

# Birth through Five (0-5) Child Outcomes Summary Process Manual

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## Purpose and Acknowledgements

This Birth through Five (0-5) Child Outcomes Summary Process Manual is a resource developed to assist you in understanding the requirements and important processes regarding child outcomes as they apply to both *Early On*<sup>®</sup> and preschool special education.

This manual is based on a variety of sources including information from the Early Childhood Outcomes (ECO) Center, the Early Childhood Technical Assistance (ECTA) Center, Infant and Toddler Connection of Virginia, Army Educational and Developmental Intervention Services (EDIS), and other expertise. We have referenced the resources throughout the document. We are grateful for the knowledge and information provided on this topic and thank these experts for their generous sharing of materials and ideas.

## Historical and Legislative Background of Child Outcomes

In 2001, the [U.S. Office of Management and Budget \(OMB\)](https://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/) (https://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/) introduced the [Program Assessment Rating Tool \(PART\)](https://www.strategisys.com/omb_part) (https://www.strategisys.com/omb\_part) to align the federal budget development process with the performance data required by the [Government Performance and Results Act of 1993 \(GPRA\)](https://www.congress.gov/bill/103rd-congress/senate-bill/00020) (https://www.congress.gov/bill/103rd-congress/senate-bill/00020). According to the ECO Center, in 2003, when the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) Part C and Part B 619 programs were assessed by PART, the finding was “results not demonstrated,” meaning that insufficient data existed on which to determine the performance of programs. It also recommended that the federal Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) establish long-term outcome objectives and develop a strategy to collect annual performance data in a timely manner (ECO Center, May 2011). With a heightened emphasis on accountability, the OMB began to require federal agencies to identify goals for every federal program and to measure and report progress toward those goals. Judging the performance of federal programs requires looking not only at process but also at outcomes (ECO Center, May 2011).

Therefore, when IDEA was reauthorized in 2004, OSEP directed states to develop six-year state performance plans (SPP), and for states to submit annual performance reports (APR) across 14 performance indicators. Early childhood outcomes are one of those indicators (Early Childhood Outcomes: Demonstrating and Reporting the Results of Early Intervention Services for Infants and Toddlers; Collecting Outcomes Data, October 1, 2006 – June 30, 2007).

In response to this report, OSEP funded the ECO Center to build consensus around a set of child outcomes. Between fall 2003 and spring 2005, the ECO Center convened numerous stakeholder groups to gather input on what the outcomes should be and to review and comment on initial drafts of the outcomes. A draft set of outcomes was posted on the ECO Center's website in December 2004 and January 2005. Based on the input received, ECO Center recommended a set of child outcomes to OSEP in February 2005. The child outcomes required by OSEP are similar to those recommended by the stakeholders (ECO Center Q&A, January 2013).

States reported data on the status of children at program entry in their February 2007 APR. States reported their first data on children's progress in the 2008 APR and have continued to report progress data annually. (ECO Center Q&A, January 2013).

The work of the ECO Center is now enveloped into the Early Childhood Technical Assistance (ECTA) Center and the work and resources around the child outcomes are found on the [ECTA Center website](https://ectacenter.org/) (https://ectacenter.org/).

## What are Child Outcomes?

Measurement of child outcomes is a mandated means for practitioners, districts, and states to show the positive effects their supports have for children, birth through age five, who are experiencing developmental delays, established conditions, and/or educational disabilities. According to the [ECTA Center](https://ectacenter.org/eco/pages/faqs.asp), (https://ectacenter.org/eco/pages/faqs.asp) child outcomes are best defined as a measure of the benefit children experience due to early intervention and/or preschool special education. They are a snapshot of the whole child and his or her functioning across settings and situations.

Although sometimes confused with Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) outcomes or Individualized Education Program (IEP) goals, child outcomes are considerably different. They reflect a **child's global functioning** in three broad areas of development: social emotional development, acquisition and use of knowledge and skills, and improved self-efficacy. This profile of a child's global functioning is always done in the context of typical age expectations. In contrast, IFSP outcomes and IEP goals reflect **a child's developmental and instructional needs and priorities**. This description of instructional needs and priorities is always provided in the context of a child's current level of performance.

Understanding the differences between a child's global functioning and his or her developmental and instructional needs and priorities is important; however, it is equally important to understand how they are interrelated. Although they are

different in definition and context, they both rely on the same four required components to be accurate and meaningful: functional information, parent input, professional expertise, and current assessment data.

In sum, the child outcomes process is one in which a child's progress is determined through movement toward age expectations. The IFSP and IEP build upon this information and, through outcomes and goals, define the accommodations, specialized instruction, and child or family supports needed for a child to advance toward age-expected functioning.

## The Overarching Goal

Through the work of the [ECO Center](https://ectacenter.org/eco/pages/faqs.asp), (https://ectacenter.org/eco/pages/faqs.asp) stakeholders created a statement defining the overarching goal of early intervention and/or preschool special education. This goal is:

*"...To enable young children to be active and successful participants during their early childhood years and in the future in a variety of settings – in their homes with their families, in child care, preschool or school programs and in the community."*

The stakeholders that constructed this goal emphasized the need for all individuals and agencies who are working with a child to focus on the child's ability to achieve active and successful participation across a variety of settings both now and in the future.

## The Three Child Outcomes

The ECO Center stakeholders further clarified the overarching goal for early intervention and preschool special education by defining three separate and interrelated areas of development. These areas are the **three child outcomes** and they emphasize the integrated nature in which children develop and learn across the five developmental domains. The child outcomes describe children's mastery and appropriate application of behaviors, knowledge, and skills in a meaningful way in their everyday lives. The three child outcomes refer to actions children need to carry out and knowledge that children need to apply in order to function successfully across a variety of settings. Remember that the three child outcomes reflect global functioning. They are a snapshot of the whole child and the status of the child's current functioning across settings and situations.

This cross-disciplinary definition of child development and outcomes is critical to understanding the focus and purpose of child outcomes measurement. Each of the three child outcomes focuses on the integrated way children learn and how their

development is essentially functional in nature rather than domain or skill specific. The outcomes highlight what children need to be successful now, later in school, and in life. The three child outcomes are:

### **a. Positive social emotional skills**

This outcome, *positive social emotional skills, including social relationships*, involves building and maintaining relationships with adults and other children as well as following rules related to groups and interacting with others. Included in this area are the child's attachment/separation/autonomy, and his or her ability to express emotions, to initiate and maintain relationships - to learn rules and expectations. Skills and behaviors in this area allow children to participate in a variety of settings and situations – at home, on the playground, at mealtime, at the grocery store, in child care, at preschool, etc. Examples of this outcome are:

1. Interacting with and relating to others in daily events and routines.
2. Interacting in ways that allow participation in a variety of settings and routines.
3. Regulating, showing, understanding, and responding to emotions.
4. Transitioning between familiar and new events.
5. Demonstrating awareness of social rules and expectations.
6. Initiating and maintaining social interactions.
7. Understanding and following social rules.
8. Demonstrating trust.
9. Regulating their emotions.

### **b. Acquire and use knowledge and skills**

This outcome, *acquire and use knowledge and skills, including early communication/language/early literacy*, consists of the ability to understand information, symbols, and the physical and social world as well as to think, reason, and problem-solve. Behavior and skills that reflect this outcome include a child's eagerness to explore and learn about his or her environment, to show increasing imagination and creativity, and to develop a foundation of information, including language and literacy skills, on which later behaviors, skills, and learning are built. Examples of this outcome are:

1. Trying to imitate and learn new behaviors and skills.
2. Showing persistence in getting to a desired result.
3. Comprehending directions and concepts.
4. Interacting with books, manipulatives, pictures, and print.
5. Remembering stories and information.
6. Displaying curiosity and eagerness for learning.

7. Exploring and playing with people and objects.
8. Using vocabulary either through spoken means, sign language, or through augmentative communication devices to communicate in an increasingly complex form.
9. Showing imagination and creativity in play.

### **c. Take appropriate action to meet their needs**

This outcome encompasses the ability of a child to take care of basic needs and contribute to safety and health. (Also included is the child's ability to get from place to place and use tools and resources effectively.) Behaviors and skills in this area consist of:

1. Meeting self-care needs (feeding, dressing, toileting, etc.).
2. Getting from place to place by either crawling, rolling, walking, or any other means possible.
3. Using tools (such as forks, toothbrushes, switches, and other devices).
4. Following rules related to health and safety.
5. Communicating wants and needs (gestures, sounds, words, signs).
6. Seeking help when necessary to assist with needs.

