ND Early Childhood Outcomes Process Guide

SPECIAL EDUCATION IN NORTH DAKOTA
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Section 1
Introduction

The ND Department of Public Instruction (NDDPI), Office of Special Education is committed to assuring that young children with disabilities receive high-quality services and supports. These services and supports will enable young children to be active and successful participants during their early childhood years and in the future in a variety of settings. To work toward achieving this goal, the NDDPI developed the *ND Early Childhood Outcomes (ND ECO) Process*. The ND ECO Process was developed through the collaborative efforts of local, state, and national professionals in the area of early childhood special education.

The ND ECO Process provides an entry rating for every preschool child with an IEP when they begin receiving early childhood special education services and an exit rating when the child transitions out of or exits services. The entry and exit ratings will be gathered in the following three outcome areas:
1. Children have positive social-emotional skills;
2. Children acquire and use knowledge and skills; and
3. Children use appropriate behavior to meet their needs.

The child outcome information is gathered yearly to assure that local school district programs are making a positive difference for young children with disabilities. The data is used to:

- provide information on how programs are making a difference for the children and families;
- provide information to improve early childhood special education services in North Dakota; and
- provide data to demonstrate results to all stakeholders at the local, state, and federal level.

What is the framework of the ND ECO Guide?

The ND ECO Process Guide was developed to provide the reader with a general understanding of the major components of the ND ECO Process. The Guide includes:

- the history of the development of the Early Childhood Outcomes Process at the federal and state level and
- a description of several components of the ND ECO Process including: Anchor Tools, the ND Child Outcome Summary Form, and Parent Participation.

An Appendix is included which provides resources to assist professionals in implementing the ND ECO Process. Several ND documents are located in the Appendix such as the *ND Child Outcomes Summary Form, ND COSF Quality Assurance Checklist and Directions,* and the document *Questions and Answers – ND Early Childhood Outcomes Process*.

Several valuable documents from the Early Childhood Outcomes Center are referenced throughout the Guide. These documents are located at the Early Childhood Outcomes Center website at:
http://ectacenter.org/eco/

Who are the intended readers of the ND ECO Guide?

The ND ECO Process Guide is written for professionals responsible for the implementation of the ND ECO Process within each local school district. As the ND ECO Process continues to evolve, the procedures and forms within this Guide are updated. The writers have dated each document and encourage readers to refer to the NDDPI website for updates.

What are the purposes of the ND ECO Guide?

Purposes of the ND ECO Process Guide are for readers to develop an understanding of:

- the federal and state requirements for collection of information on three specific child outcomes;
- the development and components of the ND Early Childhood Outcomes Process;
- the three child outcomes and the purpose for measuring child outcomes;
- the importance of looking at a child's ability to function in the three outcome areas and how the outcome ratings will benefit the child and family; and
- how to summarize the data on the ND Early Childhood Outcomes Form and report this information

ND Early Childhood Outcomes Committee

The NDDPI wishes to thank the ND ECO Committee. Each member of the Committee dedicated time and effort in assuring the ND ECO Process was a high quality and comprehensive process which enables young children to be active and successful participants during their early childhood years and in the future in a variety of settings.

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Section 2
Early Childhood Outcomes - Federal Requirements

The Individuals with Disabilties Education Improvement Act 2004, IDEA, includes a heightened emphasis on accountablity, focusing on improving educational results for children with disabilities. This emphasis on accountability is driven by the Government Performance and Results Act 1993 (GPRA) which requires federal agencies to identify goals for every federal program and to measure and report progress toward those goals. Judging the performance of federal programs requires looking not only at process but also at outcomes.

Why do we measure child outcomes?

In 2001, the U.S. Office of Management and Budget introduced the Performance Assessment Rating Tool (PART) to align the federal budget development process with the performance data required by GPRA. In 2002, when IDEA Part C and Part B Preschool were assessed, the finding was “results not demonstrated” meaning that insufficient data existed on which to determine the performance of programs. The federal Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) is responsible for ensuring state compliance with IDEA. The finding of the PART assessment reinforced the need for OSEP to develop a system to provide data demonstrating the impact of IDEA programs.

How were the child outcomes developed?

To determine the preschool outcomes, OSEP funded the Early Childhood Outcomes (ECO) Center to build consensus around a set of child and family outcomes. The outcomes needed to provide the data that would measure the impact of early childhood programs on children from birth to five with disabilities and their families.

