SPP/APR INDICATOR 7

CHILDHOOD OUTCOMES SUMMARY
(COS) Process

MISSISSIPPI
DEPARTMENT OF
EDUCATION

OFFICE OF SPECIAL EDUCATION
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MISSISSIPPI DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
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The COS Process

As part of State Board of Education Goal 3, every child has access to a high-quality early childhood program, the vision for the Child Outcomes Summary (COS) process is that every district that serves preschool students will accurately report outcomes data for each child with disabilities ages 3-5. This information will provide an important snapshot of the impact preschool special education services have on children and guide decision-making and program improvement. MDE will provide training and technical assistance to help districts improve the quality of these data, the quality of services, and ultimately improve outcomes for children. **While the main purpose of the COS process is to meet federal requirements, these outcomes data have other valuable uses. These data should be used by districts to improve programs and services for preschool children.** Additionally, this information can help programs improve communication with families about their child's functioning. These data also are useful for public reporting, including providing statewide and LEA information around preschool to the legislature and other stakeholders.

The purpose of this document is to provide special education preschool personnel an overview of the functions and processes that *must be used* to collect and enter *required early childhood outcome data on all preschool children receiving special education services.*

As of July 1, 2021, Mississippi will be collecting data on child outcomes using the COS process. This process goes beyond basing the child's functioning on any one assessment tool or in any one situation. In the COS process, teams use information from multiple sources and synthesize all that is known about a child's functioning to identify a rating that is a snapshot at a point in time that best captures the child's functioning relative to what is expected for a child of that chronological age. The COS process was selected for a number of reasons, including:

- it does not mandate use of one particular assessment tool;

- it allows selection of various and multiple assessment tools based on the specific strengths, skills, cultural and linguistic background of the child;

- it capitalizes on all that is understood from all members of the IEP team, including families, to use the richest understanding of the child's functioning much like a portfolio;

- it is consistent with the DEC Recommended Practices on assessment (https://ectacenter.org/decrp/topic-assessment.asp); and

- it was designed to measure the child's functioning in the three outcome areas and not focus exclusively on developmental domains.

Technical assistance with COS functions and processes is provided by the MDE. Please contact the 619 Coordinator at the Office of Special Education at 601-359-3498 or visit the MDE Early Childhood Special Education web page at mdek12.org/ose/ec.

Outcome Descriptions

In the COS process, teams document information about each child's functioning in the same three global outcome areas. These outcomes differ from commonly used developmental domains. Each outcome includes skills integrated from multiple domains, with the focus on to what extent the child functionally uses those skills in everyday experiences that are meaningful to the child. A description of these three global outcome areas and examples of the kinds of skills included in each is described below.

Outcome 1: Positive Social Emotional Skills

This outcome involves relating to adults, relating to other children, and for older children, following rules related to groups or interacting with others. The outcome includes attachment/separation/ autonomy, expressing emotions and feelings, learning rules and expectations in social situations, and social interactions and social play.

- **Relating with caregivers:** attachment, separation, regulation, respond/ initiate/sustain interactions, acknowledge comings and goings…

- **Attending to other people in a variety of settings:** awareness, caution, respond to/offer greetings, respond to own/others' names…

- **Interacting with peers:** awareness, respond/initiate/sustain interactions, share, cope and resolve conflicts, play proximity with peers…

- **Engaging in social games and communication with others:** respond to/initiate/sustain games and social communication, engage in mutual activity, joint attention…

- **Adapting to changes in the environment or routines:** transition between activities, respond to new/familiar settings/interactions, behave in ways to participate, follow routines and social rules…

- **Expressing own emotions and responding to the emotions of others:** show pride/excitement/ frustration, display affection, acknowledge/comfort others…

Outcome 2: Acquisition and Use of Knowledge and Skills

This outcome involves activities such as thinking, reasoning, remembering, problem solving, number concepts, counting, and understanding the physical and social worlds. It also includes a variety of skills related to language and literacy including vocabulary, phonemic awareness, and letter recognition.

- **Showing interest in learning:** persist, show eagerness and awareness, imitate and repeat actions, explore environment…

- **Using problem solving:** figure things out, trial and error, remember steps/actions, use purposeful actions, experiment with known and new actions…

- **Engaging in purposeful play:** early awareness and exploration, functional object use, construction, pretend, make believe play scenarios…

- **Understanding pre- academic and literacy concepts:** differences or associations among things, matching/sorting, size/color/shape/numbers, actions with pictures and books, early writing…

- **Progressing from sounds to words:** acquisition and complexity of sounds and vocabulary, sentence length and structure, [includes general items about language skills without context or intent]

- **Understanding questions asked and directions given:** respond to gestures, verbal requests, understand meaning of increasingly complex words/questions/directions, knowing and stating details about oneself such as name, age, gender…

Outcome 3: Use of Appropriate Behaviors to Meet their Needs

This outcome involves behaviors like taking care of basic needs, getting from place to place, using tools (such as forks, toothbrushes, and crayons), and, in children 24 months or older, contributing to their own health, safety, and well-being. It also includes integrating motor skills to complete tasks; taking care of oneself in areas like dressing, feeding, grooming, and toileting; and acting on the world in socially appropriate ways to get what one wants.

- **Moving around and using tools/manipulating things to meet needs:** early movements and control to rolling, crawling, walking, running, jumping, climbing…, using tools – crayons, scissors…

- **Eating and drinking with increasing independence:** suck/swallow, chew, bite, finger feed, use utensils, hold bottle, drink from cups, amount/type of food…

- **Dressing and undressing with increasing independence:** assist with dressing, take off, put on shoes and clothes, undo/do fasteners…

- **Diaper/toileting & washing with increasing independence:** lift legs, toss diaper, sit on potty, wash hands, brush teeth, help with bathing…

- **Communicating needs:** indicate hunger, need for diaper change, sleep, express discomfort, hurt, request/reject food, express choice…

- **Showing safety awareness:** avoid dangers – stove, road, seatbelt…
  Note: safety awareness is less evident in very young children

Prompts for discussing a child's functioning related to each of the three outcomes can be found at https://ectacenter.org/eco/assets/pdfs/COSFDiscussionPrompts.pdf. These questions may be helpful to the IEP committee when discussing the child's functioning in each of the three outcome areas as part of determining the three outcomes ratings at entry and exit. For more information on the three outcomes, see the video at https://ectacenter.org/eco/pages/videos.asp.

