

Frequently Asked Questions on Collecting Child Outcome Data in Early Intervention

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Rationale for Measuring Child Outcomes

1. Why are we measuring progress on child outcomes?

Pennsylvania's infant toddler and preschool early intervention (EI) programs have been collecting and reporting child outcome data since FY 2006-7. Since that time, the aggregate data on child outcomes has been used to:

- Demonstrate the high quality of Pennsylvania's EI program;
- Meet the federal Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) child outcomes reporting requirements related to program accountability;
- Ensure the effectiveness of local EI programs;
- Provide families with information on their child's progress while in EI; and
- Provide IFSP/IEP team members with information to enhance intervention strategies.

Starting in FY 2015-16, Pennsylvania will also use child outcome data to meet additional federal requirements to develop a statewide goal for enhancing the progress that children make while they are enrolled in early intervention. Pennsylvania's goal (called a SiMR or Statewide Measurable Result) will be measured through the use of ECO child outcome data. Pennsylvania's SiMR is:

- Infants, toddlers and preschoolers with IFSP/IEPs will demonstrate the social relationship and early language/literacy skills needed to succeed in home, community, early childhood, and school settings

2. What are the three OSEP child outcomes?

The child outcome indicators, with the exception of the focus on early literacy skills in preschool, are the same in both the infant toddler and preschool early intervention programs.

Positive, Social, Emotional Skills (including social relationships)

This includes the skills and behaviors that infants, toddlers and preschoolers use across settings to:

- Build and maintain relationships with adults and other children
- Behave in a way that allows them to participate in a variety of settings and situations
- Understand and follow social rules
- Regulate their emotions

Acquisition and Use of Knowledge and Skills (including early language/communication and early literacy for 3-5 year olds)

This includes the skills and behaviors that infants, toddlers and preschoolers use across settings to:

- Think, reason, remember, and solve problems
- Understand and use symbols that will build to early literacy skills
- Engage in daily learning opportunities through appropriately manipulating toys and objects
- Use vocabulary, through spoken, signed or augmentative systems, to communicate in increasingly complex forms

Use of Appropriate Behaviors to Meet Needs

This includes the skills and behaviors that infants, toddlers and preschoolers use across settings to:

- Take care of basic needs (e.g., expressing hunger, dressing, feeding, toileting, etc.)
- Contribute to own health and safety (e.g., follows rules, assists with hand washing, avoids inedible objects, etc.)
- Get from place to place (mobility) to participate in everyday activities and routines
- Use objects as tools in appropriate ways (e.g., forks, pencils, strings attached to objects, switches, etc.).

3. What data does the Bureau of Early Intervention Services report to OSEP?

For each of the three child outcome indicators, Pennsylvania reports to OSEP the number and percentage of children in five categories. The child's rating of one of these categories is determined by comparing their entry and exit rating scores (1-7) and the determination of whether or not the child has made progress. The categories are:

- A. Infants, toddlers or preschoolers who did not improve functioning
- B. Infants, toddlers or preschoolers who improved functioning but not sufficient to move nearer to functioning comparable to same-aged peers
- C. Infants, toddlers or preschoolers who improved functioning to a level nearer to same- aged peers but did not reach it
- D. Infants, toddlers or preschoolers who improved functioning to reach a level comparable to same-aged peers
- E. Infants, toddlers or preschoolers who maintained functioning at a level comparable to same-aged peers

Using these five categories listed above, OSEP also requires states to report the following summary statements for each of the child outcome indicators. These summary statements are used in Pennsylvania for public reporting on local performance through the online data profiles for each infant toddler and preschool early intervention program.

- Summary Statement 1: Of those infants and toddlers or preschoolers who entered and exited early intervention below age expectations in each outcome, the percent who substantially increased their rate of growth by the time they exit the program.
- Summary Statement 2: The percent of infants and toddlers or preschoolers who were functioning within age expectations in each outcome by the time they exit the program.

Data from Summary Statement 1, combined for all infants, toddlers, and preschoolers, is used to report Pennsylvania's progress in reaching targets for the SiMR.

To see the actual aggregate child outcome or SiMR data that is reported to OSEP, see the Annual Performance Reports on the PaTTAN website (www.pattan.net). There is an Annual Performance Report for the infant toddler early intervention program and one that covers the preschool early intervention and school-age special education programs.

