

# Ecomap Script

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## ***Script with the Parent:***

The ecomap is a simple tool used to help us plan interventions with your family and child. It also helps us to consider the specific resources and needs of each family as we develop the IFSP/IEP.

I would like us to work together to identify all of the different types of people who currently provide support or help you and your child. This might include family members, friends, church friends, neighborhood friends, etc. Support can come in many different forms including friendship, a listening ear, help with child care, spiritual support etc.

Let's start with your immediate family and more informal supports. We'll start by putting your child's name in the middle box along with the people who live with him/her. Then we will draw more squares with the people you identify as informal supports.

## ***Categories and examples of potential family supports to ask about:***

<b>Category</b>	<b>Example</b>	<b>Type of Support</b>
Family	grandparent	financial, emotional
Friends	friend of mom	friendship
Work	work friend of dad	friendship, time away
Neighborhood	next door neighbor	child care
Church	church member	transportation
Community	case worker	housing, financial assistance
Child care	teacher	child care, parent education
Intervention services	physical therapist	early intervention
Mental Health	counselor	emotional support, parent educ.
Medical/health	physician	medical care

## ***Good questions to ask:***

How often do you see or talk with this person?

How are things going with them?

If something cool happened with one of your children, who would you call?

## ***Wrapping up the ecomap:***

Ask the family "Does this picture look like what we talked about? Should I change anything?" followed by giving the family an opportunity to add to or subtract anything they wish. Most any family can be asked "What do think about this picture?"

If the family says, "That's a lot of people," you can say things like, "You're right. You have a lot of support" (informal supports with thick lines) and, if they have lots of formal supports, "We'll try not to complicate your life even further," which sets you up for streamlined service decision making.

If the family says, “I don’t have a lot of people, do I?” which they rarely do, you can say, “True. If you want to build this up, we can help you with that.” If you think it looks pretty thin, you can say, “If you’re happy with this, great. If you want to get connected to more people, we can help with that.”

“This really helped me get to know you and your family. I’d like to keep it so that as we develop the IFSP, we can use this information as you see fit to address your priorities. It will help make the team’s recommendations more relevant to you and your family’s life.”

“Just like all other information you share with me (and the team), it will be kept confidential and only shared with people for whom you have given permission. Would you like me to make you a copy?”

***About the ecomap:***

The ecomap facilitates (1) identification of sources of family support that can be utilized during service provision, (2) identification of information that will empower families and assist in obtaining needed services for their child and family, and (3) decision making regarding currently used and needed resources required of family for services and supports (e.g. the family needs to take time off from work to drive the child to therapy). One of the biggest benefits is that it lets the family know that our work is not just about the child, that it begins with the family. Very simply, it is a “drawing” that depicts gaps in resources or relationships as well as helping to identify conflicting or stressful relationships. When used with families who are already receiving services, it reviews the family’s use of formal and informal supports. Often we overlook informal resources, immediately arranging for formal programs or organizations. The ecomap helps to avoid the “got-a-need, get-a-service” phenomenon which can drain family time, energy and resources. A comparison of ecomaps can help measure changes occurring over time; especially in complicated situations, and they support services in natural environments because they help identify where and with whom the child and family spend a lot of time (e.g. child spends time at grandpa and grandma’s house).