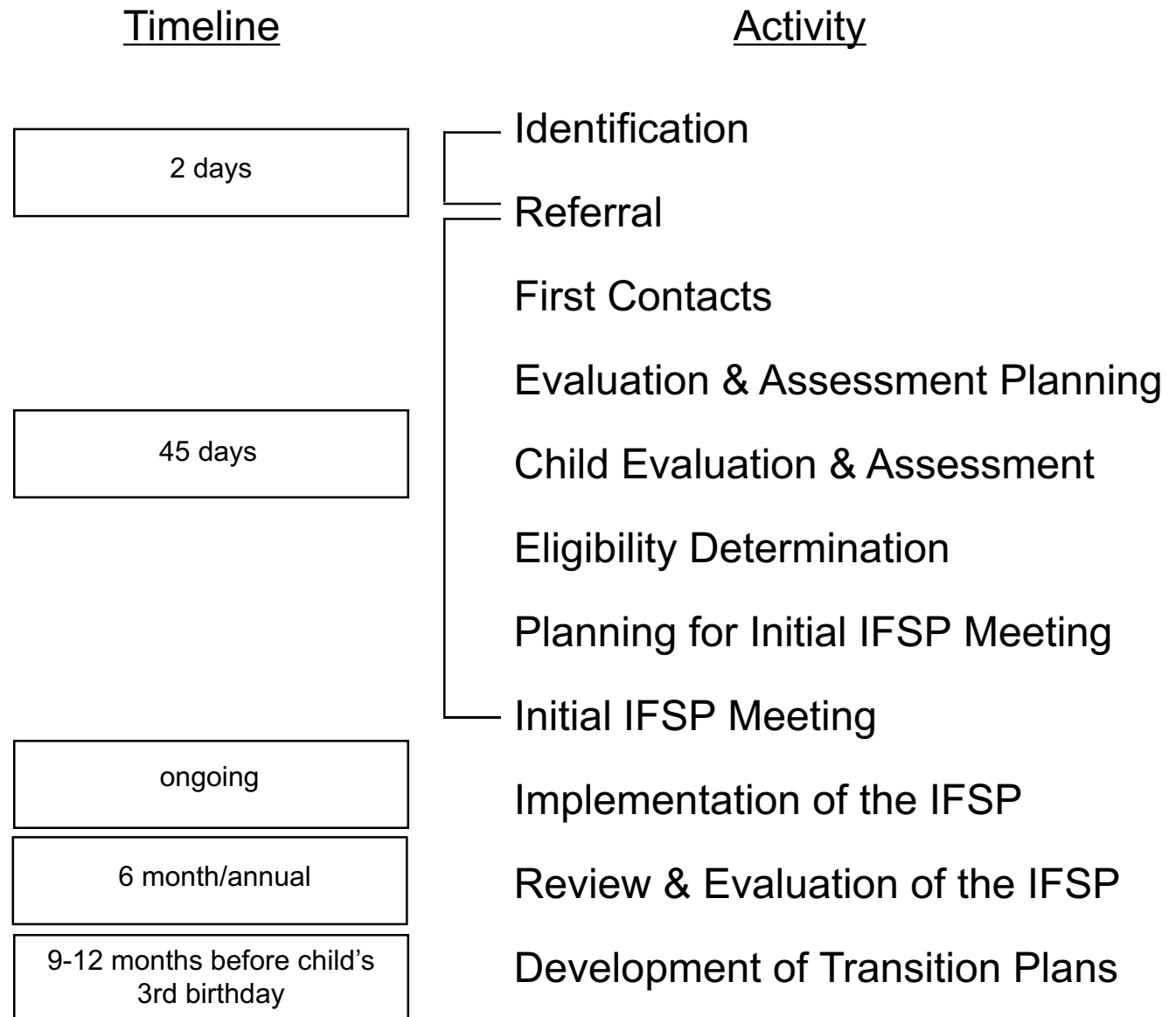
This section provides examples of both child and family outcomes. These outcomes can be used as a model for writing outcomes in your program or you can use the *Outcome Rating Scale* (see last section of packet) to practice rating these outcomes before you try to evaluate your own outcomes. These outcome examples are to be used only as a guide but were written by “real” early interventionists and “real” families with children with delays and disabilities.

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Linked System

The following diagram shows the timelines and activities related to the development and review of the IFSP.



