



Writing Family-Centered Outcomes: Doesn't Look Good/Looks Good



Service coordinators and providers often ask for examples of "good outcomes." Because outcomes are so specifically individualized for each child and family based on the child's and family's interests, the families everyday routines, important people in the family's life who provide support, and natural learning opportunities that occur within each family, it is often difficult to generate such examples of "good outcomes." If, however, a review of IFSP outcomes for a number of children within a program show very similar outcomes, it may be helpful to consider examples of questions to guide the process to promote increased individuality.

Here are some examples of questions that service coordinators and providers can use to consider how they are writing outcomes with families. The first example with the "unhappy face" indicates an outcome that may need modification. The second example with the "happy face" indicates an improvement to the original outcome.

Is the wording jargon free, clear and simple?

- ⊖ e.g., Marta will participate in range of motion and strengthening exercises.
- ⊕ e.g., Marta will participate in Mommy and Me Exercise class one time a week for 30 minutes.

Does the wording emphasize the positive?

- ⊖ e.g., Robin will stop having tantrums at separation.
- ⊕ e.g., Robin will play by herself or with other children for three minutes without becoming upset when her Dad leaves.

Are statements specific enough to measure change?

- ⊖ e.g., Miguel will improve his sleeping patterns.
- ⊕ e.g., Miguel will go to sleep at approximately the same time each night and sleep at least five hours without waking.

Are statements necessary and functional for the child and family's life?

- ⊖ e.g., Bonnie will use a pincer grasp to flip a switch.
- ⊕ e.g., Bonnie will feed herself using her fingers and thumb to pick up food during her family's dinner meal.

Does the statement reflect inclusive, community-based settings?

- ⊗ Angel will participate in reciprocal turn taking during one-to-one facilitation.
- ⊙ Angel will make sounds and participate in library story time one time per week for 15 minutes.

(Adapted from McWilliam, Ferguson, Harbin, Porter, Dunn, & Vandivere, 1998; Rosenhoetter & Squire, 2000)

Sample Outcome Format

Who? _____ will _____ *Do what?*

How well/How often?

Conditions required for outcomes to be met? (optional)

Example: Katy will cook one new dinner recipe per week using green vegetables.