

Up to 3 procedures

Natural Environment and Justification Statements

Federal law allows for a team to choose a non-Natural Environment (NE) **ONLY IF** the outcome cannot be met in the NE. Documentation of setting for each service is identified on the Supports and Services page.

If a service is not provided in the NE, the justification page of the IFSP must be completed. An appropriate justification:
IS:

- Is based on the individual needs of the child
- Includes a plan to transition the child's service into a natural setting within a short period of time.
- Is determined necessary by the IFSP team, including the parents
- Is consistent with IDEAs natural environment provisions
- Is based on the child's expected outcomes
- should include why the team determined that the child's outcome/s could not be met if provided in the child's natural environment and how the service will be generalized to support the child's ability to function in his/her natural environment

IS NOT

- Is not based on administrative convenience, fiscal reasons, personnel limitations or parent/therapist preferences
- Cannot be based solely on the preferences of the family (for example if the family prefers services in the clinic).
- No team member can unilaterally determine the location of service delivery.
- Cannot require a child to be removed from his or her typical environment (home, childcare, community) unless a service cannot be adequately provided in the natural environment.
- "If a determination is made by the IFSP Team that, based on a review of all relevant information regarding the unique needs of the child, the child cannot satisfactorily achieve the identified early intervention outcomes in natural environments, then services could be provided in another environment (e.g. clinic, hospital, service provider's office.)"

In Up to 3 since the Lil Aggies teacher does not see the child before meeting with the parent to enroll them, team members referring the child will include a description of why the child has not been successful in reaching the outcomes in the home. For example, "Child cries for 30 minutes when separating from parent." Or "Child has tantrums for 10 minutes when given instructions, refuses to participate in group activities like fingerplays & songs with actions, runs off without someone holding his hand in public."

Below are examples of information that could be included in justification statements to individualize and explain the three required areas, which are:

- 1-why the child's outcomes cannot be addressed in the natural environment
- 2-How generalization to the natural environment will occur and
- 3-timelines and support for moving to the natural environment.

Explain why outcome(s) cannot be met in the natural environment	
Aggie has not responded to intervention at childcare. She wanders endlessly, tantrums when redirected. She needs an environment with fewer Distractions.	
How will services be generalized within settings & routines.	Timelines & supports for generalizing outcome to natural environment
Parents will receive training on non-coercive instructions	Aggie will return to childcare when not Tantrums or wandering longer than 30 seconds

Aggie has not responded to intervention at the child care. She is not complying to one-step directions. She wanders endlessly and tantrums when a teacher tries to re-direct her. She needs an environment with fewer distractions and lower child to adult ratio to help her wander and tantrum less. Parents will receive training on non-coercive instructions to use at home or other places. Aggie will return to childcare settings when no tantrum or wandering for 1 month."

Explain why outcome(s) cannot be met in the natural environment

Scott is not successful communicating with unfamiliar peers or adults in the park, store nursery. He needs opportunities to interact with unfamiliar people in an environment that structures interaction opportunities.

How will services be generalized within settings & routines.

Strategies to help him communicate in new environments will be shared with parents and childcare teachers

Timelines & supports for generalizing outcome to natural environment

We'll try Lil Aggies for 3 months.

“Scott is not making sounds that can be understood by unfamiliar people. He is not successful communicating with peers or adults in the park, store, or nursery. He needs to interact with unfamiliar people with structured interaction opportunities. Strategies to help him communicate in new environments will be shared with parents and childcare teachers. He can be in Lil Aggies for 3 months.”

“Sally has limited engagement and struggles with transition and has meltdowns when preferred activities end. She needs a structured environment to promote smooth transitions. Parents will also receive instruction at home on facilitating transitions. Sally can generalize to natural environment when more engaging and transitioning easier or when she turns 3.”

“Joey is distracted easily by sounds in the environment. Due to his short attention span, once he loses engagement, it takes 3-5 minutes to re-direct him to the task. Joey is not increasing his skill level and has not since services began. Team suggests working with Joey in a quiet environment to help acquire skills. Parents will also receive instruction on animation, setting up the environment, and teaching Joey to ask for a break. When he can pay attention to the task in less than 1 minute with only one re-direction, the services in the quieter environment can be ended.”

“Garret is not engaging or learning communication skills in his natural environment. He only stays with an activity for 5 seconds and then leaves the room. He needs to have opportunities to interact introduced slowly and systematically. Parents will also receive information about strategies to help him engage at home and he can receive more service at home when he can stay engaged with adult play partners for 10 minutes.”

“Patrick’s limited engagement makes it hard for him to learn from interactions with parents in the natural environment with distractions of many siblings. He needs interactions in a less distracting environment until he can play calmly with siblings or until he turns 3.”

A sample template for formulating justification statements is included below but not required to be used.

“The IFSP team has reviewed all relevant information (FEAS, family assessment, etc) regarding the unique needs of _____ (child), which include _____ (for example needing a structured environment to engage and to learn social communication, needing to separate from parents and follow group instructions from unfamiliar adults, etc.) and has determined the child cannot satisfactorily achieve the identified outcomes in the natural environment.

References:

- IDEA Federal Regulations Justification statement section 303.344 (d)(1)(ii) (B). Natural Environment, 303.26 and 303.344(d)(1)(ii) content of an IFSP.
- 76 Fed.Reg.at 60157-60158
- Pletcher, L.C. & Younggren, N.O (2013). The Early Intervention Workbook; *Essential Practices for Quality Services*.
- Center for Parent Information and Resources (2017). *Providing Early Intervention Services in natural Environments*. Retrieved from <http://www.Parentcenterhub.org/naturalenvironments>