COS as a Multidisciplinary Team Process

While early childhood special education teachers and therapists who work with three- through five-year-old children are responsible for collecting and reporting child outcomes data as part of the accountability process, they are encouraged to collaborate with families, other special education professionals, and other early childhood professionals in the COS process. **All members of the IEP committee should have the opportunity to share information about the functional skills and behaviors of the child in the three outcomes areas across settings and situations and participate in the child outcomes summary rating discussion and decision making.** Involving everyone connected with the child across the full range of settings provides the most accurate picture of the child's current functioning.

Teams typically include all the people familiar with the child who interact with the child across settings and situations. For instance, teams can include but are NOT limited to:
- Parents/Family members
- Part C staff – for children transitioning from Early Intervention Services
- Current provider(s) – if the child is participating in a program
- Head Start or preschool teachers
- Psychologists/psychometrists
- Therapists, including Occupational, Physical, Speech or Language Pathologist, or other related service provides
- Paraprofessionals

COS Steps

Other states have found that the COS process is most effective when it is integrated into a variety of the activities that already occur during the evaluation and service delivery process. Rather than having an additional activity to complete, districts should incorporate the steps of the COS process into evaluation at entry point, and as a way to show progress as the child prepares to exit from preschool services.

At Entry:

1. **Introduction to Parents:** When a child enters into early childhood special education services, describe the three global outcomes to family members. Explain that a team discussion called the COS process provides an opportunity to identify what is known about their child's functioning in each of these three areas. This discussion and the snapshot of their child's functioning relative to same-aged peers helps the team plan. It also provides a way for early childhood special education programs to measure the influence they have on children and to help continue to improve the program for all children. The MS Early Childhood Outcomes Flyer provides general information that will assist in this discussion. Entry into Part B early childhood special education services could be when a child: 1) is newly identified as eligible for preschool services; 2) transitions from Part C to Part B; or 3) enters a MS ECSE program from another state. Discussion of the three early childhood outcomes can begin as early as during referral, as these serve to organize information gathered about the child's functioning and to determine to what extent special education services would make a difference for young children.

2. **Administer Anchor Assessment:** The assessment team must determine and administer the most appropriate anchor assessment from the State Board of Education approved list. This assessment will be one of the team's multiple data sources used to determine the child's outcomes ratings. Ideally, the anchor assessment will be included as part of the comprehensive evaluation of the child. However, if this is not possible, this assessment must be completed within the first thirty (30) days the child receives special education services.

3. **Discuss 3 Areas:** As part of the IEP process, the committee should discuss the child's functioning in each of the three child outcome areas and identify the COS rating that most accurately represents the child's current skills and behaviors relative to what is expected for the child's chronological age. The rating should be based on information from multiple data sources including the family, professional observations, assessment scores, including the anchor assessment, and other pertinent information gathered or shared by IEP committee members. If an anchor assessment has not been completed by the initial IEP meeting, the committee should reconvene once the anchor assessment has been completed so that this data will be included in the discussion and final decisions for the ratings. Every child should have ratings on all three outcomes regardless of eligibility category.

   For children who are transitioning from Part C, the team should also review and consider data from Part C, including the child's Individual Family Service Plan (IFSP), provider notes, current assessments, and Part C exit ratings.

4. **Complete COS Form for Entry:** The IEP committee will engage in the COS process and complete the Child Outcomes Summary form by determining the appropriate ratings that characterize the child's skills and behaviors in each outcome area and provide evidence to support these ratings. **Entry ratings must be determined as soon as possible once the anchor assessment has been administered, which should be no later than the first 30 calendar days after entrance to early childhood special education services.**

5. **Enter into MSIS:** The three COS ratings must be entered into MSIS as soon as possible after determination. Specific instructions for entering this information can be found in the MSIS 2.0 manual in the Special Education section.

At Exit:

6. **Administer Anchor Assessment for Exit:** Ideally, the same anchor assessment used for Entry should be used for Exit. However, since this is only one piece of the data that is used to determine the COS ratings, this is not a requirement. This assessment must be completed **within 30 days before the child's sixth birthday, if the child has been receiving special education services within the state for at least six months**. If a child is being dismissed from services earlier than his/her sixth birthday, the anchor assessment must be completed **within 30 days before dismissal.**

7. **Complete COS Form for Exit:** The MS child outcomes measurement process for exit must be completed within 30 days before the child's sixth birthday or time of dismissal, after the anchor assessment is given, if the child has been receiving services for at least six consecutive months. The IEP committee should come together to discuss all pertinent information, including the anchor assessment, to determine the three exit ratings.

8. **Enter into MSIS:** The three COS ratings and the Progress Rating must be entered into MSIS per the instructions in the MSIS 2.0 manual. All ratings for students should be entered into MSIS no later than June 30 of each school year.

Annually:

- **Data Quality:** It is the responsibility of the LEA to review data internally on a regular basis in order to ensure fidelity and quality of programming. The MDE Office of Special Education (OSE) will conduct reviews of the data to identify any data quality issues. LEAs may be contacted if there are concerns about data entered. Data checks will be issued to LEAs annually.

