
Issue Date: July 23, 2024

Reporting Early Child Outcomes Exit and Progress Ratings

Purpose

This document replaces Memo: Early Child Outcomes (ECO) Exit and Progress Ratings (May 30, 2018). The intention is to remind special educators and special education directors of important steps when completing exit ratings and submitting accurate data across the three ECO areas as part of the Child Outcome Summary (COS) process.

Supervisory Unions and School Districts (SUs/SDs) report ECO entry, exit, and progress ratings to the Agency of Education through child count annual collections as entered into your respective Individual Education Program (IEP) software system.

The Three Early Child Outcomes (ECO) Areas

- Outcome A: Positive Social and Emotional Skills and Relationships
- Outcome B: Acquisition and Use of Knowledge and Skills
- Outcome C: Taking Action to Meet Needs How to Use this Document

The Child Outcome Summary Process

The COS process is a team decision-making process involving practitioners and family members who know the child. It is a consistent way for teams to rate a child's functioning relative to age-expected behavior at a specific point in time. The team discusses information about a child's functioning in three outcome areas, resulting in a rating on a 7-point scale for each of the three outcomes. The team synthesizes information about a child, including what they learned from assessment tools as well as other sources.

ECO Ratings

ECO ratings are a snapshot of the child's overall functioning at one given point in time, informed by a full team of people who know the child best across settings and situations where the child spends their time. They require information about the child's everyday functioning across a variety of settings and from multiple sources.

ECO ratings represent global functioning and are not based on discrete skills only observed by the team only occasionally in isolated situations. COS team members synthesize information when functioning differs



across contexts. A child's functioning often varies across contexts, exhibiting different ways of interacting with different people and in places where different supports and expectations exist. Ratings should reflect the mix of functioning observed.

ECO Exit Ratings

ECO exit ratings are determined by the COS team. Teams must gather and discuss information that is age-anchored to child development resources, such as the Vermont Early Learning Standards (VELS) as well as demonstrate the progress the child has made since the last time the ECO ratings were completed.

No exit rating or reporting is required for children receiving special education services for less than six months.

ECO Ratings are Required When

- **A child transfers to a different SU/SD.** The IEP team must determine and report an ECO exit rating for each outcome area prior to the child's transfer and must document it in the child's Individualized Education Program (IEP) file.
- **A child moves out of state.** The IEP team must determine and report an ECO exit rating for each outcome area prior to the child's move.
- **A child will transition to kindergarten for the following academic year.**
- **A child's family revokes services.**

Other Considerations

- If a child leaves their current early childhood education setting, such as a Universal Prekindergarten (UPK) program, prior to their entrance into kindergarten, the exit ECO should be completed as close to the end of services as is feasible, not to exceed 30 days after the child has left the program.
- ECO exit ratings and the progress question discussion and determination should occur during the last IEP meeting/transition meeting before the end of the school year, prior to their entrance into kindergarten.

Progress Question

In conjunction with determining ECO exit ratings for each outcome area, the COS team must answer a progress rating question (yes/no) for each child at exit. This is a critical component of the reporting process. **If the child made any progress, even developing one new functional skill between entry and exit, the progress question will be marked "yes."** If the child did not gain at least one new skill, or even lost skills, the answer to the progress question will be "no." This is expected to be the case for a

relatively small number of children who experience significant disabilities where progress is very slow, or conditions that result in a regression or loss of skill over time.

Resources

The following resources are available to enhance understanding of the early child outcomes and the Child Outcomes Summary process.

National Resources

- [Breadth of the Child Outcomes](#)
- [COS Process Online Module](#): This self-paced online module provides foundational knowledge about the COS process and the practices that contribute to consistent and meaningful COS decision-making.
- [Child Outcomes Summary \(COS\) Process Quick Reference Guide](#)
- [Definitions for COS Ratings](#)
- [Decision Tree for Summary Rating Discussions](#): The Decision Tree for Summary Rating Discussions contains a series of questions about age-expected skills and behaviors within the three child outcomes. Responses to these questions guide the user to a rating category on the 7-point rating scale. [This version with no rating scale](#) can be especially useful when families are directly involved in team discussions that describe a child's level of functioning.

Vermont Resources

- [Early Childhood Special Education \(ECSE\) Individualized Education Program \(IEP\) - ECSE Form 5](#): The ratings for each of the three early childhood outcomes are embedded in the ECSE 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 considered best practice and are highly recommended.
- [Vermont's Early Childhood Outcomes Practices and Procedures Manual](#)
- [Vermont Early Childhood Special Education Services webpage](#) includes memos, webinars, and other resources for completion of Indicator 7: Early Child Outcomes.