

IDEA and Part C Natural Environment Requirements

The following provide information regarding the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and Part C natural environment requirements.

Early Intervention Services Definitions

Section 632(4)(6)

To the maximum extent appropriate, early intervention services are to be provided in natural environments, including the home and community settings in which children without disabilities participate.

34CFR303.13(a)(8)

Early intervention services means developmental services that to the maximum extent appropriate, are provided in natural environments as defined in §303.26 and consistent with §§303.126 and 303.344(d).

34CFR303.26

A natural environment means settings that are natural or typical for a same-aged infant or toddler without a disability, may include the home or community settings, and must be consistent with the provisions of §303.126.

Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) Policies and Procedures

34CFR303.126

Each system must include policies and procedures to ensure, consistent with §303.13(a)(8), 303.26, and 303.344(d)(1)(iii), that early interventions services for infants and toddlers with disabilities are provided:

- To the maximum extent appropriate, in natural environments: and
- In settings other than the natural environment that are most appropriate, as determined by the parent and the IFSP Team, only when early intervention services cannot be achieved satisfactorily in a natural environment.

Content of IFSP

34CFR 303.344(d)(1)(ii)(A-B)

The IFSP must include a statement of the specific early intervention services, based on peer-reviewed research (to the extent practicable), that are necessary to meet the unique needs of the child and the family to achieve the results or outcomes including:

- A statement that each early intervention service is provided in the natural environment for that child or service to the maximum extent appropriate consistent with §§303.13(a)(8), 303.26 and

303.126 a justification as to why an early intervention service will not be provided in the natural environment.

- The determination of the appropriate setting for providing early intervention services to an infant or toddler with a disability, including any justification for not providing a particular early intervention service in the natural environment for that infant or toddler with a disability and service, must be:
 - Made by the IFSP Team (which includes the parent and other team members);
 - Consistent with §§303.13(a)(8), 303.26 and 303.126; and
 - Based on the child's outcomes that are identified by the IFSP Team.

Section 636 (d)(5)

A statement of the natural environments in which early intervention services will appropriately be provided, including a justification, if any, to which the services will not be provided in a natural environment.

Requirements for Statewide System

Section 635 (a)(16)(A)and (B)

To the maximum extent appropriate, early intervention services are provided in natural environments and the provision of early intervention services, for any infant and toddler with a disability, occurs in a setting other than a natural environment that is most appropriate, as determined by the parent and IFSP team, only when early intervention cannot be achieved satisfactorily for the infant or toddler in a natural environment.