- **Data Use:** MDE OSE will report the statewide child outcomes data to the federal government through the Annual Performance Report (APR) for Indicator 7. MDE will also report LEA data to the public on an annual basis, as part of the Special Education Performance Determination Report. LEAs should use the child outcomes data, along with other program data, to better understand the children being served, the patterns of progress observed among children in the program, to answer questions about outcomes for children with different programmatic experiences, and to inform decision-making for

program improvement. MDE OSE will provide training and technical assistance as needed to support LEAs in implementing a high-quality early childhood program for all students.

- **Interim Ratings:** While not a requirement, using the COS process to rate a child annually can provide useful information to the IEP committee when considering the services a child may need for the upcoming school year. The conversation is also helpful for supporting families in understanding both the child's progress relative to their prior skills and the child's functioning compared to same-aged peers. The COS form should be used for interim ratings, but this data does not need to be entered into MSIS.

Students who Transfer:

- **Within the state:** If a student moves from one district to another within the state, the receiving district can use the COS entry form from the previous district. If the COS entry was not completed, the receiving district must complete one via IEP meeting within 30 days. If the previous district completed an approved anchor assessment, then that assessment may be included as a data source for the receiving district's COS entry. The receiving district should refer to MSIS to determine whether the outcomes ratings were completed and entered.

- **From outside the state:** If a student moves from another state, the receiving district can use current data in the student's record. However, if the record does not include an approved anchor assessment, one must be administered within the first 30 days of services. The COS entry form must be completed using data from the anchor assessment as well as other available data. If the child enters the district less than six months before his/her sixth birthday, no data should be collected and entered for COS purposes.

Transition from Part C:

- Children who are transitioning from Part C must have an anchor assessment completed as part of their initial evaluation.

- Part C also uses the COS process for their entry and exit ratings. The IEP committee should consider data collected by Part C, as well as their exit ratings, when determining entry ratings for Part B. However, the IEP committee should not just use Part C exit ratings for entry. This information is just one of many pieces of data that should be considered.

Anchor Assessments

Multiple sources of data that measure the child's progress are required when completing the COS process. Recommended sources include but are not limited to observations, interviews with the child's family and/or caregiver, other assessment tools, IEP/IFSP Progress Notes and checklists. One of the formal State Board of Education approved assessment tools, known as anchor assessments, must be used as a data source in the COS process at both entry and exit. The same anchor assessment should be used for both entry and exit, if possible. The current list can be found at www.mdek12.org/OSE/EC/ecse-indicator-7. When choosing which anchor assessment to use, districts will determine what is most

appropriate for the child, given disability type, language, etc. Staff must be trained on the assessment(s) the district decides to use. For help determining which assessment may be most appropriate, a crosswalk that shows the relationship between the assessment items and the three outcomes can be useful. The Early Childhood Technical Assistance (ECTA) Center offers crosswalks of various instruments with the three early childhood outcomes. Teams can reference these to help understand how content on the assessment or in observation is related to each outcome area. To read these crosswalks visit https://ectacenter.org/eco/pages/crosswalks.asp.

Additional Considerations

Who completes the COS process?

The COS process should be completed by those who know the child best, those who see the child in various settings and situations and understand his/her everyday skills and behaviors. The IEP committee, including the family, is responsible for discussing the child's functioning, determining ratings, and completing the COS form. Districts decide what staff will be responsible for entering this information into MSIS for entry and exit, following their procedures for data entry.

What sources of information should the committee consider?

Many types of information could be considered in selecting a rating. The intent is to gather rich information to understand the child's functional skills across settings and situations. In addition to using one of the state approved anchor assessments, information from other data sources may include but are not limited to: parent and clinical observations, curriculum-based assessments, norm-referenced assessments, screening tools, medical records, service provider notes about performance in different situations, other provider notes, and progress and issues identified in the PLAAFP of the IEP. Any data source that provides the team with information about the child's everyday functioning across settings and situations may be considered. The team includes evidence from this information on the COS form.

What is included in the Supporting Evidence section of the COS form?

The Supporting Evidence is the rationale that explains the rating and should: correspond to the specific outcome area; cover all appropriate aspects of the outcome; provide examples of the child's everyday functioning in the outcome area that designates if they are age-expected, immediate foundational, or foundational skills; provide discipline-specific evidence from service provider(s) to support the outcome area; and provide an overall picture of how the child functions for the outcome area across settings and situations. The COS form includes separate boxes for the team to write evidence that includes examples of skills and behaviors that are considered age expected, immediate foundational, and foundational. For example, if a team selects a rating of '7' one would expect to see evidence of age expected behaviors only and "none" written in the other two boxes. If a team selects a rating of '2' one would expect to see evidence of foundational skills and one or two immediate foundational skills and "not yet" or "none" in the age-expected box. Teams can complete the form electronically and use as much space as needed or attach extra pages if completing the form by hand.

How do you know if the child made progress (answering question 1b, 2b, or 3b on the COS form)?

- The Yes/No progress question on the COS form should be answered only on the Exit COS form or Interim COS form (not on the Entry COS form). The progress question is used to indicate whether or not a child has made ANY progress while in the program.

- If a child has shown even one new skill or behavior incorporated into his/her functioning, the team should answer "Yes" to the progress question.

- At exit, the answer will be "Yes" for nearly all children. Teams can celebrate the important individual progress of the child and the new skills the child has acquired since entry in this discussion.

- The Yes/No progress question is independent of the 7-point rating. In other words, a child may not have a change in his/her rating, but the team can still report that "Yes" the child has made some progress.

- Remember that when answering the Yes/No progress question, the team is comparing the child's current skills and behaviors to his/her own previous skills and behaviors (unlike the 7-point rating scale which is comparing the child's skills and behaviors to those that are expected for his/her age.

Important Reminders

1. The COS process, including a team discussion and determination of ratings for all three outcome areas and a complete COS form is expected for every child in ECSE near entry and again near exit. This is true regardless of eligibility category and service setting. The only exception is if a child enters the program less than six months before his/her 6th birthday and he/she has not received services anywhere else in the state.