Adapted with permission from Early Childhood Connections for Infants, Toddlers & Families. (2001, May). *Colorado service coordination core training program*. Colorado Department of Education. Retrieved June 14, 2004, from http://www.cde.state.co.us/earlychildhoodconnections/scct/Module2_Slides.pdf



Starting Meaningful Conversations

There are many ways we can communicate with families and children receiving early intervention services. Sometimes it is difficult to get the information you need without struggling for words or saying something you really didn't mean to say. The information contained on the following pages will assist you in finding the right words and asking the right questions of families when you are trying to obtain information to create the IFSP.



Identifying Family Activities and Routines Conversation Starters

Consider using some of these comments or questions to open a dialog about the child's and family's activities, environments, and routines.

- ★ We'd like to learn about some of your child's daily routines and activities for teaching and learning. By sharing your daily activities and routines, you are identifying potential times and places for your child's intervention.
- ★ Tell me about your day. What are the routines/activities or places that you go that most often occur for you and your child?
- ★ What types of things happen on most:
Mornings? Afternoons? Nights? Weekends?
- ★ Life with children usually makes us be pretty flexible. Can you give me some ideas about what usually happens before or after _____? (Use some event the careprovider mentions-- "One Life to Live." Systematically identify events, and then proceed.)
- ★ If the careprovider is having difficulty identifying activities or routines, ask some specific questions about some of the following: dressing, breakfast, watching TV, car travel, preparing meals, household chores, nap, lunch and evening meals, yard work, bath, bedtime stories, or hanging out.

Possible follow-up questions to consider:

- ★ Are there any activities or places that you go (e.g., shopping, doctor's appointments) that occur on a less than regular basis (e.g., once a week, every few days)?
- ★ Are there other events that occur fairly regularly or during the weekend (e.g., sport events for siblings)?
- ★ Who are the important people who participate in your child's life? Who are helpful in your child's care, and who may also have activities and routines for teaching and learning (e.g., grandparents, big brother, neighbor, friend)?

- ★ What routines/activities does _____ (child’s name) _____ enjoy doing?
 - What makes this routine(s) enjoyable to _____?
 - What does _____ usually do during the routine/activity?
 - What do you (or the other careproviders) do during the routine/activity?
 - How long does it take?

- ★ Are there opportunities for your child to interact with other children?
 - How many other children participate in this routine/activity?

- ★ What routine/activity(s) does _____ not like?
 - What makes this routine/activity difficult or uncomfortable for _____?
 - What does _____ usually do during the routine/activity?

- ★ What are your (family’s) expectations of the children during the routine/activity?
 - What do you do during the routine/activity?
 - How do you let the child know what is expected in this routine/activity?

- ★ Are there better times for you during the day or locations that are more comfortable for intervention routines?

SUMMARY INFORMATION

<u>Potential Outcomes</u> What to do	<u>Careprovider & Child Routines</u> Who Which Routine	<u>Good Times & Places</u> When Where

Adapted from Cripe, J. (1990). *Evaluating the effectiveness of training procedures in a linked system approach to individual family service plan development*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Oregon, Eugene.
 Cripe, J. W., & Venn, M. L. (1997, November). Family-guided routines for early intervention services. *Young Exceptional Children*, 1(1).

FACETS

Getting to Know Your Child

Activities and Games



Favorite	Least Favorite

Toys and Objects



Favorite	Least Favorite

Foods



Favorite	Least Favorite
	Any Allergies?

People and Playmates



Favorite	Least Favorite



How does your child let you know what he/she likes?	How does your child let you know what he/she doesn't like?

When is your child most cooperative?	When is your child least cooperative?



What frightens your child?	What calms your child?

How does your child assist/participate in the following daily routines?

Feeding

Dressing



Toileting

Bathing

What do you do to help your child learn?	What activities would you like to do with your child during assessment?



Adapted from: Noonan, M.J., & McCormick, L. (1993). Early Intervention in Natural Environments: Methods and procedures. Pacific Grove, CA. Brooks/Cole.

It is important to give families every opportunity to participate fully in the IFSP process. By rewording the following questions an early interventionist will have a much more meaningful conversation about the child and family's wants and needs. Below are commonly used closed-ended questions often heard in early intervention programs.

Reword these Questions

- ◇ Do you have concerns about your child's development?
- ◇ Are you happy with the supports and services you are receiving?
- ◇ What do you need help with?
- ◇ Does your child play with other kids?



Ways to reword the above questions might include some of the open-ended examples below.

