



What are the critical questions?

- * They are a set of questions about children, programs, and personnel in early intervention (EI) or early childhood special education (ECSE) programs. The DaSy Center developed these questions to help states plan new data systems or enhance existing systems.
- * Local programs and state agencies can use the answers to these questions to improve programs and to provide information required for federal reporting.

Section 1: Child- and Family-Level Questions

1.A. Characteristics of Children and Families

1.A.1. What are the characteristics of children and families receiving early intervention or early childhood special education (EI/ECSE)?

1.A.1.a. How many children does the state serve in EI/ECSE (e.g., on a single day or in a given period of time such as a month or year)?

1.A.1.b. What are the characteristics of children and families currently enrolled in EI/ECSE (e.g., disability, demographics, risk)?

1.A.1.c. How have the characteristics of children and families enrolled in EI/ECSE changed over time (e.g., disability, demographics, risk)?

1.B. IDEA Services and Settings

1.B.1. What are the characteristics of the services and supports provided to children/families in early intervention/early childhood special education (EI/ECSE)?

1.B.1.a. What percentage of children in EI/ECSE were planned to have each type of service (e.g., occupational therapist, physical therapist) according to their Individual Family Service Plan (IFSP) or Individualized Education Plan (IEP) within a given time period (e.g., the past month or year)?

1.B.1.b. What percentage of children received each type of service within a given time period (e.g., the past month or year)?

1.B.1.c. What amount of each type of service (e.g., frequency, intensity, total hours) do children in EI/ECSE receive?

1.B.1.d. What is the relationship between the amount of services planned and the amount of services received?

1.B.1.e. What percentage of children received a particular practice (e.g., joint-attention activities, peer-mediated intervention) within a given time period (e.g., the past month, past year, or over their time in EI/ECSE)?

1.B.2. How do children enter and move through the early intervention/early childhood special education (EI/ECSE) system(s)?

1.B.2.a. What are the different sources of referral to EI/ECSE (e.g., parent, physician, social services)?

1.B.2.b. What percentage of referred children are eligible for services, and what percentage of eligible children are enrolled in services (e.g., have an IFSP/IEP)?

1.B.2.c. What percentage of children meet each program milestone (e.g., time between referral, evaluation, IFSP/IEP, first service, and transition) within timelines based on IDEA requirements or state standards?

1.B.2.d. How long do children participate in EI/ECSE (e.g., average length of time, percentage in program less than 6 months)?

1.B.2.e. What percentage of children who receive EI services continue on to ECSE? What percentage of children in ECSE received EI services?

1.B.2.f. What percentage of children leave EI/ECSE because they are no longer eligible (i.e., services are deemed no longer necessary)? What percentage of children leave EI/ECSE because the family withdrew from services? What percentage of children leave EI/ECSE for other reasons?

There are two kinds of questions:

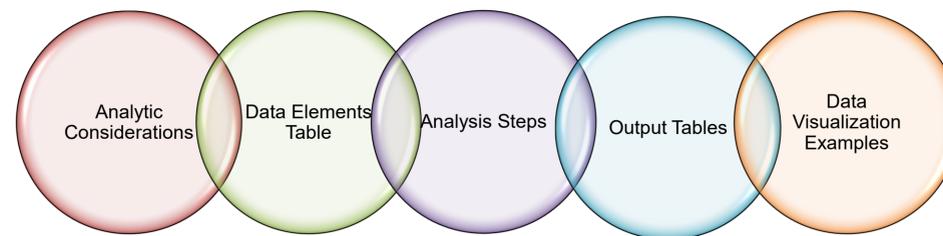
Bread and Butter Questions: These are essential questions for programs and state agencies.

Mountain Climber Questions: These are aspirational questions that are more complex to answer.

State agencies or programs may ask these critical questions:

- * **What are the characteristics of the services and supports provided for children/families in EI/ECSE?**
- * **How do children enter and move through the EI/ECSE systems?**
- * **Are young children with disabilities receiving services in settings that are for all children?**

Contents of the Critical Questions Analysis Plans



An Example: Services Planned and Received

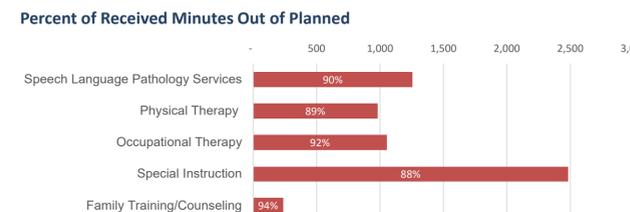
1. What is the relationship between the amount of services planned and the amount of services received?
2. Get data from data system and prepare.

	A	B	C	D
	Child ID	Service	Service Planned_Minutes_Year	Service Received_Minutes_Year
1	12345	Speech Language Pathology	1390	1256
2	23456	Physical Therapy	1096	980
3	34567	Occupational Therapy	1151	1055
4	456789	Family Training/ Counseling	2831	2483
5	321654	Psychological Services	250	235
6	654321	Physical Therapy	2230	1926

3. Analyze data.

Service Categories	N for Service	Planned Minutes per child per year	Received Minutes per child per year	Mean % Minutes Received Compared to Minutes Planned
Speech Language Pathology Services	6,141	1,390	1,256	90.3%
Physical Therapy	5,202	1,096	980	89.4%
Occupational Therapy	5,003	1,151	1,055	91.6%
Special Instruction	1,112	2,831	2,483	87.7%
Family Training/Counseling	575	250	235	94.2%

4. Share and use findings.



Suggested Uses of Critical Questions & Analysis Plans

- * At staff meetings: discuss program improvement
- * At Interagency Coordinating Council or other stakeholder meetings: explore areas of interest to members
- * State agencies: help local programs use the data they collect and report
- * With families and other stakeholders: find out their questions about services in your state
- * At local or state level: Develop strategic plans

How to Get Started

Need help asking and answering critical questions?

- * Contact us:
 - Gary.Harmon@unc.edu
 - Megan.Cox@sri.com

Coming Soon!
 Analysis Plans on DaSy website

What are the critical questions analysis plans?

- * The DaSy Center developed the analysis plans to help local programs and state agencies analyze their data to answer each of the critical questions. The plans identify the necessary data elements and describe the steps in the analysis. They also present examples of possible output and ways to display the data.

Find **critical question** resources online:
<http://dasycenter.org/resources/critical-questions/>