

## **Questions and Answers on SPP/APR Indicator 7, Early Childhood Outcomes**

1. Q. *What are early childhood outcomes?*
  - A. An outcome is a benefit experienced as a result of services and supports provided for a child. The fact that a service has been provided does not mean that an outcome has been achieved. Likewise, an outcome is not the same as satisfaction with the services received. The impact that services and supports have on the functioning of children constitutes the outcome.
  
2. Q. *Why are States required to measure early childhood outcomes?*
  - A. In this age of accountability, policymakers are asking questions about the outcomes achieved by programs supported by public funds. Judging the effectiveness of any program requires looking at results, not simply at the process. The Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) in the U.S. Department of Education requires states to report outcomes data for children served through Part C and Part B Preschool of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) as part of the Annual Performance Report (APR). Data on child outcomes provides the required information to the federal government and can also be used by districts to improve preschool programs.
  
3. Q. *What are the early childhood outcomes that are reported to OSEP?*
  - A. States must report the percent of preschool children with IEPs who demonstrate improved:
    - Positive social-emotional skills (including social relationships)
    - Acquisition and use of knowledge and skills (including early language/communication and early literacy)
    - Use of appropriate behavior to meet needs
  
4. Q. *What is the Child Outcome Summary Form (COSF)?*
  - A. The COSF is a 7-point scale developed by the Early Childhood Outcomes Center that provides a common metric for describing children's functioning compared to age expectations in each of the three outcome areas. The COSF provides a way for a team to summarize the child's level of functioning using information from many sources including assessment tools and parent and provider reports.
  
5. Q. *When is the COSF completed?*
  - A. The COSF is completed two times for each child. It is completed once at initial entry into IDEA Part B preschool programs and once at exit from IDEA Part B preschool programs. The COSF rating is a number between 1 and 7 that describes the child's functioning compared to age expectations in each of the three outcome areas at entry and exit. In addition, at exit, a yes/no question about whether the child has acquired any new skills or behaviors from the first COSF rating is answered in each of the three outcome areas.
  
6. Q. *How is progress on the early childhood outcomes reported to OSEP?*
  - A. State progress data is reported for each outcome in the following categories:
    - a. Percentage of children who did not improve functioning.
    - b. Percentage of children who improved functioning but not sufficient to move nearer to functioning comparable to same-aged peers.

- c. Percentage of children who improved functioning to a level nearer to same-aged peers but did not reach it.
  - d. Percentage of children who improved functioning to reach a level comparable to same-aged peers.
  - e. Percentage of children who maintained functioning at a level comparable to same-aged peers.
7. Q. *How are ratings on COSFs converted into progress data?*
- A. **Progress category a:** COSF ratings are converted to progress category a when ratings on the COSF are lower at exit than entry or rated a 1 at entry and at exit with a “no” answer on the skill acquisition question.
- Progress category b:** COSF ratings are converted to progress category b when ratings on the COSF are the same at entry and exit or lower at exit with a yes answer on skill acquisition question.
- Progress category c:** COSF ratings are converted to progress category c when ratings on the COSF are higher at exit than entry but not reaching a 6 or 7 rating at exit.
- Progress category d:** COSF ratings are converted to progress category d when ratings on the COSF are 5 or lower at entry and 6 or 7 at exit.
- Progress category e:** COSF ratings are converted to progress category e when ratings on the COSF are 6 or 7 at entry and exit.
8. Q. *What are early childhood outcomes summary statements and how do the summary statements relate to progress categories?*
- A. In the State Performance Plan (SPP) submitted February 1, 2010, States for the first time set targets for improving child outcomes. Rather than set targets for each of the five categories of progress per outcome area, States set targets for two summary statements per outcome. The summary statements, and the formulas for calculating them, are as follows:
- 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 turned 6 years of age or exited the program (progress categories  $c+d/a+b+c+d \times 100$ ).
  - Summary Statement 2: The percent of children who were functioning within age expectations in each outcome by the time they turned 6 years of age or exited the program (progress categories  $d+e/a+b+c+d+e \times 100$ ).
9. Q. *Why are summary statements comparing the functioning of children receiving Part B preschool services to age level expectations?*
- A. States are required to compare the functioning of children in Part B preschool programs to age expectations because age level expectations provide a common standard for all young children. To merely record the progress children made between entry and exit would not provide strong evidence for the effectiveness of the program. One of the goals of early childhood services is to prepare children to succeed in kindergarten where 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 early childhood services, but the system will now be tracking how many have achieved or moved closer to functioning at an age expected level.

10. Q. *Why was State Performance Plan Indicator 7, Early Childhood Outcomes included in the District IDEA State Performance Plan Public Report reported on March 15, 2011?*
- A. Baseline data for Indicator 7 was reported to OSEP for the first time in the State Performance Plan submitted in February 2010. The baseline reporting delay was to give time for States to include children who entered in 2005-2006, 2006-2007, 2007-2008, and/or 2008-2009 and exited in 2008-2009 in baseline data. Statewide targets were established in the SPP for each of the summary statements using baseline data. Data from 2009-2010 was compared to the targets established on the two summary statements for each of the three outcomes (total of six targets) and reported in the APR submitted in February 2011. The District IDEA State Performance Plan Public Report reported on March 15, 2011 compared district data to the statewide target and determined whether the district met the statewide target.
11. Q. *How will not meeting the statewide target(s) for Indicator 7 impact the district's Level of Determination (LOD)?*
- A. Indicator 7 is a results indicator not a compliance indicator. Therefore, whether or not the district met the statewide target(s) will not impact the district's LOD.
12. Q. *How were the statewide targets determined for Indicator 7?*
- A. States were permitted to set statewide targets for 2009-2010 that were equal to baseline data. Targets for 2010-2011, however, were expected to be higher. KSDE with stakeholder input set the targets for 2009-2010 equal to baseline data. Statewide targets for this indicator through 2012-13 are included in the District IDEA State Performance Plan Public Report under the view targets tab.
13. Q. *What resources are available to districts to improve early childhood outcomes data?*
- A. The KITS Project website is the source for "Hot Topics", quality rating forms, training, and other resources supporting the early childhood outcomes process for administrators, trainers, direct service providers, and data entry personnel in districts and infant-toddler networks in Kansas: <http://www.kskits.org/ta/ECOOutcomes/Index.shtml>.  
In addition, currently districts are able to create a variety of reports in the Report Builder on the OWS website which may help them identify improvement areas. In the near future, investigative questions will be available to further assist with this process. A district may request individualized technical assistance on the KSDE TASN website at: <http://ksdetasn.org/cms/>