

## Indicator 4: Family Outcomes

### **Introduction and Intent**

The intent of this section is to provide an understanding about the State Performance Plan/Annual Performance Report (SPP/APR) Indicator 4: Family Outcomes, the indicator that gives parents a voice as to their experience with early intervention. This document will look at the purpose of Indicator 4, how data is collected and how data is utilized to enhance the interventions that are provided to infants, toddlers, and their families.

This section includes information regarding:

- Description of Family Indicator Outcomes
- Collection of Information Within Michigan
- Supporting Family Outcomes
- Impacting Family Outcomes
- Related Documents and Resources

### **Description of Family Indicator Outcomes**

Under Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) there is a requirement to collect data to assess the effectiveness of the early intervention system supported through federal funding. One of the ways this is done is through surveying the families of children within Part C, known as *Early On* in Michigan. This data is collected and reported to all levels of the early intervention system, at federal, state, and local levels.

In 2005, the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) funded the Early Childhood Outcomes (ECO) Center to develop an approach for collecting data on child and family outcomes for the Part C early intervention and Part B preschool programs of IDEA. In April of that same year, the ECO Center developed a goal statement for the role of early intervention:

*For families, the goal of early intervention is to enable the family to provide care for their children and have the resources they need to participate in their own desired family and community activities.*

The child and family outcomes were developed through a year-long consensus building process that involved input from and review by numerous stakeholders including

federal, state, and local policymakers and administrators, local providers, family members of children with disabilities, and researchers.

The ECO Center, which is now part of the [Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center \(ECTA\)](#), identified five family outcomes that would support the previous goal:

1. Families understand their child's strengths, abilities, and special needs.
2. Families know their rights and advocate effectively for their child.
3. Families help their child develop and learn.
4. Families have support systems.
5. Families access desired services, programs, and activities in their community.

Based on the results from the consensus-building process, ECTA determined that all five outcomes apply to early intervention. Additionally, outcomes 1, 2, and 3 could apply to early childhood special education as it is currently being delivered. After further review, it was decided that three specific outcomes could yield the best information on the effectiveness of early intervention within the federal programs. States are now required to report on the percent of families participating in Part C who report their services have helped their family:

1. Know their rights;
2. Effectively communicate their children's needs; and
3. Help their children develop and learn.

These three family outcomes are used in reporting SPP/APR Indicator 4: Family Outcomes for *Early On*.

OSEP requires each state to set measurable and rigorous targets for improved performance on the SPP/APR indicators and Indicator 4: Family Outcomes is no exception. Every five years the data collected about family outcomes is reviewed and used in the redetermination of the state's targets for each of the three family outcomes. The Michigan Interagency Coordinating Council (MICC), including the Parent Involvement Committee (PIC), partner agencies, and local *Early On* Coordinators, work with MDE to review this data and recommend SPP/APR annual targets that will result in improvement over the course of several years. The current targets for family outcomes can be located within the SPP/APR Part C on [MDE – Early On Michigan](#).

Note: There are eleven SPP/APR performance indicators that all states/territories receiving Part C funds are required to collect data and report on. The family outcomes are the fourth of those eleven indicators.

### **Collection of Information Within Michigan**

The Michigan Department of Education (MDE), through a grant, has contracted with Wayne State University (WSU), Center for Urban Studies, Qualitative Compliance Information Project (QCIP) to collect and analyze family outcome data. To do this, WSU surveys families annually, through multiple modes: mail, phone and online.

In 2006, Michigan decided, along with many other states, to use the National Center for Special Education Accountability Monitoring (NCSEAM) tool to collect information from families participating in *Early On*. The survey has been modified over time. In 2019, Michigan added nineteen questions related to social emotional development to the family survey. These questions have supported data collection for the State Systemic Improvement Plan (SSIP) initiative around social emotional development. This information has allowed us to study the relationship between a family's understanding about social emotional development and their family outcomes.

The data gathered from the family survey provides important feedback to the state and local service areas regarding the achievement of the system goals. This important data helps Michigan assess whether the families that received *Early On* feel it has helped them to support the development of their children.

Within the survey there are questions that address assessment, Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) meetings, service coordination and quality of service. These questions are asked multiple times in different ways to assist in compiling a family's perception of their experience with *Early On* and the impact of the intervention on the child and family.

Each spring, WSU provides a list of each family's contact information to the *Early On* Coordinator in each of the 56 service areas. This list is provided for verification of contact information for families who had current IFSPs in the previous fall collection and to identify any families who should not be receiving the survey. Once the list is reviewed and verified by the service area's *Early On* Coordinator, it is returned to WSU, who then sends out a

pre-survey notification to the families identified on the corrected list. The pre-survey notice is intended to inform families of the survey, reason for the survey, how the information is used, and contact information for questions or assistance.

WSU then sends out the survey to families, along with a self-addressed envelope. A follow up postcard reminder is sent out to any family that has not submitted a reply. As needed phone calls are made in a last attempt to reach families to ensure as many families as possible have the opportunity to participate. Once the surveys are sent back to WSU, the data is compiled for the entire state, reported to the federal government as Indicator 4 and disaggregated for each of the 56 local service areas.

The data is used to inform statewide and local system improvements. The 56 local service areas receive their local data in the form of a PowerPoint to make it easier to share the data within their systems. Local service areas are expected to meet or exceed the targets for each of the three components of Indicator 4: Family Outcomes. The percentages for each of the three family outcomes along with Indicator 3: Child Outcomes are posted on the [Early On data website](#) for each individual service area within the June data report.

## **Supporting Family Outcomes**

From referral to exit from *Early On*, our interactions and interventions support not only the outcomes found within the IFSP, but also the Indicator 3: Child Outcomes and Indicator 4: Family Outcomes. There are many times when the service coordinator and/or the service provider can support one or more of the three family outcomes within the process.

## **Know Their Rights**

The first of the three family outcomes is supporting families in their understanding of their rights within the *Early On* system. During a child and family's enrollment there are many opportunities to support the family's understanding of the rights given to them through Part C of IDEA. The procedural safeguards are designed to protect those rights, from referral through transition out of *Early On*. The system provides information about family rights and these procedural safeguards, multiple times and in various ways, through the sharing of printed materials, website links and discussions. Each of these references to procedural safeguards given by *Early On* referral personnel, service coordinators or service providers presents an opportunity to assist families in

their understanding of their rights and how and when they may apply to their child and family.

Below are some of the circumstances where there is opportunity to support the understanding of family rights.

- When sending a brochure welcome letter and notice of referral to a family.
- When sharing with families and discussing the written (or electronic) procedural safeguards during your first visit.
- When readdressing the procedural safeguards; as it relates to where they currently are in the process by highlighting that section and ensuring the family understands how it applies.
- When discussing the Family Guidebook with the family.
- When discussing authorization to request additional information.
- When discussing consent for screening or evaluation.
- When sharing information on the maintenance or “keeping” of *Early On* records.
- When providing Prior Written Notice.
- When supporting a family to file a complaint, if needed.
- When working through the process of transition with the family.

What other circumstances within your system give you the opportunity to share family rights with the families you work with?

**Effectively**  
**Communicate Their**  
**Child's Needs**

The second of the three outcomes is ensuring the family can effectively communicate their child's needs. Understanding that families know their child best is the first step in supporting this outcome. Encouraging and supporting opportunities and experiences for caregivers to participate within all aspects of the intervention will build upon and enhance their knowledge, skills, competency, and confidence. Promoting the active participation of families in decision-making related to their child will support the creation of meaningful IFSP outcomes and will build the foundation for the caregiver to advocate for their child's needs now and in the future.

Below are examples of circumstances when there are opportunities for families to gain experience and confidence in their ability to effectively communicate their child's needs.