2. The entry ratings should be completed at the initial IEP committee meeting if possible, using all available data, including the results of the anchor assessment. If this is not possible, the IEP committee must reconvene within thirty (30) days to complete the COS form.

3. The anchor assessment for exit must be given before the child turns 6 years old, but as close to his/her birthday as possible, to allow for maximum growth. If a child is dismissed from special education services prior to age 6, the anchor assessment should be completed prior to dismissal.

4. There must be at least 6 months of special education services in the state to complete the COS ratings for a child. If a child begins receiving early childhood special education services within 6 months of his or her 6th birthday, neither entry nor exit ratings are required. COS data should not be entered into MSIS in this instance.

5. After entry or exit ratings are given, data must be entered into MSIS within 30 days. The deadline for all data entry for each year for any entry and any exit ratings is the end of each school year, June 30th.

6. While an interim rating is not required for Indicator 7 reporting, conducting an interim assessment and/or determining ratings for a student between entry and exit can provide very

useful information for measuring progress and deciding on appropriate programming. Remember, the goal is to change the child's trajectory to move nearer to what is age-expected. The best time to change that trajectory is while the gap between current functioning and age-expected functioning is the smallest.

7. Exit ratings indicate where a child is currently in terms of functioning. **There is no need to review the entry rating when completing the exit.**

Understanding the 7-Point Rating Scale

The Child Outcome Summary form uses a 7-point scale to characterize a child's current level of functioning in each of the three child outcome areas compared to the skills and behaviors expected at the child's chronological age. Each point on the scale is defined by the extent to which the child demonstrates age expected, immediate foundational, and/or foundational skills. The summary ratings are determined by the child's IEP committee, including the family, and provide an overall picture at a given point in time about how the child functions in everyday life for each outcome area across a variety of settings and situations.

Note that the ratings are based on the child's functioning using whatever assistive technology the child usually has access to across settings and situations. So, if the child's functioning is mixed because of inconsistent access to assistive technology, the ratings will reflect that. Over time, if the program helps the child get better access to assistive technology and that helps the child function more effectively across settings and situations, then the exit ratings will reflect that improvement relative to the entry ratings.

More information about special considerations, such as if a child can have all 7s at entry, considering atypical behaviors and how they influence functioning, children with articulation only issues, assistive technology, and whether or not to correct for prematurity can be found at https://ectacenter.org/~pdfs/eco/cos-special-considerations.pdf.

| Rating		Rating Definitions/Criteria	Sample Statements Used to Summarize Rating Rather Than Numbers (Culminating or Descriptor Statements)	Documentation Considerations
Overall Age-Expected Skills	**7**	- Child shows functioning expected for his or her age in all or almost all everyday situations that are part of the child's life. - No one on the team has concerns about the child's functioning in this outcome area.	- Relative to other children Calvin's age, he **has all of the skills that we would expect** of a child his age in the area of (*outcome [e.g., use of appropriate behaviors to meet needs]*) - Calvin has a **good mix of age-expected skills** in the area of (*outcome*).	- Provide examples of the child's age-expected functioning. - Indicate: "No concerns."
	6	- Child's functioning generally is considered appropriate for his or her age, but there are some significant concerns about the child's functioning in this outcome area. - Although age-expected, the child's functioning may border on not keeping pace with age expectations.	- Relative to same age peers, Calvin **has the skills that we would expect of his age** in regard to (*outcome*); however, **there are concerns with how he** (*functional area that is of concern/quality of ability/lacking skills*). - Aside from **the concern** regarding Calvin's ____, he is **demonstrating skills expected of a child his age** in the area of (*outcome*).	- Provide examples of the child's age-expected functioning. - Note concerns. *Evidence should not include any functioning that is not age expected for a 6 or 7.*
Decreasing Degree of Age-Expected Skills	**5**	- Child shows functioning expected for his or her age some of the time and/or in some settings and situations. - Child's functioning is a mix of age-expected and not age-expected behaviors and skills. - Child's functioning might be described as like that of a slightly younger child.	- For an # -month-old child, Calvin has **many skills expected of his age**, but he also demonstrates **some skills slightly below what is expected at this age** in the area of (*outcome*). - Relative to same age peers, Calvin **shows many age-expected skills**, but continues to **show some functioning that might be described like that of a slightly younger child** in the area of (*outcome*). - Calvin is **somewhat** where we would expect him to be at this age. This means that Calvin has **many skills we would expect at this age** in regard to (*outcome*), but he **does not yet have all of the age-expected skills** (*Try to identify a few of the functional skills the child is lacking to be age appropriate*).	- Provide examples of the child's age-expected functioning. - Provide examples of the child's functioning that is not age expected.
	4	- Child shows occasional age-expected functioning across settings and situations. - More functioning is not age-expected than age-expected.	- At # months, Calvin shows occasional use of **some age-expected skills, but more of his skills are not yet age-expected** in the area of (*outcome*). - At # months, Calvin shows **occasional** use of some age-expected skills, but has **more skills that are younger than those expected** for a child his age in the area of (*outcome*). - Calvin has **a few of the skills** we would expect in regard to (*outcome*), but he shows **more skills that are not age-expected**.	- Provide examples of the child's age-expected functioning. - Provide examples of the child's functioning that is not age expected. *Evidence should show more functioning that is not yet age expected.*

