Enhancing Recognition of High Quality, Functional

IFSP Outcomes



A training activity for Infant and Toddler service providers

Anne Lucas Kathi Gillaspy Mary Louise Peters Joicey Hurth

with support from Dathan Rush, M'Lisa Shelden, Debbie Cate and Megan Vinh







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Enhancing Recognition of High Quality, Functional IFSP Outcomes

A training activity for Infant and Toddler service providers

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Background

This training activity was created to support participants' understanding of the criteria needed to develop and write high quality, participation-based Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) outcomes. The term "functional" is often used to describe what outcomes ought to be, yet many providers struggle to define what makes an outcome "functional." Still others struggle with making outcomes meet the criteria set forth in regulations, as well as have meaning for families. Reviews of existing resources developed by national experts provided a framework for considering IFSP outcomes to determine if the outcomes are high quality and support the child's participation in everyday routines and activities.

The key to supporting the development of high quality, participation-based outcomes is creating a clear and deliberate link between every step of the IFSP process, beginning with interactions with the family during initial contacts and referral through the development of the IFSP, and beyond. Critical to this process is the fundamental belief that children learn best through their participation in everyday activities and routines with familiar people. Also critical to this process are three important skills for providers:

- The ability to understand how to gather information from families throughout the process,
- The ability to conduct a functional assessment that gives a clear picture of the child's abilities and needs in the child's natural, everyday settings, activities and routines, and;
- The ability to use the information to develop outcomes.

Throughout the process of gathering information from families, special attention should be paid to the information the family shares about what's working well for them, as well as what is challenging. When paired with the provider's knowledge of early development and functional assessment occurring in multiple situations and settings, and over time, information from families provides all that is needed to develop high quality, participation-based outcomes.

An IEP Goal-oriented version of this activity is available at the following URL:

http://www.ectacenter.org/~pdfs/pubs/rating-iep.pdf

Criteria Defining High Quality, Participation-Based IFSP Outcomes

The Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center reviewed expert-generated resources and identified six key criteria that define IFSP Outcomes as high quality and participation-based. They are:

- The outcome is necessary and functional for the child's and family's life. This means that the outcome focuses on ways to support the child and family's participation in community life and family activities that are important to them. For the outcome to be necessary and functional, it should benefit the child by focusing on social relationships, acquiring and using knowledge and skills, and/or using appropriate actions to meet needs. It should also help the child and/or family improve participation in chosen activities and/or help them begin new activities that are important to them. The determination of what is necessary and functional is not based upon what the practitioner thinks is meaningful and functional for the family.
- The outcome reflects real-life contextualized settings. This means that outcome statements reflect the everyday activity settings and routines for the child and family. This includes mealtime, bathing and riding in the car, as well as routines and activities that are specific to the individual family. Specific isolated skills (e.g., test items that were missed during evaluation) are not considered real-life or contextualized.
- The outcome integrates developmental domains and is discipline-free. This means that the outcome is written to describe the child's participation in routines and everyday activity settings, promoting skill development across multiple domains, which can be addressed by any member of a child's IFSP team. It also means that the outcome should be written so that the child and/or family are the "actors" or persons doing something rather than the occupational therapist or early interventionist. For example, an outcome might state, "Annabelle will help her dad with the laundry by pulling up and standing at the dryer on her own and putting clothes into the laundry basket with her dad close by", as opposed to "Annabelle will pull to a standing position at the couch and maintain her balance."
- The outcome is jargon-free, clear and simple. This means that the outcome is written so that is understandable by the family and the general public, and does not include professional jargon or practitioner "speak." For example, the outcome should describe how the child will move, such as reaching up or down for toys, instead of using phrases like "range of motion." Another example would be wording an outcome so that it describes a child's ability to speak words clearly to make herself understood, rather than using the term "articulation".