Children Participating in Child Outcomes Measurement

4. Which children are included in the measurement of child outcomes?

All infants, toddlers, and preschoolers who are enrolled in the early intervention program should have child outcome data collected on all three indicators at their entry to and exit from the early intervention program.

Entry Data	Exit Data
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All infants, toddlers and preschoolers who are found eligible for the early intervention program. Those children who participate in the infant toddler early intervention tracking program <u>are not included</u> in the measurement of child progress. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All infants, toddlers and preschoolers who have received at least 6 months of consecutive early intervention services prior to exiting and who are leaving the early intervention program for one of the following reasons: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No longer eligible for early intervention because the child no longer meets eligibility criteria or has met their IEP/IFSP goals; Anticipated move out-of-state; Parent withdrawal of their child from early intervention; Transition from the infant toddler program at age three years; or Transition to Kindergarten.

5. Do we collect exit data only on those children for whom we have entry data?

Collect exit data on all children who meet the requirements for timelines and consecutive services even if they do not have entry data. As the quality of our data monitoring increases, there should be fewer instances of children without entry data. If data is missing, use it as an opportunity to determine how the data was missed and how this can be prevented in the future.

6. What are the dates that we should use to determine if the child has received at least 6 months of service?

The timeline to determine if the child has received at least 6 months of service should start at the date of the development of the child’s IFSP/IEP. In the PELICAN EI system, compare the Plan Creation Date with the Case Closure Date to determine if the child has received at least 6 months of service.

7. What does “6 months of consecutive early intervention services” mean? What are examples of breaks in early intervention services?

Planned breaks in service delivery do not count as a break in consecutive services. Planned breaks include breaks due to the program calendar, planned breaks in an IFSP/IEP services or typically scheduled vacations by family or early intervention staff.

While a planned hospitalization is a planned event in the life of the child and family, the break in early intervention services would not have happened if there was no hospitalization. A planned hospitalization that requires a break from early intervention services is considered a break in the consecutive services.

8. Do we need to collect exit data on a child who “disappears”?

It is always better to collect exit data if you have an opportunity to do it. However, OCDEL recognizes in some instances, the child and family may move or leave the early intervention program with no notice. In instances where the early intervention program did not anticipate that the child would be leaving the program and it is not feasible for the responsible team member to collect the data, exit data does not need to be collected. Instances where exit data was not collected should be very infrequent.

9. Can you define “anticipated” as it relates to collecting exit data? How soon do you need to know that the child is leaving in order for it to be “anticipated”?

It is important that child outcome data is collected on all children possible. Pennsylvania is required to report to OSEP why there are children missing from the pool of child outcome data. If you are able to collect a point of exit data, even though you did not have a lot of warning that the child was leaving, please complete the child outcome data screen.

Procedures & Timelines for Collecting Data

10. When should child outcome data be collected?

All eligible infants, toddlers, and preschoolers should have child outcome data collected at their entry to and exit from the early intervention program.

Entry Data	Exit Data
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Entry data must be collected and entered into PELICAN EI within 60 calendar days of the development of the child’s IEP/IFSP. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Exit data must be collected and entered into PELICAN EI within 60 calendar days prior to the child’s anticipated exit from the infant toddler or preschool early intervention program. For the child who stays in early intervention past the typical transition to Kindergarten (for an extra year), exit data should be collected within the 60 days prior to the child’s sixth birthday.

11. Does the term “days” refer to calendar or school days?

All references to “days” are calendar days.

12. For an infant who was born prematurely, should I compare their skills to a child who is the same corrected age or chronological age? Who is a same-aged peer for an infant who was born premature?

When collecting child outcome data on premature infants, use the child’s chronological age when comparing his/her skills to the skills of same-age peers.

13. Should the IFSP/IEP team still be measuring progress on the IFSP/IEP goals/outcomes?

Yes, the process for how the early intervention team measures the child’s progress on their individual IFSP/IEP goals has not changed.

14. What effect does the child outcome measurement system have on the requirement in the infant toddler program for quarterly progress updates?

