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# Considerations of the Impact of COVID-19 on APR Indicator Data



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## Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic caused unintended changes to state Part C program policies, procedures, and practices that may have impacted program performance. State data collection and reporting activities were also disrupted, presenting challenges to data completeness and other aspects of data quality.

The purpose of this resource is to provide considerations related to data disruption that occurred as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. It is intended for the individuals (Part C Data Manager, Part C Coordinators, and others) who collect, analyze, and report Part C Annual Performance Report (APR) data. Those who work with data can use these considerations to increase their understanding of COVID-19's impact on data quality and program performance. Some impact considerations are relevant to required reporting for Part C Annual Performance Report (APR) indicators, e.g., the impact on slippage or the impact on data collection. Equally important are other considerations that may help the state reflect on internal decisions or examine policy or practice changes made in response to COVID-19, e.g., service delivery methods. For example, if a state changed its method for administering the family survey because of COVID-19, will the state continue with this method or revert to previous methods, which may depend on the impact on response rates or representativeness?

This resource is intended to provide guidance for the APR submission of data collected during the disruptions caused by the pandemic. The considerations presented in this document are a starting point and not an exhaustive list or discussion on how APR data may have been impacted by disruptions in data collection and reporting. Similarly, there is no expectation that states would explore every consideration—states may or may not have the data to do so. It may be helpful for Part C staff to think through the additional data necessary to collect to examine program performance in the event of future disruptive events, or staff may want to consider how the state could enhance its data system to collect such data more efficiently. Please see the DaSy resource on [Key Part C Data Considerations During COVID-19](#).

## APR Guidance from the Office of Special Education Programs

The Annual Performance Report (APR) requires states to report on the impact of COVID-19 on data collection, specifically on data completeness and data quality. The FFY2019 SPP/APR instructions stated the following:

“a. If data collection for any indicator was impacted specifically by COVID-19, the State must include in the narrative:

- (1) the impact on data completeness, validity, and reliability for the indicator;
- (2) an explanation of how COVID-19 specifically impacted the State's ability to collect the data for the indicator; and
- (3) any steps the State took to mitigate the impact of COVID-19 on the data collection”.

This must be completed for data collection for each indicator impacted by COVID-19.

# APR Considerations During the COVID-19 pandemic

**This resource is divided into two sections:**

- General APR Considerations: Data considerations that may apply across multiple indicators.
- Specific APR Indicator Considerations: Data considerations that are specific to each indicator.

Within each section, there are considerations that apply to both data collection and data quality as well as program performance.

## General APR Considerations related to COVID-19 pandemic

Two general considerations can help guide analyses to ensure data are of high quality and identify areas for further exploration. Included with each consideration is the language from Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) Part C Measurement table related to the considerations, where applicable.

1. **Impact of COVID on Data Available:** Due to disruptions in operations, data may not be available for the usual time periods reported on in the APR. In this case, it is important to note that several of the indicators, specifically those on compliance, do not require states to report data for the entire reporting period (12 months). For indicators that do not require data for the full reporting period, the state can select data from a specific time period and describe how they accurately reflect data for the full reporting period. These indicators are listed below.

**Indicator 1:** Timely receipt of services

**Indicator 7:** 45-day timeline

**Indicator 8A, 8B, and 8C:** Early childhood transition

2. **Coding for exceptional family circumstances:** Several indicators allow for states to identify the cause of delay as Exceptional Family Circumstances as defined in *34 C.F.R. §303.310(b)*.

States need to consider how they have been collecting and documenting exceptional family circumstances through COVID-19 as detailed in OSEP guidance and how that will impact the APR. Some examples of collecting/documenting considerations:

- Documenting the types of exceptional family circumstances to include additional information on delays specifically due to COVID-19. How will the state report data on delays specific to COVID-19?
  - Updating or changing codes and adding comment fields in the state data system to capture the additional information.
  - Reporting to OSEP information about the additional family circumstances and the general impact on the data compared to previous APRs.
  - Calculating the impact of exceptional family circumstances on specific indicators for the current reporting period and comparing that to previous years' data.
  - Reviewing other periods of data disruption in the State's history to see how that impacted data collection and how it was handled for APR reporting (i.e., natural disasters such as hurricanes, floods, or wildfires).
  - Considering the availability and use of technology/remote services during this time and how that has impacted families differentially.
3. **Missing or Incomplete Data:** Disruption due to the pandemic has likely resulted in missing or incomplete data. Patterns of missing data are important to consider as you interpret data:
    - Determining how state lead agencies' and/or local programs' closing or pausing services/operations or the inability to connect with families, for short or extended periods, impacted data collection.
    - Determining the extent of missing data, which may be greater for some local programs due to differences in rates of COVID-19 and accompanying restrictions.

