

ACTIVITY 5

Reaching Consensus

Activity Purpose: Now that professionals have had an opportunity to learn about the COS process -- how and why the data is collected, age-expected skills for children birth to age three, engaging caregivers, the rating criteria and how to use the decision tree to determine ratings, they will now practice reaching consensus as a team. Participants will have the opportunity to engage in a role play activity, discuss examples and non-examples, and consider strategies related to instances where teams may encounter special circumstances.

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

Estimated Time: 60-75 minutes

Materials:

- Internet access & TV/computer
- Audio for video
- Highlighters
- Handouts:
 - *COS Process – Looks Like and Doesn't Look Like*
 - *Emanuel Case Study*
 - *Emanuel Case Study for Facilitator (only for facilitator)*
 - *Decision Tree*
 - *Team Discussion of Outcomes*
 - *What Would You Do...situation 1*
 - *What Would You Do...situation 2*
 - *What Would You Do...situation 3*
 - *What Would You Do...Considerations for Facilitator (only for facilitator)*

Activity Instructions:

Part 1 – Action Plan Follow-Up

1. Ask the participants to get into small groups (3-4 people depending on the overall size of the group) and briefly discuss their action plans from the previous session. Ask everyone to consider the successes and potential barriers they experienced implementing their action items.

Part 2 – Review

1. Give the participants a copy of the handout titled, *COS Process – Looks Like and Doesn't Look Like*

2. Give everyone a few minutes to individually complete the handout to review how to engage caregivers in conversations, cultivate comfortable climates and use the decision tree.
3. Once everyone has had an opportunity to complete this activity individually, instruct them to get into small group (3-4 people depending on the overall size of the group).
4. Encourage them to share and discuss their examples and non-examples with each other.

Part 3 – Reaching Consensus Role-Play

1. Break the large group up into smaller IFSP teams for a role-play activity, ideally 2-3 people to each team (SC, DT & Caregiver). Encourage the participants to decide in their groups who want to act as Emanuel’s service coordinator, caregiver and developmental therapist.
2. Pass out the following handouts:
 1. *Team Discussion of Outcomes*
 2. *Emanuel Case Study*
 3. *Decision Tree*
3. Instruct the groups to read Emanuel’s case study and highlight the foundational and immediate foundational skills using two different colored highlighters.
4. Then after the teams have had an opportunity to identify Emanuel’s skills, the teams will engage in a COS conversation (using the script within the handout titled, *Team Discussion of Outcomes* and the *Decision Tree*) to reach consensus about the rating for how he is acquiring and using knowledge and skills. Each person should act their part, asking and responding in ways that are indicative of their roles.

***Note for facilitator:** although the script within the *Team Discussion of Outcomes*, is focused on positive social relationships, participants can use the script while substituting the language that is appropriate related to acquiring and using knowledge and skills.

5. Give the groups several minutes to complete this activity. Facilitator can walk around the room and listen in for how the conversations are unfolding.
6. Once the groups have had enough time to reach a consensus on a rating, consider the following prompts:
 - a. How did the person playing the service coordinator set up the conversation for everyone? What did you think about the script? Did you use any of the previous discussion prompts/conversation starters?
 - b. What rating did your team come up with and why?
 - b. Did groups come up with something different? Why?
 - c. What happened after asking the first question on the decision tree?
 - d. What were the immediate foundational skills you identified?
 - e. How were you able to determine the frequency Emanuel demonstrated the skills? Across settings and people?
 - f. How did you ensure that everyone had an opportunity to share their perspective?
 - g. How did it feel using the decision tree?

- h. How did the decision tree help guide the conversation and reach a consensus?

Part 4 – What Would You Do...

1. Break the large group up into four smaller groups.
2. Give group 1 the handout titled, *What Would You Do...situation 1*
3. Give group 2 the handout titled, *What Would You Do...situation 2*
4. Give group 3 the handout titled, *What Would You Do...situation 3*
5. Give group 4 the handout titled, *What Would You Do...situation 4*
6. Encourage the four groups to work through their situation and consider the questions on each of the handouts.
7. Once the four groups have had enough time to discuss their situations and potential ways of working through the scenario, discuss each one as a large group.

***Note for facilitator:** see handout titled, *What Would You Do...Considerations for Facilitator* as you facilitate the discussion. As the group discusses the different situations, ask if anyone has experienced similar situations, what they do and the outcomes.

Part 5 – Group Reflection

1. Engage the large group in a brief reflection regarding varied perspectives. Consider asking the following questions:
 - a. What are the benefits of varied perspectives?
 - b. What are the possible disadvantages to varied perspectives?
 - c. How do we help families navigate varied perspectives during COS discussions?
 - d. How do you negotiate varied perspectives with the professionals and families you collaborate with, especially pertaining to the COS process, but could entail everyday conversations with families, other professionals, IFSP meetings, etc.?

