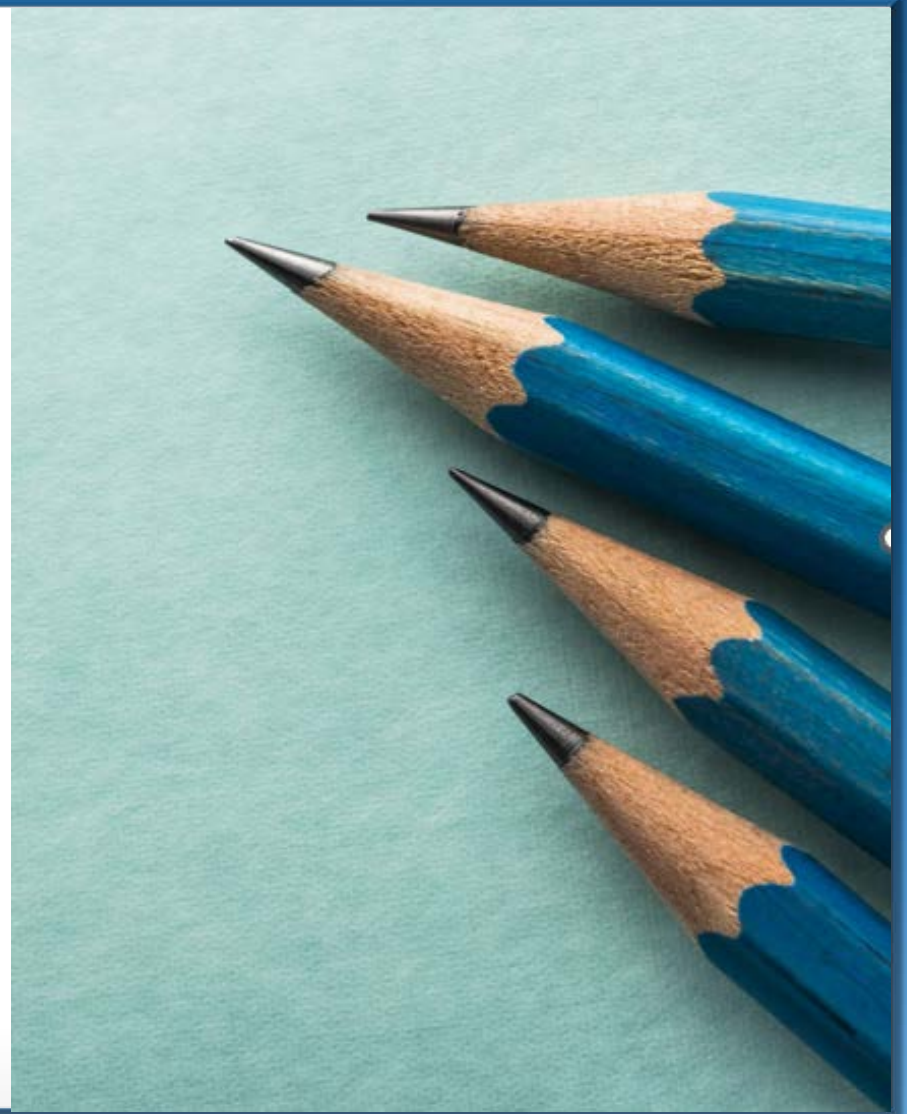


Related Resources:

Seven Tips

For having quality COS
conversations with families



Tip #1

Build your own
COS capacity
and be prepared
for each family
conversation

Tip #1 Related Resources

ecta DaSy **Child Outcomes Summary (COS)**
Collecting & Using Data to Improve Programs

Get Started

ecta Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center
DaSy The Center for IDEA Early Childhood Data

<https://ectacenter.org/eco/pages/cos-module/>

DaSy The Center for IDEA Early Childhood Data Systems
ecta Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center

Child Outcomes Summary (COS) Process Quick Reference Guide

Ultimate Goals for Early Intervention and Early Childhood Special Education

- To enable young children to be active and successful participants during the early childhood years and in the future in a variety of settings: in their homes with their families, in childcare, in preschool or school programs, and in the community.
- To enable families to provide care for their child and have the resources they need to participate in their own desired family and community activities.

