

Tips for Using the Goal Tracker

The Goal Tracker is designed to be given to families at IFSP meetings. The purpose of this handout is to assist providers in sharing information with families about the global child outcomes and to reinforce understanding of their role in supporting their child's development.

The Goal Tracker has three distinct features:

1. Information about the global child outcomes, written in language that is understandable to families.
2. Space for families or service providers to write in the child's individual IFSP outcomes. The document is designed so new outcomes can be added as the child develops. Additionally, the IFSP outcomes section is aligned with the global child outcomes information so families can see how their child's individual IFSP outcomes relate to the global child outcomes.
3. Developmental information and parenting resources are included to help families understand what developmental milestones are expected for their child and to help them with ideas for how to support their child's development.

Discussion Tips:

Avoid handing the Goal Tracker document to the family without explanation. Take a few minutes to review the information and point out the document's features.

Child Outcomes Information –

“For children to be active and successful participants at home, in the community, and in places like child care or preschool programs, they need to develop skills in three areas: (1) developing positive social-emotional skills; (2) acquiring and using knowledge and skills; and (3) taking appropriate action to meet needs.”

Discuss the rating process including:

- Functional behavior vs. isolated skills: Give examples of how the global child outcomes focus on the child's functional behavior. The outcomes do not measure isolated skills or discrete developmental milestones. Instead of assessing whether or not a child can stack blocks, say three words, or walk, the global child outcomes focus on whether or not the child is able to acquire new skills and knowledge, use these skills and knowledge to get his/her needs met, and to develop positive relationships. For example, is a two-and-a-half year-old child able to use his language to protest a friend taking a toy instead of biting (positive

social-emotional skills and acquiring and using knowledge and skills)? Is an eighteen-month-old able to walk to the kitchen, get his cup from the table, and take a drink if he is thirsty (taking appropriate action to meet needs)?

- Information used when determining the child outcomes ratings: This includes evaluation and assessment results, observations by professionals with knowledge of child development, and reports from the parent, other caregivers and other professionals who serve the child.
- The parent's or caregiver's role in the process: The parent(s) or caregivers provide information used to help determine the appropriate rating for the child for the three global outcomes. Parent or caregiver input is crucial; family members see the child in situations professionals do not. The rest of the team will need to learn what family members know about the child -- what the child does at home, at grandma's house, at child care, in the grocery store, etc.
- How the ratings are determined and what they mean: The child's development is compared to what a typical child his/her age should be doing related to each outcomes. More information about the different ratings can be found in the Global Child Outcomes module on the ECI training page.
- How the ratings are used: Ratings are used to measure progress over time. Comparisons of entry ratings with annual or exit ratings can be used to describe the impact of early childhood intervention services.

Individual IFSP Outcomes

Discuss how the child's individual IFSP outcomes fit within the global child outcomes. Every outcome on the child's IFSP should be related to at least one of the global child outcomes. Remind parents and caregivers that even small amounts of progress should be celebrated! There is room on the Goal Tracker to add new outcomes as previous ones are achieved.

Developmental Information

Although both the global child outcomes and the child's IFSP outcomes focus on the child's functional behavior, it is still important for parents to have a basic understanding of developmental domains, how infant and toddler development is interrelated and the major developmental milestones. Some parents, especially first-time parents, may not know the age expectations for infant and toddler developmental milestones. Additionally, because it is not an "obvious" developmental

domain, like motor and communication skills, some parents may not be aware of how the child's social-emotional development affects other areas of development and how critical these skills are for future academic and life success. Likewise, help parents and caregivers understand the importance of supporting their child's development on an ongoing basis.

Achieving an IFSP goal is definitely an occasion to celebrate, but it doesn't necessarily mean the child is ready to exit from ECI services. Use the information from the different resources to show parents or caregivers what their child should be working on next. Discuss the benefits of knowing about typical child development. Knowledge of typical child development will support parents' and caregivers' participation in IFSP meetings and during the global child outcomes rating process. Additionally, parents and caregivers will be more equipped to support their child's development when they know what skills and behaviors are expected for their child and what developmental milestones are coming next.

The resources listed on the Goal Tracker are designed for parents and caregivers. They can be accessed from a smart phone or tablet by downloading a QR code reader. The websites can also be accessed by typing in the web addresses using a smart phone, tablet or computer. Most of the resources are available in English and Spanish and have handouts that can be printed for families without computers or smart phones. The resources list developmental milestones and offer tips and suggestions for how to improve a child's development.

To encourage parents or caregivers to use these resources, remind them of how important they are to their child. These resources are tools they can use to help support their children's development. Activity suggestions from these resources can also be incorporated into future intervention visits if the parent or caregiver would like to try them, or if he/she needs help determining how to embed them into different daily routines.