

IFSP Rating Scale

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Carefully read the description and refer to examples before you rate each applicable part of the IFSP. Detailed descriptions and examples are provided for ratings of "1," "3" and "5" for each item. If after referring to the examples and description, you are having difficulty deciding between a "1" and a "3," you may rate the item "2." Similarly, if you are having difficulty deciding between a "3" and a "5," rate the item a "4." Any time a complete item is missing, rate the item a "1." Do not discuss any of your ratings with anyone.

Present Level of Development

The Present Level of Development table is in yellow on the protocol. After rating each present level of development item, record the median score in the last column.

1. Language

For each developmental domain (Motor, Cognitive, Communication, Social-Emotional, and Adaptive) determine if results, strengths, and needs are written in family-friendly language. Writing that is obscure, technical, or complicated will be considered not family-friendly. Family-friendly language is clear and simple. There is little doubt that most any family would be able to understand the language used.

1. Assign a "1" to the domain if the author of the IFSP has used any undefined technical jargon or obscure or complicated language. (If a technical term is used but clearly defined, it does not count as jargon).

Examples

Gross Motor Area covers Advancing Postural Control. Skills that Henry has mastered in this area are; stands from supine using a sit up, runs, jumps a distance of 8 to 14 inches, climbs jungle gyms and ladders, walks upstairs using alternate feet and downstairs alone, throws ball into a box, rides tricycle using pedals, and walks on line in general direction.

Fine motor: David has no difficulties with visual responses and tracing. For grasping and prehension, he has most skills when just looking at his left hand. He is able to poke using his index finger. He is also able to point with his index finger. He is emerging with his ability to use a neat pincer as was as ability to grasp a crayon adaptively. He is emerging with his skill to rotate his forearm upward. He is also emerging with his ability to put tiny objects into small container. David presented with great difficulties with bilateral and midline skills. His highest skill level was transferring objects.

Other examples of technical jargon:

Had normal peripheral hearing in both ears
Has decreased age appropriate response to visual stimuli
Uses a pincer grasp
WNL (for within normal limits)
Consistently produced at least one one-word approximation

3. If the domain contains no technical jargon, but used language that does not give clear information about what the child was able to do, rate the domain "3." Any time scores are given with no further explanation, the item receives a "3." Any time there is a delay and needs are only services with no developmental needs listed, assign a rating of "3." An evaluation is an acceptable need and does not count as a service.

Example:

Skills Henry has mastered in this area are: Gestures spontaneously to indicate needs, shouts for attention, makes sounds in babbling, but often substitutes those sounds in words, shows understanding of words by appropriate behavior or gesture, identifies one body part, obeys 2 part commands, uses "self centered" pronouns, and uses 10-15 words spontaneously.

Other examples of unclear language:

Responded to 1 out of 11 visual prompts.
Showed what he wants or needs by using a few actions in a row
Understands possessive forms
Understands safety rules

5 If all information is written in a manner that would likely be clear to a family, rate the item "5."

Example:

Evie was very quiet during the observation portion of the assessment. She responded appropriately to the teacher's request especially if these requests were paired with pointing or gesturing. Mrs. Edwards reported Evie be adopted from China with the first twelve months of her life being emersed in Mandarin language. She reported Evie improving her ability to follow simple commands but continues with some difficulty. Evie says several single words but is vey inconsistent in combining two words to form a phrase.

2. Positiveness

Look at each domain on the Present Level of Development to determine if the author emphasized strengths.

1. Assign a "1" to the domain if the author of the IFSP has only described needs. Also assign "1" if words "unable to" or "can't" are used. If the strength listed is not related to the child's development in the corresponding area, rate the item "1."

Examples:

Functioning at 0 months in all areas of development.
2 SD delay in communication; [Strength] Supportive mom.
Unable to make word approximations.

3. If the author described both strengths and needs, but used more words to describe needs, rate the item "3."

Examples

Michael looks for a fallen object; bangs in play; manipulates a bell; pulls a string to secure an object; regards one or more pictures in a book; and looks into an empty cup for blocks. He needs to work on the following: holding one block and reaching for a second; holding both blocks simultaneously for at least 3 seconds; holding a bell by the handle and purposely ringing it; retaining the first two blocks for at least 3 seconds after visually attending to a third block; taking all of the blocks out of a cup; and placing at least one block in or over a cup.

