

Definition of Functional Assessment

Functional assessment is a continuous collaborative process that combines observing, asking meaningful questions, listening to family stories, and analyzing individual child skills and behaviors within naturally occurring everyday routines and activities across multiple situations and settings.

The subgroup that worked on the definition established a priority to describe what functional assessment looks like throughout the early intervention process. For the purposes of conversations and training materials, the subgroup offers the following visual representation example and definitions.

Functional assessment is a **continuous collaborative process** that combines **observing, asking meaningful questions, listening** to family stories, and **analyzing** individual child skills and behaviors within **naturally occurring** everyday routines and activities across **multiple situations and settings**.

CONTINUOUS-from referral throughout the early intervention experience

COLLABORATIVE PROCESS- building and maintaining rapport and relationships among early intervention team members including the service providers and family members/caregivers

OBSERVING- observations, including videos, of the child in the home and in other natural environments

ASKING MEANINGFUL QUESTIONS-promoting a conversation with the family using open-ended questions to convey respect that enhances family-centered services

LISTENING-connecting with the family to gain a comprehensive understanding of their priorities and concerns based on their resources, values and culture

ANALYZING- putting together information about the child from all sources (parent report, observation, age-anchored assessment tool, etc.) in order to understand the child's functioning compared to same age peers

NATURALLY OCCURRING -the activities and routines the child participates in that are unique to the family's culture, community, and values

MULTIPLE SITUATIONS AND SETTINGS- a skill becomes mastered when a child is able to do it in multiple places with multiple people