

EARLY CHILDHOOD OUTCOMES PROJECT

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS – FAQ (SEPTEMBER, 2007)

Concerning the **Procedures for Reporting** Child Outcomes

1. *What children should be included in data collection and reporting?*

Entry data.

Year 1 (2006-2007) – Pilot Sites:* Children with IEPs entering preschool special education for the first time in the 2006-2007 and the 2007-2008 school years will be initially rated using the *Child Outcome Summary Form (COSF)*. Do **not include preschool children with IEPs who returned in the fall of 2006 having had previous special education preschool services.

Year 2 (2007-2008) – All Remaining Preschool Sites:* Children with IEPs entering preschool special education for the first time in the 2007-2008 school year will be initially rated using the COSF. Do **not include preschool children with IEPs who returned in the fall of 2007 having had previous special education preschool services.

Exit data. Those students who

- ♦ have entry data,
- ♦ have participated in services for at least a 6 month period, and
- ♦ are exiting the program

will be rated at their exit from program.

For students who qualify in one area only (i.e., CD-only or motor-only), refer to the document titled *Determining Child Outcome Summary Form Scores for Children Who Qualify in One Area* for specific instructions and resources. These children are subject to the same entry/exit reporting expectations as all other students receiving service.

2. *How long should a child be in special education preschool services before s/he is rated the first time (at entry)?*

Use the curriculum-based tool adopted by your district/program as advised by the publisher. This usually involves 3-6 weeks of observation. Complete the assessment and bring together information from that instrument along with other sources of information in order to complete the *Child Outcome Summary Form (COSF)* 3 weeks – 6 weeks (maximum) after the development of the IEP and participation in the preschool program.

3. *What constitutes exit from program? More specifically, if a child has entry data, has been in program for at least six months, and does not return to school for 20 calendar days, should the child be considered as having exited the program?*

Yes. The child is considered as having exited the program for apportionment purposes after 20 school days and should therefore be considered as having exited the program for data collection purposes as well. [WAC 392-121-108 (i)]. **Note:** Some children may not be in program long enough for the staff to gather entry/exit data.

4. *How should preschool teams gather information about children?*

There are a number of options and sources of information including:

- ♦ observation and reports by family members, care providers, school and other service providers;
- ♦ developmental screenings (e.g., Ages and Stages);
- ♦ curriculum-based assessments (e.g., AEPS);
- ♦ norm-referenced assessments (e.g., BDI-2);
- ♦ progress monitoring;
- ♦ relevant information identified during assessment, planning, or IEP meetings; and/or
- ♦ notes about performance in different situations.

For children transitioning from a Part C program or currently in Head Start, curriculum-based assessment information will be available.

5. *The three outcomes on the Child Outcome Summary Form (COSF) are functional outcomes, yet most assessment/curriculum tools are organized around domains. How do we use these instruments to help arrive at a rating for each outcome area?*

The Early Childhood Outcomes Center (ECO Center), the national technical assistance agency, "crosswalked" some of the most commonly used tools for preschoolers to the three child outcomes. The crosswalks show which items or areas on each tool address each of the three outcomes. In developing crosswalks, the Center applied a consistent set of rules to map assessment tool content to the outcome content. The ECO Center cautions that the crosswalks are not meant to be used as a checklist to determine level of functioning in an outcome area. A current list of crosswalked tools is available at: www.fpg.unc.edu/~eco/crosswalks .

6. *Must parents be involved in making the rating decision?*

Best practice would say that the rating process should be a team process involving family members, others familiar with the child in various settings and situations, and school personnel. It is not a requirement that parents must be involved in making the rating decision. However, at a minimum, getting parent information and input is advisable.

Districts may decide to create some guidelines for decision-making regarding the rating. *For example*, some children will remain far from typical development or regress due to their

disability, disease, or condition. If the child's case manager or teacher feels the rating process would be upsetting for the parent, s/he can explain that this kind of rating is done for every child receiving preschool special education services and:

- ♦ ask the parent if s/he wants to participate in the rating; or
- ♦ indicate that the case manager or school team members will complete the rating based on information gathered from the parent and other sources.

7. *For children born prematurely, do we compare to a typical child of the same chronological age or of the same corrected age?*

Compare to a typical child of the same *chronological* age.

8. *How do we go about rating a child who uses an alternate mode of communication or mobility?*

Rate the child based on *his or her typical means* of functioning. For example, for a child without legs who receives special education preschool services, the team needs to consider her typical mobility patterns when rating the outcome areas. If the child uses her arms to “walk” short distances from point A to point B and uses her arms to lift herself from the ground to her wheelchair for longer distances, use these “typical” means of ambulation when rating this child's functioning across settings and situations. Use of PECS or signing would be other examples.

9. *During transition meetings, can we use the exit data from early intervention as entry data for preschool special education?*

Information from a variety of sources is required in order to complete the entry and the exit ratings on the *Child Outcome Summary Form* (COSF). A preschool team may elect to use the child outcomes exit data from an early intervention provider as part of the multiple sources of information the team considers in determining the entry data for a preschool special education student. (See Question #2.)

10. *What about children who repeat preschool? When do we conduct the exit COSF (knowing that they must have received 6 months of services)?*

The exit COSF should be completed just prior to the child turning first-grade eligible – even if retained in preschool. One way to think about this is to think about how the child is counted for state funding. When he or she reaches the age of first-grade eligibility, the child is counted as a 6-21 year old (not as a preschooler) even when remaining in preschool.

11. What constitutes 6 months of preschool services? Is it a calendar year or school year of services? Example: the child who enters preschool in April. When would the child be considered to have 6 months of services?

Six months of service is based on the school year and excludes ESY services. So, the child entering preschool in April would have 6 months of services in November or December, depending on the district calendar.

12. What if our district receives a student who participated in a pilot school district and has an entry COSF?

It depends. If a child has a CSRS number, report exit data at the time the child exits (assuming that the child has received 6 or more months of preschool services). For a child who enters without a CSRS number, treat as an entering student by doing an initial COSF if he or she can remain in preschool services for six or more months.

Concerning the *Child Outcome Summary Form* (COSF)

13. How do we know a child's true potential, what s/he could be expected to achieve?

Each outcome rating **compares a child to a typically developing child** – *not* to the child's individual potential. The child's initial rating on his/her functioning in relation to typically developing children of the same age will be used to look at progress achieved during participation in special education preschool services.

14. Can the form be modified?

No, the form can't be modified. In order to gather meaningful data that will allow for comparison, the *Child Outcome Summary Form* (COSF) must be used as is.

15. The form and process seem very subjective, so data may not be valid, reliable, or meaningful.

There is no existing "objective" assessment based on the three functional child outcomes. Through a team's discussion of the child's skills and behaviors across a variety of settings and situations and in relation to child development expectations a relatively valid and reliable rating

will result. The national technical assistance agency, the Early Childhood Outcomes (ECO) Center, is collecting information from across the country to examine validity and reliability issues. Those data will be available in the near future.

16. The box for describing progress (under the “b” question) isn’t big enough to include all the child has learned to do since the initial rating.

There is no requirement to enter a lot of examples of progress for the “b” question. This description will not be entered into the database for summarization. The box allows the child’s team to acknowledge progress the child is making, especially if the child is not “catching up” to typical functioning or is very atypical (e.g., in the “3” or “1” categories in the “a” question).

Concerning Data Submission

17. What documentation needs to be maintained – when and where?

A child’s completed *Child Outcome Summary Form* (COSF) will stay in his/her special education file. A copy of the form must be submitted to the district EC Coordinator or whoever has been designated as the Data Coordinator for early childhood outcomes.

The Data Management Coordinator for the Special Education Program at OSPI developed a spreadsheet for recording each district’s data as well as instructions. It can be accessed from the Puget Sound ESD website at www.psesd.org/specialservices/ECOutcomes or the OSPI website at www.k12.wa.us/SpecialEd/EC. The spreadsheet includes child identification (the state’s Core Student Record System [CSRS] number which is assigned to every student in the district) and the one numerical score (1-7) for each outcome area at entrance and exit, as well as one numerical score (1 or 2) for the question regarding any new skills in each outcome area at exit. The EC Coordinator or Data Coordinator will summarize the individual student COSF data on the OSPI spreadsheet and submit it by December 30, 2007 (for entry data), and again in June 30, 2008 (for entry and exit data). The template automatically computes the required reporting information for the Department of Education once entry and exit data are entered. Additional information will be provided by the OSPI Special Education Data Manager via monthly bulletins and CSRS trainings.

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and
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