As part of the groundwork for the ECO Center, OSEP convened a focus group on January 2003. The purpose of the meeting was to identify child and family outcomes, performance indicators, and assessment methodologies to measure progress of children birth through five years of age who are served under IDEA-Part C and IDEA-Part B. Participants in the OSEP sponsored January 2003 focus group recommended a set of core areas for child outcomes and indicators. Between fall 2003 and spring 2005, the ECO Center convened numerous stakeholder groups to gather input on what the outcomes should be and to review and comment on initial drafts of the outcomes.

Based on the input received, the ECO Center recommended an overall goal and three outcomes for children with disabilities participating in early intervention and preschool special education. The overall goal is to enable young children to be active and successful participants during their early childhood years and in the future in a variety of settings. Three outcomes have been identified as indicators of progress toward this goal. These outcomes are:

1. Children have positive social-emotional skills;
2. Children acquire and use knowledge and skills; and
3. Children use appropriate behavior to meet their needs.

How will the data from the child outcomes be reported?

As required by IDEA 2004, OSEP directed states to develop a six year State Performance Plan (SPP) and to submit Annual Performance Reports (APRs) relating to the Indicators specified for the SPP. Each Indicator contains information such as: details of baseline data, measurable and rigorous annual targets, and improvement activities. Indicator 7 of the SPP focuses on the process to measure skills of preschool children with IEPs.

Indicator 7: Percent of preschool children with IEPs who demonstrate improved:

A. Positive social-emotional skills (including social relationships);
B. Acquisition and use of knowledge and skills (including early language/ communication and early literacy); and
C. Use of appropriate behaviors to meet their needs.

The ND Department of Public Instruction, Office of Special Education and local education agencies, LEAs, that serve preschool children with disabilities are required to report data on Indicator 7 each year as part of the APR. OSEP uses each state's data to determine how well the state's programs have helped young children and to determine whether or not local school district programs are making a positive difference for young children and their families.

A complete copy of the North Dakota State Performance Plan and Annual Performance Reports is located on the ND Department of Public Instruction website at http://www.dpi.state.nd.us/

Section 3
ND Early Childhood Outcomes Process

The NDDPI developed a pilot project process to collect data for Indicator 7 of the State Performance Plan. The process was designed to measure entry and exit functional skills of preschool children with IEPs in the three outcomes areas. This pilot project process was developed through a collaborative effort between the National Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center (NECTAC), a workgroup of North Dakota early childhood special education professionals and input from professionals providing direct service in early childhood special education.

Between February 2006 and May 2006, NECTAC and the ND Early Childhood Outcomes Committee participated in several conference calls and face-to-face meetings. These calls and meetings provided in-depth training and discussions on the components needed to develop a comprehensive implementation plan. Topics of focus during the meetings included:

- developing a common understanding of the components involved in developing a comprehensive plan for SPP - Indicator #7;
- developing a common understanding of what is included in a comprehensive measurement system and the values that guide it;
- selecting assessment tools and strategies for the pilot project;
- training relating to the Child Outcomes Summary Form; and
- determining sites, steps, and timelines for piloting the ND child outcome system.

As part of the implementation plan, the ND Early Childhood Outcomes, ND ECO, Committee established the goals and draft forms to be used in the ND ECO Pilot Project. The five goals of the ND ECO Pilot Project were:

- to determine the appropriate Anchor Tools to be used statewide that measure the OSEP early childhood outcomes requirements and meet state-determined criteria;
- to develop a process for statewide implementation of the Anchor Tools;
- to determine needed resources to implement statewide use of the Anchor Tools;
- to develop a Child Outcomes Summary Form to meet the needs of ND; and
- to determine the appropriate method to collect child outcome information at the district level and report to the state level.

Anchor Tools are assessment measures that have been determined to be appropriate for measuring the progress of young children, ages 3 through 5, with disabilities.

The ND ECO Pilot Project began May 15, 2006. Peace Garden Special Education Unit, Bismarck Special Education Unit, Emmons County Special Education Unit and Lake Region Special Education Unit participated in the initial pilot project. From May 2006 through June 2007, members from each of the initial pilot project units gathered valuable information relating to the determination of appropriate Anchor Tools, the design of the ND Child Outcomes Form, and the ND ECO Process.