Infant toddler EI requirements for quarterly progress updates are related to how well the child is progressing on IFSP outcomes. The system for measuring child outcomes is a way of measuring child progress against a

standard of typical child development. Both methods are required and are inter-related.

15. Where do agencies/therapists get paper copies of the child outcome data collection forms?

All forms and information needed to collect child outcome data can be found on the Early Intervention Technical Assistance (EITA) portal at www.eita-pa.org. Look for Early Childhood Outcomes link under the Topics of Interest tab. Check with your early intervention program supervisor/coordinator to ensure that you are using the correct ECO Rating Summary Form and authentic assessment tool.

16. Can a child be performing at age appropriate levels on all three outcomes and still be eligible for early intervention services?

Yes, progress should be measured in all three outcome indicators for all children. A child may meet eligibility for early intervention and still be at age appropriate levels on the child outcomes. For example, an infant with Down syndrome may be at levels comparable to typical peers on each of the child outcome indicators but yet is eligible for early intervention. Remember, the assessment of a child's progress, as measured by ECO data, is not related to the determination of eligibility.

17. What should we do as an infant toddler or preschool early intervention program if we think that we are going to change our process for collecting child outcome data?

As with any local policy change, the infant toddler early intervention coordinator or preschool early intervention supervisor should discuss the change with their early intervention advisor.

Determining Responsibility for Collecting Child Outcome Data

18. Who should collect child outcome data?

One member of the IFSP/IEP service delivery team shall be assigned the responsibility for coordinating the collection of child outcome data with the family and other team members. Infant toddler and preschool early intervention programs are responsible for developing and implementing procedures for selecting the responsible team member. Examples of local procedures include:

- Assigning the developmental therapist, special education teacher or special instructor, if a member of the team;
- Assigning the teacher/therapist who will see the child and family most frequently;
- Assigning the teacher/therapist who is the primary early intervention staff supporting the child and family; or
- Having the IEP/IFSP team decide who is the most appropriate team member for that child and family.

19. Does the same person have to collect both entry and exit data?

While having the same person collect the child outcome data can provide an additional layer of data reliability, this is often not possible. There may be several years between when entry and exit data are collected, the services and supports provided through the IEP/IFSP may change, or the early intervention staff person who collected the entry data may have moved, retired or changed jobs. The most reliable data will be obtained when the person collecting that data is familiar with the child, has gathered accurate information on the child's skills through the use of an authentic assessment tool, and is knowledgeable about the child outcome indicators.

20. Should the team member responsible for reporting the child outcome data set up a specific appointment to measure progress?

No, the collection of child outcome data should be integrated into the normal service delivery activities and

discussion. The reporting of child progress data is part of the ongoing progress monitoring that is completed with every child. It should be gathered as part of the early intervention services or program day in which the child and family participate. The discussion of the child's developmental level or progress should occur as part of a service visit or program day; a separate meeting is not needed. It is not completed or billed as a separate evaluation or therapy session.

21. Who takes responsibility for reporting outcomes for children enrolled in both early intervention and early childhood programs?

Many of Pennsylvania's early childhood programs are also collecting child outcome data. To protect confidentiality, the early childhood and early intervention programs do not share information between their data systems. Children who are in multiple programs must have child outcome data entered into both data systems.

There are several steps that can be taken to reduce the data collection burden on staff and reduce the number of times that a child who is in multiple programs is assessed:

- With the family's permission, discuss the requirements for the measurement of child outcomes with staff at the early childhood program;
- Determine if the data collection schedules for the child overlap;
- If schedules are overlapping, discuss strategies for sharing authentic assessment results across programs; and
- Designate one program to complete the authentic assessment tool that can then be shared between the two programs. While the results of the authentic assessment can be shared, both the early childhood program and the early intervention program must each enter the data in their data systems.

22. Who is responsible for collecting child outcome data on children who are placed in an Approved Private Schools (APS)?

The early intervention program responsible for the development of the child's IEP/IFSP is also responsible for ensuring that child outcome data is collected. While staff at the APS may collect the data, it is the responsibility of the early intervention program to ensure that the data is accurate, timely and entered in PELICAN EI.