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No Age-Expected Skills and Decreasing Degree of Immediate Foundational Skills	**3**	• Child does not yet show functioning expected of a child of his or her age in any situation. • Child uses immediate foundational skills most or all of the time across settings and situations. • Functioning might be described as like that of a younger child.	• Relative to same age peers, Calvin is **not yet using skills expected of his age**. He does, however, show many important **immediate foundational skills to build upon** in the area of (*outcome*). • In the area of (*outcome*), Calvin is **nearly displaying age-expected skills**. This means that he does not yet have the skills we would expect of a child his age. He **has the immediate foundational skills that are the building blocks to achieve age-appropriate skills**. (*It is possible to include a few functional skills as examples*).	• Provide examples of the child's functioning at an immediate foundational skill level. • *Evidence should not show age-expected functioning in the outcome for a rating of 3.*
	2	• Child occasionally uses immediate foundational skills across settings and situations. • More functioning reflects skills that are not immediate foundational than are immediate foundational.	• At # months, Calvin **shows occasional use of some immediate foundational skills** that will help him move toward age-appropriate skills. **More** of his functioning displays **earlier skills** in the area of (*outcome*). • Relative to same age peers, Calvin is showing **some immediate foundational skills**, but has **more skills that developmentally come in earlier** in the area of (*outcome*). • For a # -month-old little boy, Calvin **occasionally uses immediate foundational skills** but has a **greater mix of earlier skills** that he uses in the area of (*outcome*). • Overall, in this outcome area, Calvin is **just beginning to show some immediate foundational skills** which will help him to work toward age-appropriate skills.	• Provide examples of the child's functioning at an immediate foundational skill level. • Provide examples of the child's functioning that is not yet age expected or immediate foundational. • *Evidence should show more functioning that is foundational than immediate foundational for a rating of 2.*
Not Yet Age-Expected or Immediate Foundational Skills	**1**	• Child does not yet show functioning expected of a child his or her age in any situation. • Child's functioning does not yet include immediate foundational skills upon which to build age-appropriate functioning. • Child's functioning might be described as like that of a much younger child.	• Relative to same age peers, Calvin has the **very early skills** in the area of (outcome). This means that Calvin has the skills we would expect of a **much younger child** in this outcome area. • For a # -month-old little boy, Calvin shows early skills in the outcome area. He does **not yet show age-expected skills or the skills that come right before those**.	• Provide examples of the child's functioning that is not yet age expected or immediate foundational. • *Evidence should not show functioning that is age expected or immediate foundational for a rating of 1.*

Decision Tree

The decision tree is an important tool to help guide team discussions. As the IEP committee reviews and discusses information about the child's functioning in each outcome area, they consider a series of questions (see chart below). The group considers/describes examples that correspond to their answer to the questions and gradually a rating is suggested on that outcome area. If consensus is difficult, the group may revisit examples with rich descriptions of the child's functioning in different situations and revisit what age-expected functioning looks like at that age with regard to the related skills. Once a rating is identified from discussion, the group considers whether that reflects the child's functioning. Facilitators can use culminating statements (see middle column of table above) to rephrase what the rating means and consider if this captures the child's functioning on the outcome.

Decision Tree for Summary Rating Discussions
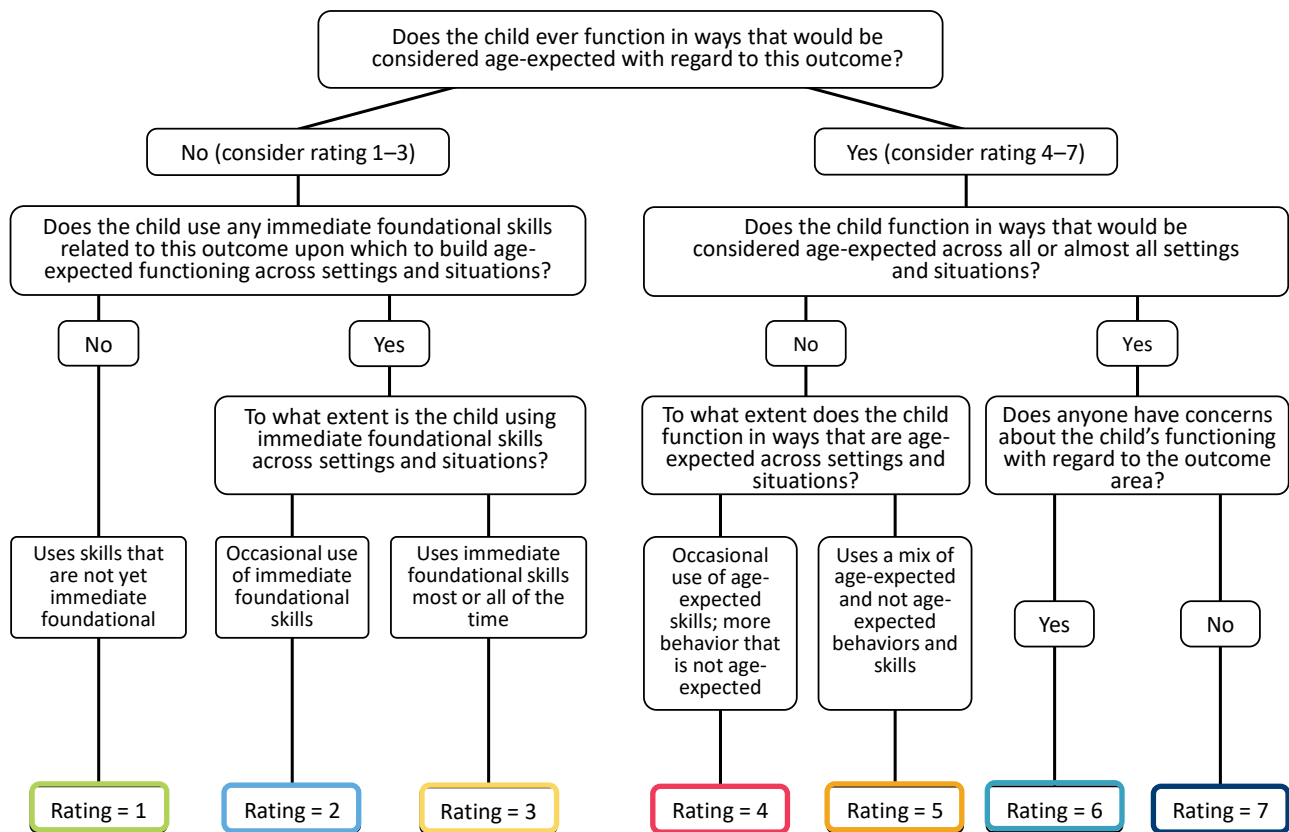
Administrative Considerations

- **Data Entry Process:** While IEP committees determine outcomes ratings for individual children, and special education teachers keep documentation, it is ultimately the responsibility of the special education director to ensure that the required data are entered into MSIS for their district. Districts can decide what staff members will enter COS data into MSIS, just as they do for other data requirements.

