

## Natural Supports: Accomplishments

1. Presence
2. Choice and Autonomy
3. Competence
4. Respect
5. Participation

- John O'Brien

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## Natural Supports: Definition 1

The operational definition of natural supports developed and used by participants states that natural supports are "human or technical resources that are available or can be developed in a setting to facilitate integration, acceptance, and satisfaction, and to promote the goals and interests of all individuals in the setting." Natural supports were further defined as organizational supports, physical supports, social supports, training supports, service supports, and community supports (Trach & Shelden, 1993).

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## Natural Supports: Definition 2

“It refers to enhancing or linking individuals to existing supports in an environment that are available either informally or formally.”

- Fabian, Edelman & Leedy, 1993

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## Natural Supports: Definition 3

“All the assistance typically available from an employer and other employees that can be used to learn job skills and sustain employment.”

- Michael Callahan, 1992

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#### Natural Supports: Definition 4

“A process for linking individuals to existing social supports in the work environment that are either formally or informally (from coworker and peers on the job) or formally (from supervisors and company sponsored training programs.”

- Dileo, Luecking, Hathaway, 1995

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#### Natural Supports: Definition 5

“To coordinate the support needs of the individual with disabilities in relation to the employment setting, using the least obtrusive support and utilizing the most natural elements available in the work setting.”

- Trach & Shelden

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## Natural Supports: Definition 6

“The underlying assumption emphasizes how to use what is available in the work environment to assist the individual, rather than emphasizing how to help the individual change in order to fit into the work environment.”

- Luecking and Tilson, 1994

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## Natural Supports: Definition 7

“To work in partnership with the employer to draw on all of the resources inherent in the workplace (recognizing that they may need to be modified, enhanced or adapted) to train, acclimatize, socially connect and support the ongoing success of the new employee throughout the term of his/her employment.”

- Rob McInnes, Feb 5, 2009

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## Natural Supports: About “Natural”

“... the individual with disabilities is engaged in activity and relationships as typical as possible to all people in a particular setting.”

- Trach & Shelden

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## Natural Supports: About “Natural”

“*Natural* does not indicate that a support occurs naturally or is preexisting in an environment.”

- Trach & Shelden

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## Natural Supports: Applications

- Job Instruction
- Social “Modeling”
- Troubleshooting
- Social Integration/Acceptance
- Growth/Advancement
- Physical Adaptations
- Routines & Rhythms

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## Natural Supports: Categories

Organizational	Preparing and organizing activities in the setting, including but not limited to scheduling, order of tasks, and location of materials (e.g., flextime, prioritized schedule, centralizing supplies).
Physical	Design and function of physical objects and equipment in a setting, including technical and nontechnical supports (e.g., robotics, ramps).
Social	Interacting with nondisabled individuals in an environment (e.g., carpools, lunch and break partners).
Training	Extending personal competence and skill through direct training and instruction (e.g., self-management and mentor programs, coaching).
Service	Accessing professional and nonprofessional disability-related services (e.g., PASS program, volunteers through ILC).
Community	Accessing community agencies and services that are available to all individuals (e.g., public transportation, YMCA/YWCA programs).

(Trach & Mayhall, 1997)

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## Natural Supports: Three Instructional Modes (in order of preference):

1. Facilitated Natural Supports (provided by employer)
2. Naturally-Referenced Strategies (provided by “Job Coach”)
3. Intensive Instructional Procedures (provided by “Job Coach”) in a manner as natural and naturally-referenced as possible)

- Michael Callahan

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## Natural Supports: Identifying Mentors

1. Do they know the job well?
2. Are they liked and respected in the workplace?
3. Do they have the skills to facilitate social relationships?
4. Are they likely to remain on the job for at least six months?
5. Is their work schedule matched to the new employee?
6. Are they willing to take on the responsibility?

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## Natural Supports: Some of the Shifts

From	To
Intervention focused solely on the employee.	Intervention focused on the employee and the entire environment.
Being the Service Provider to the employee	Being the Consultant to employer (as the service provider).
Focus on job performance	Focus expanded to social environment.
Ongoing support to the employee.	Ongoing support to the employer.
Conspicuous appendage to the employee	Unobtrusive catalyst within the workplace.

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