

**DDD-PI-082**

To: Regional DD Program Administrators  
Regional DD Case Managers  
Infant Development Coordinators

From: Mark Kolling, Director  
Developmental Disability Unit

Date: July 26, 1999

Subject: Early Intervention Natural Environments

Effective Date: August 1, 1999

It is the policy of the Developmental Disabilities Unit of the North Dakota Department of Human Services that, to the maximum extent appropriate, early intervention services for infants and toddlers with developmental delays or disabilities are provided in natural environments. Services are to be delivered in settings other than natural environments only when the child cannot achieve early intervention outcomes satisfactorily in a natural environment.

Natural environment means a setting that is natural or normal for infants and toddlers who have no disabilities, including home and community settings. Natural environments will vary from child to child. Family routines and community resources and opportunities must be considered when identifying environments in which evaluations and assessments will be conducted and Individual Family Service Plan (IFSP) outcomes will be implemented and supported.

The IFSP must identify the natural environments in which Early Intervention services will be provided and how the child and family will be supported in participating in naturally occurring learning opportunities. The IFSP must also include a justification of the extent, if any, to which early intervention services will not be delivered in a natural environment.

For some children, childcare settings are natural environments, but childcare is not an early intervention service and Part C funds will not be used to purchase childcare services. Infant Development staff and Developmental Disabilities Case Managers will support and facilitate inclusion of IFSP outcomes in childcare settings, help parents locate appropriate childcare, and assist parents in accessing or developing other opportunities for their child to interact with peers.

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