- When gathering information during routines-based interview and within the family assessment
- During screening and evaluations
- By ensuring family members are active partners within the evaluation team
- During conversations about ongoing monitoring/assessments on child's skills
- When discussing and exploring embedding intervention strategies across daily routines

### **Help Their Children Develop and Learn**

The third of the three family outcomes is helping their children develop and learn and is reflected within the provision of service delivery. The primary focus of each individual intervention service is on enhancing family capacity and competence in facilitating their child's learning and participation in family and community life. Evidence-based approaches and recommended practices point to everyday experiences and interactions with parents/caregivers as to how infants and toddlers learn best. Everyday family experiences provide rich opportunities for promoting child development.

The [Division for Early Childhood \(DEC\) Recommended Practices](#) identifies evidence-based approaches which are directly related to the family outcome of assisting a family with helping their child develop and learn. These practices fall within the categories of environment, family, instruction, interaction, teaming, and collaboration. Each of these categories have practices that can be used by an interventionist to support the family.

The ECTA Center's ["The Seven Key Principles and Practices Providing Early Intervention Services in Natural Environments"](#) identifies evidence-based practices that support service delivery to enhance family/caregiver competence and capacity.

*All families, with the necessary support and resources, can enhance their children's learning and development.*

1. *Infant and toddlers learn best through everyday experiences and interactions with familiar people in familiar contexts.*
2. *All families, with the necessary support and resources, can enhance their children's learning and development.*
3. *The primary role of a service provider in early intervention is to work with and support family members and caregivers in children's lives.*

4. *The early intervention process, from initial contacts through transition, must be dynamic and individualized to reflect the child's and family members' preferences, learning styles and cultural beliefs.*
5. *IFSP outcomes must be functional and based on children's and families' needs and family-identified priorities.*
6. *The family's priorities, needs and interests are addressed most appropriately by a primary provider who represents and receives team and community support.*
7. *Interventions with young children and family members must be based on explicit principles, validated practices, best available research, and relevant laws and regulations.*

As supported by both the DEC Recommended Practices and The Seven Key Principles and Practices, early intervention practices best serve the child and family when caregivers are supported in facilitating their child's engagement and learning in the routine activities of everyday life. Families benefit when the early intervention centers around real life situations; it is real time versus hoping the strategies might fit within a routine that will happen later. This partnership between the family and provider strives to enhance family/caregiver capacity and competence in facilitating their child's learning through naturally occurring learning opportunities and participation in routines and activities that families "need and want to do". Strategies used in intervention should strengthen the relationship between caregiver and child as well as build on the strengths and interests of both the child and family thus indirectly supporting the child's and family's needs. Intervention sessions incorporate opportunities to reflect with the family on what is working and where additional problem solving may be needed. As a result, families facilitate their child's development and learning opportunities.

### **Impacting Family Outcomes**

Throughout the *Early On* process there are many opportunities to provide understanding, offer support, give resources, and facilitate learning. Our success within

these opportunities is reflected within the data received from the family survey and the percent of agreement with each of the three outcomes. This information gives direct feedback on the service area's strengths and any changes that may be needed to enhance the families experience with *Early On*. Spending time reviewing the local family survey data received from WSU will strengthen your provision of early intervention by ensuring the family is able to provide care for their children and have the resources they need to participate in their own desired family and community activities.

### **Related Documents/Resources**

[Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center-ecta, Family Outcomes](#)

[ecta-Video: Supporting Children by Improving Family Outcomes](#)

[Family Outcomes Surveys](#)

[Family Outcomes of Early Intervention and Early Childhood Special Education: Issues and Considerations](#)

[Early Intervention Services: Key Principles and Practices](#)

[DEC Recommended Practices](#)

[State Performance Plan/Annual Performance Report: Part C](#)

[Early On Data Website](#)

### **Federal Regulations**

[IDEA 2011 Part C Regulations 303.700-704, 303.722](#)

### **State Level Expectations/Guidance**

[Michigan Part C of IDEA State Plan-Data Collection page 14](#)

Data collection (§ 303.124)