- The outcome emphasizes the positive, not the negative. This means that the focus of the whole outcome statement is positive. It also means that the outcome states what the child and/or family will do, rather than what they will not do or stop doing. If there are any negative words within the statement, it is not a positively worded outcome. For example, the outcome should state "Johnny will chew and swallow food when eating with his family" rather than "Johnny will not spit out food when eating with his family."
- The outcome uses active words rather than passive words. This means using
 words that encourage a child and/or family's active participation or engagement.
 Active words include eat, play, talk, walk, etc. and indicate what the child or family
 will do. Passive words reflect a state of being (e.g., tolerate and receive), or a
 change or lack of change in performance (e.g., increase, decrease, improve, and
 maintain).

When the child's contextual information is available (e.g., assessment information, the child's IFSP), the following IFSP outcome criteria should also be evaluated:

- The outcome is based on the family's priorities and concerns, and
- The outcome describes both the child's strengths and needs based on the information from the initial evaluation and ongoing assessment.

IFSP Outcomes Rating Activity

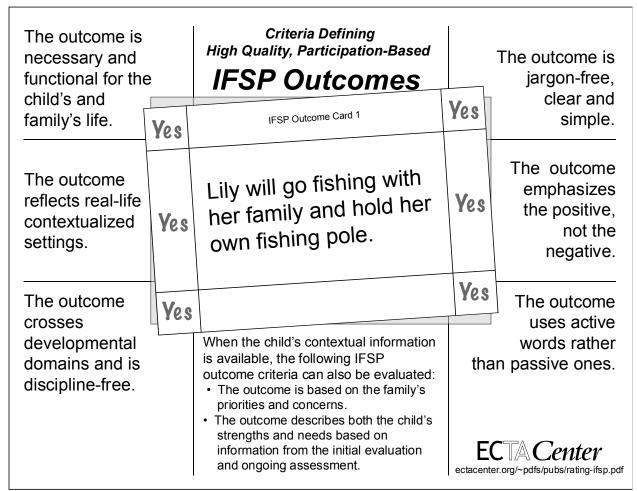
A. Materials Preparation

- 1. Print the Criteria Defining High Quality, Participation-Based IFSP Outcomes (Appendix A on page 9) and the Answer Key to Rating High Quality, Participation-Based IFSP Outcomes (Appendix E on page 25) for each participant.
- 2. The **IFSP Outcome Cards** (Appendix B on page 11) contain 22 IFSP outcome statements (two per page). Print the outcomes statements on card stock and cut on lines indicated for a 4 x 6" card, or print on plain paper and glue to 4 x 6" index card.
- 3. Print the **IFSP Outcomes Placemat** (Appendix C on page 23) on a sheet of 8½ x 11" paper and laminate.
 - NOTE: The placemat included in this publication is $8\frac{1}{2} \times 11^n$ in size so that they may be printed on any standard printer. A larger placemat measuring 11 x 17" in size is available for download from the following URL:
 - http://www.ectacenter.org/~pdfs/pubs/rating-ifsp-placemat-11x17.pdf
 - In instances where this activity will be used with IEP-oriented groups as well, the IFSP placemat may be printed on the same paper (front and back) and/or laminated for durability.
- 4. One set of outcome statements will make 22 cards. One set of 22 cards goes with each placemat. Make as many sets as needed for the groups completing the activity.

B. Activity Instructions

The rating activity is designed to be used in multiple ways with different kinds of groups. Groups that are either familiar with the IFSP or in groups where participants are mixed in their experience may use it. In those situations, it is suggested that less familiar participants sit at tables with others who are familiar with the IFSP, so that they can work through the criteria together. The recommended group size is 3-6 people.

- 1. Provide a copy of the **Criteria Defining High Quality, Participation-Based IFSP Outcomes** to each participant.
- 2. Give **one placemat** and one set of **22 IFSP Outcome Cards** to each group. **Be sure to shuffle the cards** so that outcome statements are *not* in the order they are on the answer key.
- 3. Have each group put a card in the center of the placemat so that the printed grid on the card matches up with the placemat (shown below):



4. Within each small group, have the participants discuss and rate the outcome statement by writing "yes" or "no" in each quadrant, based on whether the statement meets each of corresponding criteria. Encourage participants to refer to the Criteria Defining High Quality, Participation-Based IFSP Outcomes while completing the ratings for each statement.

