

What Are Outcomes?

A Tool for Families who Have Children with Special Needs and Disabilities

As a parent or family member of a child with special needs, you might not think about asking your child questions like ***“What do you want to be when you grow up?”*** But taking the time to think long term and create “outcomes” can help your child reach the goals that matter most. By creating outcomes, you may learn about new options and resources.

This fact sheet provides information on creating outcomes which can be used for developing an Individual Service Plan (ISP) for the Medicaid Children’s Long Term Support Waiver, but it can also be very useful for any child as you and your family partner with schools, health care providers and community services and supports.

What is an Outcome?

An outcome is a statement that reflects the values, goals and expectations of your child and family. Outcomes show what is important to your child and family. An outcome might state what your child hopes to achieve, or it may say what you need in order to maintain or improve your child’s quality of life. Outcomes are defined by your child and family.

Why are Outcomes Important?

Outcomes focus on the concerns and issues that matter most to your child and family. They are centered on your child and family. By deciding on outcomes for your child and including them in your child’s Individual Service Plan, you can receive the services and supports you and your family need to achieve these goals.

How is an Outcome Written?

Outcomes are written as your child and family members tell them. Your child will be encouraged to share interests, abilities, choices, and hopes for the future. Family members and those close to the child will share information also. The individual outcomes for a child living with family may contain some outcomes for the whole family. An outcome may not be important to your child, but important to the family in providing care for that child. That outcome may be included in the Individual Service Plan. Although an Outcome may support the family as a whole, the Medicaid Children’s Long Term Support (CLTS) waiver can pay only for supports and services provided directly to your child.

How will the Support and Service Coordinator learn about our Outcomes?

Your Support and Service Coordinator will meet with you and ask you questions about your child and family. The Support and Service Coordinator will observe your child and family, and review written information.



Things to consider in defining outcomes:

- What is going well for your child and family right now?
- Who are the important people in the life of your child and family?
- Are there family members, friends, or others who are a support to your child and family? How do they help you?
- What is your child currently working on, maintaining, or wanting to change?
- Describe a typical day in the life of your child and family, be specific. What times are difficult for your child or family? What activities cause a problem? What is the best part of your child's day?
- What does your child most like to do?

How are outcomes included in the Plan?

Outcomes describe what is most important to you and your child. Outcome statements listed on the Individual Service Plan describe your concerns, desires, goals, solutions, or changes. The plan includes the supports and services that will help to achieve or maintain the Outcomes. It also lists those having a role or responsibility in achieving the outcomes. These statements will be written as you and your child have said them. You should agree to the outcome statements as they are written on the Individual Service Plan.

Examples of current child and family outcomes:

- I need to be able to get in and out of my house safely.
- I want John to play safely with his sister.
- I need a break so I can spend time with my other children sometimes.
- I need someone to watch Jill after school while I am at work.
- I want to graduate from High School.
- I need help keeping our family safe.

“What if I don't know if my child's plan includes outcomes?”

If you are not sure whether Outcomes have been included in your child's Individual Service Plan or you would like a copy of the Outcomes, contact your Service Coordinator and ask for a copy.

“What if things change and I want to have different outcomes included in my child's plan?”

Your child's Service Coordinator can meet with you and your family to talk about the changes in your child's life and can help update the Outcomes included in your child's Plan.

If you have questions or need help finding services contact the following organizations:

- [Regional Centers for Children and Youth with Special Health Care Needs](http://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/cyshcn/index.htm)
www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/cyshcn/index.htm
- [Wisconsin First Step](http://www.wisconsin.gov/firststep) , a 24-hour hotline and resource database, at 1-800-642-7837