

January 2011 Child Indicators Technical Assistance – Regional Meetings

Documents:

- Determining the Status of Infant/Toddler Development in Relation to the Three Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) Outcomes manual
- Understanding Growth Trajectories and Progress Categories
- Child Indicator Summary Statements

Introduction:

We want to start our discussion on child indicators by acknowledging upfront some important considerations about the data. At this point in our work with child indicators, the conclusions we can draw from the data are limited by a number of very important factors.

First of all, we must consider accuracy of the data. This includes whether assessment tools are administered correctly, whether individuals are applying the criteria for ratings uniformly (or inter-rater reliability), how much information is gathered from families, and whether the information is documented accurately. This is an area where we do have a measure of control.

We have less control of a number of other factors that have major implications in how the data is interpreted. At this point in time we are not measuring variables such as the supports and services the children received in early intervention, their age at entry and exit, their diagnosis, and the length of time the child was in early intervention.

At the national level, there is ongoing discussion about what the percentages for the summary statements should be. . We do know that we do not expect all children to exit at age level. We also recognize that there are some children who will not make progress due to the severity or degenerative nature of their condition. We are all in a learning mode with this process

We do know that we are required to set targets and to measure and report child indicator results in relation to the targets. The State is proposing that we revise our targets downward based on this year's data. The percentages this year were not as high as they were last year. This is not unexpected because this year included more children who had been in the early intervention longer. In prior years, we captured data for children who had been in early intervention up to one or two years. This year was the first time we were able to include children who had been in the system up to three years. It is expected that the children in the system longer would be those who were more involved and likely to have lower ratings. Just as a heads up, next year will likely include a higher percentage of children who have been in early intervention longer because every child that is discharged between July 1, 2010 and June 30, 2010 will have had the opportunity to have entry ratings. It is possible that this will impact the percentages.

The take home message about the indicator percentages is that the Part C Office is not drawing conclusions about local systems based on the results of the child indicators, nor are we requiring service enhancement plans. Our focus rather is on the elements of this process over which we have control – and that is data accuracy. Thus our focus for the next three weeks will be on assisting local systems to do the best job possible with determining individual child ratings.

Our intent over the next three regional meetings is to provide information to help you understand the child indicator process fully and to provide you with resources and tools that you can use with others in your local system to optimize data accuracy.

In January we will review some of the basics regarding child outcomes, including the why, what and when of the process. We will ask you to review the online child indicator training modules prior to the February meeting. In February we will discuss reactions to the modules and ways they may be used in your system. We will provide you with tools to use to look at data accuracy in your system between February and March. In March, we will discuss the results of your reviews and next steps.

Now we will move into our January focus on reviewing the child indicator system.

First let's review why we are measuring child indicators.

- In 2005, the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) began requiring State Early Intervention and Preschool Special Education programs to report on child and family outcomes.
 - In response to PART Finding that results were not indicated
 - In order to continue to receive federal funding, results (outcomes as a result of the program) were required to be reported
- In addition, measuring and analyzing child indicators provides information for local systems and the state to use to improve results of the Infant & Toddler Connection System

Before we go any further, we need to address the terminology.

- The national literature refers to Indicator 3 of the State Performance Plan as child outcomes.
- Virginia chose to refer to these global child outcomes as child indicators in order to distinguish them from individualized child outcomes.

Let's review exactly what we measuring

- Indicator 3 requires us to report the percent of infants and toddlers with Individualized Family Service Plans (IFSPs) who demonstrate improved:
 1. Positive social-emotional skills (including social relationships);
 2. Acquisition and use of knowledge and skills (including early language/communication [and early literacy]); and
 3. Use of appropriate behaviors to meet their needs.
- In order to report change, measurement must occur at two points: entry and exit
- Children are rated in comparison to same age peers

We are sometimes asked about who selected these indicators, about how it was determined that this is what should be measured.

- The Early Childhood Outcome (ECO) Center, an organization funded by OSEP developed and proposed the indicators with extensive input from stakeholder groups across the nation including parents and family members.