- 5. Repeat for each card.
- 6. Have the participants separate the cards into "high quality" statements and "substandard" statements. Statements that fail to meet all criteria (all those with a "no" in any quadrant) go into the "substandard" pile.
- 7. Distribute the **Answer Key to Rating IFSP Outcomes** (Appendix D on page 25). Ask your participants to compare their answers with the answer key.
- 8. Debrief with the group, asking questions such as:
 - Where did you get stuck with an outcome statement? (Listen for varying interpretations of the criteria.)
 - How might this activity help you in your work and within your team?
 - What additional supports do you need to help you successfully identify whether or not an IFSP Outcome is of high quality and is participation-based?

Those using the activity to fit the context of the participants and their learning needs may add other questions to the debriefing.

NOTE: The criteria described in the bottom center box of the placemat should not be rated during the training activity. Be sure to tell participants that they are criteria to be considered when the child's IFSP and assessment information is available, but for the purposes of the activity, they are reference information only.

Alternate Activity

A blank **Worksheet for Rating IFSP Outcomes** (Appendix E on page 28) of the activity has also been provided for the IFSP Outcome Cards. Provide copies of the worksheets to participants or groups with or without using the placemats or cards. Encourage participants to refer to the **Criteria Defining High Quality, Participation-Based IFSP Outcomes** (Appendix A on page 9) while completing the ratings for each statement.

In this version of the rating activity, participants write "yes" or "no" in each box under the criteria to rate outcomes. Participants can then compare their answers with the **Answer Key to Rating IFSP Outcomes** (Appendix D on page 25).

Tell us what you think.



If you used this training activity, consider evaluating it!

http://ectacenter.org/eval

Your feedback is important to us.

Thank you for your time and attention!

Appendix A	Appendix A	1:
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Criteria Defining High Quality, Participation-Based IFSP Outcomes

Criteria Defining High Quality, Participation-Based IFSP Outcomes

- The outcome is necessary and functional for the child's and family's life. This means that the outcome focuses on ways to support the child and family's participation in community life and family activities that are important to them. For the outcome to be necessary and functional, it should benefit the child by focusing on social relationships, acquiring and using knowledge and skills, and/or using appropriate actions to meet needs. It should also help the child and/or family improve participation in chosen activities and/or help them begin new activities that are important to them. The determination of what is necessary and functional is not based upon what the practitioner thinks is meaningful and functional for the family.
- The outcome reflects real-life contextualized settings. This means that outcome statements reflect the everyday activity settings and routines for the child and family. This includes mealtime, bathing and riding in the car, as well as routines and activities that are specific to the individual family. Specific isolated skills (e.g., test items that were missed during evaluation) are not considered real-life or contextualized.
- The outcome integrates developmental domains and is disciplinefree. This means that the outcome is written to describe the child's
 participation in routines and everyday activity settings, promoting
 skill development across multiple domains, which can be addressed
 by any member of a child's IFSP team. It also means that the
 outcome should be written so that the child and/or family are the
 "actors" or persons doing something rather than the occupational
 therapist or early interventionist. For example, an outcome might
 state, "Annabelle will help her dad with the laundry by pulling up
 and standing at the dryer on her own and putting clothes into the
 laundry basket with her dad close by" as opposed to, "Annabelle
 will pull to a standing position at the couch and maintain her



- The outcome is jargon-free, clear and simple. This means that the outcome is written so that is understandable by the family and the general public, and does not include professional jargon or practitioner "speak." For example, the outcome should describe how the child will move, such as reaching up or down for toys, instead of using phrases like "range of motion." Another example would be wording an outcome so that it describes a child's ability to speak words clearly to make herself understood, rather than using the term "articulation".
- The outcome emphasizes the positive, not the negative. This means that the focus of the whole outcome statement is positive. It also means that the outcome states what the child and/or family will do, rather than what they will not do or stop doing. If there are any negative words within the statement, it is not a positively worded outcome. For example, the outcome should state "Johnny will chew and swallow food when eating with his family" rather than "Johnny will not spit out food when eating with his family."
- The outcome uses active words rather than passive words. This means using words that encourage a child and/or family's active participation or engagement. Active words include eat, play, talk, walk, etc. and indicate what the child or family will do. Passive words reflect a state of being (e.g., tolerate and receive), or a change or lack of change in performance (e.g., increase, decrease, improve, and maintain).