- Considering the impact of missing and incomplete data may also be greater for some indicators, (e.g., those that rely on the ability to connect with families, such as child and/or family outcomes).
  - Recognizing that the impact of missing or incomplete data may not be constant across the reporting period as circumstances change.
4. **Differential Impact of Demographic Characteristics:** It is important to keep in mind the multiple demographic characteristics that may impact data collection, especially data completeness. The impacts of state and local responses to COVID-19 are not necessarily uniform across a state—they may be influenced by local city or county mandates, and those may change over time. Characteristics such as race, ethnicity, income, family status, and/or geographic location may disproportionately impact families' ability to engage in services and may impact multiple indicators, for example, the timely receipt of services. For example, to examine possible service disruptions in rural areas where the transition to telehealth/teleservices was impacted by the availability of internet to families to participate remotely.

## Considerations by APR Indicator

While these considerations for the Part C APR indicators are meant to be comprehensive, each program should consider its own data and how circumstances related to data disruption have caused an impact beyond what is presented below. There may be one or more indicators within a state impacted by state-specific changes in practices and/or data collection methods. For indicators where such changes occurred, an analysis of an entire year of data may not yield substantial differences in performance from the previous year. The state may uncover differences upon disaggregating the data by the time period for the original practice/method vs. the time associated with the change in practice/method. Although slippage may not have occurred, the analysis may be able to shed light on the patterns of results to come and inform state decisions on whether to maintain or change the practice/method.

For each of the indicators below there are examples of the types of data that states may collect, analyze and report either to OSEP or for program improvement.

### Indicator 1: Timely Receipt of Services

States may want to consider the following when preparing Indicator 1 data:

- Number of Individual Family Service Plans (IFSPs) in draft status or on pause when state and/or local offices were temporarily paused or services changed/suspended and the impact on service start date.
- Impact of delayed service start for IFSPs (i.e., all IFSP's that were completed before the State temporarily pausing or suspending services or changing service delivery model (e.g., shifting to virtual).
- Challenges related to temporary pausing or suspending of activities and services generally impacted noncompliance in the state, especially if there are geographic differences (e.g., services continued uninterrupted in one part of the state, while not in another).
- Impact of COVID-19 on timely correcting previously identified noncompliance, including delays in corrective action plans and measures.
- Additional challenges related to distributing and ensuring access to technology for families to participate in services remotely that may have impacted new service start dates.

### Indicator 2: Settings

States may want to consider the following when preparing Indicator 2 data:

- Impact of COVID-19 on Part 618 data already submitted and future submissions and how that may vary over time with the pandemic.
- Changes made to the state data system or data collection processes to capture virtual and distance settings for delivery of services.
- How virtual settings will be reported, including explanations for any changes observed from previous years' data (e.g., changes in number of virtual services).

## Indicator 3: Early Childhood Outcomes

States may want to consider the following when preparing Indicator 3 data:

- Missing or incomplete data for entry and/or exit ratings, the impact on representativeness, particularly if there is bias as a result of missing or incomplete data.
- Modifications to child outcomes data collection procedures with new evaluation and service delivery approaches.
- Limitations in gathering information from multiple sources and across multiple settings.
- Analyses on whether COVID-19 impacted outcome results (e.g., comparing results for pre-COVID vs. COVID time periods, comparing results based on assessment approaches/ tools used pre-COVID vs. virtual approaches during COVID, or examining results based on types and amount of service).
- How to calculate “six months in services” for children/families that were on hold or suspended services for some period. Refer to OSEP guidance in the [COVID Supplemental Fact Sheet](#).

## Indicator 4: Family Outcomes

States may want to consider the following when preparing Indicator 4 data:

- The impact, if any, if timeframes were changed for data collection (e.g., either the timing of the survey distribution or how long the survey is available for completion).
- Representativeness of data across key factors like geographic region of the state, race and ethnicity, program, and/or age of the infant or toddler.
- Changes in approach/methods to administer a family survey and collect family data (e.g., changes in hand delivering a survey during a home visit vs. administering the survey online vs. a mixed-mode approach).
- Differences in response rates associated with different methods.
- Differences in the representativeness of the respondents associated with different methods.
- Differences in family outcomes associated with different methods of service delivery.