Child Profile/Present Levels of Development

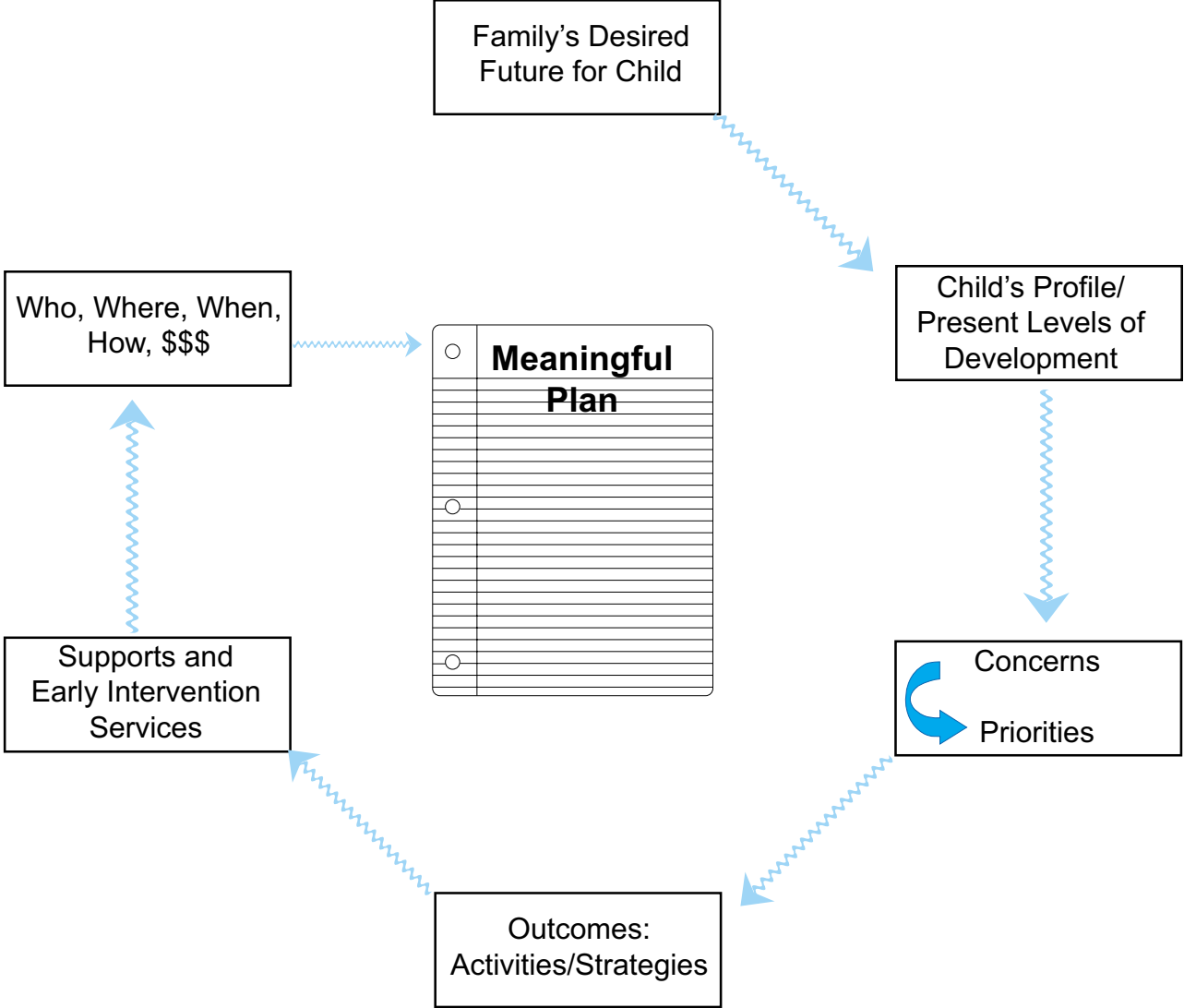
- ◇ Purpose: Collect information about the child from a variety of sources.
- ◇ Questions to consider:
 - ◆ What are your child's strengths (What does your child do well? What are your child's challenges?)
 - ◆ What does your child enjoy? (Activities? Toys? People? Places? Other things?)
 - ◆ Where do you go with your child in a typical week? (What do you do there?)
 - ◆ How does the assessment information fit with what you know and believe about your child?

