



Child Outcomes Summary (COS): What Families Should Know

What is it?

The Child Outcomes Summary (COS) summarizes information on a child's functioning in each of the three child outcome areas listed below using a 7-point scale. With the COS process, a team of individuals who are familiar with a child (including parents) should consider multiple sources of information about his/her functioning, including parent/provider observation and results from assessment. The team documents the ratings in the child's special education record.

Outcome 1: Positive Social Emotional Skills, including but not limited to:

- Relating with caregivers
- Attending to other people in a variety of settings
- Interacting with peers
- Engaging in social games and communication with others
- Adapting to changes in the environment or routines
- Expressing own emotions and responding to the emotions of others

Outcome 2: Acquisition and Use of Knowledge and Skills, including but not limited to:

- Showing interest in learning
- Using problem solving
- Engaging in purposeful play
- Understanding pre- academic and literacy concepts
- Progressing from sounds to words
- Understanding questions asked and directions given

Outcome 3: Use of Appropriate Behaviors to Meet their Needs, including but not limited to:

- Moving around and using tools/manipulating things to meet needs
- Eating and drinking with increasing independence
- Dressing and undressing with increasing independence
- Diaper/toileting & washing with increasing independence
- Communicating needs
- Showing safety awareness

Who participates?

Children ages three through five who are receiving special education services are included in this process.

When does it happen?

Ratings are determined when a child begins receiving special education services (known as entry) and again just before his or her sixth birthday or dismissal from services (known as exit). The same three outcomes are used at both entry and exit.

Why should my child participate?

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 inform families and providers about the child's functioning. While individual student information is kept confidential and only used by the team working with the child, district level information can be collected and shared publicly with legislators and other stakeholders.

How can I as a parent be involved?

Parents are experts about their child and can provide valuable information about how their child learns best and the progress he/she is making on specific developmental skills. Parents are included on the team that discusses all available data and determines the ratings for each of the three outcomes at entry and exit.



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