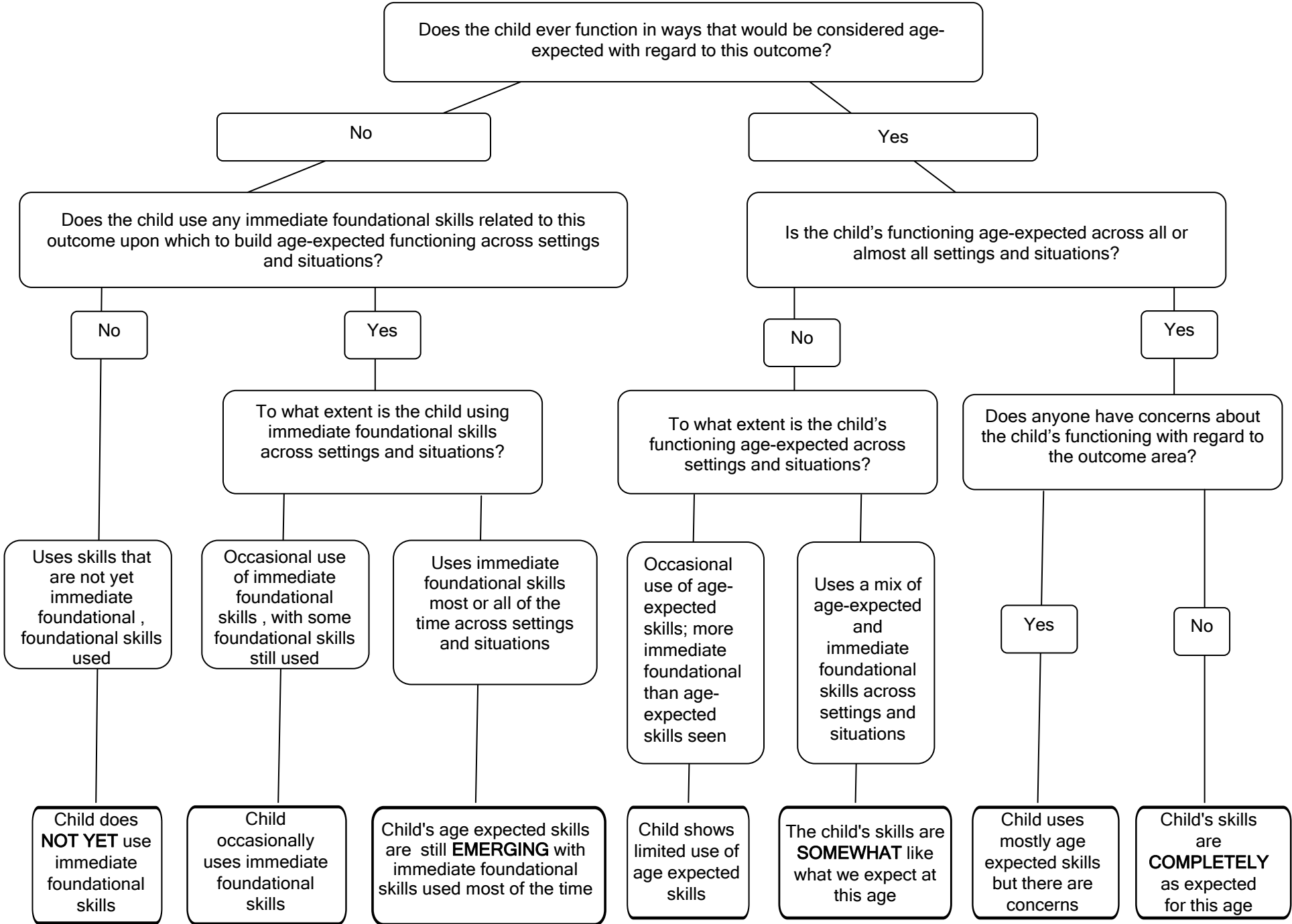
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Child Outcomes Summary Process: What it DOES & DOESN'T Look Like

COS Process	What it <u>DOES</u> looks like...	What it <u>DOESN'T</u> look like...
Cultivating a Comfortable Climate for the Team		
Engaging Caregivers in the Conversation		
Using the Decision Tree to Determine a Rating		



Decision Tree for Summary Rating Discussions



ACTIVITY 5

Emanuel Case Study – Reaching Consensus

Directions: Individually read about Emanuel’s skills below. Consider using two different colored highlighters; one color to highlight foundational skills and the other color to highlight immediate foundational skills. Then decide as a group who will play the speech therapist, caregiver, service coordinator and developmental therapist during this activity. Once each person has chosen their role, then use the decision tree to reach a consensus about the rating for how he is acquiring and using knowledge and skills. Each person should act their part, asking and responding in ways that are indicative of their roles.

Child: Emanuel

Age: 18 months

Outcome: acquiring and using knowledge and skills

Description: At home Emanuel understand some routinely spoken words, such as ‘night-night, no, up, down and out.’ On the playground, he understands when his mom says, “Ready, set, go!” as he will go down the slide after hearing ‘go.’ He does not yet demonstrate understanding of questions or directions such as, “Do you want juice?, go get the block, or bring me a diaper.” When offered a choice, Emanuel takes what he wants, rather than indicating a choice by pointing to or naming the item he wants. During play and while hanging out with his family, Emanuel makes vowel sounds, cries and laughs, but he is not consistently saying words or using signs. He will say “mmm” when he is eating something he likes and cries when he does not like something or is unhappy. His parents have tried sign language (mostly the sign for more) with him, but he does not yet imitate the sign. He rarely imitates what he sees others do unless it is of high interest to him (e.g., he imitated sliding a block down the ramp, which was a novel activity for him). Emanuel’s favorite toys are blocks, shape sorters, and toys that involve putting things in and taking them out. He uses some toys in their intended manner and plays with his toys in different ways, showing his creative thinking skills. Emanuel has pretended to bring a bottle to his mouth once, but he has not showed his pretend play skills in other ways. Emanuel currently shows little interest in books. He turns the pages in the books and looks briefly at pictures. He typically looks at books for about one minute and is not yet pointing at pictures. Emanuel likes the Mickey Mouse Clubhouse show and will stop, smile and watch it, and sometimes dances to the music. Bath time is another favorite activity for Emanuel. In the tub, he plays with containers by filling them up with water and dumping them out. His mother says that he would do this for hours. He also likes to splash around in the water.

Adapted from the Child Outcomes Summary – Team Collaboration (COS-TC) Toolkit

“Script” for Team Discussion of Outcomes Rating

The following text provides guidance for discussing a child’s functioning that:

- gets the information needed for a rating determination without using numbers,
- is based on the child’s strengths,
- uses a tone that is family-friendly.

It was designed for training teams in the use of the Child Outcomes Summary Form (COSF), especially with families at the table during the rating discussion

Discussing the Outcomes

Discuss the outcome areas one at a time, although not necessarily in any particular order. The suggestions in this document focus on Outcome 1: positive social relationships. Use the same format for Outcomes 2 (acquisition and use of knowledge and skills) and 3 (taking action to meet needs), substituting words to reflect the content of each outcome, as appropriate. Refer to the “COSF Discussion Prompts” resource for suggested questions and language to use for the discussion of all three outcome areas.

Begin the discussion as follows, filling in the child’s name and the content appropriate to the outcome area (as noted above, these examples illustrate Outcome 1).

- One of the important things we want ___to learn is how to get along well with the people in his/ her life. Let’s talk about how ___ is doing in social relationships. We want to talk about how ___ interacts with adults and with other children. We also want to look at how s/he follows rules and participates in routines with groups.
- Who are the adults in ___’s life?
- Is s/he around other children? [Who?]
- [if child is old enough] Is s/he in situations where she/he is expected to participate in routines with others or to follow rules related to being with others?

Strengths

- Let’s start by talking about _____’s strengths in this area. What are some of _____ strengths in social relationships and getting along with others? For example,
 - What are the things that ___does well when it comes to relating to adults? (See COSF Discussion Prompts)
 - What are some of his/her strengths in relating to other children?
 - What are some of his/her strengths when it comes to following rules or routines?

Areas of concern

- What are some of the things we are concerned about/would like to work on with ___ in the area of social relationships? For example,
 - What are the things that we are concerned about with regard to how _____ relates to adults? (COSF Discussion Prompts)
 - What are some of our concerns with regard to how _____ relates to other children?

- What are some of our concerns with regard to how ____ follows rules or routines?

Expectations

- We know that as children develop they learn to do different things at different ages. Some of the things we would like to see children doing in this area at ___[child's age] are.....
- Looking for age appropriate functioning
- Is ___ doing any of the things related to social relationships that we expect to see at his/her age?
- Possible answers:
 - Yes, he is doing ____
 - No, not yet.

Extent of age appropriate functioning

- [if yes] Would we say that all or almost all of ____'s functioning for this outcome is what we would expect to see for a child this age?
 - [if yes] ___ is doing really well in this area. Is there any thing related to how ___ interacts with others that we are concerned about and that we think we should monitor or give him some help with?
 - If no. "This means we want to say his development in this area is "completely" what we expect for a child this age.
 - If yes. This means we want to say his development in this area is "between completely and somewhat" for what we expect of a child this age.
 - [If no] Would we say that ____ rarely shows examples of what we expect to see for children this age or that she/he shows a solid mix of functioning that is age appropriate and not age appropriate yet?
 - If a solid mix. This means we will say that his development in this area is "somewhat" age appropriate.
 - If rarely. This means we will say that his development is between "emerging and somewhat".

Looking for immediate foundational skills

- [if not yet] Just before children learn to ____ [age expected functioning], they ____ [immediate foundational skills]?
- Is ___ doing anything related to social relationships at this level?
- Possible answers:
 - Yes, he is doing ____
 - No, not yet. This tells us we need to work with ____ to help him/her develop some skills such as [immediate foundational skills] to help him improve in this area. Since ____ hasn't yet developed what we call immediate foundational skills, we will code his development in this outcome as "Not Yet."

Extent of immediate foundational skills

- [if yes] Would we say that just about most or all of ____'s functioning in this area is showing the kind of skills that develop just before what children do at this age?
 - [if yes] That helps us know where ____ is functioning so we can work with the skills he/she has and help him/her move to the next step. It means the rating should be "Emerging."
 - [If no] That helps us know where ____ is functioning so we can work with the skills he/she has so we can help him/her move to the next step and suggests the rating should be between "Not Yet" and "Emerging."

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What Would You Do...

(Discussion Points for Facilitators)

Situation 1: During the rating process discussion, you and the team noticed that the child's skills vary across settings. One person on the team reports seeing a child use functioning that none of the others have seen before.

- What do you do?
- What questions might you ask the team, especially the professional who has observed the skills no one else has seen yet?
- How might you reach consensus about this outcome?

***Note for facilitator:** consider the below discussion points to enrich the participants' understanding.

- Consider asking the professional who has seen the new skill:
 - Describe what that looked like.
 - When have you seen that occur?
 - What was happening just before?
- How might scaffolding be consider in this team's discussion?
- This case represents a mix of functioning, which does occur.

Situation 2: During the rating process discussion, you and the team notice that the ratings/descriptors vary across the three outcomes for the same child. For instance, the child receives a rating of “emerging” for acquiring knowledge and skills; a rating of “somewhat” for taking action to meet needs; and a rating between somewhat and completely, which is “child uses mostly age expected skills, but there are concerns” for positive social emotional relationships.

- What do you do?
- How often do you think this might occur?
- Does the pattern make sense?
- What might contribute to the variance across the outcomes and the descriptors?

***Note for facilitator:** consider the below discussion points to enrich the participants’ understanding.

- This can happen as each outcome is rated independently and considers the skills and functioning in each outcome area.
- Does the pattern make sense given that there are some skills that impact all three outcomes (e.g. – communication)?
- Is something in the breadth of skills for each outcome being forgotten about in the rating for one of them that you should reconsider?

Situation 3: During the rating process discussion, you and the team notice that a child's ratings/descriptors are "completely" for all three of the outcomes.

- How does this impact eligibility?
- In what situations might a child's functioning look age-expected?
- How often do you think this situation might occur?

***Note for facilitator:** consider the below discussion points to enrich the participants' understanding.

- Common concern is how can this happen if a child is eligible for EI.
- Ratings/descriptors are independent from eligibility, but if teams are consistently rating eligible children as 'completely', the team may need a refresher on the definitions of foundational, immediate foundational and age-expected, as well as the rating process.
- Ratings reflect current functioning. Current functioning can look age-expected if:
 - The child is very young and the impact of their delay/disability is not evident. Or if the child has a diagnosed condition that will likely result in a delay, but the delay is not evident yet.
 - Child's functioning is age-expected with the support of assistive technology or widespread supports across settings.
- This instance will not occur often.
- Be sure considering all facets of an outcome area when thinking about a rating and whether anyone is seeing something that is concerning.

Situation 4: During the COS process discussion, you and the team agree that the child has made progress over the last year and is showing new skills. One team member feels as though that progress should be reflected in the outcome rating/descriptor and therefore suggests giving a higher COS rating than the previous one, which occurred a year ago at the child's last IFSP meeting.

- What do you do?
- Does progress always mean a higher rating?

***Note for facilitator:** consider the below discussion point to enrich the participants' understanding.

- Confusion can occur when teams think that a rating should go up from one time to the next because a child has made progress. The rating reflects how close the child's current functioning is to age-expected functioning. In typical development, skills increase with age, so even maintaining the same rating between entry and exit requires that the child gains new skills. This can be critical to explain to families as well.

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