

Questions and Answers on Using the Child Outcomes Summary Form (COSF)

1. Why collect outcomes data?

States are required to collect early childhood outcomes data in the State performance Plan (SPP) and Annual Performance Report (APR). Indicator 7 measures state early childhood outcomes in several areas.

2. What are the Indicator 7 reporting areas?

The areas are measured are (a) positive social emotional skills (including social relationship); (b) acquisition and use of knowledge and skills (including early language/communication), and (c) use of appropriate behaviors to meet their needs. Students included in the measurement must have been receiving preschool special education services for at least six months.

3. What is the COSF?

The COSF is a process developed by the ECO Center. The COSF provides a system for an IEP team to summarize the child's levels of functioning using information from a variety of sources. This summary of information must be reported using the COSF within six weeks of the child's entry into special education services. This includes children receiving only a single special education service such as speech-language therapy in an itinerant service delivery format. The COSF is required by South Carolina to report entry and exit data for all children ages three through five.

4. How are children assessed initially?

Children must be assessed using whatever method the IEP team determines is appropriate either as part of their initial eligibility evaluation or within six weeks of entering special education services for all disability categories. This entry data must be recorded using the COSF.

5. When are children assessed again?

Children who have received special education services for at least six months must be assessed again using whatever method the IEP team determines is appropriate at one of two points:

- For children who are exiting the preschool age range (ages three through five), the children must be assessed within three weeks prior to or after their sixth birthday if they are continuing to receive special education services past their sixth birthdays; or
- For children who are exiting from all special education services through reevaluation prior to their sixth birthday, the children must be assessed during the reevaluation.

6. What must be collected on the COSF?

Data for all domains must be collected at both entry and exit points for all children ages three through five for all disability categories (speech-language, orthopedic, other health, vision, deaf/hard of hearing, deaf-blind, learning disabilities, emotional disabilities, intellectual disabilities, developmental delay, autism, multiple disabilities, and traumatic brain injury) and all educational environments (itinerant, resource, self-contained, and other settings).

7. What can assist me in assigning ratings?

The Early Childhood Outcomes (ECO) Center decision tree can assist. The decision tree was revised by the as a tool for training in the use of the 7-point Child Outcomes Summary Form. The decision tree represents a series of questions about the extent to which a child exhibits age-appropriate skills and behaviors. Responses to questions on the decision tree guide the user to a specific rating category on the 7-point scale. Walking through the questions can guide a rating-scale discussion or confirm a final rating decision.