These outcome areas are not simply a measuring process for children with challenges or disabilities, but rather a set of crucial behaviors and skills that *all* children must acquire to participate fully in routines and activities with their families, caretakers, teachers, and community members both now and in the future.

## **Integrating the Child Outcomes**

Integrating child outcomes is the process of combining the COS rating process and the IFSP or IEP process into one seamless experience for teams, including family members. Keeping a focus on the three broad child outcome areas, from referral to exit, encourages the gathering of information essential to understanding a child's functional skills and developing effective means of supporting children and families as well as reporting progress. For many years, the idea of combining the process of weaving the child outcomes with the IFSP or IEP process has been gaining momentum, and several states now have IFSPs and/or IEPs that contain the child outcomes rating within their forms.

Because the three child outcomes are based on a child's functional skills, they are an excellent source for developing and updating meaningful IFSPs and IEPs. Additionally, when the child outcome information is integrated into each step of supporting children and families, from referral to service delivery to exit, integration



promises the benefits of greater family participation as well as more measurable and functional objectives and a direct alignment between the assessment process and true child benefit. For the practitioner, the process of integrating child outcomes promises the benefit of a more streamlined and efficient process both in terms of workload and paperwork.

As indicated above, the process of seeking functional information about a child begins at **referral** and continues throughout **the eligibility process** and into service delivery, progress reporting, and exit. The goal is to understand and support a child's development within his or her typical routines. With this understanding, routines-based conversations are a critical source of gathering meaningful information.

**Gathering information** about a child's functioning within routines may take many forms, including observing the child doing things he or she typically does, interviewing parents and other people who know and spend time with the child, or taking videos and pictures of the child in everyday activities. The organization and flow of the routines-based conversation yields rich information about the child's engagement, independence, and social relationships in the context of all that happens in a typical day.

The eligibility conversation should include conversation about the evaluation, formal assessment results, and the observational and functional information about the child's daily routines and activities, including what is going well for the child and family and where there are challenges.

The [ECTA website](https://ectacenter.org/eco/pages/ifsp-iep.asp) (<https://ectacenter.org/eco/pages/ifsp-iep.asp>) contains resources and documents that outline the practice of integrating child outcome information throughout the processes of developing a child's plan or program. This website contains separate documents that illustrate integrating child outcomes in the [IFSP process](http://ectacenter.org/~pdfs/eco/IFSP-OutcomesFlowChart.pdf) (<http://ectacenter.org/~pdfs/eco/IFSP-OutcomesFlowChart.pdf>) as well as the [IEP process](http://ectacenter.org/~pdfs/eco/original_IEP-Outcomes_Flow_Chart.pdf) ([http://ectacenter.org/~pdfs/eco/original\\_IEP-Outcomes\\_Flow\\_Chart.pdf](http://ectacenter.org/~pdfs/eco/original_IEP-Outcomes_Flow_Chart.pdf)).

## **What is the Rating Process for Child Outcomes?**

The process of bringing together multiple sources and multiple measures of information for the purpose of arriving at an individual child outcome rating is called the [child outcomes summary \(COS\) process](https://ectacenter.org/eco/pages/faqs.asp) (<https://ectacenter.org/eco/pages/faqs.asp>). This process provides a common metric for describing children's functioning compared to age expectations in each of the three outcome areas. The COS provides a rubric for a team to summarize the child's level of functioning using information from many sources including

assessment tools and parent and provider reports. This important process is one in which the COS team, comprised of providers and family members who know the child the best, analyze and discuss collected information in each of the three child outcomes to arrive at a rating. This rating should accurately reflect the functional abilities of the child.

In order to complete the COS, the team uses a seven-point scale to rate the child's skills and behaviors compared to age expectations. For example, a rating of 6 or 7 signifies functional abilities that are at or near age-level. In contrast, ratings of 1, 2, or 3 suggest abilities that are those of a younger child developmentally.

The COS process is the foundation of child outcomes and sound collection practices are essential to valid and reliable reporting at the local, state, and federal levels. Without these proven collection practices, the resulting ratings are essentially flawed and the COS rating will be viewed as inaccurate or meaningless. For the purpose of child outcomes, a valid COS rating is one that conveys the child's current functioning across the child's natural settings and typical situations.

Because the COS rating is a way of indicating the functional abilities of a child, the process should include one or more conversations with people that know the child best. The child's service provider or teacher facilitates these conversations and participants typically include family members and other practitioners. [Appendix A: Conversation Starters for Making Functional Child Outcome Ratings](#), adapted from OSEP, provides suggestions on how to effectively begin these conversations.

Some family members and practitioners have voiced concerns about the possibility of rating disagreements amongst the participants. When the group is having difficulty landing on a valid rating, participants are encouraged to consider using tools such as [Appendix B: What If We Can't Reach Consensus](#) developed by the ECO Center.

Additional essential collection practices that lead to accurate ratings include:

- Using the **four required components** of the COS rating process,
- Understanding the difference between the COS rating process and **standardized evaluation/assessment for eligibility**, and
- Understanding the **exit progress questions**.

## The Four Required Components

The four components of the COS rating process are:

1. Family Input/Parent Reporting
2. Professional Observation and Expertise

3. State Approved Assessment Tool
4. Seven-Point Rating Scale

The child outcomes are intended to help us understand how children function within their daily routines and activities and how they benefit from *Early On* and preschool special education supports and services. In the effort to measure functionality and benefit, multiple sources of data must be used to give an accurate rating of a child's functional abilities. According to the [ECTA Center](https://ectacenter.org/) (<https://ectacenter.org/>):

*"Assessing children's functioning in three outcome areas requires multiple sources of information, including observation, family input, and data from one or more assessment tools. Observation and family input provide information about the child's functioning across situations and settings. Data from the administration of a reliable assessment tool can be used to compare a child's skills and behaviors to those of his/her same-age peers."*

## **Family Input/Parent Reporting**

Both *Early On* and preschool special education providers are required to work in partnership with parents of eligible children to enhance their child's development and learning. This collaboration with parents fulfills the spirit of IDEA, which calls for parents to be a part of a family-directed assessment and intervention activities.

Parents are keen observers of their child's behavior and have the greatest investment in their progress. Family members bring key information to the conversation regarding their child's functioning across settings and situations as well as cultural expectations for their child. Involving family members in the rating process will increase accuracy of the data because they can provide additional information about their child's functioning.

To promote a rich conversation with parents and caregivers, providers are encouraged to start with open-ended questions about the child's routines, strengths, and needs. Ask questions that allow parents and caregivers to tell you what they have seen. For example, "When Anthony is thirsty or wants a drink what does he do?" Sometimes you will need to ask yes/no or multiple-choice questions when information that is more specific or clarification is needed. For example, "Does Anthony drink from a regular cup or sippy cup?"

### ***Early On***

*Early On* recognizes that parents and other key caregivers are the primary teachers of infants and toddlers. With this recognition in mind, the primary role of *Early On* is to support families and caregivers in gaining the competence and confidence

needed to help their child learn. To aid parents and caregivers in understanding child outcomes, the ECTA Center developed [Including Families in the Rating Discussion](https://ectacenter.org/~pdfs/eco/role_of_families.pdf) (https://ectacenter.org/~pdfs/eco/role\_of\_families.pdf) (April 2007). *Early On* Training and Technical Assistance has also developed a document called [Measuring Child Outcomes, Information Guide for Parents](http://eotta.ccrea.org/Files/Uploads/New/3267/Revised_Measuring_Child_Outcomes.pdf) (http://eotta.ccrea.org/Files/Uploads/New/3267/Revised\_Measuring\_Child\_Outcomes.pdf). This information guide may be copied, distributed, and used locally.

### Preschool Special Education

Parent input and reporting is often misunderstood to be a requirement that applies only to the COS rating process for *Early On*. However, because the goal is to rate a child's functioning **across** his or her typical routines, parent/caregiver input is a required part of understanding a child's global functioning and instructional needs. With this requirement in mind, practitioners in the field of preschool special education may use various means of gaining family input including questionnaires, phone calls, and/or face-to-face meetings.

### Professional Observation and Expertise

Professional observation provides **developmentally referenced** information to the COS rating process regarding a child's functional, integrated behaviors, and skills. Professional observation that provides accurate developmentally referenced information consists of two crucial components:

- A professional's knowledge of child development and age expectations,
- A professional's ability to observe skills and behaviors across settings and situations.