5. If the author described both strengths and needs and used at least as many words to describe strengths as needs, rate the item "5."

Example:

During the observation portion Evie was observed to move from a sitting to standing position without support. She could also walk without any obvious weakness. Mrs. Edwards reported her having a bit of difficulty running as she is unsure of the safety of the area due to the visual weakness. Evie can go up and down steps with support and caution. Evie can release objects forward. During the fine motor portion Evie was observed to use the end of her index finger and thumb to pick up small objects, especially an M&M given to her by the teacher. She examined it closely before putting it in her mouth. Evie aligns objects for stacking and can build a tower several blocks high. She can scribble using a crayon or pencil.

3. Relevance

Look at the strengths and needs of each developmental domain to determine if the author provided information about skills and behaviors that are relevant to daily routines and activity settings or tasks from an instrument.

1. Assign a "1" to the domain if it consists of nonfunctional tasks from an instrument that the child did and did not complete.

Example:

Skills that Henry has mastered: points with index finger, scribbles spontaneously, builds tower using six cubes, turns pages in a book one at a time, places pegs in pegboard. Beginning skills in this area are: holds crayon with thumb and fingers instead of fist, places round square and triangular piece in formboard with no demonstration, and strings beads. Next skills for Henry to learn in this area are: imitating vertical and circular strokes, build three block train, paste on one side, and snip with scissors.

3. If the information includes nonfunctional tasks from the instrument but includes functional information on skills as well, rate the item "3."

Example:

Gross Motor Area covers Advancing Postural Control. Skills that Henry has mastered in this area are; stands from supine using a sit up, runs, jumps a distance of 8 to 14 inches, climbs jungle gyms and ladders, walks upstairs using alternate feet and downstairs alone, throws ball into a box, rides tricycle using pedals, and walks on line in general direction.

5. If the domain includes only information about skills and behaviors that are relevant to daily routines, rate the domain "5."

Example:

This portion of the assessment looks at how Evie interacts with adults and children. During the assessment Evie interacted with adults at the day care. She was compliant to their requests to line up and hold hands with the person beside you. Evie walked from the bathroom to her classroom following the teacher. Evie is learning to follow routines for mealtime and bath time. Evie interacted with children in the classroom She

responded to their question with "huh". She entertained herself by playing with the blocks and also allowed other children to participate. She watched some children as they played with the dolls. Evie did not initiate communication with the children due to limited spoken vocabulary.

Priorities and Concerns

The priorities and concerns table is blue on the protocol. Count the number of priorities and concerns listed on the IFSP and number the protocol.

4. Relevance

After rating Relevance for each priority, record the median score in the last column.

1. Assign a "1" to the priority if it is not likely to be compatible with participation in daily routines and activities. If the priority/concern appears to be an item from an assessment instrument, rate the priority a "1." If the priority is for the child to receive a service, rate the priority "1." If the priority is not a sentence, or at least a 5-word phrase, rate the priority a "1."

Examples:

The family wants child to stack blocks.

Parents wish for Michael to receive Occupational Therapy and Developmental Intervention through the First Steps program to address his developmental needs.

3. If the priority/concern may be necessary or useful for participation in daily routines or activities, but the rationale is not clear, rate the item "3." If only a developmental domain, not a behavior or skill, is given, rate the priority "3."

Examples:

The family wants Michale's communication to increase.

Family is concerned about walking and talking.

5. If the outcome is clearly needed necessary or useful for participation in this family's daily routines, rate the outcome "5."

Examples:

Family wants Evie to use utensils to eat a complete meal by herself.

Family wants Evie to participate in free play with peers at school without aggression.

Family wants Evie to be able to tell them what she wants by putting words together.

5. Thoroughness

The priorities and concerns table is blue on the protocol. Count the number of priorities and concerns listed on the IFSP and number the protocol. Only count those that are sentences or phrases with at least 5 words.

