

Overview of the Child Outcomes Summary Form 9-30-05

The following questions and answers provide the ECO Center's current thinking on the use of the Child Outcomes Summary Form. The **Summary Form is a draft** and is still undergoing revisions based on pilot testing. We are releasing the current draft so that states can have a sense of what the Summary Form might look like and what it could do for them. New versions of the Summary Form will be released as they are developed. We do not expect the Summary Form to change radically but states need to understand the Summary Form is under development and much more research is needed on its use. All versions of the Summary Form will be dated. Continue to check the ECO web site for revisions.

1. What materials related to the Child Outcomes Summary Form are available on the ECO web site?

The following materials are available on the ECO web site:

- **Instructions for Completing the Child Outcomes Summary Form** – this document contains instructions for completing the form along with the definitions of the scale points.
- **Cover Sheet** – This form could be used in conjunction with the Supporting Evidence form to document information related to how the Summary Form was completed
- **Child Outcomes Summary Form**
- **Supporting Evidence** – this form could be used to document the basis for the Outcome Summary rating and would provide a way to audit the fidelity with which various programs or teams are using the form to generate the outcomes rating.

2. What is the draft Child Outcomes Summary Form?

The draft Child Outcomes Summary Form is a 7-point scale for summarizing information related to a child's progress on each of the three child outcome areas recommended by ECO. The Summary Form can be used:

- 1) when the state wants to use multiple sources of information on a child's functioning on each of the outcomes. The information could include one or more norm-referenced or curriculum-based assessments, parent report on child's skills and behavior, progress notes of therapists working with the child, observations by a teacher or child care provider, or other sources; and/or
- 2) when different assessments have been given to different children across the state and the results need to be placed on the same scale to be aggregated.

States need to be aware that the Summary Form was designed for states that want to examine children's progress at a more detailed level than is required by the OSEP reporting requirements. The Summary Form will allow states to address the OSEP reporting requirement as well as look at the child outcomes data in other ways. Using the Summary Form does **not** require that programs collect more data about children's progress; it is a mechanism that allows them to retain more of the assessment information for their own purposes. Ways in which the Summary Form can be used to

address the OSEP reporting requirements as well as answer additional questions are addressed later in this document.

3. What is the basis for the scale on the Summary Form?

The scale on the Summary Form is based on several assumptions:

- a. that the overall goal of programs and services for children is active and successful participation now and in the future across a variety of settings. Achieving each of the three outcomes is key to the overall goal;
- b. For many, but certainly not all young children with disabilities, receipt of high quality services will allow them to move closer to typical development than they would have been able to without those services;
- c. Documenting children's movement toward typical development is one type of evidence that can be used to make a case for the effectiveness of early intervention and early childhood special education.
- d. Documenting the extent of children's progress is a second type of evidence.

Building off of these assumptions, the highest point on the scale is typical or age-appropriate development with each lower point being a degree of distance from age expectations. Additional information about the scale points is included in the document "Instructions for Completing the Child Outcome Summary Form."

4. Who completes the Summary Form?

States need to decide who completes the Summary Form. It could be completed by a team as part of the ISFP meeting. It could be completed by a provider and a parent at a home visit. It could also be completed by a service coordinator or provider who works with the child. Finally, the answer to the 3 questions on the Form could be generated by a computer program based on code written to generate outcome summary scores for different assessments (Use #2 described in Question 1).

5. How often is the Summary Form to be completed?

To provide data for the OSEP reporting requirements, the Summary Form must be completed at a minimum at program entry and exit. States that want outcome data for their own purposes should consider completing the form more often, for example, annually or every 6 months.

6. How are the data from the Summary Form to be analyzed? How can they be used to address the OSEP reporting requirements?

Note: Look at the Summary Form before reading the answer to this question.

Each child will have 3 numbers (one for each outcome) at entry. When the form is completed the second, third, etc. time, each child will have 3 more numbers plus three answers to the yes-no questions in the Summary Form.

Children who are scored a 7 at both time points are children who maintain age-expected functioning. Children who are scored 6 or lower at entry and a 7 at exit are children who achieve age-expected functioning. Children who move up the scale (e.g., from a 3 to a

4, a 4 to a 6, etc.) are children who make progress and have moved closer to typical functioning but not yet achieved it. Children who get the same score at both time points have made progress but not moved significantly closer to typical development. The one exception could be children who are very low functioning (e.g., a 1 at both time points). To further differentiate who has and has not made progress, the second question about progress is asked for all Summary Forms after the initial one.