## Indicators 5 & 6: Child Find: Birth to One and Birth to Three

States may want to consider the following when preparing Indicator 5 & 6 data:

- Ongoing monitoring of referral and program eligibility to understand and address trends.
- Engagement with local programs and families to understand changing trends in the percentage of children with IFSPs compared to previous periods of data and prepare an explanation.
- Changes in the number of referrals on enrollment/ movement from referral to IFSP (see [DaSy Child Find Funnel Tool](#) for assistance).

## Indicator 7: 45-Day Timeline

States may want to consider the following when preparing Indicator 7 data:

- Number of children and families referred and undergoing initial assessment and evaluation when state and/or local offices were temporarily paused or services were changed/suspended, and the impact on holding timely initial IFSP meetings.
- Impact of referrals while states were temporarily pausing or changing the method of delivering services, including state and local program changes on assessment and evaluation procedures (e.g., how the state conducted standardized assessments typically done in person, such as the BDI-2).
- Shut down or suspended activities and services, generally impacted noncompliance in the state, especially if geographic differences (i.e., services continued in one part of the state, while paused in another).
- COVID-19 impact on timely correcting previously identified noncompliance, including delays in corrective action plans and measures.
- Additional issues related to holding timely IFSP initial meetings virtually, including challenges related to distributing and ensuring access to technology for families to participate in IFSP meetings.
- Changes made to eligibility, including whether the state had any procedures for provisional eligibility or interim (or provisional) IFSPs.

## Indicator 8: Early Childhood Transition

States may want to consider the following when preparing Indicator 8 data:

- Impact of delayed or canceled IFSP meetings due to COVID-19, particularly relating to the timely development of transition steps and services.
- Issues related to holding IFSP meetings virtually, including challenges related to distributing and ensuring access to technology for families to participate in IFSP meetings relating to transition planning.
- Impact of changes to the methods and/or timelines for notifications to the state education agencies (SEAs) and local education agencies (LEAs).
- Impact of changes to the timelines and/or methods for conducting transition conferences (e.g., holding transition conferences virtually, availability of the LEA to participate).
- Changes made to the state data system or data collection processes to capture the inability to hold transition conferences due to COVID-19.
- Impact of COVID-19 on timely correcting previously identified noncompliance, including delays in corrective action plans and measures.

## Indicator 9: Resolution Meetings Resulting in Written Settlement Agreements

States may want to consider the following for Indicator 9 data:

- Increase in number of due process hearing requests, due to COVID-19, which could increase resolutions meetings. States must determine whether baseline and targets will be needed, i.e., when the number of resolution sessions reaches 10 or greater.
- OSEP guidance in [IDEA Part C Dispute Resolution Procedures in the COVID-19 Environment](#).

## Indicator 10: Percentage of Mediations Resulting in Mediation Agreements

States may want to consider the following for Indicator 10 data:

- Increase in number of mediation requests, due to COVID-19, states must determine whether baseline and targets will be needed, i.e., when the number of mediation sessions reaches 10 or greater.
- OSEP guidance in [IDEA Part C Dispute Resolution Procedures in the COVID-19 Environment](#).

## Indicator 11: State Systemic Improvement Plan (SSIP)

States may want to consider COVID-19's impact on data collection and data quality related to these SSIP aspects: The State-identified Measurable Result (SiMR)

- Additional data that demonstrates progress toward the SiMR
- Implementation and/or evaluation of infrastructure improvement activities
- Implementation of evidence-based practices
- Evaluation of fidelity of implementation and/or practice change
- Implementation of other improvement activities, such as professional development activities or revisions to policies/procedures
- Engagement of stakeholders
- Scaling up efforts in implementation

## Conclusion and Next Steps

This resource contains general Part C APR considerations; each state will have unique circumstances to consider when looking at COVID-19 impacts. When possible, states should gather additional quantitative and qualitative data that provide context to the results and informs further analyses. Potential next steps may include sharing data with program staff and stakeholders, compiling feedback and suggestions, and determining the implications for policy and practice. Additionally, DaSy technical assistance providers are available to support your work.

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## About Us

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