- **District Training and Continuing Education:** Initial training for the COS process is being provided by MDE OSE for two staff members from each district, the special education director or his/her designee, and one additional staff member of the director's choice. These two staff members are then responsible for training other preschool staff who participate in the COS process, including new staff members that are hired. The national training modules can be found at https://ectacenter.org/eco/pages/cos.asp. State level training webinars will be located at www.mdek12.org/OSE/EC/ecse-indicator-7 once the initial training phase has been completed. Special education staff who are hired after this initial training will be responsible for viewing both the national and state-level sessions. Directors are encouraged to review this information with staff at least annually to maintain fidelity to this process. In the event of changes in requirements or procedures, the MDE OSE will provide statewide training as needed.

- **Time for Discussion in Meetings:** More time may be needed for IEP committee meetings that involve the completion of the COS process, as each member of the committee should actively participate in the discussion. Administrators should be mindful that this additional time is needed and important to the overall outcomes of the program. It is a good investment for instructional and accountability purposes.

- **Build in Data-Driven Discussions with Staff:** The COS data will provide a snapshot of functioning for children in the district. Sharing this data with staff helps them more fully understand the children's functioning and become more invested in high quality discussions. MDE will provide resources and tips to support data-driven discussions with staff.

Key Concepts in Implementing the COS

Age Expected, Immediate Foundational, and Foundational Skills

During the COS process, the IEP committee selects one of 7 rating points that best represents a child's functioning in each of the three outcome areas. To determine a rating, the team must be familiar with the child's functioning in the outcome across a variety of situations and settings. The team needs to think about the many skills and behaviors that allow the child to function in an age-expected way in each outcome area. Between them, team members must:
1. Know about the child's functioning across settings and situations
2. Understand age-expected child development
3. Understand the content of the three child outcomes
4. Know how to use the rating scale
5. Understand age expectations for child functioning within the child's culture

The committee needs to understand the developmental continuum that leads to age-expected functioning, asking:

1. Are the child's skills and behaviors what one would expect for a child this age? Does he or she use those skills functionally in the way expected for that age?
2. If not, are they the skills and behaviors that come just before the age-expected skills and behaviors? Or are they like those of a younger child?
3. If not, are they like those of a MUCH younger child? Are they farther away from age expected skills and behaviors? (much earlier or atypical skills and behaviors)

An important developmental concept for understanding how to use the COS scale is the concept of foundational skills. Some of the skills and behaviors that develop early serve as the foundation for later skills and behavior. Teachers and therapists can use the earlier skills to help children move to the next higher level of functioning developmentally. We refer to these earlier skills that serve as the base and are conceptually linked to later skills as "**foundational skills**." For example, children play alongside one another before they interact in play. Development in the early childhood years proceeds through several levels of foundational skills with skills and behaviors becoming more complex and more proficient as children get older. All skills that lead to higher levels of functioning are foundational skills, however, the set of skills and behaviors that occur developmentally just prior to age-expected functioning can be described as **immediate foundational skills** in that they are the most recent set of foundational skills that children master and move beyond.

A child whose functioning is like that of a younger child is probably showing immediate foundational skills. Her functioning does not meet age expectations, but she demonstrates skills and behaviors that occur developmentally just prior to age expected functioning and are the basis on which to build age-expected functioning.

A child whose functioning might be described as like that of a MUCH younger child does not meet age expectations, nor does she demonstrate skills and behaviors that immediately precede age-expected functioning. She has foundational skills, but not yet at an immediate foundational level.
Often children will have a mix of skills, perhaps with some age-expected skills and some immediate foundational skills or some immediate foundational and some foundational skills, depending on the specific aspect of the outcome being considered. The COS decision tree walks teams through a set of questions to think through the mix observed and help determine the appropriate rating.

It is important to note that some foundational skills get replaced by newer skills whereas others continue in children's (and adult's) repertoires throughout life. The nature of interacting with other children changes fundamentally as children get older. On the other hand, skills like making eye contact, turn-taking, and eating with a fork get incorporated into more sophisticated routines but never disappear. When thinking about whether the child has any age-expected skills related to the outcome, one should only "count" age-expected skills that emerge around the child's chronological age, not those that come in much earlier and are maintained (e.g., not "count" walking as age-expected in a 40-month-old child since this usually is a skill that is first observed much earlier even though many 40-month-olds continue walking at that age).

Mississippi has a list of standards for infants through four-year-old children that were developed to align with the Mississippi College and Career Readiness Standards, as well as standards for kindergarten students. These standards can be found at https://mdek12.org/EC/Guidelines-and-Standards and can be used for reference when determining age-expected, immediate foundational, and foundational skills.

How the COS Data is used for Reporting OSEP Requirements

The COS data can be used to classify a child into one of the five reporting categories that make up the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) reporting requirement on child outcomes. For OSEP, states are required to report the number and percentage of children statewide in five categories of progress for each of the three child outcomes:
  a. Children who did not improve functioning.
  b. Children who improved functioning but not sufficient to move nearer to functioning comparable to same aged peers.
  c. Children who improved functioning to a level nearer to same aged peers but did not reach it.
  d. Children who improved functioning to reach a level comparable to same aged peers.
  e. Children who maintained functioning at a level comparable to same aged peers.