Let's move on now to what is required of local systems.

- Please turn to page 1 of the manual Determining the Status of Infant/Toddler Development in Relation to the Three Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) Outcomes for instructions. Are there any questions about the instructions?

- Let's move onto the ratings. The assessment team must determine a score between 1-7 for each child for each child indicator by the date of the Initial IFSP and at exit from the Part C system (except for children over 30 months of age or children who transition to the local system from another local system).
- Turn to page 9 of the manual and let's review the rating explanations. Do you have any questions about these definitions for each rating? It is important to remember that the ratings are dependent on the team gathering comprehensive information from the child and family and are not simply a reflection of an assessment tool. The team must consider how the child functions across settings and situations in order to determine the rating for each indicator. Turn a minute to pages 13 and 14. The more detailed decision tree on page 14 may be most useful for new providers who are learning this process. The color coded decision tree on page 13 gives a quick visual reminder of the questions to consider to determine a child's rating.
- Documentation of the ratings is required on page one of the Child Indicator Summary Form (CISF). Please pull out the copy of the form now. There is a place for child's name, dates and the ratings – as well as a place to record the yes/no response for exit ratings. Please note that you will use a separate form for the entry and exit rating, so for entry, the yes/no questions will be blank. Please note the statement at the bottom of page one on this form "NOTE: The child's IFSP (and record) includes documentation to fully support the ratings. Yes ___ No ___ If yes, this form is complete. If no, supporting documentation must be completed on the back of this form." Now let's look at the 2nd page. This information MUST be documented either on this form or on the IFSP or in the child's record. You will be looking at this documentation in February when we provide you with a documentation tool.
 - Is your system using page 2 for the documentation or documenting this information in the IFSP? If teams are using the IFSP or child's records, are all of the elements on the 2nd page of the CISF being captured including who participated, what tools were used, examples of the child's functional skills that support the ratings?
- In addition to documenting the ratings on the CISF, the ratings must also be documented in the child's ITOTS record. Are there any questions about that?

Let's move on to the progress categories and how they are calculated.

- ITOTS converts the entry and exit scores to a progress category from "a"-“e”. Please pull out your handout **Understanding Growth Trajectories and Progress Categories**.
 - Discussion

Now we will discuss the Summary Statements and why they are required.

- OSEP determined that reporting 15 points of information (5 progress categories for each of three indicators) was too complex to analyze.
- ECO developed (with extensive stakeholder input) summary statements which were recommended to OSEP. OSEP adopted two summary statements after a period of public comment. These two summary statements must be reported each year as part of the Annual Performance Report
- As you know, the Summary Statements are:
 - Summary Statement One: 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
 - Summary Statement Two: The percent of children who were functioning within age expectations in each Outcome by the time they exited the program

- **Summary Statement Explanation** Handout
 - Review how the percentages are calculated

How is this information being used?

- States were required to establish targets for each summary statement and to report results to OSEP each year
- What is a good percentage? Discussion
 - Never expect 100% because measurement is in comparison to same age peers
 - The nation is learning together as data is collected and analyzed about what percentages might be reasonable
 - Much more data is needed in order to make sense of the summary statement percentages and to understand opportunities for improvement
 - Diagnoses
 - Time in the Part C system
 - Supports and services received
 - Age of entry into the Part C System

Can we trust the data?

- Elements that contribute to accurate data/ quality assurance mechanisms
 - Comprehensive training of new staff
 - Refresher training for existing staff
 - Supervision and oversight
 - Review of data
 - Clarity and completeness of documentation
 - Agreement of documentation with ratings
 - Comparison of entry and exit scores across children and across the system
- **Quality Assurance System** Handout

Next Steps:

- Please review the online Child Indicator Training Modules at: <http://www.vcu.edu/partnership/ITC/index.htm> prior to the next regional meeting. Come prepared to discuss how these modules can be used to assist local system with training new staff and for refresher trainings for existing staff.
- Next month, a couple checklists will be shared and discussed as tools to aid assessing quality at the local level.