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Creating Meaningful Plans

Making plans meaningful for families means that the family's desires for their child's future must be linked to the relevant components of the IFSP. Information regarding the child's profile/present levels of development should address strengths and challenges as well as reflect the child and family's preferred and future activities/events. The concerns/priorities section should address how the concerns/priorities effect the functioning of the family and the child in preferred and future activities/events. Linked to the concerns/priorities as well as the child's present level's of development should be the outcomes the family wants to see addressed for their child and/or themselves. The specific activities and strategies utilized to address outcomes should demonstrate the family's preferences in present and future events. These activities and strategies dictate which supports and services are linked together to provide optimal services for the child and family. Lastly, to complete a meaningful plan, delineating who, where, when and how we will pay for supports and services makes the plan useful for the family and the child as well as the early intervention team.

Creating Meaningful Plans



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Concerns

- * Purpose: Identify concerns that are important to the family, related to the child's development.
- * Questions to consider:
 - + What's working right now? What is not working?
 - + What do you think your child needs help with?
 - + What would make your life easier?
 - + Are there activities you do not participate in, as a family, but wish you could?

Priorities

- * Purpose: Identify the family's most immediate concerns related to the child's development.
- * Questions to consider:
 - + What are your most immediate concerns?
 - + If you were to focus your energies on one thing, what would it be?
 - + What would you like to see your child doing within the next six weeks? Six months?
 - + Which of these concerns are most important to you?

Meaningful Outcomes

- * Purpose: Identify specific abilities and behaviors which will be evident in the child's daily life as a result of early intervention supporting your family.
- * Questions to consider:
 - + What would your child be doing differently?
 - + In which part of the day would it be helpful for your child to walk?
 - + Can you tell me more specifically what it means when you say that you want your child to talk?
 - + How would you know that you have accomplished your outcome?

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Outcomes

- 👉 Outcomes are based on the family's priorities.
- 👉 Outcomes are developed through a team process.
- 👉 Outcomes are meaningful to families.
- 👉 Outcomes are worded in ways that are understood by families.

Why Do We Sometimes Arrive at Outcomes That are Not Meaningful to Families?

- 👉 Sometimes we get so focused on "filling out the form" that we lose sight of what will be meaningful to the family.
- 👉 Sometimes we don't refer back to the family's information: interests, daily routines, resources, etc. -- we don't tie all of the pieces together.
- 👉 Sometimes, we limit the possibilities by thinking too narrowly (e.g. as soon as we hear a concern, we jump to generating strategies).
- 👉 Sometimes we brainstorm many possibilities but don't focus them into a plan of action.

Quality Indicators for Outcomes

- 👉 Why are we writing this outcome?
- 👉 Is this outcome in context of activities that the family *chooses* to do?
- 👉 Is the outcome written in language the *family* would use and understand?
- 👉 Does this outcome really matter to the family?
- 👉 Is the outcome reflective of the daily routine of the child/family?
- 👉 Is the outcome written so we can evaluate how we are doing?

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Red Flags When Writing Outcomes

- 👉 Outcomes which were written from test protocols
- 👉 Outcomes which look the same across children/families
- 👉 Outcomes which list only what the child will do or what the early intervention provider will do without a family context

Who? When? Where? How? (Activities/Strategies)

- * Purpose: Identify activities/strategies and people that facilitate accomplishing meaningful outcomes.
- * Questions to consider:
 - ✍ Given everything that we know from the early steps of this process, what are the ways that we can achieve the outcomes?
 - ✍ Which intervention strategies and everyday routines, activities, and places will facilitate the child's specific developmental outcomes?
 - ✍ Which one of these ideas sounds the best to you?
 - ✍ Which one of these ideas do you think will make the biggest difference?
 - ✍ How do the activities/strategies involve the important people in the child's life?
 - ✍ How will the outcomes support the family in knowing how to address concerns/strengthen development when the early intervention provider is not in the home?

Support and Services

- * Purpose: Identify the details of the plan that will let everyone know who will do what, when, where, and how.
- * A statement of the specific early intervention services necessary to meet the unique needs of the child and family including:
 - ✍ Frequency and intensity (beginning date, how often, how long, ending date)
 - ✍ Method of delivery
 - ✍ The natural environments in which the service will be provided or a justification if not provided in natural environment
 - ✍ Payment arrangements
- * Questions to consider:
 - ✍ **Who** are the people currently involved with your child and family? Are they helpful?
 - ✍ **Where** will the intervention occur that best fits the family's life and typical routine?
 - ✍ **When** will the intervention occur that will have the greatest impact?
 - ✍ **How** will the early interventionist work with the family, other adults in the child's life and the child care provider?
 - ✍ What **funding** sources need to be explored?

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