Outcomes

- An "outcome" is defined as a benefit experienced as a result of services and supports received. An outcome is neither the receipt of services nor satisfaction with services, but rather what happens as a result of services provided to children and families.
- It is understood that a service system cannot guarantee the achievement of any outcome since services are only one factor that influences outcomes. Nevertheless, early intervention and early childhood special education should strive to achieve the outcomes for all of the families and children involved in the program.

Child Outcomes

What are the Requirements?

States are required to report on the percentage of infants and toddlers with Individualized Family Service Plans (IFSPs) or preschool children with Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) who demonstrate improved:

1. Positive social emotional skills,
2. Acquisition and use of knowledge and skills, and
3. Use of appropriate behaviors to meet their needs.

These are sometimes referred to as the three global early childhood outcomes.

What are Characteristics of Child Outcomes?

- Integrated across domains:** Child outcomes include skills from multiple developmental domains, drawing on functioning that bring together skills across domains in complex and interconnected ways.
- Functional:** Child outcomes reflect how children use the skills they have to participate in everyday activities and to accomplish things that are meaningful to them.
- Global, not individualized:** Child outcomes are global benefits that all children participating in the program are expected to experience as a result of their experiences with the services; they are not individualized like IFSP/IEP outcomes or goals.
- Interdependent with family outcomes:** Positive outcomes experienced by the family promote child outcomes, and outcomes achieved by the child benefit the family.

Why Child Outcomes?

- Achieving each of the three child outcomes is key to supporting the ultimate goal of active and successful participation noted above.
- For many, but certainly not all young children with disabilities, receipt of high-quality services will allow them to move closer to age-expected functioning than they would have been able to without those services.
- Documenting children's movement toward age-expected functioning is one type of evidence that can be used to make a case for the effectiveness of early intervention and early childhood special education at national, state, and local levels.

Child Outcomes Summary (COS) Quick Reference Guide (updated March 17, 2021) 1

<https://ectacenter.org/~pdfs/eco/cos-quick-reference-guide.pdf>

COS-TC
Child Outcomes Summary Team Collaboration

Quality Practices

Welcome to the Child Outcomes Summary-Team Collaboration (COS-TC) Quality Practice Checklist and Descriptions: Online Practice. The online practice gives Early Intervention and Early Childhood Special Education providers online access to the COS-TC quality practice checklist and descriptions, and allows you to practice your learning by watching video clips of COS team meetings with families and rating the extent to which providers in the video used COS-TC quality practices.

The content is intended for those providers who have completed the COS Process Module: Collecting & Using Data to Improve Programs, as well as for trainers supporting teams in the COS process. By providers we mean professionals working with children and families in early learning and development programs to improve outcomes for young children with disabilities.

Begin at the **Getting Started** tab to learn more about purpose, background, and uses of the COS-TC Quality Practice Checklist and Descriptions.

For returning users, select one of the following topics to continue where you left off:

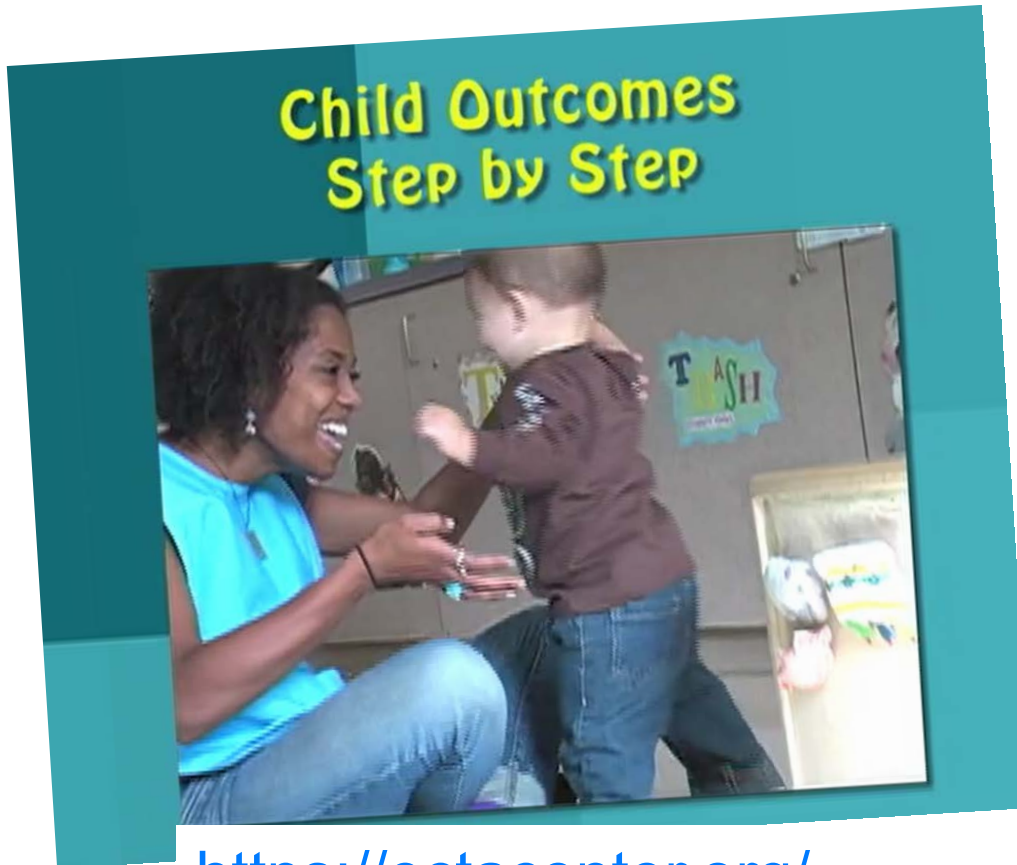
- I. Planning COS**
- II. Explaining COS**
In this section, providers can learn about quality practices for
- III. Discuss Child Functioning**
- IV. Identifying Ratings**
In this section, providers can explore quality practices related to identifying
- V. Interactive Principles**