On July 1, 2007, three additional special education units joined the ND ECO Pilot Project as the "Phase I" sites. These units included: Souris Valley Special Education Unit, Dickinson Special Education Unit and Morton Sioux Special Education Unit. These units joined the initial pilot project units in finalizing the initial list of the ND ECO Process Anchor Tools and fine tuning all the ND ECO Process forms and procedures. Piloting the ND ECO Process allowed ND to develop forms and procedures that were used when the Process was implemented statewide on July 1, 2008.

Preschool children to be included in the ND ECO Process are children ages three through five years of age who will be receiving early childhood special education preschool services for at least six months. If a child enters preschool services and will not be receiving preschool services for longer than 6 months, the district will not complete entry or exit scores for the child.

What is the ND ECO Process?

The ND Early Childhood Outcomes (ND ECO) Process can be completed in conjunction with three other processes: the ND Early Childhood Transition Process, the ND Evaluation Process, and the Individualized Education Program (IEP) Planning Process. Additional guidance for these processes can be found at: http://www.dpi.state.nd.us/speced/index.shtm

The following is a brief description of the ND ECO Process. Additional information relating to this Process is provided throughout the ND ECO Process Guide.

The steps within ND ECO Process include:

1. When a child enters into early childhood special education services, discuss the ND ECO Process with parents and professionals. The North Dakota Early Childhood Outcomes Project Brochure, located in Appendix A, provides general information that will assist in this discussion. Entry into Part B early childhood special education services could be when a child: 1) is newly identified as eligible for Part B; 2) transitions from Part C to Part B; 3) enters a ND ECSE program from another state; or 4) reenters a program after an exit rating was completed.

2. As part of the process to gather information needed to determine the child's outcome ratings, determine and administer the most appropriate Anchor Tool. The process that this step will be incorporated into will depend on the child, e.g., if the child is transitioning from Part C services, determination of the Anchor Tool may be part of the early childhood transition process; for children newly identified as eligible for Part B services, this step in the process may be part of the ND Evaluation Process. If an Anchor Tool has been done recently for the child, the results of this assessment may be used to complete the ND Child Outcomes Summary Form.
3. As part of the IEP process, the team should discuss the three child outcomes areas and the COSF rating score that most closely matches to the child's performance using the Anchor Tool scores and other valuable information from IEP Team Members.
4. Complete the ND Child Outcomes Summary Form by determining the appropriate ratings that characterize the child's skills and behaviors in each outcome area and provide evidence to support these ratings. Entry ratings can be determined up to 60 days upon entrance to early childhood special education services.
5. The ND ECO Process must also be completed when a child exits early childhood special education services if they have been receiving services for at least 6 months. Following the ND ECO Process, exit and progress ratings should be determined during the time period right before the child leaves early childhood special education services or by the time the child turns 6 years of age.

Section 4
Anchor Tools

What are Anchor Tools?

Anchor Tools are assessment measures that have been determined to be appropriate for measuring the progress of young children, ages 3 through 5, with disabilities. Information gathered from the Anchor Tool along with other valuable information from IEP team members will provide the information needed to determine the extent to which the child displays behaviors and skills expected for his or her age related to each outcome area. Team discussions and the use of a state approved Anchor Tool and the ND Child Outcome Summary Form allows for this comparison.

The North Dakota Early Childhood Outcomes (ND ECO) Committee strongly recommends that the same Anchor Tool used for a child upon entry be used for that child upon exit from the ECSE services. If a district uses a different measurement tool at entry than at exit, they should provide a description of how and to what extent different Anchor Tools are comparable in what they measure.

Please refer to the current list of approved Anchor Tools located in the Appendix. The Anchor Tools that have been selected and approved meet the necessary criteria described on page 9 of this document. The reader is encouraged to check the following NDDPI website for updates to the Anchor Tool list.
https://www.nd.gov/dpi/SchoolStaff/SpecialEd/EarlyChildhoodSpecialEducation/

How were the initial Anchor Tools chosen?

The ND ECO Committee participated in an extensive process of reviewing each of the nominated assessment measures and examined them against predetermined criteria that contained multiple properties that were considered essential for an adequate Anchor Tool. The initial list of assessment measures came from a survey conducted by the North Dakota Department of Public Instruction, Office of Special Education (2006). The survey asked each special education unit in North Dakota to share information about the early childhood assessment measures currently being used in the school districts served by the special education unit. Assessment measures that were reported by the special education units in the state were subject to the review.

