

**Criteria Defining
High Quality, Participation-Based
IFSP Outcomes**

- **The outcome is necessary and functional for the child’s and family’s life.** This means that the outcome focuses on ways to support the child and family’s participation in community life and family activities that are important to them. For the outcome to be necessary and functional, it should benefit the child by focusing on social relationships, acquiring and using knowledge and skills, and/or using appropriate actions to meet needs. It should also help the child and/or family improve participation in chosen activities and/or help them begin new activities that are important to them. The determination of what is necessary and functional is not based upon what the practitioner thinks is meaningful and functional for the family.
- **The outcome reflects real-life contextualized settings.** This means that outcome statements reflect the everyday activity settings and routines for the child and family. This includes mealtime, bathing and riding in the car, as well as routines and activities that are specific to the individual family. Specific isolated skills (e.g., test items that were missed during evaluation) are not considered real-life or contextualized.
- **The outcome integrates developmental domains and is discipline-free.** This means that the outcome is written to describe the child’s participation in routines and everyday activity settings, promoting skill development across multiple domains, which can be addressed by any member of a child’s IFSP team. It also means that the outcome should be written so that the child and/or family are the “actors” or persons doing something rather than the occupational therapist or early interventionist. For example, an outcome might state, “*Annabelle will help her dad with the laundry by pulling up and standing at the dryer on her own and putting clothes into the laundry basket with her dad close by*” as opposed to, “*Annabelle will pull to a standing position at the couch and maintain her balance.*”
- **The outcome is jargon-free, clear and simple.** This means that the outcome is written so that is understandable by the family and the general public, and does not include professional jargon or practitioner “speak.” For example, the outcome should describe how the child will move, such as reaching up or down for toys, instead of using phrases like “range of motion.” Another example would be wording an outcome so that it describes a child’s ability to speak words clearly to make herself understood, rather than using the term “articulation”.
- **The outcome emphasizes the positive, not the negative.** This means that the focus of the whole outcome statement is positive. It also means that the outcome states what the child and/or family will do, rather than what they will not do or stop doing. If there are any negative words within the statement, it is not a positively worded outcome. For example, the outcome should state “*Johnny will chew and swallow food when eating with his family*” rather than “*Johnny will not spit out food when eating with his family.*”
- **The outcome uses active words rather than passive words.** This means using words that encourage a child and/or family’s active participation or engagement. Active words include eat, play, talk, walk, etc. and indicate what the child or family will do. Passive words reflect a state of being (e.g., tolerate and receive), or a change or lack of change in performance (e.g., increase, decrease, improve, and maintain).