



Technical Assistance Bulletin

TO: WV Birth to Three Payees, Practitioners, and Service Coordinators
WV Birth to Three Regional Administrative Units

FROM: Mel Woodcock, CSPD and Policy Coordinator
WV Birth to Three

DATE: **August 1, 2007**

ISSUE: **Clarification of the Provision of Services in Community Settings**

Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) requires that "to the maximum extent appropriate to meet the needs of the child, early intervention services must be provided in natural environments, including home and community settings in which children without disabilities participate." Natural environment is not just a place where services are provided but the way services are provided through the naturally occurring learning opportunities that happen within the context of the child and family's daily activities and routines. Examples of naturally occurring learning opportunities that happen within typical family activities and routines include: mealtimes, bath time, playing in the park, visiting the library or grandmother's house, gardening, feeding the ducks at the pond, playing a game of catch with brother, etc.

There may be rare occasions when a service need is identified through the IFSP process and a practitioner cannot be located who can support the child and family within the child and family's daily activities and routines at home or within the local community environment. The family may be required to travel to access the service in another town, county or even another region of the state. Any time a service is provided outside of the typical home and/or community settings in which the child lives, learns or plays, and the family is traveling to access the service, WV Birth to Three will consider the location as a Service Provider Location even if the location is a park or other community setting. The WV Birth to Three IFSP team must justify why the team has chosen the other environment and how the family will be supported to be able to generalize activities into their natural home and community settings.

If you have questions about this clarification, please contact your Regional Technical Assistance Specialist or email dhrwvbt@wv.gov.