What criteria were used to select approved Anchor Tools?

The initial criteria that were used in the review were selected by the ND ECO Committee through strategic planning. Criteria that were considered essential to assure integrity of the process were included in the review criteria. The criteria consisted of:

1. How well does the instrument address each of the three outcome areas including a) Positive social/emotional skills including social relationships, b) Acquiring and using knowledge and skills, and c) Use of appropriate behavior to meet needs.
   Criteria: Each instrument was rated as to how well it addressed the three outcomes on a continuum including: a) Low, b) Medium, and c) High.
2. Are the items, activities and materials culturally appropriate for the different populations served?
   Criteria: Each instrument was rated on a continuum including: a) Yes, b) Yes, with exceptions, c) Somewhat, and d) No.
3. Is the instrument appropriate for children with disabilities?
   Criteria: Each instrument was rated as "Yes, it is appropriate for children with disabilities" or "No, it is not appropriate for children with disabilities."
4. Who is intended to administer the instrument? Do we have the qualified personnel or the capacity to train personnel?
   Criteria: Each of the instruments was rated in terms of whether or not the assessment manual contained specifications for the qualifications of "who" could administer the assessment measure and the extent to which the expectations inherent in the assessment process aligned with existing practices in the state.
5. Are there clear guides/instructions for how to adapt with diverse populations?
   Criteria: Each of the assessment instruments was rated on a continuum including: a) Yes, b) Somewhat, and c) No.
6. Do we have information on reliability and validity?
   Criteria: Each of the assessment measures was rated as being a "Yes, information on reliability and validity is provided in the manual", or a "No, the manual provides no information on reliability or validity".
7. To what extent is the instrument being used in the state?
   Criteria: Each of the assessment measures reviewed was rated on a continuum including: a) High, b) Medium, and c) Low.

How did the pilot sites determine the effectiveness of each Anchor Tool?

Assessment measures that met the specified criteria were selected for inclusion in the pilot-site field testing process. The ND ECO pilot site examiners then used each of the assessment measures to determine their effectiveness in meeting the stated outcomes of the process. The efficacy data on field-testing was gathered through the use of a formative evaluation process utilizing the *ND ECO Pilot Project Anchor Tool Feedback Form*. The form documented the reviewers perception of: 1) how well the Anchor Tool addressed each outcome area, 2) how well the Anchor Tool met the state criteria needs, 3) the strengths and weaknesses of the process used to administer the Anchor Tool during the evaluation process, and 4) the types of supports and training needed for statewide implementing of the ND ECO Process.

Another survey form entitled the *ND ECO Pilot Project Child Outcome Feedback Form* was also used to gather data on: 1) the extent to which the Child Outcomes Summary Form was user friendly, 2) whether the process allowed for input from a variety of sources, 3) formative data on the extent to which the process was conducive to a team approach, and 4) perceptions of the best place to document the child outcome summary scores for each child.

What are some of the variables to consider when selecting an Anchor Tools?

The decision as to what Anchor Tool to use will require careful consideration of a number of factors. The decision making process prior to selecting the Anchor Tool for a given child, or group of children, consists of balancing several variables. Some of these variables include:

1) the child's disability and the appropriateness of the Anchor Tool being considered;
2) factors relating to the administering and scoring of the Anchor Tool; and
3) the availability of Anchor Tools.

How is an Anchor Tool approved for statewide use?

The ND ECO Committee reviews new assessment measures nominated by users in the field. ECSE teachers and other professionals who wish to refer an assessment measure to the Committee should complete the form attached to this section and submit it with a copy of the assessment kit, scoring booklet, and examiner's manual.

The Committee will review the assessment measurement, rate the assessment measure against the stated criteria, and provide feedback to the referral source. If a decision is made to approve the assessment measure, the selection will be added to the list of state-approved assessment measures. The assessment measure may be approved for limited field-testing. If this is the case, arrangements would be made with the referral source for special permission to use the assessment measure for a limited period of time. A condition of use of the assessment measure would entail the collection of field-test data that would be gathered for subsequent review by the Committee.

