

OFFICE OF SUPERINTENDENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) about Early Childhood Outcomes Reporting for Children in Preschool Special Education Programs

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This FAQ is intended to provide information and respond to questions from the field. Continued updates will be provided as needed.

STATE DATA COLLECTION REQUIREMENTS

1. *Why is the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) collecting child outcomes data?*

In 2007, the federal Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) required that all states develop a process for reporting reliable performance outcomes data for children ages three through five who have received special education services. For State Performance Plan (SPP) Indicator 7, states are required to annually report outcomes data for young children with disabilities, in three federally required focus areas. Below is the Indicator and the required focus areas:

Indicator 7: Percentage of preschoolers with IEPs who demonstrate *improved*:

- ◆ Positive social-emotional skills (including social relationships)
- ◆ Acquisition and use of knowledge and skills (language and literacy)
- ◆ Use of appropriate behaviors to meet needs

2. *What data instrument will be used to collect child outcomes data?*

The *Child Outcomes Summary Form (COSF)* developed by the federally funded Early Childhood Outcomes Center (ECO) adopted by Washington State in 2007 is the instrument used to collect these outcome data. COSF “refresher” training may be arranged through the Educational Service Districts (ESDs) or by contacting the OSPI Early Childhood Program Supervisor, Sheila Ammons, at (360) 725-6075. In addition, the [OSPI](#) and the [Early Childhood Outcomes Center](#) website contain a variety of COSF training resources.

3. *How does OSPI report outcomes data to OSEP?*

States set six-year performance targets in the State Performance Plan (SPP), based on data reported by local districts. Each year the state compiles an Annual Performance Report (APR) which measures the yearly progress of the state on the targets identified in the SPP.

Progress data are reported to OSEP in five categories, ‘a’ through ‘e,’ as follows:

- Progress category ‘a’ = the percentage of children who did *not* improve functioning;
- Progress category ‘b’ = the percentage of children who improved functioning, but *not sufficient* to move nearer to functioning comparable to same-aged peers;
- Progress category ‘c’ = the percentage of children who improved functioning to a level nearer to same-aged peers but *did not reach it*;
- Progress category ‘d’ = the percentage of children who improved functioning to reach a level comparable to same-aged peers; and
- Progress category ‘e’ = the percentage of children who maintained functioning at a level comparable to same-aged peers.

OSPI then uses the COSF data reported by districts to calculate two summary statements for each of the three child outcomes (see Question 1). Summary statement data illustrate the collective developmental gains

achieved by preschoolers in their special education programs in the Progress categories ‘a’ through ‘e’ above. The two summary statements are listed below, along with the formula used to calculate each summary statement.

Summary Statement 1: Of those children who entered the program below age expectations in each Outcome, the percent who substantially increased their rate of growth by the time they exited the program $((c+d) \div (a+b+c+d))$. Summary Statement 1 combines data from progress categories ‘c’ and ‘d’ to reflect the percentage of children who made greater than expected progress.

Summary Statement 2: The percent of children who were functioning within age expectations in each Outcome by the time they exited the program $((d+e) \div (a+b+c+d+e))$. Summary Statement 2 combines data from progress categories ‘d’ and ‘e’ to reflect the percentage of children who left the preschool program at age level.

4. What are the state targets for Indicator 7?

In February 2010, OSEP required states to set targets for the two summary statements in each of the three outcome areas, based on data collected during the 2008-2009 school year. OSPI set targets for Washington State based on feedback collected from a stakeholder input process. The table below shows the state targets set for each of the three outcome areas. Please note that targets are required to increase from year to year.

Summary Statements	Targets 2009-10 (% of children)	Targets 2010-11 (% of children)
Outcome A: Positive social-emotional skills (including social relationships)		
1. Of those children who entered or exited the program below age expectations in Outcome A, the percent who substantially increased their rate of growth by the time they exited the program	82.7%	83%
2. The percent of children who were functioning within age expectations in Outcome A by the time they exited the program	49.4%	50%
Outcome B: Acquisition and use of knowledge and skills (including early language/communication and early literacy)		
1. Of those children who entered or exited the program below age expectations in Outcome B, the percent who substantially increased their rate of growth by the time they turned 6 years of age or exited the program	81.1%	82%
2. The percent of children who were functioning within age expectations in Outcome B by the time they exited the program	50.2%	51%
Outcome C: Use of appropriate behaviors to meet their needs		
1. Of those children who entered or exited the program below age expectations in Outcome C, the percent who substantially increased their rate of growth by the time they exited the program	80.8%	81%
2. The percent of children who were functioning within age expectations in Outcome C by the time they exited the program	64.3%	65%

In September 2010, summary statement data for the state and each school district will be publicly reported on the OSPI special education website. Summary statement data will be listed in the [district data profile](#), under Indicator 7.

