



Natural Learning Environment Practices in Child Care

Getting Started: Early Intervention Support in Child Care Settings

How can EI providers prepare and plan for supporting a child in a child care setting?

Children learn best through participation in everyday activities and routines with the important caregivers in their lives. Early Intervention providers use natural learning environment practices to promote caregiver responsiveness, use child interests, and support children's participation in routines and activities.

Familiarize yourself with the setting:

- Find out the philosophy of the child care provider/program.
- Discover the expectations that the child care provider has for EI services.
- Communicate your expectations for working with the child care provider (coaching, practicing strategies during real-life routines).

Learn about the everyday activities and routines in the classroom:

- Learn what the schedule of the child care classroom is.
- Find out what centers, routines, and other activities happen in the classroom.
- Identify a plan for if the child care provider is absent or a new one starts.

Individualize your supports for the child in the context of the classroom:

- Identify the child's interests within the classroom.
- Ask what the child care provider's priorities for the child are within daily activities and routines.

- Use classroom observations to inform IFSP development.

Tip: Approach the partnership with curiosity and an open mind and reassure child care providers that you are there for support, not judgment.