1. Assign a "1" if there are fewer than 3 priorities/concerns.
3. Assign a "3" if there are between 3 and 5 priorities/concerns.
5. Assign a "5" if there are at least 6 priorities/concerns.

6. Family Role

For each priority or concern, look ahead to the outcome statement pages. For those priorities that clearly are addressed in one or more outcomes, score the outcome "5." For those that are not addressed in one or more outcomes, rate the item "1." Divide this sum by the total number of concerns.

Outcome Statements

The outcomes table on the protocol is green. Star the CHILD LEVEL outcomes on the IFSP and number the table accordingly, using the outcome numbers listed on the IFSP, even if they are not in sequence (e.g., 2, 4, 5, 18). If a child level outcome appears to be a transition outcome, write a "t" after the number on the IFSP RS (e.g. 2, 4, 5, 18t). If more than 10 outcomes are included, only score the first 10.

7. Language

Look at each outcome statement and corresponding action steps to determine the level of family-centered language.

1. Assign a "1" to the outcome if the author of the IFSP has used any undefined technical jargon or obscure or complicated language. Any time the outcome is [Child] will receive _____ services, the item receives a "1." (If a technical term is used but clearly defined, it does not count as jargon).

Examples:

Child will use radial digital grasp to eat.
Evaluation will be conducted to evaluate tactile sensitivity.
[Child] will safely complete ambulation on uneven surface without falls for at least 5 consecutive attempts

3. If the outcome contains no technical jargon, but the outcome remains unclear, rate the domain "3." Although this is clear, it provides no information about a child or family outcome.

Examples:

[Child] will move his body from one place to another by himself.
[Child] will learn to care for herself.

- 5 If all information is written in a manner that makes it clear what the behavior or skill to be learned is, rate the item "5."

Examples:

Janie will participate in meals by feeding herself with a spoon consistently for 2 weeks.
Gloria will be able to prop herself up on her elbows while lying her tummy to look at her environment.

8. Relevance

Look at each outcome statement on the IFSP to determine if the outcome is likely to be relevant to daily routines and activities.

1. Assign a “1” to the outcome if the outcome is not likely to be necessary for development or functioning within routines.

Examples:

The family will transport Maddie to physical therapy center to increase motor skills.
Anna will stack 3 blocks.

3. If the outcome could be useful for participation in daily routines or activities, but no routines or activities are mentioned and the rationale is not evident, rate the item “3.”

Examples:

Nuserg will be able to finger feed using a teething biscuit
Ava will learn how to operate a switch toy
Liam will tolerate his hands being messy most of the time so that he can learn and explore his environment.

5. If the outcome is clearly relevant for participating in this family’s daily routines or activity settings, rate the outcome “5.”

Examples:

Spencer will move three feet by crawling on his hands and knees.
Liam will sit without screaming in a shopping cart for at least 15 minutes as Mom completes grocery shopping twice each week.
Liam will take at least five bites of 2 new foods each week so that he can have a larger variety of food available to him during meals.

9. Specificity

Look at each outcome statement on the IFSP to determine if the author used the language about the skill or behavior that is specific.

1. If the author does not define a behavior or other outcome that will happen, rate the item “1.” If the outcome is that a service will be provided, rate the outcome a “1.”

Examples:

- Family will receive service coordination services.
- Mom wants physical therapist to help with motor skills.
- Child will be evaluated by physical therapist.
- Family will search for appropriate child care.

3. Assign a “3” to the outcome if the author of the IFSP has used language that defines a behavior, but is not specific. You aren't sure how this behavior or skill looks.

Examples:

- Nuserg will learn how to take care of himself.
- Spencer will have better use of right arm and right leg.
- Ada will communicate wants and needs.
- Liam will tolerate his hands being messy most of the time so he can learn and explore his environment.

5. If the outcome includes a clear skill or behavior, rate the outcome a “5.”

Examples:

- Inta will participate in getting ready in the morning and for bed by dressing and undressing.
- Maddie will participate in meal times by feeding herself.
- Liam will sit without screaming in a shopping cart for at least 15 minutes as Mom completes grocery shopping twice each week.