Determining Child Outcome Ratings

23. What is the process for determining the child outcome rating for each indicator?

The responsible team member and the family member or caregiver should use part of a typical intervention session to collect the child outcome data. Refer to the handout, *Determining ECO Ratings with the Decision Tree*, for more details. In general, the steps are:

- Check with your early intervention program contact to find out the specific procedures that are used by the program to collect child outcome data. Find out the authentic assessment tool used by the program, the procedures for collecting the data and the procedures for entering the data into PELICAN EI. Find out which ECO Rating Summary Form, either A, the long version, or B, the short version, is required by your early intervention program.
- Check with your early intervention program to find out if you are the team member who is responsible for collecting child outcome data for a particular child. Only the team member should complete the data entry.
- Complete the authentic assessment tool on the child using the procedures delineated in the

assessment tool manual. Gather any additional progress information from the child's family and other team members as appropriate.

- With the family, review the information from the authentic assessment tool and any progress data related to the child's performance in typical activities and routines. Use the *Conversation Starters* to help with the discussion.
- Use the *Decision Tree* to guide your determination of a 1 – 7 ratings. Decide which rating best describes the child's current performance across settings and situations. You can find additional information on how to rate the child using this scale on the EITA portal at www.eita-pa.org. Look for Early Childhood Outcomes link under the Topics of Interest tab.
- Follow local procedures for entering the data into PELICAN EI.

24. What authentic assessment tools are approved for use in collecting child outcome data?

Each child's entry and/or exit ratings shall be based on information collected using an authentic assessment tool. An authentic assessment tool relies on natural observations of a child's functional skills and abilities with familiar adults in everyday settings and routines. The authentic assessment tool to be used for child outcome data collection is selected by the local infant toddler and preschool early intervention programs from an approved list of tools that can be found on the EITA portal at www.eita-pa.org. Look for Early Childhood Outcomes link under the Topics of Interest tab.

25. Can I use the *Decision Tree* alone to determine the child outcome rating or do I need to use an authentic assessment tool?

The *Decision Tree* should not be used alone without any supporting information about the child's skills and behaviors. An authentic assessment tool must be used to gather progress information on the child.

26. As a supervisor, how do I choose which authentic assessment tool all the staff in my program should use when measuring child outcomes?

Begin the process of choosing an authentic assessment tool by reviewing the tools that are approved and by asking these questions:

- Is my staff familiar with the tool?
- What type and amount of training would be needed to use the tool?
- What are the costs associated with using this tool in my program (start-up expenses and expenses for the ongoing use of the tool)?
- Does the authentic assessment align with the curriculum our program uses?
- Will the authentic assessment tool allow me to collect data through an online system or on paper?
- What other assessment tool characteristics are important to my program?

27. As a supervisor, how do I choose which ECO Rating Summary Form the staff in my program should use when measuring child outcomes?

There are two rating forms that can be used by early intervention staff to collect and record child outcome data. Each early intervention program may decide which rating form to use in their program. You may choose to use one rating form for your entire program or use different rating forms for specific staff or providers.

ECO Rating Summary Form A is a longer version and is designed to collect more information on the process that the staff person used to collect ECO data. ECO Rating Summary Form A can be helpful if you want to provide more oversight to a staff person or program. You could also use the information gathered to analyze your process for collecting ECO data and to make program improvements. ECO Rating Summary Form B is a shorter version of a data collection form and captures only the 1-7 rating scores for each indicator. It is designed to be

a more efficient report form for programs or staff who are experienced in ECO data collection and do not need additional oversight.

28. Do programs need to measure progress on all three outcome indicators even when the outcome indicator is not an area of concern?

Yes. Regardless of the child's strengths and needs, progress should be measured on all the child outcome indicators.

29. How do we rate child outcomes at entry and exit?

For each of the three child outcome indicators, a 1 – 7 rating of the child's current performance is required. You can find additional information on how to rate the child using this scale on the EITA portal at www.eita-pa.org. Look for Early Childhood Outcomes link under the Topics of Interest tab.

