

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) about Early Childhood Outcomes (ECO) Reporting for Preschool Children Eligible for Special Education Services

This FAQ is intended to provide information and respond to questions from the field. Continued updates will be provided as needed.

STATE DATA COLLECTION REQUIREMENTS

1. *Why is the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) collecting child outcomes data?*

The federal Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) requires all states develop a process for reporting reliable performance outcomes data for children ages three through five who have received special education services. For State Performance Plan (SPP) Indicator 7, states are required to annually report outcomes data for young children with disabilities, in three federally required focus areas. Below is the Indicator and the required focus areas:

Indicator 7: Percentage of preschoolers with IEPs who demonstrate *improved*:

- Positive social-emotional skills (including social relationships)
- Acquisition and use of knowledge and skills (language and literacy)
- Use of appropriate behaviors to meet needs

2. *What data instrument will be used to collect child outcomes data?*

The *Child Outcomes Summary form* developed by the federally funded Early Childhood Outcomes Center (ECO) adopted by Washington State in 2007 is still the instrument used to collect these outcome data.

[OSPI](#) and the [Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center](#) websites contain a variety of ECO training resources. They can be accessed at: [Early Childhood Outcomes \(Indicator 7\)](#)

3. *How does OSPI report outcomes data to OSEP?*

States set six-year performance targets in the State Performance Plan (SPP), based on data reported by local districts. Each year the state compiles an Annual Performance Report (APR) which measures the yearly progress of the state on the targets identified in the SPP.



Progress data are reported to OSEP in five categories, „a“ through „e“, as follows:

- Progress category „a“ = the percentage of children who did *not* improve functioning;
- Progress category „b“ = the percentage of children who improved functioning, but *not sufficient* to move nearer to functioning comparable to same-aged peers;
- Progress category „c“ = the percentage of children who improved functioning to a level nearer to same- aged peers but *did not reach it*;
- Progress category „d“ = the percentage of children who improved functioning to reach a level comparable to same-aged peers; and
- Progress category „e“ = the percentage of children who maintained functioning at a level comparable to same-aged peers.

OSPI then uses the ECO data reported by districts to calculate two summary statements for each of the three child outcomes (see Question 1). Summary statement data illustrate the collective developmental gains achieved by preschoolers in their special education programs in the Progress categories a“ through „e“ above. The two summary statements are listed below, along with the formula used to calculate each summary statement.

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 $((c+d) \div (a+b+c+d))$. Summary Statement 1 combines data from progress categories „c“ and „d“ to reflect the percentage of children who made greater than expected progress.

Summary Statement 2: The percent of children who were functioning within age expectations in each Outcome by the time they exited the program $((d+e) \div (a+b+c+d+e))$. Summary Statement 2 combines data from progress categories „d“ and „e“ to reflect the percentage of children who left the preschool program at age level.

4. What are the state targets for Indicator 7?

In February 2015, OSEP required states to set targets for the two summary statements in each of the three outcome areas, based on stakeholder input and current three-year data trends. OSPI set targets for Washington State based on feedback collected from a stakeholder input process. The district data profiles display the annual targets and data for the state and each school district. The annual performance report (APR) also contains targets for the state performance plan (SPP) cycle. These documents are located: [Special Education Data Collection](#).

LOCAL EDUCATION AGENCY (LEA) DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURES

5. On which children will Early Childhood Outcomes (ECO) data be collected?

ECO data are collected for all preschool children ages three through five who have an Individualized Education Program (IEP) and have received special education services for at least six months. This includes children who receive only one service, such as speech therapy

or occupational therapy. Data is collected when the child initially receives preschool special education and related services, regardless of the child's age when initial services begin. Data is collected again when the child exits preschool special education.

6. *Are data collected on children who qualify in only one area such as speech language impairment?*

Yes, children who qualify in only one area for special education services are subject to the same ECO reporting requirement as all other preschool children receiving special education services.

7. *How is ECO data reported to OSPI?*

ECO data is reported to OSPI, on or before July 31 of each year. School districts submit data to CEDARS then verify the data in a downstream application in the Special Education Reporting Section of the Education Data System (EDS). For more information, please review the User Guide for this application located at: [Special Education Data Reporting and Collection](#) in the accordion titled Early Childhood Outcomes (Child Outcome Summary).

