



Exploring Routines and Activities with Families: Good Questions to Ask

Service coordinators and providers who interact with families within the context of intervention have the opportunity to share and receive information relevant to IFSP outcome development. Simply listening to families and discussing basic routines is not enough when trying to prepare for outcome development. Developing truly individualized, family-centered outcomes requires that service coordinators and providers explore how families work, how family members interact, and get to know specifically what makes them “tick!”

Here are some examples of questions that service coordinators and providers can use to help families explore their routines and activities in depth. These questions are also useful for learning about family priorities for their child’s development and the natural learning opportunities that occur during daily family life.

- What does your child enjoy doing during the day?
- What do you enjoy doing with your child?
- What parts of the day go well for you and your child?
- Are there parts of the day or things you and your child do that are difficult?
- Tell me about bathtime/bedtime/taking your child to the grocery store, etc.
(use this open-ended statement to explore routines with families)
- What happens before/during/after bathtime/bedtime (or other challenging routine)?
(use this question to break down a routine to identify problem areas and learning opportunities)
- What makes your child laugh?
- What frustrates your child? What frustrates you?
- What would make your life easier with your child?
- Are there places you and your child like to go?
- Are there places that you would like to be able to go?
- Who does your child interact with during the day?
- How will you know when your child has met this goal?

ACTIVITY

1. Develop 2 additional questions that could be used to explore child and family routines, activities, and priorities.

2. Consider the difference between asking a family “What are your concerns?” versus “Could you tell me about your child?” What types of information are likely to be gathered from each question? Which question is more likely to give you richer information that you could use for outcome development?