

At a Glance: Child Outcomes

Child Outcomes

States are required to report on the percentage of infants and toddlers with Individualized Family Service Plans (IFSPs) or preschool children with Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) who demonstrate improved:

1. Positive social-emotional skills (including social relationships);
2. Acquisition and use of knowledge and skills (including early language/communication [and early literacy]); and
3. Use of appropriate behaviors to meet their needs.

Positive social emotional skills (including social relationships). This outcome involves relating to adults, relating to other children, and for older children, following rules related to groups or interacting with others. The outcome includes concepts and behaviors such as attachment/separation/autonomy, expressing emotions and feelings, learning rules and expectations in social situations, and social interactions and social play.

Acquisition and use of knowledge and skills (including early language/communication/early literacy). This outcome involves activities such as thinking, reasoning, remembering, problem solving, number concepts, counting, and understanding the physical and social worlds. It also includes a variety of skills related to language and literacy including vocabulary, phonemic awareness, and letter recognition.

Use of appropriate behaviors to meet their needs. This outcome involves behaviors like taking care of basic needs, getting from place to place, using tools (such as forks, toothbrushes, and crayons), and, in children 24 months or older, contributing to their own health, safety, and well-being. It also includes integrating motor skills to complete tasks; taking care of one's self in areas like dressing, feeding, grooming, and toileting; and acting on the world in socially appropriate ways to get what one wants.

Ultimate goals for early intervention and early childhood special education:

For children...

to enable young children to be active and successful participants during the 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.

For families ...

to enable families to provide care for their child and have the resources they need to participate in their own desired family and community activities.



Child Outcomes are:

- **A snapshot** – of the child’s overall functioning at one given point in time, informed by the full team of people who know the child best across settings and situations where the child spends his/her time. They provide a consistent format for programs to see the extent to which their activities are making a difference in supporting all children’s progress and offer needed information to guide program improvement. More detailed information about each specific child’s functioning and progress may be more useful to the team in developing program plans than the 3 global outcomes.
- **Integrated** – going beyond skills in any one domain, bringing them together in complex and interconnected ways
- **Functional** – reflecting how children use the skills they have in everyday activities to accomplish things that are meaningful to them. They go beyond actions that might be observed in a child sporadically under a specific set of ideal or unusual conditions to focus on how the child regularly uses his/her skills
- **Different across contexts** – in many cases children’s functioning will vary across contexts, exhibiting different ways of interacting with different people and in places where different supports and expectations exist. The outcomes reflect an overall sense of how the child functions across the full range of everyday settings and situations. Include a child’s functioning with whatever assistive technology supports may routinely be available (or not) in the settings where the child spends his/her time
- **Considered relative to same-age peers** – ratings reflect the child’s functioning relative to that of same-aged peers to help interpret the mix of functioning observed and the trajectory of the child’s progress over time
- **Not intended for eligibility determination** – the outcomes reflect one measure of a child’s functioning. For a variety of reasons, it is not expected to mirror eligibility determination. A number of kids eligible for IDEA-funded services may demonstrate age-expected functioning in one or more of the outcome areas

Progress Categories

For OSEP, states are required to report on the percentage of children in five categories of progress for each of the three child outcomes (percentage in 5 categories X 3 outcomes = 15 numbers the state reports):

- a. Children who did not improve functioning.
- b. Children who improved functioning but not sufficient to move nearer to functioning comparable to same aged peers.
- c. Children who improved functioning to a level nearer to same aged peers but did not reach it.
- d. Children who improved functioning to reach a level comparable to same aged peers.
- e. Children who maintained functioning at a level comparable to same aged peers.

States must report progress category information on children who receive services in the state for 6 months or more. Progress category information on all 3 outcomes is required for each child, regardless of the child’s reason for eligibility. Categories are derived by combining the outcomes ratings or descriptor statements given at program entry and exit.

Summary Statements

For OSEP, states are required to convert information from the progress categories into two summary statement percentages for each of the three child outcomes:

Summary Statement 1: 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. (State derives a percentage for each child outcome area.) *Formula*: $[(c + d)/(a + b + c + d)] \times 100$, where letters represent the actual number of children in each progress category group.

Summary Statement 2: The percent of children who were functioning within age expectations in each Outcome by the time they exited the program. (State derives a percentage for each child outcome area.) *Formula*: $[(d + e)/(a + b + c + d + e)] \times 100$, where letters represent the actual number of children in each progress category group.