### Knowledge of Child Development

A crucial component of professional observation is the practitioner's understanding of child development. Tools that are specifically designed to help with this piece are called age anchoring tools and their use is strongly encouraged in the process of determining and discussing the mix of skill levels that a child is demonstrating within daily routines.

For the COS rating process, three critical terms must be understood by the professional to yield valid and reliable information in relation to age anchoring. These crucial terms are:

- Age-expected skills (AE),
- Immediate foundational skills (IF), and
- Foundational skills (F).

**Age-expected skills (AE)** are those skills that reflect abilities, which are within the range of typical development. Age-expected skills are not those reflecting exactly the child's age, but a developmental mix of skills that are within the range of typical development. When a child's skills are described as being age-expected, they will be a mixture of skills at slightly above and slightly below their chronological age, which is a reflection of typical development.

**Immediate foundational skills (IF)** are those skills that are slightly below what would be expected based on a child's chronological age. In other words, the set of skills and behavior that occur developmentally just prior to age-expected functioning can be described as the immediate foundational skills. A child whose functioning is like that of a slightly younger child is probably showing immediate foundational skills, as his or her functioning does not meet age expectations.

**Foundational skills (F)** are those earlier skills that might be described as those of a much younger child. Some of the early developing behaviors and skills serve as the foundation for later behaviors and skills. Early childhood development proceeds through several levels of foundational skills with behaviors and skills becoming more complex and more proficient as children get older. In several instances, later skills build upon earlier skills in a predictable way. For example, children typically roll over, sit, crawl, and stand independently before they walk. It is like a staircase where foundational (F) skills lead to immediate foundational (IF) skills which then lead to age-expected (AE) functioning.

### **Ability to Observe Skills and Behaviors Across Settings and Situations**

Professional observation provides information about a child's functioning across situations and settings, during natural interactions, and in the context of his or her natural environments. Knowledge of child development with the help of age-anchoring tools, will guide observations of foundational, immediate foundational, and age-expected skills.

Age-anchoring tools are instruments that have been developed by states and publishers for comparing a child's behaviors and skills to age-expected standards. Most often, age-anchoring tools are criterion-referenced or developmental checklists because they are meant to record a child's functionality within typical routines and settings.

Practitioners in the fields of early intervention (*Early On*) and preschool special education often know a great deal about child development, but it is difficult for any individual to possess and stay true to the detailed developmental progression and age range for every set of functional abilities. For this reason, practitioners are

encouraged to use age-anchoring tools in addition to their expertise as they participate in professional observation and the COS rating process.

Not all checklists and instruments are suited for age anchoring. Many instruments are designed to assess discrete skills that are defined first by domain rather than function. Other instruments require that they be used in a standardized setting with a child performing prescribed tasks rather than in a natural setting with the child engaged in routine activities. Neither of these types of tools will serve the practitioner well in the COS rating process. For more information on age-anchoring tools visit [Age Anchoring Guidance](https://ectacenter.org/~pdfs/eco/COS_Age_Anchoring_Guidance.pdf) ([https://ectacenter.org/~pdfs/eco/COS\\_Age\\_Anchoring\\_Guidance.pdf](https://ectacenter.org/~pdfs/eco/COS_Age_Anchoring_Guidance.pdf)).

### ***Early On***

There are a number of tools that states and various agencies have developed to assist with the age-anchoring process for children who are birth to three years old. One such tool that stands out is the [Measure of Engagement, Independence, and Social Relationships](https://www.cdd.unm.edu/ecln/FIT/pdfs/MEISRCOSFTool.pdf) (MEISR) (<https://www.cdd.unm.edu/ecln/FIT/pdfs/MEISRCOSFTool.pdf>). This instrument is structured to strongly emphasize a child's skills and behaviors within the context of daily routines including, amongst others, waking up, eating, playtime, and going out. Within the multiple routines, the child's observed skills and behaviors are compared to typical age expectations. Because of the MEISR's dual emphasis on daily routines and typical age expectations, this tool has great potential for being used to not only inform the COS rating process but also to develop functional IFSP outcomes. Additionally, the MEISR's structure lends itself to meaningful parent input, accurate progress reporting, and thoughtful eligibility conversations.

Additional tools include:

- Colorado's age anchoring resource: [Larimer County Age Anchoring Tool](http://olms.cte.jhu.edu/data/ck/sites/4055/files/Larimer%20County%20Age%20Anchoring%20Tool.pdf) (<http://olms.cte.jhu.edu/data/ck/sites/4055/files/Larimer%20County%20Age%20Anchoring%20Tool.pdf>)
- [Indiana Standards Tool for Alternate Reporting of Kindergarten Readiness \(ISTAR-KR\) Performance Level Descriptors](https://www.doe.in.gov/sites/default/files/assessment/performance-level-descriptors-new.pdf) (<https://www.doe.in.gov/sites/default/files/assessment/performance-level-descriptors-new.pdf>)
- [Maryland's Part C Age Anchored Early Guidelines](http://cte.jhu.edu/onlinecourses/HealthyBeginnings/HBFINAL.pdf) (<http://cte.jhu.edu/onlinecourses/HealthyBeginnings/HBFINAL.pdf>)
- [North Dakota Department of Public Instruction Age Expectation Developmental Milestones – Full version](https://www.nd.gov/dpi/sites/www/files/documents/SpEd/Early%20Childhood/ND%20Early%20Childhood%20Outcomes%20Process%20Full%20Version.pdf) (<https://www.nd.gov/dpi/sites/www/files/documents/SpEd/Early%20Childhood/ND%20Early%20Childhood%20Outcomes%20Process%20Full%20Version.pdf>)

) and [Quick reference](#)

(<https://www.nd.gov/dpi/sites/www/files/documents/SpeEd/Early%20Childhood/Age%20Expectation%20Developmental%20Guidelines%20quick%20reference%20landscape%201%20.pdf>)

- North Carolina Early Learning Network resource: [Age-Anchoring Tool for Use with the Child Outcomes Summary Process](#)  
(<http://modules.nceIn.fpg.unc.edu/sites/modules.nceIn.fpg.unc.edu/files/foundations/handouts/Age-Anchoring%20Tool%20for%20use%20with%20COS.docx>)

## Preschool Special Education

States and agencies have also developed a number of age-anchoring tools for children ages birth through five years. One such tool that was developed by the North Carolina Early Learning Network is called the [Age-Anchoring Tool for Use with the Child Outcomes Summary Process](#)

(<http://modules.nceIn.fpg.unc.edu/sites/modules.nceIn.fpg.unc.edu/files/foundations/handouts/Age-Anchoring%20Tool%20for%20use%20with%20COS.docx>). As indicated in its title, this tool was designed primarily to inform the COS rating process; however, given its strong emphasis on the three child outcomes and its structured reference to age expectations, this tool is also an excellent resource for developing meaningful statements about a child's present level of functioning. In turn, these statements of functioning encourage instructional objectives that are not based first on the child's disability but on the child's need to improve functioning within typical settings and situations.

## Approved Assessment Tool

Approved assessment tools provide data about the child's development in a structured, developmentally referenced manner. These tools are an important piece of the COS rating process. The use of an assessment tool is a required part of the COS rating process; however, since the COS rating process relies on multiple sources and multiple measures of a child's functioning, no assessment tool alone is able to provide an accurate rating. Valid and reliable ratings rely on using all four components and putting too much emphasis on the tool alone will lead to inaccurate results.

When feasible, participants in the COS rating process are encouraged to consider the results of approved assessment tools that have already been completed. For example, an approved assessment tool may have been used to inform the eligibility decision. If this is the case, the results of the approved tool should be used, and the child and family not subjected to another assessment.

For children who are enrolled in a general education preschool or setting that use one of the approved assessment tools, the COS rating team is encouraged to request and use the already completed assessment data to inform their COS rating process.