LOCAL EDUCATION AGENCY (LEA) DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURES

5. ***On which children will COSF data be collected?***

COSF data are collected for all preschool children ages three through five who have an Individualized Education Program (IEP) and have received special education services for at least six months. This includes children who receive only one service, such as speech therapy or occupational therapy. Data is collected when the child initially receives preschool special education and related services, regardless of the child's age when initial services begin. Data is collected again when the child exits preschool special education.

6. ***Are data collected on children who qualify in only one area such as speech language impairment?***

Yes, children who qualify in only one area for special education services are subject to the same COSF reporting requirement as all other preschool children receiving special education services.

7. ***How is COSF data reported to OSPI?***

COSF data is reported to OSPI, on or before July 15 of each year. The Data Management Coordinator for the Special Education Program at OSPI has developed a spreadsheet for recording preschool district data. A link to the OSPI COSF reporting template is provided to districts at <http://www.k12.wa.us/SpecialEd/Data/FederalForms.aspx> under *Child Outcomes Summary Form*. The template automatically computes the required reporting information once entry and exit data are entered by the district. The template accepts SSID child identification numbers and facilitates tracking capabilities for children who change districts. Updated information, as necessary, is provided by to districts via monthly bulletins and CEDARS trainings.

8. ***When is COSF data collected?***

Entry data is collected between the first three weeks (minimum) and six weeks (maximum) weeks when the child begins to receive preschool special education services. The minimum timeframe allows preschool staff an opportunity to become acquainted with the child and observe their functional skills within a classroom or school-based setting before collecting data. The maximum timeframe allows preschool staff to develop a baseline from which to report progress.

Exit data is collected on those children exiting preschool special education services, and have received services for a minimum of six months. Exit data is collected during the *final* 60 days of receiving services, prior to exiting the preschool program. For example, if a child is transitioning to kindergarten in the fall and the last day of preschool services is June 1, exit data would be collected anytime from April 2 to June 1.

9. ***A student who had been receiving preschool special education services recently transferred into our district. The sending district says that COSF entry data was never collected. How do we proceed?***

If the student will receive special education services for the next six months, the receiving district should collect entry data within the first three to six weeks of attendance. Districts are required to report both entry and exit data on the COSF data reporting template. If the receiving district does not collect entry data, then the district will not be able to report exit data when the child exits preschool special education services.

10. ***How is entry data reported for a child whose family has moved to another district after the child has been receiving special education services for only a few months?***

The entry data collected by the sending district can be used by the receiving district, but only if the child is reenrolled within six weeks or less. If the child has received no services for more than six weeks, new entry data should be collected by the receiving district.

11. If a child has entry data, has been receiving special education services for six months, and does not return to school for twenty 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 twenty consecutive days of absence, and should therefore be considered as having exited the program for data collection purposes as well [WAC 392-121-108 (i)]. If the child returns to school after 20 days but before six weeks of absence, the existing entry data can be used. If the child returns to school after six weeks of absence, new entry data should be collected.

12. Is COSF data reported for a child who will not receive special education services for the full six months?

For an older child who begins receiving special education services in the spring and will transition to kindergarten in the fall, it is possible that COSF data may not be collected. For example, if a five year old starts to receive preschool special education services on March 1 and the preschool year ends on June 1, COSF data will not be reported on that child. This depends on the date when the child starts receiving services and the date of the last day of school. A child must receive at least six months of special education service in order for the district to report COSF data.

13. How should districts gather information about a child's functional skills?

Districts may gather information about a child's functional skills in a number of ways. Examples of information sources include, but are not limited to:

- ◆ observations and reports by family members, care providers, school and other service providers;
- ◆ early intervention outcomes information;
- ◆ developmental screenings (e.g., Ages and Stages Questionnaire);
- ◆ curriculum-based measures (e.g., Assessment, Evaluation and Programming System);
- ◆ norm-referenced assessments (e.g., Battelle Developmental Inventory);
- ◆ progress monitoring information;
- ◆ classroom or other environment observations; and
- ◆ information identified during assessment, planning, or IEP meetings.

Observation in natural settings and reports from families and caregivers can be an effective way to obtain information about a child's functional skills. The Early Childhood Outcomes Center has created a resource on this topic titled "[What is a functional outcome](#)".

14. What is the requirement for parent participation in making COSF rating decisions?

The COSF rating process was designed to include input from all members of the IEP team, including parents. "[Including Families in the Rating Discussion](#)" is a resource from the ECO Center that identifies a variety of ways to include families in the COSF discussion. OSPI strongly encourages districts to collect information and input from parents as part of the decision making process. The rating process is an IEP team responsibility involving parents, other individuals familiar with the child in various settings, and school personnel.