To report early childhood outcomes data to CEDARS, the following fields have been added to CEDARS beginning with the 2020-21 school year. The students who should be reported in this collection are students with IEPs who are enrolled in Grade Level PK. If the student is in Grade Level (Element B13) PK, then Elements K16, K17, K18, K19, K20, K21, K22, K23, and K24 cannot be null. Refer to pages of this User Guide 14-15 for a list of valid values.

The elements added to collect this data are outlined at the end of this document and in the [CEDARS Manual, File K](#). Updates to this data **must** be made through a re-submission of data to CEDARS.

8. *When is ECO data collected by school district teams?*

Entry data is collected between the first three weeks (minimum) and six weeks (maximum) when the child begins to receive preschool special education services. The minimum timeframe allows preschool staff an opportunity to become acquainted with the child and observe their functional skills within a classroom or school-based setting before collecting data. The maximum timeframe allows preschool staff to develop a baseline from which to report progress.

Exit data is collected on those children exiting preschool special education services, and have received services for a minimum of six months. Exit data is collected during the *final* 60 days of receiving services, prior to exiting the preschool program. For example, if a child is transitioning to transitional kindergarten/kindergarten in the fall and the last day of preschool services is June 1, exit data would be collected anytime from April 2 to June 1.

9. *A student who had been receiving preschool special education services recently transferred into our district. The sending district says that ECO entry data was never collected. How do we proceed?*

The receiving district should collect entry data within the first three to six weeks of attendance. If the receiving district does not collect entry data, then the district will not be able to report exit data when the child exits preschool special education services.

10. How is entry data reported for a child whose family has moved to another district after the child has been receiving special education services for only a few months?

The entry data collected by the sending district can be used by the receiving district, but only if the child is reenrolled within six weeks or less. If the child has received no services for more than six weeks, new entry data should be collected by the receiving district.

11. If a child has entry data, has been receiving special education services for six months, and does not return to school for twenty school days, should the child be considered as having exited the program?

Yes, the child is considered as having exited the program for apportionment purposes after twenty consecutive school days of absence, and should therefore be considered as having exited the program for data collection purposes as well [WAC 392-121-108 (i)]. If the child returns to school after 20 days but before six weeks of absence, the existing entry data can be used. If the child returns to school after six weeks of absence, new entry data should be collected.

12. Is ECO data reported for a child who will not receive special education services for the full six months?

For an older child who begins receiving special education services in the spring and will transition to transitional kindergarten/kindergarten in the fall, it is possible that ECO data may not be collected. For example, if a five year old starts to receive preschool special education services on March 1 and the preschool year ends on June 1, ECO data might not be reported on that child. This depends on the date when the child starts receiving services and the date of the last day of school. A child must receive at least six months of special education service in order for the district to report ECO data. It is considered best practice to collect entry data for a student even if they are not expected to be in the program for six months. There have been many instances where a student was not ready for transitional kindergarten/kindergarten and went back to the preschool setting. If entry data had been collected, that data can be used.

13. How should districts gather information about a child's functional skills?

Districts may gather information about a child's functional skills in a number of ways. Examples of data sources include, but are not limited to:

- observations and reports by family members, care providers, school and other service providers;
- early intervention outcomes information;
- developmental screenings (e.g., Ages and Stages Questionnaire);
- curriculum-based measures (e.g., Assessment, Evaluation and Programming System);
- norm-referenced assessments (e.g., Battelle Developmental Inventory);
- progress monitoring information;
- classroom or other environment observations; and
- information identified during assessment, planning, or IEP meetings.

Observation in natural settings and reports from families and caregivers can be an effective way to obtain information about a child's functional skills. The Early Childhood Outcomes Center (ECTA) has created a resource on this topic titled "[What is a functional outcome](#)".

14. What is the requirement for parent participation in making ECO rating decisions?

The ECO rating process was designed to include input from all members of the IEP team, including parents. ["Including Families in the Rating Discussion"](#) is a resource from the ECTA Center that identifies a variety of ways to include families in the ECO discussion. OSPI strongly encourages districts to collect information and input from parents as part of the decision-making process. The rating process is an IEP team responsibility involving parents, other individuals familiar with the child in various settings, and school personnel.