Appendix I	B:
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IFSP Outcome Cards

Lily will go fishing with her family and hold her own fishing pole.	Carefully cut and detach these two cards to include them in the activity. The gridded lines on these cards match up with the IFSP Placemat in Appendix B and are used to write in a "yes" or "no"
 	 syes of no answer. ★ Cut here
IFSP Outcome Card 2	Each card is numbered to make it easy to
Romeo will go visit grandma and ride in his car seat all the way to her house.	review and match up with the worksheet in Appendix D and Answer Key in Appendix C.

Kimmie will play with her toys so Grandma can cook breakfast and get the older kids off to school.	Carefully cut and detach these two cards to include them in the activity. The gridded lines on these cards match up with the IFSP Placemat in Appendix B and are used to write in a "yes" or "no" answer.
Leroy will play together with his brother while his mom is making meals and express himself using gestures and words.	

IFSP Outcome Card 5	Carefully cut and detach these two cards to
Kamika will sleep through the night.	include them in the activity. The gridded lines on these cards match up with the IFSP Placemat in Appendix B and are used to write in a "yes" or "no"
IFSP Outcome Card 6	 answer.
Marcus will play in the backyard getting around on his own using his walker.	to make it easy to review and match up with the worksheet in Appendix D and Answer Key in Appendix C.

Walker will greet friends at story time at the library.	Carefully cut and detach these two cards to include them in the activity. The gridded lines on these cards match up with the IFSP Placemat in Appendix B and are used to
	 write in a "yes" or "no" answer.
IFSP Outcome Card 8	Each card is numbered
Phu will eat enough food so he can gain weight and not have to have surgery.	to make it easy to review and match up with the worksheet in Appendix D and Answer Key in Appendix C.

Miles will be happy and relaxed when his mom leaves him at child care.	Carefully cut and detach these two cards to include them in the activity. The gridded lines on these cards match up with the IFSP Placemat in Appendix B and are used to write in a "yes" or "no" answer.
Ahmet will get to eat what he wants during mealtimes by pointing or looking at the choices his parents provide.	Each card is numbered to make it easy to review and match up with the worksheet in Appendix D and Answer Key in Appendix C.

Dahlia will join the family on short hikes at Upper Creek Falls while riding comfortably in her infant carrier.	Carefully cut and detach these two cards to include them in the activity. The gridded lines on these cards match up with the IFSP Placemat in Appendix B and are used to write in a
 IFSP Outcome Card 12	 "yes" or "no" answer.
Davis will talk more and pronounce words better.	Each card is numbered to make it easy to review and match up with the worksheet in Appendix D and Answer Key in Appendix C.

Bonnie will use a pincer grasp to flip a switch.	Carefully cut and detach these two cards to include them in the activity. The gridded lines on these cards match up with the IFSP Placemat in Appendix B and are used to write in a "yes" or "no" answer.
Marta will participate in range of motion and strengthening exercises.	Each card is numbered to make it easy to review and match up with the worksheet in Appendix D and Answer Key in Appendix C.

Robin will stop having tantrums at separation from primary caregiver when going to day care.	Carefully cut and detach these two cards to include them in the activity. The gridded lines on these cards match up with the IFSP Placemat in Appendix B and are used to write in a "yes" or "no" answer.
Miguel will improve his sleeping patterns 4 out of 5 times.	Each card is numbered to make it easy to review and match up with the worksheet in Appendix D and Answer Key in Appendix C.