10. Measurability

Look at each outcome statement on the IFSP to determine if the author included criteria that are measurable.

1. If the author does not include a measurable criterion for acquisition or completion, rate the item “1.” Also rate a “1” if the criterion used does not match the outcome.

Examples:

- Ada will hold her spoon with 80% accuracy.
- Spencer will communicate wants and needs.
- Maisie will play with toys.

3. Assign a “3” to the outcome if the author of the IFSP has included a measurable criterion for either acquisition or outcome completion, but not both.

Examples:

Max will participate in getting ready in the morning and for bed by dressing and undressing independently.
Inta will participate in circle time by sitting with the group for at least 5 minutes without being reminded.

5. If the outcome includes measurable criteria for both acquisition and completion, rate the outcome a “5.”

Examples:

Max will participate in getting ready in the morning and for bed by dressing and undressing independently at least 10 times within a week.
Inta will participate in circle time by sitting with the group for at least 5 minutes without being reminded, 5 days in a row.

11. Family Role

For each outcome, look ahead to the back to the priority and concerns statements. For those outcomes that clearly are addressed in one or more priority or concern, score the outcome “5.” For those that do not address one or more priority/concern, rate the item “1.” Divide this sum by the total number of concerns. (This does not mean merely a match in domain between priority and outcome).

Action Steps

The actions steps table on the protocol is orange. Number the outcomes on the IFSP the same way as you did for the outcome statements above, matching the numbers from the IFSP. Look at the actions steps that correspond with each outcome statement to score the following items.

12. Language

Determine the level of family-centered language. If more than 10 outcomes are included, only score the actions steps for the first 10.

1. Assign a “1” to the actions steps if the author of the IFSP has used any technical jargon or obscure or complicated language. If a technical word is used but explained or given a context using examples or definitions, it does not count as jargon. Any time the method is [Child] will receive _____ services, the item receives a “1.” Although this is clear, it provides no information about the support to be provided. (If a technical term is used but clearly defined, it does not count as jargon).

Examples:

OT will use vestibular stimulation
Therapist will focus on expressive vocabulary-action words and descriptive words, will use modeling.
Include a pressure vest for deep calming input; wrap Liam up in a snug blanket for proprioceptive feedback; roll back and forth on the floor while in blanket (i.e. “roll like a hot dog”)

3. If the actions steps contain no technical jargon, but the method remains unclear, rate the domain “3.”

Examples:

Developmental interventionist will coach the family.
DI Donna will provide family with strategies and activities to embed in their daily routines: encourage interaction; talk to her all the time.

5. If all information is written in a manner that clearly articulates the outcome, rate the item “5.”

Examples:

Shelly and the family will identify several playtime choices to give Spencer. Shelly will give the family strategies to use the choices to encourage Spencer to say the word instead of pointing.

13. Relevance

Look at each outcome statement and corresponding actions steps on the IFSP to determine if they could easily be incorporated into a family’s daily routines.

1. If the actions steps require special people, objects, or places, rate the outcome a “1.” Any time the actions steps imply only direct, hands-on services by a professional, rate the outcome “1.” Also, if actions steps are stated as outcomes rather than actions steps, rate the outcome “1.” Rate the outcome “1” if the actions steps merely say how to evaluate progress instead of how support will be provided.

Examples:

Begin pressure touch brushing program followed by joint compressions; begin deep pressure touch to upper and lower gums; wipe cheeks and lips slowly with firm pressure.

Completing “Mirror Play” – make teeth go bite-bite-bite, open your mouth wide and say “ahhhhh”, close your lips very tight and say “mmmmmm”, stick out your tongue, do raspberries and lip smacks, blow kisses, make funny faces with lots of mouth movement.

3. Assign a “3” to the outcome if the actions steps do not require a special person, place, or equipment but a routine or activity setting is not specified.

Examples:

Physical therapist and mom will work on encouraging walking.
Home trainer and mom will teach [child] to remove clothing and put it on.
SLP will coach and model strategies; SLP will offer handouts as necessary.
OT will provide handouts as needed; OT will educate the family on sensory integration and coach family on strategies.