Parents should also be informed about the requirement to report ECO data and the process used by the district to collect ECO data. A [parent information sheet](#) about the ECO is available on the OSPI website. Parents should be informed that the rating will be part of the child's special education file. A parent may choose not to participate in the rating process. However, the district is still required to report ECO entry and exit data on all children receiving preschool special education services. Parental consent is not required for the rating process. ECO ratings are a reflection of their child's progress and OSPI urges districts to share rating information with families. A professional development resource titled ["Quality Review of Family Participation"](#) is available on the Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center website.

15. Can districts use the same ECO form to record both entry and exit data?

No. Separate ECO rating forms should be completed at entry and at exit. The rating should reflect the status of the child's functioning at that time, relative to same-age peers. If districts use the same form to collect both entry and exit data, the exit ratings may be influenced by the entry ratings.

16. When should exit data be collected for a child in preschool special education, who is older than five?

Exit data should follow the child's educational program, not age. For example, if a child is repeating preschool his/her exit data would be reported when transitioning to transitional kindergarten/kindergarten or first grade, even if the child is older than five.

17. What constitutes exit from preschool special education services?

When a child leaves preschool services, for any reason, this is considered exiting. However, for data reporting purposes exit data is collected only on the children who have received special education services for six months or more. **Examples of exiting the preschool program are: entering transitional kindergarten/kindergarten, no longer qualifying for services or moving out of state.**

18. How will exit data be collected on children who transfer from one district to another district?

For a child who transfers to another district within Washington, the receiving district will request the ECO entry data from the sending district as part of the special education records. The receiving district is also responsible for collecting and reporting exit data when the child transitions to transitional kindergarten/kindergarten or no longer qualifies for special education services. The child may enter several preschool programs; however, the last program that the child exits will be responsible for obtaining the entry data and reporting the exit data.

19. Are there any exceptions to Question 18 (preceding above)?

One exception could be a child who has received special education services for six months in one district then transfers to a new district with three or fewer weeks before the end of the program year. This child is exiting preschool services and will begin transitional kindergarten/kindergarten in the fall. In this example, the sending district should collect and report the exit data. The reason for this is that in order for the receiving district to be able to make rating decisions it would need to have three to six weeks to observe the child in the program. Entry at the end of the school year may not allow for that observation time. Therefore, it would be more appropriate for the sending district to collect and report the exit data. However, exit data collection should be done in collaboration with the receiving district so that accurate, current information is available for making rating decisions.

CHILD OUTCOMES SUMMARY DATA

20. What documentation needs to be maintained – when and where?

A child's completed *Child Outcomes Summary form* will remain in his/her primary confidential special education file. A copy of the form must be submitted to the individual designated by the district to report ECO data to OSPI once a year, on or before July 31.

21. Why is the progress of a child with an IEP being compared to the child's same-age peers?

States are required to compare the functioning of children in preschool programs to their same-age peers because age expectations provide a common standard for all young children. To merely record that children made progress between entry and exit would not provide strong evidence for the effectiveness of the program. Also, one of the goals of early childhood special education is to prepare children to succeed in transitional kindergarten/kindergarten. In transitional kindergarten/kindergarten, children will be expected to meet grade level standards. OSEP recognizes that not all children will be able to function comparable to same age peers at the end of preschool services, but the system will now be tracking how many have achieved or moved closer to functioning at an age expected level.

22. For children born prematurely, do we compare her/him to a typical child of the same chronological age, or of the same corrected age?

Children born prematurely are compared to a typical child of the same *chronological age*. Do not adjust for prematurity or *corrected age*.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

[Child Outcomes Summary \(COS\) Process Module: Collecting & Using Data to Improve Programs](#): This online learning module provides key information about the ECO process, and the practices that contribute to consistent and meaningful ECO decision-making.

[Early Childhood Technical Assistance](#)

[Center \(ECTA\) website](#) [OSPI Early](#)

[Childhood Special Education website](#)

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