ND Early Childhood Outcomes Committee
Assessment Instrument Referral Form

Instrument referred for review	Publisher	
Publication Date	Person Requesting the Review	
Address	Telephone Number	E-mail address
Copy of the Assessment Measure Included ☐ Yes ☐ No	Date for Committee Review:	
Comments from the reviewers:		
Decision		
Date of Notification		

Review Criterion for Identificaion of Anchor Tools

1. How well does the instrument address each of the three outcomes areas?

   Low Medium High

   a) Social/Emotional:

   b) Acquiring knowledge:

   c) Actions to meet needs:

2. Are the items, activities and materials culturally appropriate for different populations of students?

   Yes Somewhat No

3. Is the instrument appropriate for children with disabilities?

   Yes No

4. Who is intended to administer the instrument?

   No specified ECSE Teacher Psychologist Only Other

5. Do we have the qualified staff or the potential to train staff?

   Yes No

6. Are there clear guides or instructions for how to adapt the items to diverse populations?

   Yes Somewhat No

7. Is there information available on reliability?

   Yes No

8. Is there information available on validity?

   Yes No

9. Does the normative sample contain norms derived in the past 10 years?

   Yes No

Section 5 Early Childhood Outcomes

As described in Section 2 of this Guide, the Early Childhood Outcomes (ECO) Center was funded by the federal Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) to build consensus around a set of child and family outcomes. The ECO Center convened numerous stakeholder groups to gather input on what the outcomes should be. Based on the input received, the ECO Center recommended an overall goal and three outcomes for children with disabilities participating in early intervention and preschool special education.

What are the three child outcomes?

The overall goal is to enable young children to be active and successful participants during their early childhood years and in the future in a variety of settings. As stated earlier in this Guide, the three early childhood outcomes are: 1) Children have positive social-emotional skills; 2) Children acquire and use knowledge and skills; and 3) Children use appropriate behavior to meet their needs.

The following excerpt from the ECO Center Paper *Family and Child Outcomes for Early Intervention and Early Childhood Special Education* provides a brief explanation of each child outcome area along with examples of the behavior or skills that are part of achieving the outcome. This Paper and several additional Papers are located at: http://www.fpg.unc.edu/~eco/pages/papers.cfm

1. Children have positive social relationships.

As noted in the discussion of the first family outcome, a caring, warm relationship between a parent and the child is the foundation for all subsequent development. From this foundation, the young child begins to develop a positive sense of self and can begin to build more relationships with other family members and those outside of the family such as peers. Making new friends and learning to get along with others is an important accomplishment of the early childhood years. Children develop a sense of who they are by having rich and rewarding experiences interacting with adults and peers. They also learn that different rules and norms apply to different everyday settings and that they need to behave accordingly. All children need support from adults in learning how to be successful participants in their social world but some children who face challenges in this area need additional or specialized support.

Children who achieve this outcome show a variety of behaviors related to making and maintaining positive social relationships in age-appropriate ways. For example, they:

- *Demonstrate attachment with the significant caregivers in their lives.*
- *Initiate and maintain social interactions.*
- *Behave in a way that allows them to participate in a variety of settings and situations, for example, on the playground, at dinner, at the grocery store, in child care, etc.*
- *Demonstrate trust in others.*

- *Build and maintain relationships with children and adults.*
- *Regulate their emotions.*
- *Understand and follow rules.*
- *Solve social problems.*

2. Children acquire and use knowledge and skills.

Over the early childhood period, children display tremendous changes in what they know and what they can do. Everyday life can present children with a wide variety of natural learning opportunities that serve to help children acquire progressively more advanced skills. Parents and other adults support children's acquisition of knowledge and skills by providing children with safe, nurturing and stimulating environments in which learning can flourish. Children with special needs can face a variety of challenges related to acquiring knowledge and skills and may need additional supports to realize their potential. The knowledge and skills acquired in the early childhood years, especially those related to communication, pre-literacy and pre-numeracy, provide the foundation for success in kindergarten and the early school years.

Children who achieve this outcome show a variety of behaviors related to acquiring and using knowledge and skills across a variety of everyday routines and activities. For example, they:

- *Display curiosity and an eagerness for learning.*
- *Explore their environment.*
- *Explore and play with people and objects including toys, books and other materials.*
- *Engage in daily learning opportunities through manipulating toys and other objects in an appropriate manner.*
- *Use vocabulary either through spoken means, sign language, or through augmentative communication devices to communicate in an increasingly complex form.*
- *Learn new skills and use these skills in play, for example, by completing a puzzle or building a fort.*
- *Acquire and use the precursor skills that will allow them to begin to learn reading and mathematics in kindergarten.*
- *Show imagination and creativity in play.*

3. Children take appropriate action to meet their needs.

As children develop, they become increasingly more capable of acting on their world. Babies cry to communicate hunger whereas an older child can ask for something to eat. Children have a variety of needs – to eat, sleep, play, move, explore, and communicate to name but a few. With the help of supportive adults, young children become able to address their needs in more sophisticated ways and with increasing

independence over the course of the early childhood years. They integrate their developing skills, such as fine motor skills and increasingly complex communication skills, to achieve a goal that is of value to them, such as showing their artwork to an adult and describing what it is or pointing to a toy and asking for it. Children with disabilities may use specialized technology or may need assistance from adults to allow them to meet their needs.

Children who take appropriate action to meet their needs show a variety of behaviors related to this outcome. For example, they:

- *Use gestures, sounds, words, signs or other means to communicate wants and needs.*
- *Meet their self care needs (feeding, dressing, toileting, etc.). Their ability to meet self care needs allows them to participate in everyday routines and activities.*
- *Use objects (for example, forks, sticks, pencils, crayons, clay, scissors, switches, other devices, etc.) as tools in appropriate ways.*
- *Move from place to place to participate in everyday activities, play, and routines.*
- *Seek help when necessary to move from place to place.*
- *Seek help when necessary to assist with basic care or other needs.*
- *Follow rules related to health and safety.*

What are functional outcomes?

The three early childhood outcomes previously described are functional outcomes. Functional outcomes refer to things that are meaningful to the child in the context of everyday living. Functional outcomes place an emphasis on “how” the child is able to carry out meaningful behaviors in a meaningful context.

Functional outcomes are not single behaviors or the sum of a series of discrete behaviors that a child learns. Functional outcomes refer to an integrated series of behaviors that allow the child to achieve the important everyday goals.

Discrete Skills	Functional Outcomes
Being able to say 10 words	Being able to use 10 words to communicate to mom that the child is hungry
Using a pincer grasp to pick up a tiny object	Using a pincer grasp to pick up cheerios and place in the mouth during finger feeding
Smiling at mom	Using a smile to signal to mom that the young child wants to continue with turn taking, or initiate an interaction

Functional outcomes refer to behaviors, often multiple behaviors that integrate skills across domains. Functional outcomes can also involve multiple domains. Skills are domain-based, separating a child’s development into discrete areas. An example of this would be gross motor skills, involving large muscle movement and fine motor skills, involving small muscle movement. Other discrete skills are found in the domains of expressive communication, receptive communication, social skills, cognitive skills, and interaction skills.

For example, a functional outcome for a 3-year-old child might be to “play interactively with other children for a period of 30 minutes.” Many discrete, domain-specific skills are required in order to accomplish this outcome. The following example shows how the child is using many “skills” that cut across all domains in interactive play with other children.

Functional Outcome "to play interactively with other children for a period of 30 minutes"

Discrete Skills	Domains
Visually recognize the presence of other children	Visual skill
Approach the other children	Gross Motor
Initiate the play interaction	Expressive Language, Interaction
Engage in motor and fine motor turn-taking	Fine motor, cognitive, interaction
Use language in reciprocal play	Expressive language, cognitive
Follow directions and requests from other children	Receptive language, cognitive, interaction

Other examples of functional outcomes versus isolated skills are listed below.

Discrete Skills

- Knows how to imitate a gesture when prompted by others
- Uses finger in pointing motion
- Uses 2-word utterances

Functional Outcomes

- Watches what a peer says or does and incorporates it into his or her own play
- Points to indicate needs or wants
- Uses 2-word utterances in engaging in back and forth verbal exchanges with a caregiver to gain information

How do I learn to think functionally?

Being able to think "functionally" rather than from the perspective of discrete skills, involves being able to ask critical questions that will force us to think beyond an isolated skill and consider the larger perspective of "how" the child is using the skill to achieve a critical outcome or purpose. The example of "using a pointing behavior" to indicate needs or wants can serve as the basis for the critical questions that would force us to think functionally.

