

# ACTIVITY 1

## Beginning the Conversation

**Activity Purpose:** Early Intervention professionals must inform families about the outcomes measurement process and describe the purpose/intent of collecting outcomes data. This session will encourage professionals to think about different ways they can explain/share information with families about the process to promote their understanding.

**Difficulty Level:** Introductory Level – Awareness & Intermediate Level – Application

**Estimated Time:** 60 minutes

### Materials:

- Internet access & TV/computer
- Audio
- Handouts:
  - *Child Outcomes: Measuring the Benefits of Early Intervention*
  - *A Family Guide to Participating in the Child Outcomes Measurement Process*
  - *Child Outcomes: Measuring the Success of Early Intervention*

### Activity Instructions:

#### Part 1 – Think-Pair-Share

1. Encourage professionals to think about the following question: How do you and the team members you work with currently engage new families in a conversation about the COS Process? After giving everyone a few minutes individually to think about this, encourage them to get into pairs and discuss the similarities and differences between how they explain the COS Process and engage families in discussions about the process before collecting the data.
2. As a large group, ask the professionals to share some of the strategies and approaches they are already using.
3. Considering also asking the following questions:
  - a. How and what do you feel families are able to contribute to this process?
  - b. How do you convey to families that they are valued members of the team, including when it comes to measuring the child outcomes?

#### Part 2 – Early Childhood Outcomes: Step-By-Step Video

1. As a group, view the video titled, Early Childhood Outcomes: Step by Step Video, that offers information about the COS Process: <http://ectacenter.org/eco/assets/media/ChildOutcomesStepByStep-captioned.mov>
2. After viewing the video, consider the following prompts to lead a discussion:

- a. Why is it important to support young children's development in the three child outcome areas?
- b. What's something new that you learned from watching the video about the COS process?
- c. How might you be able to use this video to help families understand this process? What specific pieces of information would you want to share with them that the video covers?

### Part 3 – Different Ways to Share Information

1. In addition to providing verbal information to families about the process, professionals are encouraged to share written materials as well. Ask the professionals to get into small groups and review the state and national documents by highlight the sections/sentences/words, etc. that they feel are important and would make the most impact for families:
  - a. *Child Outcomes: Measuring the Benefits of Early Intervention*,
  - b. *A Family Guide to Participating in the Child Outcomes Measurement Process*
  - c. *Child Outcomes: Measuring the Success of Early Intervention*
2. After participants have had time to complete this activity, as a large group, discuss what the participants came up with and why. See if there were some commonalities with what they felt were important pieces for parents to understand.
3. Then considering asking:
  - a. Do you typically use these documents in your work with families?
  - b. If not, might you consider using one or both? In what situations would you use these?
  - c. What are the advantages and disadvantages of both?

### Part 4 – Simulation

1. Ask the group to get into pairs; one person act as a parent and the other person as the professional. The person acting as the professional will need to think of a script or a way of explaining the COS process to this new parent – considering the previous discussion around what might be important for parents to know and different strategies for helping a parent understand more about the process. Encourage the person acting as the parent to ask questions that a parent might genuinely need information and/or clarification around.
2. As a group, debrief together by asking:
  - a. What did you learn from this exercise?
  - b. Were you able to explain Child Outcomes in a parent-friendly manner?
  - c. Did you refer to any of the resources (video or written documents) to support the caregiver's understanding?
  - d. What kinds of questions did the caregiver ask?
  - e. Do you feel as though you have a script for how you might explain Child Outcomes to families tomorrow?
  - f. What questions do you still have about explaining Child Outcomes to a family?

# **A Family Guide to Participating in the Child Outcomes Measurement Process**



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*ALL-71*

Developed by the National Parent Technical  
Assistance Center at PACER Center  
[ParentCenterNetwork.org](http://ParentCenterNetwork.org)  
[PACER.org](http://PACER.org)

in collaboration with:

**ECTA Center**  
The Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center  
[ectacenter.org](http://ectacenter.org)



## Introduction

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As a parent of a young child who is in an early intervention (EI) or early childhood special education (ECSE) program, you want to be sure these services are helping your child develop and learn. These services are designed to make the most of each child's potential, as well as to strengthen the family's ability to help their child. **But how can you know if your child's early intervention or special education program is meeting his or her needs?**

**One way to learn more about your young child's progress is through three "child outcomes"** that are measured for every child in the United States who participates in an early intervention or early childhood

special education program. These outcomes will help you know how well your child is developing and participating in activities at home, at school, or in the community. In addition to helping you measure your child's individual progress, these outcomes are also used to measure how well your child's early intervention or early childhood special education program is serving all children who are enrolled.