### ***Early On***

The list of assessment tools approved by the Michigan Department of Education (MDE) for COS rating includes:

1. Assessment, Evaluation, and Programming Tool (AEPS)
2. Early Learning Accomplishment Profile (E-LAP)
3. Hawaii Early Learning Profile (HELP)
4. Early Intervention Developmental Profile (EIDP)
5. Brigance® Inventory of Early Development
6. Infant-Toddler Developmental Assessment (IDA)
7. Carolina Curriculum for Infants and Toddlers with Special Needs (CCITSN), Third Edition
8. Battelle Developmental Inventory
9. Bayley Scales of Infant Toddler Development
10. Other

**Other:** Providers may use an assessment tool other than one of the first nine listed. Some other tools worth considering are:

1. Measurement of Engagement, Independence, and Social Relationships (MEISR) - The functional items of this instrument are cross walked with the three child outcomes and organized by age. This makes it a valuable tool for age anchoring a child's functional abilities within each of the three outcomes.
2. Routines-Based Interview (RBI) – This is an evidence-based assessment practice that gathers information about home and community routines and the child's engagement, independence, and social relationships within those routines to promote routines-based intervention [2018, Maryland Infants & Toddlers Program Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) Process & Document Guide, Maryland State Department of Education, Division of Special Education/Early Intervention Services].
3. Devereux Early Childhood Assessment for Infants and Toddlers (DECA I/T) – This strength-based, nationally standardized, reliable, and valid screening and assessment tool focuses on identifying key social emotional strengths and key resources to promote children's resilience. This tool should be used solely for social emotional development.



## Preschool Special Education

For children who are receiving their supports through preschool special education, the approved assessment tools include:

1. Assessment, Evaluation, and Programming System (AEPS)\*
2. Battelle Developmental Inventory, Second Edition (BDI-2)\*
3. Battelle Developmental Inventory Screening Test
4. Brigance® Inventory of Early Development II (IED II)\*
5. Brigance® Inventory of Early Development III (IED III)
6. Carolina Curriculum for Preschoolers with Special Needs (CCPSN), Second Edition
7. Preschool Child Observation Record (COR)
8. Child Observation Record (COR) Advantage
9. Creative Curriculum® for Preschool
10. Learning Accomplishment Profile-Third Edition (LAP-3)
11. Teaching Strategies GOLD®

**\*Continuum Tools:** For children who begin receiving preschool special education supports prior to the age of three, a continuum tool must be used and these tools are indicated by an asterisk. Continuum tools are ones that address the full age range of behaviors/skills for children **birth through age five**. Although many of the other tools listed cover children birth to three and three through five, they do so using two separate sets of expectations, manuals, and protocols. The separate pieces of an assessment tool that are specifically for children birth to three may not be used in the preschool special education COS rating process.

**Using *Early On* Assessment Information:** Children entering preschool special education must be assessed using one of the approved assessment tools unless the team agrees that the *Early On* exit ratings accurately reflect the child's entry skills **in all three outcomes**. When using the *Early On* assessment and exit rating for preschool special education entry, it is important to record that rating in both the local student information and state data systems.

## Seven-Point Rating Scale

In Michigan, the COS team is required to use a seven-point rating scale as part of the COS rating process. As mentioned earlier, the COS team includes providers and family members who know the child the best. The seven-point rating scale is designed to help the team engage in focused and meaningful conversations about the child's functioning and to come to consensus on ratings that accurately reflects the child's functioning in each of the three outcome areas. Some practice is needed for teams to become comfortable with incorporating the rating scale in their

process. However, studies have demonstrated that when team members use a rating scale their ratings are more consistent and accurate. Several tools have been developed to assist COS teams in using the seven-point rating scale to establish COS ratings.

The [Decision Tree](#) (2007)

([https://ectacenter.org/eco/assets/pdfs/Decision\\_Tree.pdf](https://ectacenter.org/eco/assets/pdfs/Decision_Tree.pdf)) is the most commonly recognized tool used to assist in arriving at decisions about the ratings on the seven-point rating scale. The decision tree is a process-driven instrument that presents the COS team with a series of yes/no question prompts about the extent to which a child exhibits age-expected skills and behaviors in each outcome area. The team's responses to each of the prompts guides them to a specific rating category on the seven-point scale.

The first question on the decision tree is a frequent stumbling point for COS team members. It asks if the child **ever** functions in ways that would be considered age expected regarding the outcome being rated. Many teams arrive at an incorrect rating for a child because they misunderstand this question to be asking about the child's overall behaviors and skills rather than instances of age-appropriate functioning. If the child **ever** functions in ways that would be considered age expected, regardless of level of disability, the answer to this prompt is yes. The following questions in the decision tree are used to assess the level of either foundational skills or age-expected skills across settings and situations.

Other tools also being used by COS teams include those that are pictorial and descriptive in nature rather than process driven. An example of such a tool is available online and called the [Bucket List 7 Point Scale](#) ([https://ectacenter.org/eco/assets/pdfs/COSF\\_Scale\\_Descriptors\\_w-buckets.pdf](https://ectacenter.org/eco/assets/pdfs/COSF_Scale_Descriptors_w-buckets.pdf)). The tool is often referred to as the **COS bucket list** and it was developed by personnel in Army Educational and Developmental Intervention Services (EDIS) (2010). The COS team may employ the simple visual depiction of a child's behaviors and skills alongside the printed descriptor statements to arrive at an accurate COS rating. In instances where the visual and descriptive information included in the COS bucket list is insufficient to determine an accurate COS rating, a decision tree should be used.

In 2016, EDIS published a COS tool that incorporates both the process-driven components of the decision tree and the visual, descriptive components of the COS bucket list. This rating tool is called the **EDIS COS Organizing Tool** and it is a rich resource for arriving at consensus regarding a child's accurate COS rating as well as developing IFSPs and IEPs that are based on current, functional information. This document is available on the [ECTA Center website](#)

(<http://ectacenter.org/eco/assets/pdfs/EDISCOSOrganizingToolSep2016.pdf>). Members of the COS team are encouraged to use this tool as a resource in developing IFSPs and IEPs that are based on an accurate reflection of the child's functioning and needs as compared to age-expectations.

The terms age-expected, immediate foundational, and foundational skills are used extensively throughout the tools described above and the definition of each of these critical terms is discussed earlier in this document. Only when the team understands these terms can members engage in the summary conversation effectively and rate a child's functioning accurately.

### ***Early On***

As the COS rating team members are involved in conversations that include one of the seven-point rating tools, team members are encouraged to provide brief written examples of the infant or toddler's age-expected, immediate foundational, and/or foundational skills in each of the outcome areas. These statements are an excellent way of validating a specific numeric COS rating. Additionally, these statements provide a strong foundation for developing meaningful and functional IFSP outcomes.

### **Preschool Special Education**

In preschool special education, as in *Early On*, members of the COS rating team are required to use one of the seven-point rating tools. By using the decision tree, COS bucket list or the EDIS COS Organizing Tool, participants are better able to come to consensus regarding valid ratings and accurately report a child's functional skills in the required outcome areas. In addition, the conversations that these tools promote are an excellent starting point for developing a meaningful IEP that includes a true reflection of a child's functional performance and his or her areas of strength and need.

### **The Exit Progress Question**

The progress question, sometimes referred to as the exit skills question, is a pivotal piece of the COS rating process. The answer to the question has the power to define whether a child has developed since participating in *Early On* or preschool special education. For this reason, the participants in the COS rating process must understand what the question is asking and how to answer it correctly. This progress question is answered upon exit COS for preschool special education and can be completed at annual or exit COS rating for *Early On*.

The progress question is a yes/no question that asks whether a child has acquired **any new skills or behaviors** since the entry rating. This exit question is different from the COS numerical rating which compares a child's skills and behaviors to age expectations. The exit question separately asks about the child's current skills and behaviors compared to those previously observed and rated. The COS numerical rating and the exit progress question are two interrelated, but separate indicators of child progression in development. The key point to remember is that the exit progress question asks about the child's progress compared to self, not about progress relative to same-aged peers.

In some instances, the team mistakenly answers "no" to the exit progress question because the child's numerical COS rating 1-7 has stayed the same or gone down. In reality, a child may lose ground compared to age expectations, but the team should still answer "yes" if the child is demonstrating **any new** skill. For example, a child who receives a numerical rating of "4" at entry and "3" at exit would receive a "yes" on the progress question if he or she has acquired new skills in the outcome area. In this instance, the child's development at exit is further from that of the same-age peers; however, he or she is progressing.

In other instances, participants in the COS rating process mistakenly answer "no" to the exit question because they believe that the child must show significant progress across an outcome area to answer "yes." In reality, participants must answer "yes" to the progress question even if the child has acquired only one new skill related to one aspect of the outcome. For example, if in the time since the entry rating was completed, the team has seen the child begin using even one more gesture to get his or her needs met the team answers "yes" to the exit progress question.

