

# Child Outcome Summary (COS) Reference Guide

This quick reference guide is intended to provide key information for understanding the COS process. Providers may refer to this guide while preparing to explain the COS process to a family, meet with the family to select descriptor statements, during analysis of COS data for program improvement or as a reminder for how COS data are collected and reported.

## Three Global Child Outcomes

1. Positive social-emotional skills and social relationships.
2. Acquisition and use of knowledge and skills including language and communication.
3. Use of appropriate behaviors to meet their needs.

## Child Outcome Summary Ratings and Descriptor Statements

The IFSP team will use professional observation, parent and other caregiver report and evaluation and other assessment results to assign a COS rating for the child in each outcome area. The COS decision tree must be used to help the IFSP team reach consensus.

7	During every-day routines and activities related to this outcome area, the child uses all age-expected skills.
6	During every-day routines and activities related to this outcome area, the child has all of the skills we would expect to see for a child their age and there are still some concerns.
5	During every-day routines and activities related to this outcome area, the child is using some skills that are similar to a slightly younger child but mostly using age expected skills.
4	During every-day routines and activities related to this outcome area, the child is using some skills that are age-expected but mostly using skills similar to a slightly younger child.
3	During most every-day routines and activities related to this outcome area, the child is using skills that come right before age-expected skills. These skills are similar to a slightly younger child.
2	During every-day routines and activities related to this outcome area, the child is mostly using important skills similar to a much younger child.
1	During every-day routines and activities related to this outcome area, the child uses important-skills similar to a much younger child.

## Progress Categories

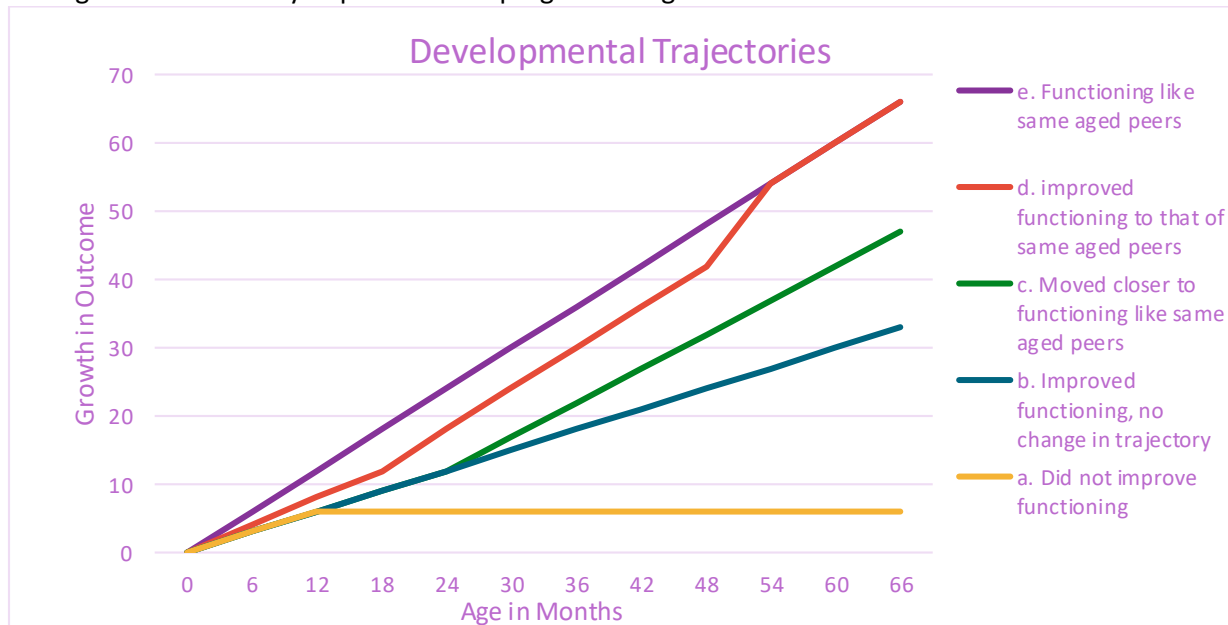
Progress categories give us a simplified way to understand the progress we see in a child's development during the time they are in the program. The progress category is derived from changes between the child's entry and exit Summary of Functional Performance ratings and is most useful as a manageable way to understand developmental changes in a large group of children served by a program.



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a	Did not improve functioning.
b	Improved functioning, but not sufficient to move nearer to functioning comparable to same-aged peers.
c	Improved functioning to a level nearer to same-aged peers but did not reach it.
d	Improved function to reach a level comparable to same-aged peers.
e	Maintained functioning at a level comparable to same-aged peers.

The figure below visually depicts the five progress categories.



Further information on the meaning and calculation of the progress categories can be found at:

- [How Data from the COS Form Can Be Used to Address the OSEP Reporting Requirement \(PDF\)](#)
- [Federal Reporting Categories for Child Outcomes Data \(PDF\)](#)
- [Calculating OSEP Categories from COSF Responses \(PDF\)](#)

## Summary Statements

ESIT reports summary statements for each of the three child outcome areas and shows the impact of early intervention. These data are considered at the local, state and federal levels to demonstrate that what we do really makes a difference in the development and well-being of young children with disabilities. Summary Statements use the progress categories to create an overall view of the progress made by children who received ESIT services.

**Summary Statement One (SS1):** Of those children who entered the program below age expectations in each outcome, the percent who substantially increased their rate of growth by the time they exited the program.

Other ways to think about SS1:

- How many children changed growth trajectories during their time in the program?

- What percent of the children who entered the program below age expectations made greater than expected gains, made substantial increases in their rates of growth, i.e., changed their growth trajectories?

*This formula is how the progress categories are used to calculate the % for SS1*  $\frac{c + d}{a + b + c + d}$

**Summary Statement Two (SS2):** The percent of children who were functioning within age expectations in each outcome by the time they exited the program.

Other ways to think about SS2:

- How many children were functioning like same aged peers when they left the program?
- What percent of the children who were functioning at age expectations in this outcome area when they exited the program, including those who:
  - Started out behind and caught up and
  - Entered and exited at age level?

*This formula is how the progress categories are used to calculate the % for SS2*  $\frac{d + e}{a + b + c + d + e}$

Below is an additional visual that highlights the flow of the process from the ratings to the summary statements:

