

**Early Intervention**  
**Frequently Asked Questions about Child and Family Outcomes**  
**August 2006**

**Child Outcomes**

- Q1. If a child is in early intervention for a month and then moves out of the state do I need to collect exit data before the family leaves?**
- A1. If a family feels that an exit IFSP meeting to summarize their child's progress and plan for transition would be useful, child outcomes should also be discussed at this meeting.
- Q2. What happens if a child exits unexpectedly (i.e. they move or parents withdraw from the program) and there are no exit child outcome data?**
- A2. Every effort to collect data at the designated points should be made. Since CFCs are instructed to follow their procedure manuals and DHS directives, it is expected that exit IFSP meetings will be held within 120 days of the child's third birthday for each child enrolled in the early intervention system and that the child outcomes summary form exit rating will be completed at this time. If data is not available due to the child leaving unexpectedly, this should be noted in the child's record.
- Q3. Are child outcomes summaries to be completed for all children exiting EI after July 1<sup>st</sup> or only those for whom an initial rating has been completed?**
- A3. Exit IFSP meetings are to be held for all children who leave the early intervention program after July 1, 2006. This meeting can serve a variety of purposes, one of which may be the completion of the child outcomes exit rating.
- Q4. When will the Child Outcomes exit rating be shared with the school district?**
- A4. Ideally, the child outcomes exit rating will be shared with the school district when they attend the transition meeting, especially if this meeting is also being used as the exit IFSP meeting. This rating may also accompany the discharge summaries that the service coordinator sends to the school district when the child exits early intervention.
- Q5. How does the Child Outcomes exit rating relate to the rating that school district teams will be providing?**
- A5. The exit rating that the child receives in early intervention is "considered" along with other sources of information when the school district determines its rating.
- Q6. Is it possible that the early intervention team and the school district team will rank the same child with different numbers?**
- A6. Although it will be confusing for families, there is some chance that this may occur. While both groups are comparing the child to age-expected norms, teams may provide different ratings based on the amount of information they have about the child. It is important to remember that the child is being compared against

their same-aged peers and that the ratings occur at different times. Therefore, different skills may be expected at each of these ages.

**Q7. Can a parent refuse to have their child's assessment data used for purposes of OSEP's outcomes data collection?**

A7. The FAQ document from OSEP states "since these data are needed for federal accountability for the Part C and Part B/619 programs, families cannot refuse to have their child's assessment data included in the aggregate".

**Q8. What if a parent declines an exit IFSP meeting or does not show to the meeting? Can ratings be completed without the family?**

A8. Since federal guidelines stipulate that an IFSP meeting must include at least the parent and the service coordinator, an exit IFSP meeting cannot be conducted without a parent present. If a family feels uncomfortable determining their child's rating, team members should reiterate information that the family has shared at other times and show how this information is being incorporated to determine the rating. Since different families will demonstrate different levels of comfort with expressing information in a meeting, the rest of the team should work to increase the parents' comfort level and reinforce the important role that families have in the early intervention process.

**Q9. Can the exit meeting be completed via phone conference if the parent does not wish to participate in a face-to-face meeting?**

A9. Current policies allow for IFSP team members to participate by phone, if necessary. The parent and the service coordinator could be at the family's home (or other mutually agreed upon location) with providers phoning in if this is more convenient for the family. While this is not considered best practice, it is allowable in order to facilitate the full IFSP team's participation.

**Q10. Will child outcomes information be examined during the CFC monitoring process?**

A10. Yes. Monitors will be checking for the presence of child outcomes information for all initial IFSPs developed after April 1, 2006. They will also be monitoring for completion of child outcomes at all annual and exit IFSP meetings occurring after July 1, 2006.

**Q11. Will DHS mandate that all providers complete at least the online child outcomes training?**

A11. DHS does not currently plan to make child outcomes training mandatory for providers, however, the EI Training Program has made an online training as well as face-to-face trainings available to providers throughout the state. All new providers will receive information about the child outcomes process when they attend the Systems Overview training.

**Q12. If a child is getting only one direct service, is that provider expected to provide ratings for each outcome?**

A12. The IFSP team , which includes not only direct service providers, but also the child's service coordinator and the family, are expected to share information that would allow the team to reach consensus on all three outcomes.

**Q13. When children enter the early intervention system less than 120 days before their third birthday, are two ratings expected?**

A13. It is anticipated that children will receive ratings at entry (initial IFSP), annual review, and exit (within 120 days of the child's third birthday). If entry and exit both fall within the time period for the exit IFSP meeting, it is not expected that two different ratings will be provided.

**Family Outcomes**

**Q14. How were the families chosen for survey delivery?**

A14. Families were chosen randomly after meeting certain requirements. Children who were expected to have either a six month or annual review (based on their current IFSP date) during the months of May and June were pulled from the Cornerstone database. A certain number of children that speak both English and Spanish were then selected from that sample. Each CFC had at least some children selected, but numbers of children selected varied based on the size of the CFC.

**Q15. Why did some families receive more than one survey?**

A15. Families may receive more than one survey if they have more than one child in the early intervention system. Families who have multiple children that entered the system on the same date may receive more than one survey at the same time. Focus group families indicated that parents might have different feelings about particular survey items based on the needs of each of their children. We wanted to provide families an opportunity to express these differences if they existed.

**Q16. What do I do with the survey if I don't have a meeting with the family?**

A16. If a meeting does not occur and the survey is not delivered, please mark the reason for non-delivery on the outside of the survey and return it to the EI Training Program, 7550 W. 183<sup>rd</sup> St., Tinley Park, IL 60477. It is important to return these surveys so that a process that will maximize the number of surveys that reach families can be developed. Providing honest feedback about the reasons for non-delivery is essential to this process.

**Q17. What do I do with the postcard on the outside of the envelope?**

A17. Check to make sure that the postcard is written in the primary language of the family and remove it before delivering the envelope to the family. The postcard should then be placed in the mail approximately one week after the survey is hand-delivered to the family.

**Q18. When will we receive our next batch of surveys?**

A18. The pilot period for the family outcomes survey was May –June 2006. The information gathered during this period will help Illinois establish its baseline performance. Based on the information gathered during the pilot, the survey will

be undergoing revisions and a new version will be used during the next round of surveying. The survey will be revised by September 1, 2006. Once the revised version is available, new surveys will need to be printed and prepared for distribution. Based on this timeline, surveys will probably not be received by CFCs until at least October.