

Child Outcomes

Educators have been assessing child outcomes for many years, even before the federal government's move to collect outcome data. Ongoing authentic assessment is best practice in early childhood education. Children are learning new skills and behaviors every day. A true representation of a child's functional behaviors and skills are not measured solely through one assessment tool. The assessment tool, observations and conversations with families, the decision tree and professional expertise are the components that collectively determine a true, authentic representation of a child's functioning in the context of everyday living. The three child outcomes represent important functional outcomes all young children need to achieve in order to be successful in everyday activities and routines.

The Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) mandates states to collect and report data on child outcomes. This collection is used to document program effectiveness, provide support for continued or increased funding, and to improve early childhood special education programs and services. Data are used to identify program needs and determine professional development opportunities. The three child outcomes chosen to measure and report for Part B of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) Indicator 7 Preschool Outcomes are based on a national vision of what all families would want for all children. The outcomes were determined based on stakeholder input and recommendations by the Early Childhood Outcomes (ECO) Center. The ECO Center provides guidance to states on how to understand, measure, and report these outcomes to meet federal requirements.

Indicator 7 measures the percent of preschool children with Individual Education Plans (IEPs) who demonstrated improved:

- A. Positive social-emotional skills (including social relationships)

- B. Acquisition and use of knowledge and skills (including early language/communication and early literacy)
- C. Use of appropriate behaviors to meet their needs

States are required to report to the federal government the amount of progress they are making in advancing children with IEPs towards skill development at a level comparable to that of their typically developing peers.

The Three Child Outcomes

A. Positive social-emotional skills (including social relationships)

These skills demonstrate how children get along with others and how they relate with adults and other children. For older children, these skills include how children follow rules related to groups and interact with others in group situations such as in a child care center or a preschool classroom. It includes the ways the children express emotions and feelings and how they interact with and play with other children. This outcome also includes areas like attachment/separation and autonomy, expressing emotions and feeling, learning rules and expectations and social interaction and play.

B. Acquisition and use of knowledge and skills (including early language/communication and early literacy)

This outcome refers to children's abilities to think, reason, remember, problem solve and use symbols and language. The outcome also encompasses children's understanding of their physical and social worlds. Acquiring knowledge and skills addresses the precursors necessary for success later in elementary school. These include classification, spatial relationships, the

acquisition of language and communication skills, as well as early literacy and numeracy skills.

C. Use of appropriate behaviors to meet their needs

This refers to the actions that children employ to take care of their basic needs as well as getting from place to place, using tools, and contributing to their own health and safety. These skills address children's increasing capacity to become independent in interacting with the world and taking care of their needs. Using appropriate behavior to meet needs includes areas like integrating motor skills to complete tasks, self-help skills and acting on the world to get what one wants. Appendix B in this document is a reference to the three child outcomes in a one-page format.