Table 1 provides hypothetical data illustrating results for 10 children on Outcome 2. The Summary Form was completed twice for these children.

The ECO Center recommends that states build outcomes systems with the capacity to identify 5 categories of progress. The ECO-recommended categories of progress and how they collapse to the 3 OSEP categories are shown below.

The five ECO-recommended categories of progress:

- 1) Children who maintained typical development
- 2) Children who achieved typical development
- 3) Children who made sufficient progress to move closer to typical development but did not achieve it
- 4) Children who made progress but did not move closer to typical development
- 5) Children who did not make progress

For OSEP, states are required to report on 3 categories of progress:

- a. Children who maintained or achieved typical development (ECO #1 + ECO #2)
- b. Children who made progress but were not recorded in category a (ECO #3 + ECO #4)
- c. Children who did not make progress (ECO #5)

How the data in the example would be categorized in each system also is shown in Table 1. Table 2 shows the results for this set of data for the three OSEP categories and Table 3 shows the data for the 5 ECO categories. Note that the ECO categories allow one to see that 50% of the children (20% ECO Category 2 + 30% ECO Category 3) made sufficient progress during their time in services to move closer to typical development. Table 4 shows additional information that can be learned from the Summary Form data: the extent of progress children have made.

Table 1
Hypothetical Raw Data for Outcome 2 at Entry and Exit

Child's Name	Entry Summary Number	Exit Summary Number	Progress?	OSEP Category	ECO Category
Tammy	7	7	yes	a	1
Patty	6	7	yes	a	2
Jonas	3	5	yes	b	3
Phoenix	4	4	yes	b	4
Angela	1	1	no	c	5
Juan	2	4	yes	b	3
Terry	1	1	yes	b	4
Leroy	3	5	yes	b	3
Maria	4	7	yes	a	2
Tony	5	5	yes	b	4

Table 2
Summary of Results for OSEP Categories

Category	%
a	30
b	60
c	10

Table 3
Summary of Results for ECO Categories

Category	%	
1	10	} OSEP a
2	20	
3	30	} OSEP b
4	30	
5	10	

Table 4
Change in Summary Form Ratings

Extent of Change	%
Maintained age-expected functioning	10
Maintained same level function, but not age-expected	40
Gained 3 steps	10
Gained 2 steps	30
Gained 1 step	10

7. Why would a state want to be able to do more with its data than what is required by OSEP?

The investment for the state is in collecting the data on children. Reducing the data to a form that can be aggregated across the state requires a very similar process whether the data are reduced to 2 categories or 7 categories. Using 2 categories as the example below demonstrates, collapses across categories losing a lot of what could be potentially valuable information. In data analysis, collapsing information is a one way street --one can always collapse to fewer categories but if data are collected already collapsed, it is impossible to get greater detail.

We believe that the ECO categories 2 and 3 provide the strongest evidence for the effectiveness of early intervention and early childhood special education and these categories are not available if a state chooses to reduce its data directly to the 3 OSEP categories. Also, as illustrated in Table 4, the Summary Form information allows a state to examine how much change children are showing.

8. Are there states that do not need the Summary Form?

Yes, if a state is using a single assessment statewide as the basis of its outcomes system, it has no need for the Summary Form because there are neither multiple sources of information on the same child nor different measures being used across the state. Also, if a state only wants to analyze its data to produce the 3 OSEP categories, it can use a simpler summary form. A 2-point scale that classifies children as typical (a 7 on the Summary Form) or not (1 to 6 on the Summary Form) can produce data for the 3 OSEP categories.

9. What research has been conducted on the use of the Summary Form?

Only preliminary pilot work has been done with the Summary Form to date. The ECO Center will be conducting extensive research on the Form in the coming months. It is highly likely that the Summary Form will be revised based on this research.

10. Will training materials be developed?

The ECO Center will be developing training and guidance materials for the use of the Summary Form in the coming months.

11. How much training is required to use the Summary Form?

This is one of the questions we will be researching. We are trying to design the Summary Form to be relatively simple and straightforward. We expect that many people would be able to complete the Summary Form without extensive training but for the data to be of high quality, it is essential that the Form be completed the same way by different people and that is likely to require training.

**12. What if I have a question about the Summary Form or the related materials?
Can states and others comment on the Summary Form and related materials?**

Yes. Questions and comments are encouraged. Send them to staff@the-eco-center.org