Angel will participate reciprocal turn taking during one-to-one facilitation.		Carefully cut and detach these two cards to include them in the activity. The gridded lines on these cards match up with the IFSP Placemat in Appendix B and are used to write in a "yes" or "no" answer.
The occupational therapist will assist J in grasping objects.	Jana	Each card is numbered to make it easy to review and match up with the worksheet in Appendix D and Answer Key in Appendix C.

	1	
IFSP Outcome Card 19		Carefully cut and detach these two cards to
Marcus will stack 4 blocks.		include them in the activity. The gridded lines on these cards match up with the IFSP Placemat in Appendix B and are used to write in a "yes" or "no" answer.
IFSP Outcome Card 20		Each card is numbered
Lanesha will gradually stop eating baby food and eat more solid foods.		to make it easy to review and match up with the worksheet in Appendix D and Answer Key in Appendix C.

Thomas will put up with lying on his stomach for 10 minutes without crying.	Carefully cut and detach these two cards to include them in the activity. The gridded lines on these cards match up with the IFSP Placemat in Appendix B and are used to
IFSP Outcome Card 22	write in a "yes" or "no" answer. Cut here Each card is
I want my child to walk.	numbered to make it easy to review and match up with the worksheet in Appendix D and Answer Key in Appendix C.

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IFSP Outcomes Placemat

ectacenter.org/~pdfs/pubs/rating-ifsp.pdf negative words rather The outcome is The outcome emphasizes the positive, not the The outcome uses active than passive ones. clear and jargon-free, simple. ECTA Center When the child's contextual information outcome criteria can also be evaluated: The outcome describes both the child's High Quality, Participation-Based The outcome is based on the family's information from the initial evaluation IFSP Outcomes Place Card Here strengths and needs based on is available, the following IFSP Criteria Defining and ongoing assessment. priorities and concerns. functional for the The outcome is reflects real-life domains and is necessary and developmental contextualized discipline-free. The outcome The outcome family's life. child's and settings crosses

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Answer Key to Rating IFSP Outcomes

Answer Key to Rating IFSP Outcomes

Participation-based, High Quality vs. Skills-based, Substandard

EC Center

Rating Criteria:1

- The outcome is necessary and functional for the child's and family's life.
- The outcome reflects real-life contextualized settings.
- The outcome integrates developmental domains and is discipline-free.
- The outcome is jargon-free, clear and simple.
- The outcome emphasizes the positive, not the negative.
- The outcome uses active words rather than passive ones.

The following table uses the word "Yes" to mean that the outcome meets the criteria listed, and "No" to mean that the outcome does not meet the criteria listed. A participation-based, high quality outcome is one that meets **all** of the criteria.

		Meets	Meets Criteria? — Yes or <i>No</i>	- Yes or N	0	
Sample IFSP Outcomes ²	Necessary/ Functional	Real-life Contextual Settings	Crosses Domains/ Discipline- Free	Jargon- Free	Positive, Not Negative	Active, Not Passive
1. Lily will go fishing with her family and hold her own fishing pole.	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Romeo will go visit grandma and ride in his car seat all the way to her house.	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
 Kimmie will play with her toys so Grandma can cook breakfast and get the older kids off to school. 	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
4. Leroy will play together with his brother while his mom is making meals and express himself using gestures and words.	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
5. Kamika will sleep through the night.	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
6. Marcus will play in the backyard getting around on his own using his walker.	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

When the child's contextual information (medical or developmental information, evaluation and assessment results, family interview, etc.) is available, the following IFSP outcome criteria can also be evaluated:

The OUTCOME is based on the family's priorities and concerns.