Included in this manual is [Appendix C](#), which lists all the **impossible** numerical COS ratings when combined with the exit progress question. This document may be of help in determining correct answers to the exit progress question.

In some instances, the answer to the exit progress question is "no;" however, these instances occur in less than 2 percent of the child population and typically occur for a child with a regressive condition and/or severe disability. In these circumstances, the progress exit question must be answered accurately, knowing that the COS rating is not an indication of how hard practitioners and families have worked on behalf of the child, but rather a measure of the child's progress toward age-expected skills. To answer "no" to the exit process question, the exit rating must be at least one number lower than the entry rating. However, a lower exit rating compared to entry rating will often still have an answer of "yes" to the exit progress question.

In all instances, the critical importance of the exit progress question is in knowing that an answer of “no” indicates that the child has not developed since participating in *Early On* and/or preschool special education. “No” should be reserved and used in instances in which it is the true reflection of the child’s status in skill development. An example of such an instance would be if the child had multiple disabilities and did not achieve any progress during the entire time that child was in *Early On* or preschool special education.

## **Appropriate Use of Standardized Information**

The COS rating process is completed as a means of describing the child’s functional abilities within everyday activities. Most standardized instruments are domain or skill-based and are not intended to provide this type of information. Although information from standardized assessment and evaluation tools may be considered in the COS rating process, the standardized information is not sufficient on its own for an outcome rating. It does not contain all the needed components of the process nor reference the child’s ability to use skills and knowledge in an integrated, functional manner. A high score on a set of items on a standardized or criterion-based instrument might not mean the child has achieved an outcome and, conversely, a low score might not mean the child has not achieved it.

A related, but separate point of concern regarding standardized assessment occurs in instances when persons completing the COS rating process seek to gather routines-based, functional information about the child in a standardized testing manner. Instead of relying on observation and information gathered from familiar persons, the child is prompted to perform discrete skills from everyday life in a test-like situation. Again, this method of gathering information does not contain all the components of the process, nor does it reference the child’s ability to use skills in an integrated, functional manner.

## **Timelines and Special Considerations**

### **Timelines**

The child outcomes data collection requires a COS rating to be completed for all children enrolled in *Early On* or preschool special education for at least six continuous months. The six months refers to the time a child has been receiving supports within the state of Michigan. It does not refer to the time a child has been receiving support from a particular district, program, or provider. When in doubt about how long the child has been receiving supports within the state, complete the COS rating process for the three child outcomes and enter this information into your data system.

## ***Early On***

**Entry rating** must be completed within 90 days of the **referral date** and be based upon recent data describing the child's functional development.

**Annual rating** is optional for data submission. Conducting the COS process is a meaningful way to determine functional child and family outcomes for annual IFSP development. An annual rating can be used as an exit rating if there is a loss of contact with the family.

**Exit rating** must be completed when the child discontinues *Early On* services. The exit rating should be based on recent data describing the child's development. The exit COS rating must be determined within 90 days **prior** to exit from *Early On*. Once again, parent input should be considered in the exit data. At the time of an annual or exit rating, the additional exit progress question for each of the three child outcomes is required.

Most often, the child outcomes data is collected when *Early On* services discontinue around the age of three. In addition, there are other situations when an exit rating needs to be completed. These additional situations include:

- A. **Completion of the IFSP** - The child has successfully completed the IFSP and the IFSP team, including the family, agrees that the child no longer requires services; the exit date is the date that the services end.
- B. **Decline Services** - The family has withdrawn from *Early On* (after an IFSP is in place and prior to the third birthday) and has declined further services; exit is the date that the family provides written or verbal indication of withdrawal from services.
- C. **Unable to Contact** - *Early On* is unable to contact the family after repeated attempts. If there is ongoing assessment data from no greater than 90 days **prior** to the exit date, that data should be used to determine exit rating for that child. Be sure to use any information gathered from parents during this time to inform the ratings of the child upon exit. If a service area conducts annual COS ratings, the COS rating completed within 90 days prior to the exit date could be used as the exit rating provided the progress question has been answered.
- D. **Moved, In-state** - The family has moved in-state. If the duration of the break in services for the move is short, and/or the family provides notice of the move and actively takes steps to have their record/IFSP transferred to a new service area, i.e., indicates desire to continue services, this would NOT be considered an exit for the purposes of child outcomes data collection. The new service area would not need to provide an entry rating but would

assume responsibility for any exit ratings. If the family moves in-state and there is a break in services, with no continuity in activity or service plan between the old and new service areas, the original service area should complete an exit COS rating and the new service area would consider this a new enrollment and would start with an entry rating and move forward from that point.

- E. **Moved, Out-of-state** - Family has moved out-of-state. In this case, you would provide exit data based on the date *Early On* services were discontinued in Michigan.
- F. **Death** - The child is deceased. In this case, you would not collect or submit annual or exit data and would instead document the child exiting *Early On* with the appropriate code per directions provided in the Michigan Student Data System (MSDS) manual.

## Preschool Special Education

**Entry rating** must be completed up to 30 school days of the child's **start of service**. This date is the first date that a child begins receiving any services listed on his or her IEP. Although this date may be the same as the child's IEP date, in some instances when a child is moving from the year-round support of *Early On* to the school year supports of preschool special education, the IEP date and the start of service date may be different. It is always the start of services date that "starts the clock" on the entry rating for preschool special education.

**Annual rating** is optional for data submission. IEP teams are encouraged to go through the COS process as a meaningful way of determining an accurate picture of the child's current functional performance and for developing IEPs that reflect this important outcome information in the child's present level statement and instructional objectives.

**Exit rating** may be completed up to 30 **school days** prior to the child's exit from preschool special education supports due to:

- A. **Ineligibility** - Through the re-evaluation and IEP process, the child has been found no longer in need of specialized instruction/supports.
- B. **Turning six** - For children who continue to receive preschool special education instruction/supports past their fifth birthday, their COS ratings should be submitted on or before their sixth birthday. The submission of the outcomes data does not indicate or necessitate a change in placement, only that they have reached the maximum age for collecting child outcomes data.

- C. **Enrolling in Kindergarten or Developmental Kindergarten** - Child outcomes data must be submitted prior to a child's enrollment for any portion of the day in developmental kindergarten or kindergarten. This stipulation is true even for children who are dually enrolled in preschool special education and a kindergarten experience.
- D. **Revocation of consent** - In rare instances when a parent or guardian withdraws consent for the provision of special education supports, an exit COS rating should be completed if the child has had six months or more of services.

At the time of an exit COS rating, the participants in the process will answer the exit progress question for each of the three child outcomes. As described earlier in this document, the exit progress question is a yes/no question that inquires about whether the child has developed any new skills or behaviors since the last rating.

### **Transition from *Early On* to Preschool Special Education**

The transition from *Early On* to preschool special education services is a crucial time for families. As children move from supports and services documented on an IFSP to those that are recorded on an IEP, the importance of collaboration between programs is imperative and emphasized in the many associated regulations and indicators of IDEA. The child outcomes indicators of *Early On* and preschool special education are two of the indicators that encourage a transition process that is meaningful and understandable.

**Using *Early On* Exit Rating Information:** As part of IDEA's emphasis on meaningful early childhood transition, OSEP encourages states to have their Part C and Part B personnel collaborate extensively to avoid over assessing children. States have been permitted to use the *Early On* exit ratings as the preschool special education entry ratings when they are valid.

At times, there may be a concern about data accuracy when using this practice. To lessen this concern, several factors must be considered:

1. The date of the *Early On* exit data compared to the child's initial services in preschool special education. The *Early On* exit assessment tool must be completed within 90 days of the child beginning preschool special education.
2. Members of the preschool special education COS rating team must always examine the *Early On* exit data being considered to determine if it accurately reflects the child's functional abilities in all three outcome areas across settings and situations.
3. The *Early On* exit data for all three child outcomes areas are to be used as they are and not altered in any way.



This process of collaborating, analyzing, and accepting prior data has the important benefit of increasing critical communication between the two programs during the crucial process of a child's transition from *Early On* to preschool special education. Additionally, this process helps in avoiding excessive assessments for the child and family as well as increasing the accuracy with which a child's functional skills are rated.

[Appendix D](#) includes a quick reference guide to the reporting requirements associated with *Early On* and preschool special education child outcomes.

## Special Considerations

### Prematurity

For *Early On*, providers must adjust for prematurity when determining *eligibility* for *Early On* until two years of age. However, when determining a COS rating, there is NO adjustment for prematurity.