On the rating scale, lower numbers indicate more distance between the child's performance and the performance of a same age peer. A rating of a 6 or 7 is used for age-appropriate performance. The ratings are:

- 7** (Completely): Child shows **functioning expected for his or her age** in all or almost all everyday situations that are part of the child's life. Functioning is considered appropriate for his or her age. No one has any concerns about the child's functioning in this outcome area.
- 6** Child's functioning generally is **considered appropriate for his or her age** but there are some significant concerns about the child's functioning in this outcome area. These concerns are substantial enough to suggest monitoring or possible additional support. Although age-appropriate, the child's functioning may border on not keeping pace with age expectations.
- 5** (Somewhat): Child shows functioning expected for his or her age some of the time and/or in some settings or situations. Child's functioning is a **mix of age appropriate and not age appropriate** behaviors and skills. Child's functioning might be described as like that of a slightly younger child.
- 4** Child shows **occasional age-appropriate** functioning across settings and situations. More functioning is not age-appropriate than age-appropriate.
- 3** (Nearly): Child does not **yet show functioning expected of a child or his or her age in any situation**. Child uses immediate foundational skills, most or all of the time, across settings and situations. Immediate functional skills are skills upon which to build age-appropriate functioning. Functioning might be described as like that of a younger child.
- 2** Child occasionally **uses immediate foundational skills** across settings and situations. More functioning reflects skills that are not immediate foundational than are immediate foundational.
- 1** (Not Yet): Child does **not yet show functioning expected of a child his or her age in any situation**. Child's functioning does **not yet include immediate foundational skills** upon which to build age appropriate functioning. Child's functioning reflects skills that developmentally come before immediate foundational skills. Child's functioning might be described as like that of a much younger child.

30. What is considered age appropriate or “typical” on the 7 point scale?

Both the scores of six and seven on the scale are considered typical behavior. A rating of 7 is indicated when the family may have a concern where extra support is needed to promote development. However, the area of concern is not a precursor of a significant developmental problem. A rating of 6 would be indicated when the family’s concern is significant to watch closely. For example:

- A rating of 7 would be used when a parent has concerns about a child who is very shy but whose behavior is age appropriate or a child who has temper tantrums which may be expected given the child’s age.
- A rating of 6 would be used when a child is showing age expected behavior now, but the child’s development is not keeping pace or the child is showing early signs of possible developmental problem.

31. What does “Immediate Foundational Skills” mean?

Immediate Foundational Skills are earlier skills and behaviors that that serve as a foundation and are conceptually linked to the later skills. Later skills build on these immediate foundational skills in predictable ways. Teachers and therapists typically use the earlier skills to help children move to the next higher level of development. For example, children play along-side one another before they interact in play.

32. At exit from infant toddler or preschool early intervention, how should the responsible team member make a determination about the child’s skill level and progress on each child outcome?

The responsible IFSP/IEP team member and the family should reach consensus on the determination of the child’s abilities for each outcome indicator and whether or not the child has made progress. The determination of the child’s progress is based on any progress information including information from: authentic assessment tools, ongoing progress notes, data from IFSP/IEP goal accomplishment, eligibility assessment information, observations in typical routines, parent reports, etc. The progress information should reflect the child’s typical functioning across settings, not his/her capacity to function under ideal circumstances. If assistive technology or special accommodations are available in the child’s everyday environments, then the determination of child’s abilities should describe the child’s functioning using those adaptations.

33. How much change in the child’s abilities needs to be made in order to call it progress? How much progress is progress?

Progress across each of the three child outcome indicators is made when there is any level of change in the child’s performance. Progress can be reflected in:

- An improved score on a child measurement tool;
- A change in the developmental age score on a child measurement tool;
- A single new skill that was reached; or
- The child needing less assistance to perform a skill. .

34. What should I share with parents about child outcome data?

The child outcome data should be shared with the family in the same way you share all progress information.

Collecting Child Outcomes During Transitions

35. If the infant toddler early intervention program has collected exit data on a child, does the preschool early intervention program need to collect entry data?

The exit data from the infant toddler early intervention program should serve as the entry data for the preschool early intervention if that data is recent. Depending on the timing of the child’s transition from infant toddler to preschool early intervention, the preschool early intervention program may need to only copy and re-enter the infant toddler exit data as preschool entry data in PELICAN EI. See the scenarios below for details.