Information about the number and percent of children in each of these five progress categories provides a sense of the kind of progress being made by children participating in the program. The same information about children at the LEA level also will be provided to districts in public reporting and as part of district determinations.

Other resources around reporting include this video: http://dasyonline.org/cos-osep-reporting and the summary statements calculator: https://ectacenter.org/eco/pages/childoutcomes-calc.asp

How the COS data relate to the a-e progress categories reported to OSEP is illustrated in the table below.

Relationship of COS Ratings to OSEP Progress Categories

Progress Category	Explanation	COS Ratings
a. Did not improve functioning	Children who acquired no new skills or regressed during their time in the program	Rated lower at exit than entry; OR Rated 1 at both entry and exit; AND Scored "No" on the progress question
b. Improved functioning, but not sufficient to move nearer to functioning comparable to same-aged peers	Children who acquired new skills but their growth rate did not change trajectory and move them closer to age expectations during their time in the program	Rated 5 or lower at entry; AND Rated the same or lower at exit; AND "Yes" on the progress question
c. Improved functioning to a level nearer to same-aged peers but did not reach it	Children who acquired new skills and accelerated their rate of growth during their time in the program. They increased	Rated higher at exit than entry; AND Rated 5 or below at exit

		their rate of growth but were still functioning below age expectations when they left the program		
d.	Improved functioning to reach a level comparable to same-aged peers	Children who were functioning below age expectations when they entered the program but were functioning at age expectations when they left	Rated 5 or lower at entry; AND Rated 6 or 7 at exit	
e.	Maintained functioning at a level comparable to same-aged peers	Children who were functioning at age expectations when they entered the program and were functioning at age expectations when they left	Rated 6 or 7 at entry; AND Rated 6 or 7 at exit	

Summary Statements

In the Annual Performance Report (APR), states set targets and report on performance annually on two summary statements for each of the three outcomes. The Summary Statements are calculated using the a-e progress data. The first Summary Statement focuses on children who change their growth trajectory while in preschool services. The second Summary Statement focuses on children who exit preschool services functioning at age expectations.

- Summary Statement 1: Of those children who entered the program below age expectations in each Outcome, the percent who substantially increased their rate of growth by the time they exited the program (c+d)/(a+b+c+d)
- Summary Statement 2: The percent of children who were functioning within age expectations in each Outcome by the time they exited the program (d+e)/(a+b+c+d+e)

During the fall of 2021, MDE will collaborate with stakeholders to set new targets for these summary statements for FFY 2020-2026.

LEA staff who enter ratings data into MSIS will not be required to calculate the child's progress category or calculate Summary Statements. MSIS will calculate these based on entry and exit ratings that are entered for each district. However, LEA administrators and staff will see these metrics when they review data. District summary statement data will be compared with statewide performance and targets on this indicator. Reviewing progress category and summary statement information provides an important snapshot of the kinds of progress observed among children in the program. This data allows programs to answer critical questions about whether patterns of progress vary across groups of children with different characteristics; children receiving different types and intensities of services; across children with services in different settings or with different practitioners; and over time.

Characteristics of Early Childhood Outcomes

The ultimate goal of early childhood special education services is to enable children to be active and successful participants during their early childhood years and in the future in a variety of settings. The three early childhood outcomes that all programs are required to measure are: 1) Children have positive social-emotional skills (including social relationships); 2) Children acquire and use knowledge and skills (including early language/communication and early literacy); and 3) Children use appropriate behavior to meet their needs.

The COS process starts when the child begins receiving Part B services. Each child will have three rating numbers (one for each outcome), reflecting the child's functioning at entry. When the form is completed again at exit, each child will have the three 1-7 ratings that answer the questions reflecting functioning at exit along with the three answers to the Yes/No questions about acquiring any new skills or behaviors (i.e., individual progress since entry).

Functional Outcomes

The three early childhood outcomes previously described are functional outcomes. Functional outcomes refer to things that are meaningful to the child in the context of everyday living. They place an emphasis on "how" the child is able to carry out meaningful behaviors in a meaningful context. Whereas some assessment tools might measure a discrete skill like uses index finger in a pointing motion, the functional skill considers how and why that skills is used, for instance to use index finger to point to a communication board (outcome 3) and indicate when she is hungry or uses index finger to point to a picture on a book when asked where the bunny went (outcome 2) or uses finger in a pointing motion toward herself as she says her name when a new child enters the classroom (outcome 1).

Functional outcomes are not single behaviors or the sum of a series of discrete behaviors that a child learns. Functional outcomes refer to an integrated series of behaviors that allow the child to achieve important everyday goals.

Functional outcomes refer to behaviors, often multiple behaviors, that integrate skills across domains. Functional outcomes can also involve multiple domains. Skills are domain-based, separating a child's development into discrete areas. An example of this would be gross motor skills, involving large muscle movement, and fine motor skills, involving small muscle movement. Other discrete skills are found in the domains of expressive communication, receptive communication, social skills, cognitive skills, and interaction skills.

For example, a functional outcome for a three-year-old child might be to "play interactively with other children for a period of 30 minutes." Many discrete, domain-specific skills are required in order to accomplish this outcome.

Given this understanding about functional child outcomes, one can see why it is important to learn how the child functions during everyday routines across settings and situations. By building on the knowledge of all the people who observe and know the child across settings, one captures the most complete picture of the child's functioning.

Global Outcomes

Functional outcomes reflect global functioning. Each outcome is a snapshot of the whole child. It conveys the status of the child's current functioning across settings and situations. It is far more than a sequence of skills split by domain and observed in a standardized format. It is the story of how the child uses all of the skills acquired to navigate through life with meaning and purpose.