### Cultural Expectations

COS ratings need to take into consideration and allow for how different cultures view typical child development at particular ages. What is expected of a two-year-old child in one culture may not be an age expectation in another. For the COS rating process, the rating should reflect cultural norms and expectations for behavior and skills therefore should not be lowered due to these norms and differences.

Following is an example highlighted in the [ECTA Center and Center for IDEA Early Childhood Data Systems \(DaSy\) \(April 2018\) Age Anchoring Guidance for Determining Child Outcomes Summary \(COS\) Ratings](#)

([https://ectacenter.org/~pdfs/eco/COS\\_Age\\_Anchoring\\_Guidance.pdf](https://ectacenter.org/~pdfs/eco/COS_Age_Anchoring_Guidance.pdf)):

*Tania's family does not provide her with opportunities to self-feed because this is not expected in their culture until a child is closer to 2 years of age. Knowing this, being fed at 16 months would not be considered a foundational skill for Tania. Rather, it is what the family expects of Tania and is considered age-expected within the family culture. However, Tania also attends the local child care center, and in that setting it is expected that children 16 months of age feed themselves. Because Tania is not yet self-feeding, but rather waits to be fed, this would be considered an earlier (not age-expected) ability for her in the child care setting.*

*It is important for the team to use the Decision Tree for Summary Ratings to identify the appropriate rating.*

1. *Does the child ever function in ways that would be considered age-expected with regard to this outcome? Yes, her feeding skills at home are within the context of the family's culture.*
2. *Does the child function in ways that would be considered age-expected across all or almost all settings and situations? No, because Tania is not demonstrating age expected feeding skills in her childcare setting.*
3. *To what extent does the child function in ways that are age-expected across settings and situations? The team would discuss an answer to this question and consider other skills included with the outcome before arriving at a COS rating.*

## **Supports/Assistive Technology**

COS ratings are not lowered when a child uses assistive technology supports to complete a task or participate in a routine. There are many pathways to competence for a child with atypical development, e.g., using sign language, wheelchair, etc. A child's true functionality may get lost in assessment scores that do not account for alternative ways of demonstrating a particular item. When thinking about achievement of child outcomes allow any assistive technology, supports, or alternative means the child typically uses.

## **Foster Care**

For a child who is in foster care, the ongoing role and input of the biological parent, unless rights have been terminated, is important to recognize and include. In addition, the role and input of the foster parent(s) should also be sought and included. The combined contributions provide a broader picture of the child's functional skills across settings and situations and together they will be key factors in the child's development and progress.

## **Calculating Child Progress**

Accurate, complete, and timely outcome information on each child served through *Early On* and preschool special education is the foundation of determining child progress. The ability of states and provinces to demonstrate this progress is based solely on data supplied by practitioners at the local or regional level. These data are subsequently used to make all other calculations at the state and federal level regarding child progress and the benefits of *Early On* and preschool special education. For this reason, the work of and data from those in the field are of critical importance to the COS process.

Data collected on individual children are submitted to the associated local education agency (LEA) or intermediate school district (ISD). In turn, these data are then

uploaded to MSDS. At the state level, the initial calculations are completed for all children who have a matched record. The term **matched record** within each program (*Early On* and preschool special education) means that a child has *both* an entry and exit rating for each of the three child outcomes. Annual COS ratings are not considered in determining a matched record. In instances when an annual COS rating will be considered the exit COS rating, it must be reported in MSDS as an exit rating even if it had been previously reported to MSDS as an annual rating. The matched record information is used to calculate the progress a child has made in each outcome area between the time he or she began and stopped receiving *Early On* or preschool special education. When a child's MSDS record contains more than one entry rating or more than one exit rating, the earliest entry rating and latest exit rating are used for calculating progress. This calculation places each child in one of five descriptive **progress categories, "a" through "e,"** in each of the three child outcomes. The five progress categories indicate the movement a child has made toward age-level functioning. The progress categories are as follows:

- a) Did not improve functioning.
- b) Improved functioning, but not sufficiently to move nearer to functioning comparable to same-aged peers.
- c) Improved functioning to a level nearer to same-aged peers but did not reach it.
- d) Improved functioning to reach a level comparable to same-aged peers.
- e) Improved functioning to maintain at a level comparable to same-aged peers.

[Appendix E](#) provides information regarding in which progress category a child would be included once the entry and exit numerical ratings are known as well as the answer to the exit progress question.

Annually, the progress category data from *Early On* and preschool special education are aggregated at the state level and reported to the United States Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) using two broad categories called **Child Outcomes Summary Statements**.

Both summary statements are expressed in terms of percentages and reflect the collective progress that all Michigan children receiving specialized supports have made toward age-expected behaviors and skills, either for *Early On* or for preschool special education. The summary statement definitions and their associated calculations using the progress category information are listed below:

## Summary Statement 1: Substantial Growth Toward Age Expectations

**Definition:** Of those children who entered the program below age expectations, the percent who substantially increased their rate of growth by the time they exited the program.

**Calculation:** To determine what percentage of children made substantial growth toward age expectations when they exited the program, the number of children whose progress is described by categories "c" and "d" are added together. These two progress categories each describe children who, over the course of the intervention, have moved closer to age-level functioning. The total number of children in categories "c" and "d" is then divided by the number of children in all the categories except "e" (a+b+c+d) to arrive at a percentage. For this calculation, progress category "e" is omitted because descriptively these children entered *Early On*/preschool special education using age-level behaviors and skills and subsequently left the program demonstrating age-level behaviors and skills. The calculation pictured below indicates the way in which substantial growth toward age expectations is calculated:

$$\frac{c + d}{a + b + c + d}$$

## Summary Statement 2: Functioning Within Age Expectations

**Definition:** The percent of children who were functioning within age expectations in each outcome by the time they exited the program.

**Calculation:** To determine what percentage of children were functioning within age expectations when they exited the program, the number of children whose progress is described by categories "d" and "e" are added together. These two progress categories each describe children who left intervention demonstrating age-level functioning. The total number of children in categories "d" and "e" is then divided by the number of children in all the categories (a+b+c+d+e) to arrive at a percentage. The calculation pictured below indicates the way in which functioning within age expectations is calculated:

$$\frac{d + e}{a + b + c + d + e}$$

## Comparing Federal Calculations to State Targets

The IDEA outlines multiple performance indicators for both Part C *Early On* and Part B special education programs. These indicators and associated targets are described in the SPP and each year states are required to report their performance on these indicators to OSEP in the APR. SPP/APR performance targets are expressed in terms of percentages.

Included in each state's APR to OSEP, are indicators of two types, compliance and results. Compliance indicators have federally determined performance targets of either 100 percent or 0 percent, while the performance targets for results indicators vary. The targets for results indicators are set at the state level and must demonstrate some level of improvement over the state's baseline performance. Child outcomes indicators are results indicators with the performance targets set by the state.

In Michigan, *Early On* SPP/APR targets are recommended by the Michigan Interagency Coordinating Council (MICC) and set by MDE. For preschool special education, the targets are recommended by MDE to the Special Education Advisory Council (SEAC). SEAC reviews the recommendations and provides comments. Based on SEAC input, targets are set by MDE.

Part C *Early On* and Part B preschool special education have separate results indicators for child outcomes. For *Early On*, child outcomes are reported in Part C SPP/APR Indicator 3. For preschool special education they are reported in Part B SPP/APR Indicator 7. Both Part C Indicator 3 and Part B Indicator 7 use the two summary statements described earlier in this manual as the framework for reporting progress on child outcomes.

As a reminder, there are two summary statements. For each summary statement performance, targets are given for each of the three child outcomes resulting in six annual targets for Part C Indicator 3 and six annual targets for Part B Indicator 7. The Part C and Part B SPP/APR targets for each year are available online. The targets and results for Part C Indicator 3 are available on the [Michigan Department of Education \*Early On\*](https://www.michigan.gov/earlyon) website (<https://www.michigan.gov/earlyon>). The most recent targets and results for Part B Indicator 7 are available on the [Catamaran Training website](https://training.catamaran.partners/b-7-preschool-outcomes/) (<https://training.catamaran.partners/b-7-preschool-outcomes/>).