By participating in the outcome process, you are not only helping your own child but are also helping your district and state know how early childhood programs are performing overall. **As the parent, you are a critical part of your child's development and education**, and this handout will help you understand and meaningfully participate in the outcome measurement process for your child's program.

## What are the three child outcomes?

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The following outcomes, developed by the U.S. Department of Education, are used by all early intervention and early childhood special education programs to measure young children's progress. While Individual Family Service Plan (IFSP) outcomes and Individualized Education Program (IEP) goals are written specifically for *your* child, **these three child outcomes are the same for everyone.**

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## Three Child Outcomes to Measure Progress

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- 1. Gaining positive social emotional skills, including social relationships.** This outcome measures how children interact and play with their family, other adults, and other children.
  - 2. Learning and using new knowledge and skills.** This outcome measures how children learn and use basic language and communication skills such as counting and problem-solving that will prepare them to be successful in kindergarten.
  - 3. Using appropriate behaviors to meet their needs.** This outcome measures how children gradually become more independent by learning how to move from place to place, feed themselves, and take care of basic needs.
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## Why is this information important to my child and our family?

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**The three child outcomes focus on what your child can do in his or her everyday routines and activities.**

By looking at how well your child is doing in each of the three areas, you can determine what he or she needs in order to become more involved in your family's activities.

The information gathered about your child will also help you develop individual outcomes and goals for your child's Individual Family Service Plan (IFSP) or Individualized Education Plan (IEP). As a parent, you may notice that by learning more about the three child outcomes, you also:

- **Gain confidence** in your ability to observe your child and share those observations with others.
- **Develop an increased understanding** of how your child is functioning compared to age expectations.
- **Learn to track and celebrate the progress** that your child is making.
- **Contribute more** to IFSP or IEP team discussions about your child's strengths and accomplishments and the development of appropriate outcomes or goals.

## How can I be part of the outcome measurement process?

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When first developing your child's IFSP or IEP, you should ask your child's early intervention providers or early childhood special education teachers how the three outcomes will be measured for your child and how they relate to your child's individual plan. If you feel unsure about the process, or want an update on how your child is progressing, these questions will help you start the conversations:

- **What resources are available** to help me understand what is expected for a child at different ages?
- **What specific skills and behaviors** do you look at for each outcome?
- **What information will you need** from me in order to complete the outcomes measurement?
- **How can I share my observations** about my child's skills, abilities, routines and activities?

## What information can I share about my child's progress?

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You can be prepared for any conversation about your child's development by making your own observations and sharing what you see. It may be helpful to review these questions often and take notes about what you see that's new or is happening in a different way. Even small changes are important in the measurement of the three child outcomes.





### **Outcome 1: Social Emotional Skills and Relationships**

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- How does my child relate to family members, close family friends, caregivers, and strangers?
- How does my child relate to other children at child care or in the neighborhood? With people in the community (such as the park or grocery store)?
- How does my child show his or her feelings? How does he or she calm down when upset?
- How does my child show that she or he understands social rules, such as sharing and taking turns?



## **Outcome 2: Knowledge and Skills**

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- How does my child copy others' actions or try to learn new things?
- How does my child try to solve problems?
- How does my child use words?
- Does my child understand concepts such as numbers and shapes?
- Does my child understand and respond to directions from others?
- How does my child communicate his or her thoughts and ideas?

### **Outcome 3: Meeting Needs**

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- How does my child get from place to place?
- What does my child do when he or she wants something? What if it is hard to reach?
- What does my child do when he or she needs help?
- What does my child do when he or she is hungry?
- How does my child help with dressing or undressing, using the bathroom, and brushing his or her teeth?
- Can my child feed him or herself?
- What does my child do without my help?

You may want to set up regular times with your child's early intervention providers or early childhood special education teachers to share this information. This will make sure that your input is being used to measure your child's progress in the three outcomes.

In addition to sharing your own observations, you may also want to ask your child's providers and educators what they are seeing. The information you receive can help you understand your child's development in different settings and situations. This will help you be a full partner in outcomes measurement.

# How will I know if my child is making progress?

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Looking at your child's progress over time is important for updating your child's IFSP or IEP and making sure that he or she is receiving the services needed to meet the individualized goals or outcomes. This same information is also needed to measure the three child outcomes accurately at the end of services.

Your IFSP or IEP document should state when and how often information on your child's progress will be shared. You can also ask providers or teachers at any time you have questions or concerns.

