

Overview of the Child Outcomes Summary (COS) Process

The U.S. Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) requires all state early intervention and preschool special education agencies to report data on three child outcomes: (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.

The Child Outcomes Summary (COS) process is a team process for summarizing information on a child’s functioning in each of the three child outcome areas using a 7-point scale (see below). With the COS process, a team can consider multiple sources of information about a child, including results from standardized assessment, parent input, and provider/teacher observation. Additionally, the COS process allows programs to synthesize information about children across different assessment tools to produce data that can be summarized across programs in the state, as well as across states for a national picture.

COS 7-Point Scale		
Overall Age-Appropriate	7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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.
	6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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-appropriate, the child’s functioning may border on not keeping pace with age expectations.
Overall Not Age-Appropriate	5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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.
	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child shows occasional age-appropriate functioning across settings and situations. • More functioning is not age-expected than age-expected.
	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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.
	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child occasionally uses immediate foundational skills across settings and situations. • More functioning reflects skills that are not immediate foundational than are immediate foundational.
	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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.