Scenario	New Data Required?	Preschool Entry Data
I/T to PS Transition With No Break in Service	No	Use Infant/Toddler Exit Data
I/T to PS Transition With Less than 6 Months Break in Service	No	Use Infant/Toddler Exit Data
I/T to PS Transition With More than 6 Months Break in Service	Yes	Determine New Preschool Entry Data and Enter into PELICAN
Child referred to I/T With Less than 6 Months Before Third Birthday	Yes	Based on local processes. See question 38 for details.

36. When do I need to collect a new point of entry data on a child who is re-entering early intervention?

If a child exits the early intervention program for any reason and then re-enters early Intervention, new entry data may not need to be gathered depending on how long the child has been gone from the program. This includes data collected on a child who completely leaves the early intervention program and the child who moves to/from direct early intervention services and the tracking system. Please see the following scenarios for examples of when entry data is needed and review the questions on editing data in the PELICAN EI ECO Data Screen:

- If it has been **6 months or more** since the child’s exit from the early intervention program, collect new entry data. Since the child has not received early intervention services in a long time, you will be collecting child outcome data as if this was the first time the child entered early intervention. If “old” entry and exit data exists in PELICAN EI, the data should be deleted.
- If it has been **less than 6 months** since the child’s exit from the Early Intervention program, new entry data is not needed. The exit data collected at the child’s exit from the Early Intervention program should be deleted. You are collecting child outcome data as if the child had not left Early Intervention.

37. At the age of referral, the child was almost ready to transition to the preschool early intervention program. Who should be collecting child outcome data at what times?

Follow the procedures you already have in place related to the development of an IFSP/IEP for a child who is referred to the infant toddler program close to their third birthday. If an IFSP is developed then that IFSP implementation team is responsible for gathering entry data prior to the transition at the child’s third birthday. If an IEP is developed, the IEP implementation team is responsible for collecting the entry data.

Exit data is only collected on those children who have received 6 consecutive months of service prior to their transition out of the early intervention program. If the child had entry data collected by the infant toddler

program, but did not receive 6 consecutive months of infant toddler services prior to the transition to the preschool early intervention program, then no exit data is collected by the infant toddler program.

38. A child was enrolled in the infant toddler early intervention program, received at least 6 months of service but then moved into the tracking program. Do we need to collect exit data?

The purpose of OSEP child outcome data collection is to measure the progress of children who are eligible for early intervention and are actively receiving EI services. In the infant toddler program, tracking is not an early intervention service but a service available for those children in Pennsylvania who meet certain at-risk factors. So, as a child moves from eligibility for early intervention services to the tracking system, they are exiting early intervention.

Exit data should be collected on a child who has been in early intervention for at least 6 months and then who exits early intervention by moving to the tracking program. In a similar example, if a child receives services in the tracking program and then enrolls in early intervention services, you would want to collect entry data on that child because they are “new” to the early intervention system.

39. The child was not in the infant toddler EI program for 6 months so there was no exit data when she transitioned to our preschool EI program. What data should we use if there is no exit data from infant toddler? Should we use their entry data as our entry data?

If the child has been in the system a short period of time (less than 6 months), use the infant toddler entry data as the entry data for the preschool program. The preschool program should copy the infant toddler entry data into PELICAN EI as the preschool entry data.

If it has been 6 months or more since the child’s infant toddler entry data was collected **AND** the child did not require exit data from the EI IT program, the EI PS program should collect new entry data.

40. When a child transfers from one Infant/Toddler or Preschool Early Intervention program to another, do we need to gather entry data for our program?

Please note: This question is not related to transition from Infant/Toddler to Preschool but the transition from one program to another within the same age range.

No. When the child is moving from one Infant/Toddler Program to another Infant/Toddler Program or from one Preschool Program to another, the receiving program should not need to collect an additional point of entry data. The sending program should not need to collect exit data. The receiving program will be able to see previously entered data on the PELICAN EI ECO Data Screen. If for some reason there has been an interruption of services for more than 6 months, than the receiving program should gather entry data as they would for a new child.

41. When we enroll a child in our preschool early intervention program and he is anticipated to transition in 4 months to Kindergarten, are we required to collect entry data?

Yes, still collect entry data. While the child may be expecting to transition to Kindergarten, there may be a change in plans and the child may stay in early intervention for a longer period of time.