- **If you know that a child can point, do you know that the child can communicate wants and needs?** The answer is no. One of the skills on an assessment may be to use the index finger to explore the holes in a board. Theoretically an uncommunicative child could perform this skill.
- **If you know that a child can't point, do you know that the child can't communicate his wants and needs?** A child with physical limitations may not be able to use the fingers, hands, or arms for any purposeful activities but may be very fluent in the use of oral language. A nonverbal child with limited hand/arm mobility may be very fluent in communication through the use of adaptive technology that allows the child to use a voice-activated communication device with a head switch.
- **How does knowing about pointing help you understand how the child takes action to meet needs?** From a developmental perspective, the child can or cannot point. This would have an impact on some of the daily living skills requiring a pointing response such as dialing or punching the numbers on a telephone, using a key-board, and even activating many of the battery operated toys. But it doesn't really tell us about "functional outcomes" in any major life area. A child could communicate very effectively without a pointing response. A child could learn to play appropriately, use a telephone, send electronic messages, dress self and eat appropriately.

Functional outcomes go beyond the exact "form" of developmental skills. Almost all of the items on our assessment measures consist of discrete development skills that may or may not be important to the child's functioning on an outcome.

Walking over to the group is not essential. The child could propel a wheelchair, use a walker, or indicate to an adult that they need assistance. The essential component of the behavior for the outcome is "approaching the other children," and there are many different skills that can be used to achieve that outcome. Using language in reciprocal play does not have to involve spoken words. The child could point to pictures, use sign language, or use an augmentative communication device. As long as the other children understand the message using the alternative format, the child is "using language in reciprocal play." It is interesting to note that the form of the "skill" is less important that the actual functional outcome.

Functional outcomes reflect global functioning. Each outcome is a snapshot of the whole child. It conveys the status of the child's current functioning across settings and situations. It is far more than a sequence of skills split by domain and observed in a standardized format. It is a story of how the child uses all of the skills acquired to navigate through life with meaning and purpose.

Section 6
ND Child Outcomes Summary Form

The NDDPI Office of Special Education utilizes the Child Outcomes Summary Form (COSF) to document the three child outcomes scores. The COSF is a form and process developed by the Early Childhood Outcomes Center that provides a 7-point scale for describing children's functioning compared to age expectations in each of the three outcome areas required by OSEP. The COSF provides a way for teams to summarize the child's level of functioning using information from many sources including assessment measures and parent and provider reports.

The COSF provides North Dakota with the data to address the OSEP reporting requirement as well as look at the child outcomes data in other ways. Using the COSF does not require that programs collect more data about children's progress; it is a mechanism to summarize assessment information for federal reporting as well as for accountability, program planning, and program improvement.

Benefits of using the ND Child Outcomes Summary Form

- Uses multiple sources of information to describe how the child is functioning in the three child outcome areas
- Allows a method for the use of a variety of Anchor Tools to be used throughout ND with the results aggregated on the same scale
- Is based on a rating scale that considers the child's functioning compared to other children of the same age
- Allows ND to address the OSEP reporting requirements as well as look at the child outcome data in other ways
- Is based on a child's functioning and not what a child can do in ideal circumstances
- Documents a child's movement toward typical development
- Documents the extent of the child's progress
- Provides a common framework for deciding on child outcomes, which promotes uniformity in implementation of the overall child outcome system in a district and across the state

What is the 7-point scale used within the ND COSF?

The Child Outcome Summary Form uses a 7-point scale to capture a child's current level of functioning in the three child outcome areas. The summary ratings provide an overall picture of how the child functions for each outcome area across a variety of typical settings and people in their life at a particular time in their life.

In addition to summarizing across settings and situations, the rating process compares a child's skills and behaviors to those of their peers. For each of the three outcome areas, the team decides the extent to which the child displays behaviors and skills expected for their age.

The ECO Center document, *Instructions for Completing the Child Outcomes Summary* Form, provides instructions on how to complete the Child Outcome Summary Form along with information relating to the 7-point summary scale. Included in this ECO Center document is the *Definitions of Outcomes Ratings* chart which is also found on Page 22 of the ND ECO Guide.