Outcomes are benefits experienced as a result of services and supports received. They are global in nature because they are the same for all children in preschool special education with the same ultimate goal. While each IEP team identifies individualized goals/outcomes specific to the particular needs of each child, the three global child outcomes apply to all children in preschool special education. By measuring how children are doing relative to the three global child outcomes we can get a better sense of the extent to which preschool special education is making a difference for all children. These three outcomes were intentionally designed as functional outcomes including skills that are integrated across developmental domains. So, it is important for teams to become familiar with the content of these three global outcomes.

Putting It All Together

Rating all children in early childhood special education on the same three global child outcomes allows us to gather information that can be used to ask and answer critical questions about what impacts children and families' ability to be active and successful participants in their communities. Outcomes information can be used at the team, program, district, regional, state, and federal levels to:
- support quality conversations describing children's skills across settings and situations,
- improve communication about children's functioning and their developmental trajectories,
- describe the kinds of progress students with varied characteristics are making, and
- support program improvement, for instance by identifying how different types and intensities of services are related to different outcomes.

Learning about and implementing the COS process takes time. However, the reason Mississippi's stakeholders encouraged switching to this approach for outcomes measurement was because using the COS process has the potential to impact ECSE services. The COS process is not intended to create additional requirements for teachers, but rather to provide critical data that will determine the activities and supports needed to positively impact outcomes for children. Investing energy into accurate, high quality outcomes data informs instruction and indicates how we can effectively serve children and families. In addition, this process will ensure our field implements quality practices that are already known to improve outcomes for children and families.

Child Outcomes Summary (COS) Form

Check one: ☐ Entry COS   ☐ Interim Rating   ☐ Exit COS

Date Completed: _____

I. Child Information
    Name: _____

    Date of Birth: _____   MSIS#: _____

    Primary Disability: _____

    Secondary Disability: _____

II. Rating Summary   For Interim/Exit Only:
                                                  (Any progress made since Entry rating?)

    Outcome 1 Rating: _____   ☐ Y   ☐ N
    Having Positive Social-Emotional Skills

    Outcome 2 Rating: _____   ☐ Y   ☐ N
    Acquiring and Using Knowledge and Skills

    Outcome 3 Rating: _____   ☐ Y   ☐ N
    Using Appropriate Behavior to Meet Needs

III. Anchor Assessment _____

IV. Sources of Information (check all that apply):

☐ Observations   ☐ Anecdotal Notes

☐ Interviews   ☐ Classroom Data

☐ Other Assessment Tools (list)   ☐ Other Sources (list)
   _____   _____

V. Persons involved in determining the rating:

Name	Role
	Parent
	General Education Teacher
	Special Education Teacher
	Agency Representative
	Related Service Provider
	Other
	Other

1. **Positive Social-Emotional Skills (including social relationships)**
   To answer the questions below, think about the child's functioning in these and closely related areas (as indicated by assessments and based on observations from individuals in close contact with the child):
   - Relating to adults
   - Relating to other children
   - Following rules related to groups or interacting with others

   1a. To what extent does the child show age-expected functioning, across a variety of settings and situations, on this outcome? (Circle one number)

1	2	3	4	5	6	7

   Supporting evidence for this outcome rating

   Age-expected functioning

   Concerns in this area? **Yes   No** (describe)

   _____

   Immediate foundational skills/Functioning that is not yet age-expected but approaching age-expected

   _____

   Functioning that is not yet age-expected or immediate foundational

   _____

   1b. (For Interim/Exit only) **Has the child shown ANY new skills or behaviors related to positive social-emotional skills (including positive social relationships) since the last outcomes summary?** (Circle one number)

   Yes   1 – Describe progress:

   _____

   No   2 – Describe why no progress:

   _____

2. **Acquiring and Using Knowledge and Skills (including early language/communication and early literacy)**
To answer the questions below, think about the child's functioning in these and closely related areas (as indicated by assessments and based on observations from individuals in close contact with the child):
   - Thinking, reasoning, remembering, and problem solving
   - Understanding symbols
   - Understanding the physical and social worlds

2a. **To what extent does this child show age-expected functioning, across a variety of settings and situations, on this outcome?** (Circle one number)

1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Supporting evidence for this outcome rating

Age-expected functioning

Concerns in this area? **Yes   No** (describe)

Immediate foundational skills/Functioning that is not yet age-expected but approaching age-expected

---

Functioning that is not yet age-expected or immediate foundational

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2b. (For Interim/Exit only): **Has the child shown ANY new skills or behaviors related to acquiring and using knowledge and skills since the last outcomes summary?** (Circle one number)

Yes   1 – Describe progress:

No   2 – Describe why no progress:

---

3. **Appropriate Behavior to Meet Needs**
    To answer the questions below, think about the child's functioning in these and closely related areas (as indicated by assessments and based on observations from individuals in close contact with the child):
    - Taking care of basic needs (e.g., showing hunger, dressing, feeding, toileting, etc.)
    - Contributing to own health and safety (e.g., follows rules, assists with hand washing, avoids inedible objects, etc.)
    - Getting from place to place (mobility) and using tools (e.g., forks, strings attached to objects, etc.)

    3a. **To what extent does this child show age-expected functioning, across a variety of settings and situations, on this outcome?** (Circle one number)

1	2	3	4	5	6	7

    Supporting evidence for this outcome rating

    Age-expected functioning

    Concerns in this area? **Yes   No** (describe)

    Immediate foundational skills/Functioning that is not yet age-expected but approaching age-expected

    Functioning that is not yet age-expected or immediate foundational

    3b. (For Interim/Exit only): **Has the child shown ANY new skills or behaviors related to taking appropriate action to meet needs since the last outcomes summary?** (Circle one number)

    Yes   1 – Describe progress:

    No   2 – Describe why no progress: