

Example Outcomes

The following examples are taken from real Routines-Based Interviews, which produced the informal goals below. The format for the observable goals, which is used interchangeably with “outcomes,” and for the criteria are from our model for early intervention in natural environments (www.VanderbiltChildrens.com/earlyintervention).

Child-Level Goals

Informal goal	Observable goal	Criteria for accomplishment (<i>We will know he or she can do this when...</i>)
Communicate his needs (drink, don't feel well, eat, more, play, TV, outside)	[Child] will participate in meals, play times, hanging out, outside time) by communicating his needs.	He uses four single words in one day, for 3 consecutive days.
Eating with combination of textures; vegetables, fruits	[Child] will participate in meals by eating foods having a combination of textures.	He eats 3 portions (1/4-1/2 cup/portion) of food with a combination of textures (e.g., pasta with sauce) in 1 week.
Hand washing—water rinsing	[Child] will participate in toileting and preparing for meals by washing his hands, including rinsing them.	He independently washes his hands, including rinsing, after toileting or on hearing that a meal is ready, 2 times a day for 5 consecutive days.
Identifying objects (in a book, on body), to see where he is cognitively	[Child] will participate in book reading, dressing, bathing, and toileting by pointing to named objects or body parts (e.g., <i>Where's the bunny?</i>).	He correctly points to 5 named (i. e., “Where's the bunny?") objects in books or 5 named body parts in 1 day.
Transitions (e.g., from park) when he has to stop doing something fun	[Child] will participate in outings to the park and play times at home by moving on to something else when he is told to.	He moves on to the next activity (e.g., begins walk home or to the car) with no fussing on 3 out of 5 transitions in a week for 3 consecutive weeks.
Making sounds (playing with Chris, diaper, reading, play, feeding)	[Child] will participate in playing with his father, diaper change, reading time, play time, and feeding by making sounds.	He makes 15 separate cooing or babbling sounds for 3 consecutive minutes during any three of these times of day in 1 day.
Responding to Julie and Chris during reading, play, meals	[Child] will participate in reading time, play time, and meals by responding to his parents.	He makes a sound or looks at Julie or Chris within three seconds of their trying to get his attention, once in each of these times of day, for 3 consecutive days.
Reach (playing on floor, bath,	[Child] will participate in playing time on	He reaches his arm towards a person or object once in

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swim class, music, feeding)	the floor, bath, swim class, music, or feeding by reaching for people or objects.	any 3 of these times of day for 3 consecutive days.
Batting for toys and splashing (play, bath)	[Child] will participate in play and bath times by batting toys and splashing, respectively.	He bats 5 times at toys in a 15 minute play time or splashes 5 times during a bath time on 3 consecutive days.
Grasp things in front of him (music, bath, feeding)	[Child] will participate in music, bath, and feeding by grasp objects in front of him.	He grasps an object once at each of these 3 times of day in a day, for 3 consecutive days.
Rolling both ways, pushing up (play)	[Child] will participate in play time on the floor by rolling from his stomach to his back, rolling from his back to his stomach, and pushing up on his arms.	He does each of these movements in 1 play time on 3 different days in 1 week.
Sitting unassisted (music, bath, feeding)	[Child] will participate in music, bath time, and feeding by sitting unassisted.	He sits without support in each of these times of day for 3 minutes in 1 day.
Samantha communicate, esp. "I love you" at wake up and what to eat at meals	Samantha will participate in waking up time and meals by communicating.	She says, "I love you" 3 times in 1 week, when Sue enters her room, and when she names 2 foods (i.e., not in view) she wants in 1 week.
Eat without stuffing	Samantha will participate in meals by chewing and swallowing her food, one mouthful at a time.	She puts one spoonful of food in her mouth, chews it, and swallows it, before putting the next spoonful in her mouth, 4 times in a meal for 5 consecutive meals.
Cup drinking	Samantha will participate in meals by drinking from a cup.	She drinks 3 oz from a cup with no lid, with no spilling, during every meal for 5 consecutive days.
Eat with utensils	Samantha will participate in meals by eating with utensils.	She uses a spoon or fork for 5 minutes in lunch AND dinner for 5 consecutive days.
Potty training	Samantha will participate in toileting by indicating she needs to go.	She indicates she needs to go (i.e., before an "accident") 5 times in 1 week.
Dressing independently	Samantha will participate in dressing time by putting on her clothes independently.	She puts on her shirt, pants, and socks or shoes, without any help, for 5 days in 1 week.
Play with toys appropriately at hanging-out times	Samantha will participate in hanging-out times by playing with toys appropriately.	She plays appropriately (by parents' judgment) with 3 different toys for 3 minutes each in 1 week.
Emily will extend arms at dressing	Emily will participate in dressing time by extending her arms.	She pushes her arms through the sleeves of her shirt, without help, 7 times in 1 week.

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Play without head banging (because of child care)	Emily will participate in play times by playing without banging her head.	She goes for the entire day without banging her head for 5 consecutive days.
Communicate Mama, no, up, cup, Dada, etc.	Emily will participate in meals, play time, and waking up time by using words.	She uses at least 3 different words at 3 separate times in 1 day.
Sit in car seat without self-stimulating with middle strap (for social reasons)	[Child] will participate in car rides without self-stimulating.	She plays with objects, points, sings, and talks, without self-stimulating every day for 2 weeks.
Walk faster	Emily will participate in outings by keeping up with her parents while walking.	She can walk 1 yard in 2 seconds for 20 yards, with one hand held, on three occasions per outing, once at the grocery store, once at the mall, and once at church.
Jenevae will move independently (like crawling)	Jenevae will participate in toy play by moving independently.	She moves forward on her tummy 24 inches to obtain a toy or person, twice a day for 3 consecutive days.
Learn to play with more complicated toys	Jenevae will participate in toy play by playing with toys that require different behaviors.	She plays with 5 toys, using 3 different behaviors (e.g., putting in, taking out, rolling, turning a handle, opening, closing) with each toy, during 5 consecutive days.
Say words	Jenevae will participate in waking up, meals, and play time by saying words.	She says 1 identifiable word, not in imitation, during waking up, 1 meal, and play time in 1 day.
Pulling to stand	Jenevae will participate in waking up, play time, hanging out time, and outside time by pulling to stand.	She pulls herself to stand in 2 of the 4 times of day identified for 5 consecutive days.
Come to sitting	Jenevae will participate in waking up, play time, and hanging out time by coming to sitting.	She can move from being on her tummy to sitting, independently, once at waking up, once at play time, and once at hanging out time, in 1 day, for 3 consecutive days.
Stephan and Renée stay with parents when go out	Stephan and Renée will participate in outings by staying with their parents.	They remain within 10 feet of their parents on every outing for 3 consecutive weeks.
Dressing	Stephan will participate in dressing and bath time by dressing himself.	He puts on all his clothes with no physical assistance at both morning and evening (pajamas) dressing for 7 consecutive days.
Table manners and feeding	Stephan will participate in meals by using good manners and eating appropriately.	Ali rates his table manners as adequate and his eating as appropriate for 5 dinners a week for 3 consecutive weeks.

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Stephan follow bedtime routine	Stephan will participate in bedtime by following the routine.	He plays for 30 minutes, brushes his teeth, participates in family time, and stays in bed on 4 nights a week for 3 consecutive weeks.
Adam—independent at dressing	Adam will participate in morning and evening dressing by dressing himself.	He puts on all his clothes (pajamas at night) in the morning and at night, with no physical assistance, on 4 days a week for 3 consecutive weeks.
Independent eating (using utensils, initiating clearing table)	Adam will participate in meals by using utensils independently and by initiating clearing the table.	He uses utensils independently for 15 minutes once a day for 5 consecutive days and initiates clearing the table 5 days a week for 3 consecutive weeks.
Play with toys and people at the same time	Adam will participate in play time by playing with toys and people at the same time.	He plays associatively or cooperatively with toys and people for 15 minutes during 1 play time a day for 5 consecutive days.
Participate in conversations (vs. just getting needs met)	Adam will participate in meals and hanging out by conversing (not just trying to get needs met).	He engages in back-and-forth conversations for 5 minutes twice a day for 3 consecutive days.
Meals without “attacking” Paige (sister)	Adam will participate in meals by behaving appropriately, not attacking Paige.	He eats dinner for 3 consecutive weeks, every night, without hitting Paige.
More varied foods [a very common priority in many families]	Adam will participate in meals by eating a variety of foods.	He eats one vegetable, one protein, and one carb at lunch and at dinner on 4 lunches and 4 dinners a week for 3 consecutive weeks.
Adam play with toys more	Adam will participate in play and hanging-out times by playing with toys.	He plays with a toy for at least 3 minutes once a day, for 5 days a week, for 3 consecutive weeks.
Potty training	Adam will participate in toileting by going to the potty.	He uses the potty independently, after a verbal prompt, 3 times a day, every day of the week, for 3 consecutive weeks.
Communicate what he wants	[Child] will participate in meals, play times, and hanging out by communicating what he wants.	He uses single signs or words to request spontaneously or to answer to “What do you want?” at all three times of the day, every day for a week, for 3 consecutive weeks.
Sleeping on good schedule	[Child] will participate in nighttime sleeping by going to bed on time and staying in bed through the night.	He goes to bed _____ p.m. and stays in bed until ____ a.m. for 7 consecutive nights.

Potty awareness	[Child] will participate in toileting by indicating he needs to go potty.	He pats his diaper, heads to the potty, or says “Potty” 3 times while still dry, followed by successful elimination, a day for 5 consecutive days.
Reduce number of meltdowns	[Child] will participate in play times, transitions, and meals by behaving appropriately and not having a meltdown.	He is engaged in all three kinds of situations, without having a tantrum, on 4 days a week, for 3 consecutive weeks.
Sit at table at lunch and dinner, at Grandma’s, and at restaurants	[Child] will participate in lunch, dinner, at Grandma’s, and at restaurants by sitting at the table.	He sits at the table for 15 minutes in 2 of the following situations per day: lunch, dinner, Grandma’s, and restaurants, for 7 consecutive days.
Sit for haircut	[Child] will participate in haircuts by sitting still.	He sits for 10 minutes during each of 3 consecutive haircuts.
In store, “contingency awareness” (accept bribes!)	[Child] will participate in going to the store by behaving appropriately	He behaves appropriately after being promised a reward for good behavior on 3 out of 5 outings.
Play with other kids	[Child] will participate in play dates by playing with other kids.	He engages in associative or cooperative play with another child for 10 minutes, twice a week, for 3 consecutive weeks.
Play or hang out in early morning without fussing	[Child] will participate in waking up by playing without fussing.	He plays without fussing during 4 waking-up times a week, for 3 consecutive weeks.
Forming words—book reading, calling people, when frustrated	[Child] will participate in book time, play time, and hanging-out time by using single words or signs.	He uses 10 understandable signs or words by [date].
More engaged with an activity at play times, dinner time, while [Sister’s] doing things. Entertain himself	[Child] will participate in play times, dinner time, and while [Sister] is playing by being engaged with an activity.	He remains engaged with an activity, without requiring attention, for 15 minutes, once a day during one of these times of day, for 5 consecutive days.
Feed himself with a spoon	[Child] will participate in meals by feeding himself with a spoon.	He eats a bowlful of food (approximately 25 scoops) with little spilling during 1 meal a day for 7 consecutive days.
Cup drinking	[Child] will participate in meals by drinking from a cup without a lid.	He drinks 4 ounces from a cup with no lid, 3 times a day, every day for 3 consecutive weeks.
Walking—play times, hangin’ out	[Child] will participate in play and hanging-out times by walking.	He walks 10 steps independently during these times, twice a day, every day for 2 weeks.
Initiate an interaction with a	[Child] will participate in free play,	He initiates interactions, using a child’s name, in two

friend, using his or her name	outside play, and centers by initiating interactions, using a child's name.	out of the situations (routines) given, in a day, for 5 consecutive days.
Play back and forth with an adult (taking turns)	[Child] will participate in play and hanging-out times by taking turns with an adult.	He engages in 6 turns in at least 1 of 3 different kinds of games and, at minimum, in every 1 of the 3 games in 1 week, for 3 consecutive weeks.
Drink from a sippy cup independently	[Child] will participate in meals by drinking from a sippy cup, independently.	He drinks 4 oz from a sippy cup, with no physical assistance, 3 times a day for 7 consecutive days.
Stay with one activity at centers for a reasonable time	[Child] will participate in centers by spending 5 minutes at any one activity.	He spends 5 minutes at any 1 centers activity on 3 days a week for 3 consecutive weeks.
Play with toys instead of wandering around the room	[Child] will participate in free play by playing with toys instead of wandering around the room.	He plays with toys for 5 minutes out of every 15 minutes of free play, twice a day, on 3 days a week, for 3 consecutive weeks.
Color efficiently, holding the crayon in a more sophisticated manner	[Child] will participate in art by holding the crayon with the point coming out the thumb side of his fist.	He colors in that fashion for most of the time he is coloring during every art activity for three consecutive weeks.
Follow 2-step commands in the classroom	[Child] will participate in circle, centers, small-toy play, music, meals, and toileting by following 2-step commands.	He follows 2-step commands in three of the situations (routines) given every day for 3 consecutive weeks.

Family-Level Goals

Informal goal	Specific goal	Criterion for accomplishment
Therapies more under Jo's control	Jo will revise the schedule of [Child's] therapies to suit her own needs	By [date]
Child care when Jo needs longer term care (e.g., during her medical treatments)	Jo will have child care lined up for when she needs longer term care	By [date]
Information on research, what other moms do, bedtime rituals	Julie will have information on research relevant to her child, on what other parents of similar children do, and on bedtime routines.	By [date]
Time for Chris and Julie	Chris and Julie will have 3 nights out.	By [date]

together [a very common outcome in many families]		
Sue get a new job	Sue will have information about potential new jobs	By [date]
New beds for kids	Sue will get new beds for the children	By [date]
Time for Gina to play with Maria and Emily (15-30 mins)	Gina will play with Maria and Emily, together, for 15-30 minutes a day.	4 days in 1 week.
Down time before dinner for family	Gina will arrange for the family to have down time before dinner	3 nights a week for 3 weeks.
Find child care	Gina will find acceptable child care for Emily.	By [date]
Maria (sister) cooperate	Maria will participate in play time, dressing, and meals by cooperating.	She does what she's told within 5 seconds 5 times a day for 5 consecutive days.
	(Alternative if sibling outcome is unacceptable in a system) Gina will get Maria to cooperate.	Gina will get Maria to do what she's told within 5 seconds 5 times a day for 5 consecutive days.
Hobby for Andrew (not video, not car)	Andrew will acquire a new hobby.	He participates in the activity at least once a week for 8 weeks.
Andrew to college	Andrew will enroll in a college course	By [date]
Info re: financial help	Ana and Andrew will have information about financial resources they might be eligible for.	They can list 4 investigated resources.
Lower Ana's stress	Ana will lower her stress levels.	She reports less stress by [date].
Time for Ana for herself (trustworthy child care) [<i>time for herself</i> a very common outcome across many mothers]	Ana will spend time without family, while Jenevae is in trustworthy child care.	She spends 2 hours a week without family, while Jenevae is in trustworthy child care.
Info on child care	Ana will have information on child care.	She has the names of three resources for child care.
Choose right kindergarten	Ali will choose a kindergarten with which she is happy.	By [date]
Friends for Stephan	Ali will provide Stephan with	She has five play dates by [date].

	opportunities to make friends.	
Time for whole family at bedtime	The whole family will spend time together at the children's bedtime.	They spend 15 minutes, 4 nights a week for 3 consecutive weeks.
Less chaotic when Ali comes home	Family time will be peaceful when Ali comes home.	Ali judges the first 30 minutes of re-entry as peaceful, 4 days a week for 3 consecutive weeks.
Do more things with Paige and Hailey (sisters of client child)	Rachel will spend time with Paige and Hailey.	She does one activity a day, on Mondays-Fridays, with Paige and Hailey for 3 consecutive weeks.
Rachel—info re: sleep and autism spectrum disorder	Rachel will have information on sleep and autism spectrum disorder.	By [date].
Jeff do things with Adam	Jeff (father) will do things with Adam.	He engages in 1 15-minute activity a day, every day of the week, for 3 consecutive weeks.
Family go somewhere after 5:00, without tantrums	The family will go out after 5:00, without [the child's] having a tantrum.	They go out once a week with no tantrums for 3 consecutive weeks.
Creative things to do with children	Natasha will engage in creative activities with the children.	She engages in 4 creative activities a week for 3 consecutive weeks.
Monitor allergy	Natasha will monitor [child's] allergies.	She records every day for 3 consecutive weeks whether he showed symptoms.
Teach Lauren to be flexible at play times	Natasha will teach Lauren to be flexible at play times.	Natasha shows she can teach Lauren by [date]. [This outcome could be stated as a child outcome for Lauren, the sister.]
Natasha work out with friends	Natasha will work out with friends	She works out with friends at least once a week for 4 consecutive weeks.