Asking early childhood teachers or providers the following questions will give you information about your child's progress in the three outcomes:

- How are you measuring my child's progress? Are you using observations? Assessments?
- What are you seeing that tells you that my child is or is not making enough progress?
- How is my child's progress on his or her IFSP outcomes or IEP goals related to progress in the three child outcome areas?
- How does my child now compare to other children his or her age? What do most children his or her age do in regard to this outcome area?
- How do you see my child's disability affecting his or her ability to make more progress in this area?
- What are the next skills needed in order for him or her to make progress?



## **Conclusion: You Are the Expert!**

When parents and professionals work together as a team, children do better. While professionals have expertise in working with children, **you are the expert on your own child**. You have information about your child that cannot be gathered through any other method other than to hear it directly from you.

By sharing your observations of your child, you will be helping your early intervention service providers or early childhood special education teachers understand your child's strengths and needs. You will help your IFSP or IEP team understand how your child is progressing on the three child outcomes and what skills need improvement. Through your involvement, you will help your child to be an active and successful participant now and in the future at home, in the community, and at school.

Contact Your Local Parent Center:

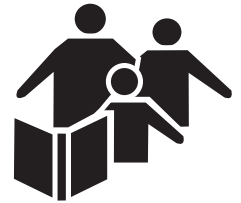
For additional copies, contact:  
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# Child Outcomes: Measuring the Benefits of Early Intervention



*Early Intervention (EI) partners with families of infants and toddlers with developmental delays and disabilities to enhance their child's development and learning through everyday activities that are important to the child and family. The goal of EI is to help families become more competent and confident in helping their child develop and learn. One way we measure progress toward this goal is by gathering information about three child outcomes.*

## National experts say EI should help all eligible children achieve these outcomes:

- **Building positive social-emotional skills and relationships**, which includes how children interact and play with other children and adults, how they show their feelings, and how they follow social rules.
- **Acquiring and using knowledge and skills**, which includes how children understand basic concepts, learn new things, solve problems, and use words or other ways to communicate.
- **Taking appropriate action to meet their needs**, which includes how children become more independent by learning to move on their own, feed themselves, ask for assistance, begin to get dressed, and take care of basic needs.



## How can you help?

As the expert on your child, you can:

- Observe differences in what your child is able to do in different settings (home, day care) and with different people (you, siblings, playmates, caregivers).
- Be ready to share what you know about your child with your EI team members.
- Ask questions such as: What are the next skills we should be looking for? How do I know when my child is making progress?
- Celebrate progress with your child, your family, and your EI team.



## How will this help you as a parent/guardian?

These three outcomes may help you decide what family activities and daily routines can best support your child's continuing development. You may also:

- Become more confident about observing your child and monitoring his progress.
- Understand more how her skills compare with other children her age.
- Contribute more to team discussions about your child's strengths.

Discussing these three outcomes with other team members can provide useful information about your child's progress over time. By sharing information, you are not only helping your own child but also assisting the EI program in identifying ways to improve EI services for all families.



For more information about measuring your child's progress, visit the Illinois Early Intervention Clearinghouse Web site at <http://eiclearinghouse.org>.

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Any opinions, findings, conclusions, or recommendations expressed in this publication are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Illinois Department of Human Services, Bureau of Early Intervention.





# OUTCOMES



## Measuring the Success of Early Intervention (EI)

### Family Outcomes

As part of your participation in early intervention, we will help you gain knowledge and skills in these three key areas:

- Knowing your rights
- Communicating your child's needs
- Taking appropriate action to meet your child's needs

### IFSP Functional Outcomes

Functional outcomes are the benefits or results you want for your child and family as a result of participating in early intervention. These outcomes are meaningful to your everyday life and are included in the individualized family services plan (IFSP) that you develop with your EI team.



### Child Outcomes

It is important to know how your child is developing as a result of receiving early intervention services. You see your child in activities and settings that other team members don't. The three child outcomes are:

- Building positive social relationships
- Gaining and using knowledge and skills
- Taking appropriate actions to meet their needs



### You Play a Key Role in Your Child's Development

As a member of the EI team, your active participation is critical because **you know your child best!** How can **you** help?

- Observe your child when you are at home and in your neighborhood
- Share what you know with the other members of the EI team
- Ask your EI team if you have questions about your child
- Complete the Family Outcomes Survey



To learn more about child outcomes, visit <http://go.illinois.edu/OutcomesVideo>



Bureau of Early Intervention  
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