Whether an LEA or ISD within Michigan is demonstrating adequate performance on the three child outcomes is based on comparing the indicator results to the SPP/APR targets for each of the three child outcomes. This comparison is done separately for each of the three outcomes. For more information about local data

and the process for *Early On*, please see the *Early On* Child Outcomes Data Manual and for preschool special education contact the Part B 619 Coordinator at MDE.

## Online Resources

Online options for learning about and practicing the quality practices associated with the child outcomes have been developed through funding from OSEP.

An online learning resource that provides foundational information about the COS rating process and key practices for promoting consistent and meaningful COS decision making is called [COS Process Online Module: Collecting & Using Data to Improve Programs](https://eotta.ccesa.org/Event.php?id=3408) (https://eotta.ccesa.org/Event.php?id=3408) and is available on the EOT&TA website at the link provided. This module is self-paced and may be revisited as often as users desire. The module consists of eight sessions. Each of the eight sessions take from 30-45 minutes to complete and are organized in a consistent framework of providing the learner with a presentation after setting the purpose of the session. Following the presentation, an opportunity is given to practice the new skills and assess one's understanding.

An additional online option for learning more about the COS measurement process is called the **Child Outcomes Summary-Team Collaboration (COS-TC) Quality Practices and Checklist**. This resource is presented in module format with each module giving *Early On* and preschool special education providers opportunities to extend their learning by watching video clips of COS team meetings with families and rating the extent to which providers depicted in the videos use COS-TC quality practices. For those interested in these modules, they are available on the [ECTA Center website](http://olms.cte.jhu.edu/olms2/COSTC) (http://olms.cte.jhu.edu/olms2/COSTC).

**The COS-TC checklist** is supplied to identify, observe, and assess recommended team collaboration within the COS rating process. A description of each of the quality practices and the associated indicators of quality are included in the checklist. The checklist is available for downloading as a Word document on the [ECTA Center website](http://ectacenter.org/~docs/eco/COS-TC_Checklist_March_2017.docx) (http://ectacenter.org/~docs/eco/COS-TC\_Checklist\_March\_2017.docx).

Another online resource that is presented through video and activities is called **Converting COS Data to OSEP Progress Categories/Summary Statements**. This online interactive experience explains how the data obtained from the COS rating process are converted to child outcomes data that states report annually to the federal government. This resource may be accessed on the [DaSy Center website](http://dasyonline.org/cos-osep-reporting) (http://dasyonline.org/cos-osep-reporting).

Additional training materials and resources related to the COS rating process are available on the ECTA Center webpage called [COS Process Professional Development](http://ectacenter.org/eco/pages/cospd.asp) (<http://ectacenter.org/eco/pages/cospd.asp>).

## **Division for Early Childhood Recommended Practices**

To bridge the gaps that existed between policy, research, and practice, in 1991 the Division for Early Childhood (DEC) developed Recommended Practices (RPs). The RPs were compiled as guidance regarding the most effective ways to improve the outcomes and development for young children, birth through five, who were at risk for developmental delays or disabilities. These RPs were based on the best available empirical evidence as well as wisdom and guidance from the field. They serve as a foundational way in which improved child outcomes may be put into practice in a practical and meaningful manner.

Since their initial publication, the DEC RPs have been reviewed and revised many times to reflect the most current research and practice in the field of early intervention/preschool special education. The most recent version is divided into eight topic areas that relate very well to the work and focus on child outcomes. In particular, the topic areas of assessment, family, teaming, and collaboration, as well as transition give proven practices that practitioners will want to incorporate into their work with children and families.

The latest versions of the DEC RPs documents were released in 2014 and are available at no cost on the associated [DEC webpage](http://www.dec-sped.org/dec-recommended-practices) (<http://www.dec-sped.org/dec-recommended-practices>). They are available in English and Spanish, may be downloaded with embedded examples and includes an interactive glossary of relevant terms.

## Appendices



## Appendix A: Conversation Starters - Making Functional Child Outcome Ratings

Source: Thinking about Functional Child Outcomes. Donna Spiker, Lauren Barton, Mary Beth Bruder. OSEP Early Childhood Outcomes Meeting, August 2007, Baltimore, MD

As you discuss each of the three global outcomes, consider these general questions:

1. What does your child typically do?
2. How does your child use his/her skills to accomplish tasks?
3. Is your child's performance consistent across a variety of settings and situations?

Outcome	Functional Skills	Conversation Starters
A. Children have positive social relationships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Relating with adults</li> <li>▪ Relating with other children</li> <li>▪ For older children following rules related to groups or interacting with others</li> </ul> <p>Includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Attachment/separation/autonomy</li> <li>▪ Expressing emotions and feelings</li> <li>▪ Learning rules and expectations</li> <li>▪ Social interactions and play</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ How does the child relate to his/her parents?</li> <li>▪ How does the child relate to strangers? At first? After a while? In different settings?</li> <li>▪ How does the child display emotions?</li> <li>▪ How would you describe the child's participation in 'games' (e.g., joint attention, social, cooperative, rule-based, with turn-taking?)</li> <li>▪ How does the child interact with other children?</li> <li>▪ How does the child let others know he/she needs help? Is frustrated?</li> <li>▪ Are there social skills or behaviors, or factors from across the developmental domains, which impact the child's positive social relationships?</li> <li>▪ Does this child integrate social skills and put them to use across settings and situations?</li> </ul>

Outcome	Functional Skills	Conversation Starters
<p>B. Children acquire and use knowledge and skills.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Thinking, reasoning, remembering, problem solving</li> <li>▪ Using symbols and language</li> <li>▪ Understanding physical and social worlds</li> </ul> <p>Includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Early concepts - symbols, pictures, numbers, classification, spatial relations</li> <li>▪ Imitation</li> <li>▪ Object permanence</li> <li>▪ Expressive language and communication</li> <li>▪ Early literacy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ How does the child use words and skills/behaviors he/she has in everyday settings (e.g., at home, at the park, at child care, at a store or mall, with different people)?</li> <li>▪ How does the child understand and respond to directions or requests from others?</li> <li>▪ Does the child use something learned at one time later or in another situation?</li> <li>▪ How does the child interact with books, pictures, and print?</li> </ul>
<p>C. Children take appropriate action to meet their needs</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Taking care of basic needs</li> <li>▪ Getting from place to place</li> <li>▪ Using tools (e.g., fork, toothbrush, crayon)</li> <li>▪ In older children, contributing to their own health and safety.</li> </ul> <p>Includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Integrating motor skills to complete tasks</li> <li>▪ Self-help skills (e.g., dressing, feeding, grooming, toileting, household responsibility)</li> <li>▪ Acting on the world to get what one wants, taking appropriate actions to meet needs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ What does the child do when he/she can't get or doesn't have what he/she wants?</li> <li>▪ What does the child do when he/she is hungry? Frustrated? Needs help? Is upset or needs comfort?</li> <li>▪ How does the child behave when dressing and undressing? When eating?</li> <li>▪ Does the child display toy preferences? How?</li> <li>▪ Are the actions the child uses to meet his/her needs appropriate for his/her age? Can he/she accomplish things that peers do?</li> </ul>

## Appendix B: What if We Can't Reach Consensus?

Source: Early Childhood Outcomes Center

Team disagreement is a commonly mentioned concern when considering the Child Outcome Summary (COS) Process. In reality, team disagreement does not happen frequently. The text below gives strategies for coming to consensus without disagreement and for dealing effectively with the rare situations in which the group is having difficulty reaching an agreement.

### Suggestions and Strategies for Reaching Consensus

**Structure** - Structure the discussion to minimize the likelihood of reaching an impasse.

**Policy** - Adopt a policy/procedure for dealing with these situations. Possible options:

- Majority rules.
- Supervisor decides.

**Pace** - Focus most of the discussion on the child's behaviors and skills related to the **outcome**; **don't select a rating number too quickly.**

**Rationale** - Discuss the rationales for the differing ratings; focus on concrete descriptions and explore how these descriptions support a rating.

**Background** - Include more discussion on what behaviors and skills you would see in a typically developing child this age to provide more background for the discussion of this child.

**Review** - If unresolvable differences are occurring frequently, revisit and discuss how the rating is being decided.

### Conversation Prompts for Groups Having Difficulty Reaching Consensus

**Focus on Outcomes** - In the rare instances in which group members are having difficulty coming to consensus, suggest that they re-visit documents that give examples of the breadth of content covered in each outcome. Have they discussed the child's behaviors and skills regarding those aspects of the child outcomes? Are the comments being considered relevant to the child outcome up for rating discussion? Conversation prompts may include the following:

"I hear you describing the child's skills regarding [insert content], what information do you have about the child's skills in [insert another relevant setting or situation or outcome component that hasn't yet been discussed]?"

*"Tell me about the kinds of evidence that suggest to you this child has [insert modifier] age-expected behavior or has [insert modifier] immediate foundational skills?"*

- When have you observed or documented those skills?
- In what situations?
- How frequently does that occur?
- Were the accommodations/supports available in that setting those that are usually available to the child? What were they?
- You identified this as an immediate foundational skill. Are there other steps in the sequence of development that need to occur between developing this skill and the age-expected skills in this area?
- Is there other information you need or want to be better equipped to make this decision?
- Has everyone on the team had a chance to talk about the skills they have observed and the evidence they are considering in reaching a rating?
- Is any one person dominating conversation and that is part of the problem?

*"What do most [insert child's age] year old children do with regard to this skill [or this outcome area]?"*

*"How does the child's disability/the child's delay/the change in the child's approach to these skills impact his/her ability to function in achieving this outcome RIGHT NOW?"*

*"Ratings are based on the child's functioning RIGHT NOW at one point in time."*

Thinking about the child's skills that have been discussed:

- Right now, is the child showing skills that are expected for his/her age?
- Right now, is the child showing skills that are immediate foundations for the skills that other peers his/her age are showing?
- How often? Can you describe what they are and when and where they occur?
- What behaviors and skills (or lack of skills) stand out in making you choose that number [or insert differentiating language associated with number]?

There is at times discussion about wanting ratings to agree with eligibility. With some children and in some states, there is a lot of overlap between achievement of functional outcomes and eligibility; with other children and in other states, there is not. Eligibility may focus a lot on testing done in contexts that differ substantially from those common in everyday functioning. Eligibility may or may not allow certain kinds of accommodations or supports; to the extent that these are available to the child in everyday situations, then they would be allowed in considering child outcomes ratings.

Eligibility usually is organized around specific domains whereas the functional outcomes are organized in a different way that could lead to different conclusions. Eligibility may assume corrections for prematurity; while this is a state decision, in many places outcomes ratings are based on a true chronological comparison. Taking all this into account, let's set eligibility decisions aside for a moment (though not necessarily the data you got to help make them), what do the child's skills and actions suggest about the child's functioning right now regarding the outcome?

## Appendix C: Impossible Combinations of COS Process Responses

Source: Early Childhood Outcomes Center, August 2007.

The following table presents combinations that are **impossible** and provides an explanation for why.

Scenario	ENTRY COS Rating (Initial or Prior Rating)	EXIT COS Rating (Subsequent Rating)	EXIT Skills Question ("Has the child shown any new skills or behaviors?")	Explanation (Why this combination of COSF responses is impossible.)
<b>A</b>	7 or 6	7 or 6	No	A <b>"no"</b> response to the new skills question means the child has not shown any new skills or behaviors related to the outcome between entry and exit. This combination of responses is impossible since a child must have acquired new skills to receive a rating of age-expected development (over the minimum time span which is six months); children must acquire new skills over time to maintain age-expected development.
<b>B</b>	5	6 or 7	No	A <b>"no"</b> response to the new skills question means the child has not shown any new skills or behaviors related to the outcome between entry and exit. A higher rating at time 2 means he/she acquired new skills.
<b>C</b>	5	5	No	A <b>"no"</b> response to the new skills question means the child has not shown any new skills or behaviors related to the outcome between entry and exit. To receive the same rating on the scale at two different points in time, the child must have acquired new skills, because as children get older it takes more skills to receive the same rating.

<b>Scenario</b>	<b>ENTRY COS Rating</b> (Initial or Prior Rating)	<b>EXIT COS Rating</b> (Subsequent Rating)	<b>EXIT Skills Question</b> ("Has the child shown any new skills or behaviors?")	<b>Explanation</b> (Why this combination of COSF responses is impossible.)
<b>D</b>	4	5, 6, or 7	No	See explanation for # <b>B</b> above.
<b>E</b>	4	4	No	See explanation for # <b>C</b> above.
<b>F</b>	3	4, 5, 6, or 7	No	See explanation for # <b>B</b> above.
<b>G</b>	3	3	No	See explanation for # <b>C</b> above.
<b>H</b>	2	3, 4, 5, 6, or 7	No	See explanation for # <b>B</b> above.
<b>I</b>	2	2	No	See explanation for # <b>C</b> above.
<b>J</b>	1	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, or 7	No	See explanation for # <b>B</b> above.

## Appendix D: *Early On* & Preschool Special Education Reporting Requirements

Source: CCRESA Office of Innovative Projects, 2016.

Child Outcomes Summary (COS) Component	<i>Early On</i> Requirements	Preschool Special Education (PSE) Requirements
<b>Entry Date</b>	Up to 90 <b>calendar</b> days of Referral Date.	Up to 30 <b>school</b> days of start of IEP services.
<b>Exit Date</b>	Up to 90 <b>calendar</b> days prior to exit from <i>Early On</i> .	Up to 30 <b>school</b> days prior to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ineligibility</li> <li>• Turning six</li> <li>• Starting kindergarten</li> </ul>
<b>Annual Rating</b>	Considered best practice for assessing functional abilities and developing or updating IFSPs.	Considered best practice for assessing functional abilities and developing or updating IEPs.
<b>Assessment Tool</b>	Any of the approved assessment tools <b>OR</b> any other tool that assesses all developmental domains.	Any of the approved assessment tools <b>OR</b> <i>Early On</i> exit ratings may be used as PSE entry ratings if felt to be accurate and used in entirety.
<b>Eligibility Information</b>	May be used to inform the COS rating process, but not as a substitute for the COS process.	May be used to inform the COS rating process, but not as a substitute for the COS process.
<b>Six Months of Service</b>	After at least six continuous months of uninterrupted service in Michigan.	After at least six continuous months of uninterrupted service in Michigan.
<b>Child Outcomes</b>	Regardless of service level, all three child outcomes must be assessed at <b>entry</b> and <b>exit</b> for all infants/toddlers on an IFSP.	All three child outcomes must be assessed at <b>entry</b> and <b>exit</b> for all children on an IEP regardless of service level.
<b>Missing Ratings</b>	Review infant/toddler's educational record <b>OR</b> contact previous service provider(s).	Review child's educational record <b>OR</b> contact Lisa Wasacz with the child's UIC# only.
<b>Family Input</b>	Required to be sought as part of the COS rating process.	Required to be sought as part of the COS rating process.



## Appendix E: Calculating OSEP Categories from COS Process Responses

The table below shows the OSEP reporting category generated from all **possible combinations** of COSF ratings at Entry and Exit.

Source: Early Childhood Outcomes Center, (2007)

<b>ENTRY COS Rating</b> (Initial or Prior Rating)	<b>EXIT COS Rating</b> (Subsequent Rating)	<b>EXIT Skills Question</b> ("Has the child shown any new skills or behaviors?")	<b>OSEP Progress Reporting Category</b> (Based on information from prior three columns)
7	7	Yes	e
7	6	Yes	e
7	1 to 5	Yes	b
7	1 to 5	No	a
6	7	Yes	e
6	6	Yes	e
6	1 to 5	Yes	b
6	1 to 5	No	a
5	6 or 7	Yes	d
5	5	Yes	b
5	1 to 4	Yes	b
5	1 to 4	No	a
4	6 or 7	Yes	d
4	5	Yes	c
4	4	Yes	b
4	1 to 3	Yes	b
4	1 to 3	No	a
3	6 or 7	Yes	d
3	4 or 5	Yes	c

<b>ENTRY COS Rating</b> (Initial or Prior Rating)	<b>EXIT COS Rating</b> (Subsequent Rating)	<b>EXIT Skills Question</b> ("Has the child shown any new skills or behaviors?")	<b>OSEP Progress Reporting Category</b> (Based on information from prior three columns)
3	3	Yes	b
3	1 or 2	Yes	b
3	1 or 2	No	a
2	6 or 7	Yes	d
2	3 to 5	Yes	c
2	2	Yes	b
2	1	Yes	b
2	1	No	a
1	6 or 7	Yes	d
1	2 to 5	Yes	c
1	1	Yes	b
1	1	No	a

**Note:** The "exit skills" question refers to answer to the question, "Has the child shown any new skills or behaviors related to this outcome since the last outcomes summary?"

## Appendix F: Contact Information

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