

Background Information

EIP Regulations define natural environments as "settings that are natural or normal for the child's age peers who have no disability, including the home, a relative's home when care is delivered by the relative, child care setting, or other community setting in which children without disabilities participate." Services can be provided in home and community-based settings. A community-based setting is a natural environment in which children under three years of age are typically found, e.g., day care center, family day care, YMCA, library, or other community setting. Regulations also state that all early intervention services shall be provided in natural environments to the maximum extent appropriate to the needs of the child. If a service will not be provided in the child's natural environment, EI regulations require the Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) to include a justification as to why services will not be provided in a natural environment.

Natural Environment Cluster on the IFSP

The natural environment cluster on the IFSP captures information on the location of the child's services and if they will be provided in a natural environment. The following information in the natural environments cluster must be completed in NYEIS.

- *Are all of the services being provided are in the child's natural environment?* If the answer is "no", an explanation must be documented.
- *If any service is being provided in a group setting without typically developing peers, an explanation must be documented as to why the IFSP team agrees this is appropriate.*
- *If a child is in daycare, the user must list the ways the qualified professionals will train daycare providers to accommodate the needs of the child.*

Chart of Natural Environments by Method of Delivery

1) Basic and Extended Home & Community Based Individual/Collateral Visit

Location Type	Natural Environment = Yes	Natural Environment = No
Child's Home	X	
Agency Provider Site		X When the child receives services in a licensed day care that is owned/operated/leased by an EI provider AND the municipality authorizes a <u>different</u> EI provider to deliver services to the child at this location AND the child receives those services while fully participating in a day care "class" that is 50% or less typically developing children.
Caregiver Home	X	
Individual Provider - Home Office		X
Licensed Day Care	X • When the child receives services in a licensed community day care that	

Location Type	Natural Environment = Yes	Natural Environment = No
	<p>is owned/operated/leased by a day care provider that does NOT provide EI services and the municipality authorizes an EI provider to go to the day care location to deliver individual services to the child.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> When the child receives services in a licensed day care that is owned/operated/leased by an EI provider AND the municipality authorizes a <u>different</u> EI provider to deliver services to the child at this location AND the child receives those services while fully participating in a day care “class” that has at least 51% typically developing children. 	
Individual Provider – External Office		X
Licensed Family Day Care	X	
Hospital - Inpatient		X
Community-Based Site	X	
Hospital – Outpatient/Clinic		X
Neighborhood Site	X	
Residential Facility		X

2) Office/Facility Based Individual/Collateral Visit

Location Type	Natural Environment = Yes	Natural Environment = No
Licensed Day Care –	<p style="text-align: center;">X</p> <p>When the child receives services in a licensed day care that is owned/operated/leased by the <u>same</u> EI service provider authorized to provide services to the child at their own day care AND the child receives those services while fully participating in a day care “class” that has at least 51% typically developing children</p>	
Community –Based Site	X	
Agency Provider Site		X

Location Type	Natural Environment = Yes	Natural Environment = No
Individual Provider – Home Office		X
Individual Provider – External Office		X
Hospital -Inpatient		X
Hospital- Outpatient/Clinic		X
Residential Facility		X

3) Groups

When creating a group service authorization (SA) for a **basic group, basic group with 1:1 aide, enhanced group or enhanced group with 1:1 aide**, you must select a group type.

Group types:

- With 0 % typically developing children
- With 50 % or less typically developing children
- With at least 51 % typically developing children

Groups must include at least 51% typically developing peers in order for a setting to be considered a natural environment. Occasional absences by group members do not affect this ratio. The actual location of services may be: licensed day care, community-based site, provider location. As long as there are at least 51% typically developing peers in the group, it would be considered a natural environment, even if the group is held in a community setting, facility, or center based site,

Group Type	Natural Environment = Yes	Natural Environment = No
With 0% typically developing children		X
With 50% or less typically developing children		X
With at least 51% typically developing children	X	

* The following groups are not included in the natural environment calculation:
 Parent/Child Group, Family/Caregiver Support Group, Sibling Support Group