The OUTCOME describes both the child's strengths and needs based on information from the initial evaluation or ongoing assessment. ² Sample outcome statements provided by Dathan Rush and M'Lisa Shelden of the Family, Infant and Preschool Program, Morganton, NC

		Meets	Meets Criteria? –	- Yes or No	lo I	
Sample IFSP Outcomes ²	Necessary/ Functional	Real-life Contextual Settings	Crosses Domains/ Discipline- Free	Jargon- Free	Positive, Not Negative	Active, Not Passive
7. Walker will greet friends at story time at the library.	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
8. Phu will eat enough food so he can gain weight and not have to have surgery.	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
9. Miles will be happy and relaxed when his mom leaves him at child care.	Yes	Yes	Yes	sə,	Yes	Yes
10. Ahmet will get to eat what he wants during mealtimes by pointing or looking at the choices his parents provide.	Yes	Yes	Yes	sə,	Yes	Yes
11. Dahlia will go with the family on short hikes at Upper Creek Falls while riding comfortably in her infant carrier.	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
12. Davis will talk more and pronounce words better.	Yes	No	No	Хes	Yes	Yes
13. Bonnie will use a pincer grasp to flip a switch.	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes
14. Marta will participate in range of motion and strengthening exercises.	No	No	ON	oN	Yes	No
15. Robin will stop having tantrums at separation from primary caregiver when going to day care.	Yes	Yes	Yes	oN	No	Yes
16. Miguel will improve his sleeping patterns 4 out of 5 times.	Yes	No	Yes	oN	Yes	No
17. Angel will participate in reciprocal turn taking during one-to-one facilitation.	No	No	Yes	oN	Yes	No
18. The occupational therapist will assist Jana in grasping objects.	No	No	No	oN	Yes	No
19. Marcus will stack 4 blocks.	No	No	Yes	Sə	Yes	Yes
20. Lanesha will gradually stop eating baby food and eat more solid foods.	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
21. Thomas will put up with lying on his stomach for 10 minutes without crying.	No	No	Yes	Yes	No	No
22. I want my child to walk.	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	No

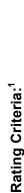
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Worksheet for Rating IFSP Outcomes

Worksheet for Rating IFSP Outcomes

Participation-based, High Quality vs. Skills-based, Substandard

EC Center



- The outcome is necessary and functional for the child's and family's life.
- The outcome reflects real-life contextualized settings.
- The outcome integrates developmental domains and is discipline-free.
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The following table uses the word "Yes" to mean that the outcome meets the criteria listed, and "No" to mean that the outcome does not meet the criteria listed. A participation-based, high quality outcome is one that meets **all** of the criteria.

			Meets	Meets Criteria? — Yes or No	- Yes or No	0	
San	Sample IFSP Outcomes ²	Necessary/ Functional	Real-life Contextual Settings	Crosses Domains/ Discipline- Free	Jargon- Free	Positive, Not Negative	Active, Not Passive
1.	1. Lily will go fishing with her family and hold her own fishing pole.						
2.	2. Romeo will go visit grandma and ride in his car seat all the way to her house.						
3.	 Kimmie will play with her toys so Grandma can cook breakfast and get the older kids off to school. 						
4.	4. Leroy will play together with his brother while his mom is making meals and express himself using gestures and words.						
5.	5. Kamika will sleep through the night.						
6.	6. Marcus will play in the backyard getting around on his own using his walker.						

When the child's contextual information (medical or developmental information, evaluation and assessment results, family interview, etc.) is available, the following IFSP outcome criteria can also be evaluated:

The OUTCOME is based on the family's priorities and concerns.

The OUTCOME describes both the child's strengths and needs based on information from the initial evaluation or ongoing assessment. ² Sample outcome statements provided by Dathan Rush and M'Lisa Shelden of the Family, Infant and Preschool Program, Morganton, NC

		Meets	Meets Criteria? —	- Yes or No	0	
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7. Walker will greet friends at story time at the library.						
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 Marta will participate in range of motion and strengthening exercises. 						
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16. Miguel will improve his sleeping patterns 4 out of 5 times.						
17. Angel will participate in reciprocal turn taking during one-to-one facilitation.						
18. The occupational therapist will assist Jana in grasping objects.						
19. Marcus will stack 4 blocks.						
20. Lanesha will gradually stop eating baby food and eat more solid foods.						
21. Thomas will put up with lying on his stomach for 10 minutes without crying.						
22. I want my child to walk.						

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Appendix F:

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