

Early Childhood Special Education (ages 3 through 5): Indicator 7- Early Childhood Outcomes Guidance

Purpose

The intent of this document is to provide guidance for Supervisory Unions/School Districts (SU/SDs) on the best practices of special education data collection, reporting and submission for Indicator 7- Early Childhood Outcomes (ECO) through the at-home learning period.

Background

Under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), SU/SDs are federally required to complete early childhood outcome progress ratings on each preschooler aged 3 through 5 with an individualized education program (IEP) (34 C.F.R. §§§ 300.120, 300.211, 300.601(b)(1)). Vermont SU/SDs report Indicator 7: ECO entry/exit/progress ratings to the Agency of Education (AOE) through Child Count annual collections. The Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) has not granted any exceptions to the required ECO entry, exit or progress data as reported in our State Performance Plan/Annual Performance Report (SPP/APR).

Submission Dates

The AOE has established July 15, 2020, as the final date for submitting ECO exit summary rating data for the fiscal year, July 1, 2019- June 30, 2020. The IEP team must determine and report an ECO exit and progress rating for each outcome area prior to a child transitioning to kindergarten for the following academic year, a child transferring to a new SD/SU, a child moving out of state, or a family revoking service. In order to help assure complete and accurate data, IEP teams and Special Education Administrators should refer to guidance in the [Vermont ECO Practices and Procedure Manual \(2018\)](#) prior to their SD/SU's submission.

Children that entered preschool special education after December 30, 2019, will not require an ECO summary progress rating, as no exit rating or reporting is required for children receiving less than six months of special education services.

Completing ECO Summary Progress Ratings

Teaming

The ECO summary progress ratings process is designed to be a team process. Although there are many advantages to in-person meetings, teleconferencing can be accomplished successfully with careful planning. However, the preparation may require a bit more coordination and organization to fully engage and effectively involve the family and all practitioners in the decision-making process. ECO ratings should still be made as a team of at least two

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professionals who are monitoring and are involved in the child's progress throughout the year, as well as family member(s).

Because the early childhood outcomes are embedded in the preschool IEP, Vermont educators and ECSE providers are expected to continue to collaborate with a multidisciplinary team to share information about functional skills and behaviors across routines, daily activities, settings and situations. Since preschoolers are at home, families play an even larger role in their contribution. Families may not be experts on special education or have knowledge of child development. However, families do have unique insights about their child's capabilities across a variety of routines, daily activities and settings that can help inform their child's overall assessment and ECO summary progress rating.

The Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center (ECTA) and The Center for IDEA Early Childhood Data Systems (DaSy) have provided helpful guidance with the online document: [ECOS Completion: When Teams Can't Meet in Person](#) and the accompanying [infographic](#).

Multiple Methods of Assessment

To assure data quality and completeness during at-home learning, district staff should continue to gather evidence from previously utilized formal assessment tools. For example, if a teacher completed a formal assessment for the child close to school closure, every effort should be made to use this information to inform the ECO summary exit and progress rating.

The [DEC Recommended Practices](#) indicate that assessment measures should include multiple sources and that a variety of methods are needed to get a full picture of the child's functioning and skills across settings, routines, activities and situations. When considering which assessment tool to use, individuals should consider how well the instrument provides information to help the team determine what the ratings will be in each of the three ECO areas. Additional information should be gathered through informal assessment and parent reports and be used to support the completion of the ECO summary progress or exit rating. This may include, but is not limited to virtual meetings, teleconferences, small groups, 1:1 meetings, etc. Consider which team members are able to either gather or supply the needed information.

Progress Monitoring

A child's progress should be monitored through the implementation of each SD/SU's Continuity of Learning plan. The ratings for each of the three early childhood outcomes are embedded in the preschool IEP form, at the end of the "Present Levels of Educational and Functional Performance" section. Ratings are required to be completed at entry into ECSE, and again at exit from the program. Ratings at annual IEP meetings are highly recommended.

Resources

[Vermont Special Education Guidance During COVID 19](#) (Vermont Agency of Education)

[Resources to Support EI and ECSE during COVID-19](#) (Division of Early Childhood)

[Converting COS Data to OSEP Progress Categories / Summary Statements](#) (DaSy)