<http://olms.cte.jhu.edu/olms2/COSTC>

Tip #2

Help each family understand why we measure outcomes and what to expect

Tip #2 Related Resources



<https://ectacenter.org/eco/pages/videos.asp>



<https://ectacenter.org/eco/pages/childoutcomes.asp>

Tip # 3

Intentionally discuss the child's functional use of skills relative to age expectations

Tip #3 Related Resources

ecta Early Childhood
Technical Assistance Center

Understanding Functional Skills: Background for the COS Process

August 9, 2022

For more information, visit: <https://ectacenter.org/eco/pages/cos-functional.asp>


This resource helps teams think about measuring a child's use and integration of functional skills to participate in their everyday routines. This resource will help teams further their understanding of the following questions:

- What makes a skill functional?
- How does context help align functional skills with each of the three outcomes?
- How do teams assess functional skills?

The goal of early intervention and early childhood special education is to enable young children with disabilities to be active and successful participants during their early childhood years and in the future. **Child outcomes** are the benefits that children and families experience as a result of early intervention or early childhood special education services. The three child outcomes selected for federal reporting reflect a child's global functioning in three broad areas of development:


- Outcome 1: Positive Social-Emotional Skills (including social relationships)
- Outcome 2: Acquisition and Use of Knowledge and Skills
- Outcome 3: Use of Appropriate Behaviors to Meet Needs

To measure a child's functioning and progress toward these outcomes, teams must identify how children use and integrate their functional skills to participate in their everyday routines, activities, and interactions. Teams using the **Child Outcomes Summary (COS) Process** 7-point rating scale for outcomes measurement aim for a snapshot of the whole child. This includes where the child's functioning is at in relation to age expectations, and how the child is functioning across settings and situations.

 **KEY TAKEAWAY:** Child outcomes measurement and the COS Process are based on the functional skills children demonstrate in the context of their routines, activities, and interactions.

<https://ectacenter.org/eco/pages/cos-functional.asp>

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Technical Assistance Center

DaSy  The Center for IDEA
Early Childhood Data Systems

Age Anchoring Guidance for Determining Child Outcomes Summary (COS) Ratings

Guidance for EI/ECSE Practitioners and Trainers

April 2018

https://ectacenter.org/~pdfs/eco/COS_Age_Anchoring_Guidance.pdf

Tip #4

Individualize the process for each family and encourage their input and expertise

Tip #4 Related Resources

ecta Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center

FAMILY Practitioner Practice Guide 2 of 4

Supporting Family Member Informed Decision Making

Involving family members in informed decision-making increases the likelihood that child and parent intervention practices are responsive to family concerns and priorities. This can best be accomplished by working with parents and other family members in ways that are sensitive and responsive to each family's unique circumstances in order to develop and implement interventions to achieve desired outcomes and goals.

[Watch a video of this guide](#)

Identifying Family Concerns and Priorities

- Informed decision-making includes three inter-related activities. These are identifying: (1) parent concerns and priorities, (2) the support and resources for addressing concerns and priorities, and (3) the sources of those supports and resources.
- Parents can only make informed decisions if they are provided complete and unbiased information. Early childhood practitioners are important sources of that information. Provide information specifically in response to parents' concerns and priorities.
- Work with parents to identify what they want to accomplish for their child and family. Engage the parents in prioritizing their concerns and goals, placing them in order from those that can be met immediately to those that will take some time and effort to achieve.
- Work with the parents to identify the types of supports and resources that are needed to address their concerns and priorities. This can include such things as child-rearing advice, childcare information, emotional support, parenting information, child-level interventions, and any other types of supports and resources to achieve desired outcomes and goals.

Engage the parents in discussing who is/are the sources of needed supports and resources. It is helpful to introduce the idea that assistance can come from informal sources of support, such as family members and friends, as well as, from formal sources of support, such as early childhood teachers and therapists.

- Parents are more likely to seek supports and resources from persons and organizations with whom they have had positive experiences. After identifying those sources of support and resources, engage parents in deciding who they feel most comfortable using to address family concerns and priorities.
- In those instances where supports and resources are not available from known persons or organizations, work together with the parents to seek out and obtain family-identified supports and resources.
- Parents look toward and expect practitioners to make suggestions and provide advice and guidance. That is one of the most important reasons they become involved with early childhood practitioners.

A Quick Peek

Susan and Bill Adams are the parents of a 1-year old daughter, Zoe, who has a disability and medical condition that requires specialized health care. The parents decided that as a result of their child's health care costs, Susan needs to return to work. She brings this up during the next home visit by the family's early childhood provider. The mother and home visitor discuss the kinds of childcare the child will need, and which backgrounds and skills childcare staff will need to take care of her daughter's health care needs. The home visitor and mother together identify about half a dozen childcare centers that meet all of the mother's requirements. The two go through each one and identify both strengths and weaknesses. After narrowing the list down to the two best picks, the home visitor shares the fact that one of the two centers is operated by a nurse who has considerable experience with children with Zoe's medical condition. The mother decides to visit that center first and eventually enrolls her daughter in that program after the director's explanation of the care Zoe would be provided.

Tom Wang / Shutterstock.com

You'll know the practice is working if...

- A parent was actively involved in specifying his or her concerns and priorities
- The parent is confident with the persons or organizations who provided needed support and resources
- The parent judges the outcome of the supports and resources as addressing concerns and priorities

This practice guide is based upon the following DEC Recommended Practices: Family 1, 2, 3, 4, 7
The DEC Recommended Practices are available at <http://dec-sped.org/recommendedpractices>

Access this practice guide and other products at <http://ectacenter.org/decrp>
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<https://ectacenter.org/decrp/topic-family.asp>

Considerations for COS Completion When Teams Can't Meet In Person

Last updated on May 6, 2020

Full guidance: <https://ectacenter.org/eco>
Infographic one-pager: <https://ectacenter.org/~pr>

COS COMPLETION WHEN TEAMS CAN'T MEET IN PERSON

Considerations and resources to assist teams conducting Child Outcomes Summary (COS) rating determination meetings through telecommunication devices such as phones and/or computers with or without video.

1) Determining Feasibility
Check state and local guidance on teleconferencing to make sure options are available for ensuring confidentiality and system security. Consider if all team members, including family members, have access to the technology needed and if an interpreter is needed.

2) Practitioner Planning for COS
Communicate with the child's practitioner about the child's functional areas and needs. Review the child's IEP or IFSP with the practitioner to ensure that the meeting is focused on the child's needs and that the practitioner is prepared to discuss the child's needs and strengths.

3) Connecting with Families to Prepare for COS
Connect with families and check their content and availability with participating in a teleconferencing meeting (with or without video). Describe the meeting's purpose and goals. Schedule the meeting and invite all relevant participants. Provide information including connection details, date, time, duration, purpose, and invited participants.

4) Getting the COS Meeting Started
Start with welcome. Review the meeting purpose and agenda. Check that everyone is present and ready to participate. Review the meeting agenda and ensure that everyone is clear on the meeting's purpose and goals.

5) Discussing the Child's Functioning
Discuss the child's functional areas and needs. Review the child's IEP or IFSP with the practitioner to ensure that the meeting is focused on the child's needs and strengths.

6) Using the Decision Tree to Determine COS Ratings
Share a visual of the Decision Tree for Summary Rating Determination and use it to facilitate discussion about the child's functioning relative to age expectations. Encourage input from all team members and make individual responses during discussion. Document when making a rating decision. Document when making a rating decision. Document when making a rating decision.

7) Teleconferencing Practice Pointers
• **PREPARE** Check your own and your team's technology. Test the system and ensure digital and environmental factors are optimized. Review the meeting agenda and ensure that everyone is clear on the meeting's purpose and goals. Review the meeting agenda and ensure that everyone is clear on the meeting's purpose and goals.

PURPOSE
This document is intended to assist teams conducting COS rating determination meetings through teleconferencing. Although there are many advantages to teleconferencing, teleconferencing can be accomplished successfully.

HOW DIFFERENT IS THE COS TEAM RATING PROCESS VIA TELECONFERENCE?
While using teleconferencing is different than meeting in person, determining a rating is not different. However, the preparatory work to fully engage and effectively involve the family and all practitioners is different.

WHAT IS INCLUDED IN THIS RESOURCE?
This document is organized into seven broad actions:

- 1) [Determining Feasibility](#)
- 2) [Practitioner Planning for COS](#)
- 3) [Connecting with Families to Prepare for COS](#)
- 4) [Getting the COS Meeting Started](#)
- 5) [Discussing the Child's Functioning](#)
- 6) [Using the Decision Tree to Determine COS Ratings](#)
- 7) [Teleconferencing Practice Pointers](#)

ecta Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center **DaSy** Data System for Early Childhood Outcomes

For the full guidance, best practices, and resources visit: <https://ectacenter.org/eco/pages/cos-distance.asp>

<https://ectacenter.org/eco/pages/cos-distance.asp>

Tip # 5

**Listen and
acknowledge
emotions**

Tip #5 Related Resources

Helping Families Be Full Team Members

TEAMING AND COLLABORATION Practitioner Practice Guide 1 of 3

ecta Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center

Helping Families Be Full Team Members

Families are full team members when they participate in all aspects of assessment, evaluation, IFSP/IEP planning, and implementation of the plan. This is important because families are the most knowledgeable about child and family life and have much to contribute to child and family interventions. It is important to value and incorporate family input throughout the entire assessment and intervention process. This practice guide includes different things practitioners can do to involve family members meaningfully and actively in assessment, planning, and intervention practices.

[Watch a video of this guide](#)

Supporting Families in Active, Meaningful Participation

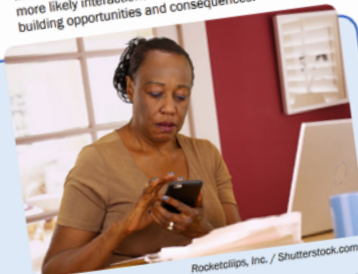
- Schedule interactions that involve a particular child/family at times and places convenient to the family. This will help the family be more relaxed and willing to participate fully.
- Clearly communicate and demonstrate that family members' input is a valued and a vital part of all assessment, planning, and intervention processes. This is accomplished by asking for family ideas and soliciting their opinions from the very beginning of the assessment process. This helps families recognize their contributions to child growth and learning.
- Providing family members with clear, understandable, and jargon-free information about the purposes of each and every interaction helps them to prepare for and participate in the assessment and intervention process.

Supporting Quality Communication

- Provide lots of opportunities for family members to discuss openly information that is important to the family. This will help identify and focus on family and child priorities and preferences for assessment and intervention.
- Be sure to use active and reflective listening skills. Remember to listen more than talk during interactions with families. This will encourage families to share information about what would be most helpful for improving child and family functioning.
- The more actively you involve family members in information sharing and informed decision-making, the more likely interactions will include family capacity-building opportunities and consequences.

A Quick Peek

"Is this Mrs. Sears? Hello. My name is Abby Lewis. I'm a teacher with the Early On early intervention program. I understand you called yesterday with some questions and concerns about your son Hal. Is this correct? (Pause). Is this a good time to talk to tell me a little more about those concerns and for us to discuss possible next steps? (Yes). Great. Can you tell me a little bit more about your concerns? (Yes...). I hear you correctly that you are worried about his talking and minding you? (Yes...) If you would like, let's set up a time that I can come to your home for an hour to see Hal play with some of the things he enjoys and, possibly, for you to show me some of the things that you are concerned about. I can share more information about Early On and what we do. This will also be a time for you to ask questions and for us to talk about Hal and your family that will help us better understand what might be going on right now. (Pause) You are welcome to pick a time and place that works best for you and Hal. What is a good time during the day for you and Hal? Please feel free to invite anyone else you would like for us to meet with. I'm going to put in the mail today a little more information about the program and what an evaluation-and-assessment process is all about. See you next week!"



RocketHub, Inc. / Shutterstock.com

Teaming Members Engaging In Quality Communication

TEAMING AND COLLABORATION Practitioner Practice Guide 2 of 3

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Teaming Members Engaging in Quality Communication

Team members frequently communicate with one another. Sometimes this communication is with practitioners, and other times the communication is between practitioners and family members. The communication can include emails, text messages, notes, or written reports. Other times the communication includes phone calls, face-to-face meetings with another person, or group meetings. All of these communications involve verbal and non-verbal messages or actions to make sure others understand the intent of a message. A few simple things can help ensure communication attempts are successful.

[Watch a video of this guide](#)


Supporting Quality Communication

- Take the time to decide what type of communication is best for conveying a message. What do you want to say and to whom? Is it best to put the message in writing or is a discussion or conversation needed or desired? The method should fit the purpose of the intended communication.
- Simple and clear written messages leave less room for misunderstanding. Start by explaining the reason for the message. The message should consist of simple, short statements that are jargon-free. Avoid using language that might not be understood. Include a statement of what the other person can do with the information and who to talk to if there are questions or the recipient needs clarification.
- Face-to-face, verbal communication is more appropriate for communication that needs to be interactive. This includes such things as sharing insight, or make a decision. The best verbal interactions use concise, clear speech spoken in a neutral tone. Additionally, verbal interactions should always be polite, open, and professional.
- Frequent pauses during conversations invite listeners to ask clarifying questions. This gives the speaker time to be sure they are being understood by engaging in reflective-listening practices. Conversations should end with comments about how the information will be used or what the next steps will be.

A Quick Peek

Example of written communication (e-mail):

"Before our meeting next week, please read the attached document, *Changes in Intake Procedures*, sent to us from the state office. Our meeting is scheduled for Thursday the 20th at 9:30 in room 280. The purpose of our meeting is to discuss how the procedures outlined in the attachment will be used in our program. Come with your ideas about how we can do this and what information or training you might need in order to implement the revised procedures. If you have questions after reading, please e-mail me or come by any afternoon to see me. I look forward to a productive discussion with your good ideas."



<https://ectacenter.org/decrp/type-pgpractitioner.asp>

Tip # 6

Remember
that words
matter

Tip #6 Related Resources



What's Parent to Parent?

Parent to Parent is a program that provides information and one-to-one emotional support to parents of children who have special needs. The program operates very simply. Trained and experienced parents are carefully matched in one-to-one relationships with parents who are new to the program. The matches are based upon similarities in disability and family issues.

That's what happened in Sandra and Bruce's case. They were put in touch with Joan and Richard, who had an older child with the same disability. Joan and

Richard have "been there," as the saying goes. And because of their experience, they have a lot of wisdom and caring to share. Parent to Parent matches are usually made very quickly, often within 24 hours of the referral. At the time of the match, parents contacting the program may have just learned that their child has a disability. Or the parents may be dealing with a new stage in their child's life.

<https://www.parentcenterhub.org/parent-to-parent-support/>

Key Terms to Know in Special Education

Key Terms to Know in Special Education

Current as of October 2017

[En español | In Spanish](#)

Special education is full of terms that people constantly use in writing and in conversation, and it's important to know what those terms mean. CPIR is pleased to provide this handy reference to special education terminology, and hopes it helps our readers quickly connect with the meaning of pivotal words and phrases in the field.

Quick-Jump Index to the Terms

- [Point of Reference: IDEA](#)
- [Child with a disability](#)
- [FAPE | Free appropriate public education](#)
- [IDEA | Individuals with Disabilities Education Act](#)
- [IEP | Individualized Education Program](#)
- [LRE | Least Restrictive Environment](#)
- [Related services](#)
- [Special education](#)
- [Supplementary aids and services](#)
- [Transition services](#)
- [TA&D | Technical Assistance and Dissemination](#)

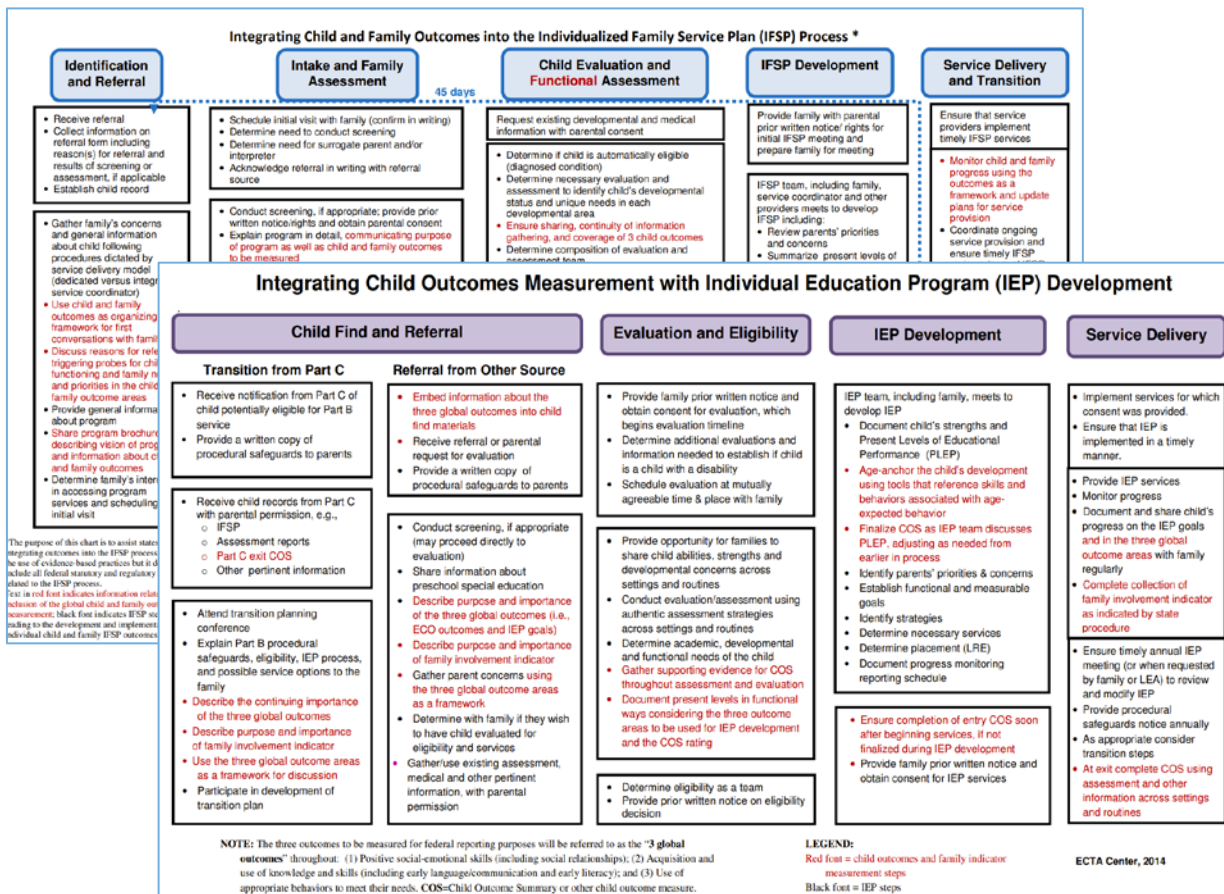


<https://www.parentcenterhub.org/keyterms-special-ed/>

Tip # 7

Use COS concepts
throughout IFSP/IEP
entry to exit processes

Tip #7 Related Resources



IFSP/IEP-Outcomes Integration

States and local programs are making child and family outcomes measurement more efficient and more effective by integrating those processes with IFSP and IEP development and implementation. The ECTA Center works to support states that are making changes to their systems and materials to integrate these two processes.



Background Information

Introduction to IFSP/IEP Integration (2011)

[Streaming Presentation](#) [Presentation File](#)

This presentation provides an overview to the IFSP-IEP integration processes across work with The ECTA Center and a number of early childhood professionals interested in these processes.

Key Considerations for Implementation

[An Interactive Guide to Implementing an Integrated Child and Family Outcomes and IFSP/IEP Process \(2014\)](#)

<https://ectacenter.org/eco/pages/ifsp-iep.asp>