5. If the actions steps clearly support intervention across routines and the family is the learner, rate the outcome a "5."

Examples:

PT Pamela will assist family with strategies to use during morning playtime, such as place a toy above her to encourage her to look up.
During meals, Inta's family will give her thick, pureed foods that are easily picked up by a spoon. OT will provide an adapted spoon and show her family how to give a small amount of support to help her learn the skill.

14. Family Role

Look at each outcome statement and corresponding actions steps on the IFSP to determine if intervention is to be implemented by families and other natural caregivers.

1. If the actions steps are to be carried out exclusively by the professional, rate the outcome a "1."

Example:

Occupational therapist will work with Nuserg on playing with toys appropriately.

3. Assign a "3" to the outcome if the action steps imply participation from the natural caregivers.

Examples:

Physical therapist will work with Maisie and her mom during home visits to encouraging walking while she plays.
During home visits, home trainer will work with mom and Spencer to teach him to remove and put on clothing.

5. If the actions steps clearly support intervention learned and implemented by natural caregivers, rate the outcome a "5."

Example:

OT will provide handouts as needed; OT will educate the family on sensory integration and coach family on strategies.
PT Pamela will help family with ideas for afternoon playtime, such as placing Gloria on her side and shaking her favorite rattle behind her head to encourage her to roll in that direction.

15. Consistency

Look at each outcome statement and corresponding actions steps to determine if they are directly related.

1. If the actions steps do not seem related to the outcome statement, rate the outcome a "1." Also, if procedures are stated as outcomes rather than procedures, rate the outcome "1." If procedures make judgmental statements about the family, rate "1."

Examples:

[Outcome] Michael will be able to progress in his eating skills so he can chew table foods safely.
[Action Steps] 1. Begin pressure touch brushing program followed by joint compressions.

3. Assign a "3" to the outcome if the actions steps indirectly support the outcome.

Examples:

[Outcome] Janie will use words to express when she wants something.
[Action Steps] Speech therapist will visit once a month.

5. If the actions steps clearly support the outcome, rate the outcome a "5."

Examples:

[Outcome] Spencer will use utensils to eat two complete meals by herself without much spilling each day for 2 weeks.
[Action Steps] Special instructor will show his parents and childcare provider a way to teach this by supporting his elbow, using less and less support each time.
[Outcome] Janie will sit up and crawl
[Action Steps] [Child] will receive a PT evaluation.

Services

The services table on the protocol is purple. Refer to the services page to determine the following:

16. Location

1. If all services are provided in a segregated setting, inconsistent with IDEA's definition of natural environment, rate the outcome a "1."

Example:

Nuserg receives early intervention services in our center based program consistent with mother's request.

3. Assign a "3" to the outcome if the service delivery model is mixed. If it is unclear where some services will occur, rate the statement "3."

Example:

Spencer receives home visits by the developmental interventionist each week. PT is provided at the clinic.

5. If only natural environment settings are referenced, rate the outcome a “5.”

Example:

Inta receives all early intervention services in her natural environments (home and child care center).

17. Model

Only score this item for plans with at least 2 providers in addition to the service coordinator. For this item, you will look at both the services page as well as each of the outcome pages.

1. If the total amount of time of services is evenly or nearly evenly distributed. Little or no integration of services on the outcomes pages (appears to have discipline-specific outcomes, with each supported by a single discipline).

Example:

1 hour per week of developmental intervention, speech therapy, and physical therapy and Separate goals for each service.

3. Assign a “3” if one service is provided the most frequently, but services on the outcomes pages are not integrated (appears to have some discipline-specific outcomes supported by a single discipline).

Example:

1 hour per week of developmental intervention, 1 hour per month of speech therapy, and 2 hours per month of physical therapy. Some outcomes do not include the primary provider.

5. Assign a “5” if one providing most frequent services, and services on the outcomes pages are integrated (primary service provider on each outcome, each of the other providers listed on some, but not all, outcomes).

Example:

1 hour per week of developmental intervention, 1 hour per month of speech therapy, and 2 hours per month of physical therapy. All outcomes include the primary provider. Other providers are included on outcomes with the primary provider.