Parents should also be informed about the requirement to report COSF data and the process used by the district to collect COSF data. A [parent information sheet](#) about the COSF is available on the OSPI website. Parents should be informed that the rating will be part of the child's special education file which they can review at any time. A parent may choose to not provide information or participate in the rating process. However, the district is still required to report COSF entry and exit data on all children receiving preschool special education services. Parental consent is not required for the rating process. COSF ratings are a reflection of their child's progress and OSPI urges districts to share rating information with families. A professional development resource titled "[Quality Review of Family Participation](#)" is available on the Early Childhood Outcomes Center website.

15. Can districts use the same COSF form to record both entry and exit data?

No. Separate COSF rating forms should be completed at entry and at exit. The rating should reflect the status of the child's functioning at that time, relative to same-age peers. If districts use the same form to collect both entry and exit data, the exit ratings may be influenced by the entry ratings.

16. When should exit data be collected for a child in preschool special education, who is older than five?

Exit data should follow the child's educational program, not age. For example, if a child is repeating preschool his/her exit data would be reported when transitioning to kindergarten or first grade, even if the child is older than five.

17. What constitutes exit from preschool special education services?

When a child leaves preschool services, for any reason, this is considered exiting. However, for data reporting purposes exit data is collected only on the children who have received special education services for six months or more. **Examples of exiting the preschool program are: entering kindergarten, no longer qualifying for services or moving out of state.**

18. How will exit data be collected on children who transfer from one district to another district?

For a child who transfers to another district within Washington, the receiving district will request the COSF entry data from the sending district as part of the special education records. The receiving district is also responsible for collecting and reporting exit data when the child transitions to kindergarten or no longer qualifies for special education services. The child may enter several preschool programs; however, the last program that the child exits will be responsible for obtaining the entry data and reporting the exit data.

19. Are there any exceptions to question 18?

One exception could be a child who has received special education services for six months in one district then transfers to a new district with three or fewer weeks before the end of the program year. This child is exiting preschool services and will begin kindergarten in the fall. In this example, the sending district should collect and report the exit data. The reason for this is that in order for the receiving district to be able to make rating decisions it would need to have three to six weeks to observe the child in the program. Entry at the end of the school year may not allow for that observation time. Therefore, it would be more appropriate for the sending district to collect and report the exit data. However, exit data collection should be done in collaboration with the receiving district so that accurate, current information is available for making rating decisions.

CHILD OUTCOMES SUMMARY FORM (COSF)

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

A child's completed *Child Outcomes Summary Form* (COSF) will remain in his/her primary confidential special education file. A copy of the form must be submitted to the individual designated by the district to report COSF data to OSPI once a year, on or before July 15. If a district did not provide preschool services to any children during the year, districts are required to report this by sending an email message to the Data Management Coordinator for the Special Education Program at OSPI.

21. Can individual student entry and exit data be deleted from the district's electronic COSF data template after it has been reported to OSPI?

A paper copy of the child's individual COSF rating is part of the student's primary confidential special education file. Once the child transitions to kindergarten or exits preschool services, districts can delete that child's COSF data from the district template *after* the exit data has been reported to OSPI. OSPI is responsible for maintaining electronic COSF data for children who have exited preschool services. **Do not delete data that has not yet been reported to OSPI.**

22. *Why is the progress of a child with special needs being compared to the child's same-age peers?*

States are required to compare the functioning of children in preschool programs to their same-age peers because age expectations provide a common standard for all young children. To merely record that children made progress between entry and exit would not provide strong evidence for the effectiveness of the program. Also, one of the goals of early childhood special education is to prepare children to succeed in kindergarten. In kindergarten, children will be expected to meet grade level standards. OSEP recognizes that not all children will be able to function comparable to same age peers at the end of preschool services, but the system will now be tracking how many have achieved or moved closer to functioning at an age expected level.

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

Children born prematurely are compared to a typical child of the same *chronological* age. Do not adjust for prematurity or *corrected* age.

24. *Can the COSF be modified?*

No.

25. *Will training and technical assistance be provided to preschool personnel on the use of the COSF and data collection process?*

Yes, the OSPI Early Childhood Program Supervisor works with the Educational Service District (ESD) Early Childhood Coordinators to identify the need for trainings. Technical assistance is available via K20, e-mail and telephone from the Early Childhood Program Supervisor at OSPI. In addition, districts may request technical assistance from the ESD Early Childhood Coordinators located in each of the nine ESD regions. For training requests or technical assistance, please contact the OSPI Early Childhood Program Supervisor, Sheila Ammons, at (360) 725-6075.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

[Early Childhood Outcomes Center website](#)

[OSPI Early Childhood Special Education website](#)

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