The following excerpt from this document and chart are located at: http://www.fpg.unc.edu/~eco/assets/pdfs/COSF_Instructions.pdf

The summary scale is based on a developmental framework that assumes:

1. *Children develop new skills and behaviors and integrate those skills and behaviors into more complex behaviors as they get older.*
2. *These skills and behaviors emerge in a somewhat predictable developmental sequence in most children, thus allowing for descriptions of what 2 year olds generally do, what 3 year olds generally do, etc.*
3. *The development of children with disabilities can be compared to the development of their same-aged peers.*
4. *Some of the skills and behaviors that develop early serve as the foundation for skills in predictable ways. Teachers and therapists can use the earlier skills to help children move to the next higher level of functioning developmentally. We refer to these earlier skills that serve as the base and are conceptually linked to the later skills, as "**immediate foundational skills**." For example, children play along side one another before they interact in play.*
5. *Some children's development is characterized by delays, meaning they acquire skills and behaviors at a substantially slower pace than other children.*
6. *Some children's development is atypical in that their functioning is so different from that of other children their age that it is considered outside the limits of age expected behavior for children that age.*

Definitions for Outcome Ratings

Overall Age-Appropriate	**Completely** *means*:	**7**	• Child shows functioning expected for his or her age in **all or almost all everyday situations** that are part of the child's life. Functioning is considered **appropriate** for his or her age. • No one has any concerns about the child's functioning in this outcome area.
		6	• Child's functioning generally is considered **appropriate** for his or her age but there are **some significant concerns** about the child's functioning in this outcome area. These concerns are substantial enough to suggest monitoring or possible additional support. • Although age-appropriate, the child's functioning may border on not keeping pace with age expectations.
Overall Not Age-Appropriate	**Somewhat** *means:*	**5**	• Child shows functioning expected for his or her age **some of the time and/or in some settings and situations**. Child's functioning is a mix of age-appropriate and not age-appropriate behaviors and skills. • Child's functioning might be described as like that of a **slightly younger child***.
		4	• Child shows occasional age-appropriate functioning across settings and situations. More functioning is **not** age-appropriate than age-appropriate.
	Nearly *means:*	**3**	• Child does **not yet** show functioning expected of a child of his or her age in any situation. • Child uses **immediate foundational skills,** most or all of the time, across settings and situations. Immediate foundational skills are the skills upon which to build age-appropriate functioning. • Functioning might be described as like that of a **younger child***.
		2	• Child occasionally uses **immediate foundational skills** across settings and situations. More functioning reflects skills that are **not** immediate foundational than are immediate foundational.
	Not yet *means*:	**1**	• Child does **not yet** show functioning expected of a child his or her age in any situation. • Child's functioning does **not yet include immediate foundational skills** upon which to build age-appropriate functioning. • Child functioning reflects skills that developmentally come before immediate foundational skills. • Child's functioning might be described as like that of a **much younger child***.

*The characterization of functioning like a younger child only will apply to some children receiving special services, such as children with developmental delays

What are immediate foundational skills?

As stated in the 7-point Rating Scale categories 1-4, part of the team discussion focuses on the level of the child's immediate foundational skills. Foundational skills are also referred to as prerequisite skills or precursor skills. They are building blocks that children learn to utilize to develop subsequent, higher-level skills.

Some of the skills and behaviors that develop early serve as the foundation for later skills and behavior. Immediate foundational skills are earlier skills that serve as the base and are conceptually linked to the later skills. These skills can be used to help children move to the next higher level of functioning developmentally. See the appendix for further information relating to Foundational Skills.

How does the team complete the ND ECO Child Outcomes Summary Form?

The ND COSF consists of two sections. The first section requires the team to complete child identification information along with the dates the entry and exit ratings were completed, dates preschool special education services began and ended, Anchor Tool used, and who attended the meeting. This information should be completed during the meeting at which the ratings were completed.

North Dakota Child Outcomes Summary Form

Child's Name:	**Date of Birth:**
ENTRY Ratings: Date entry summary ratings were completed:	
Date Preschool Special Education Services began:	
Persons involved in deciding the entry summary ratings (name, role):	
Anchor Tool used for the Entry Ratings:	
EXIT Ratings: Date exit summary ratings were completed:	
Date Preschool Special Education Services ended:	
Exit Rating not completed because:	
Persons involved in deciding the exit summary ratings (name, role):	
Anchor Tool used for the Exit Rating (A description of how and to what extent different tools are comparable in what they measure must be provided if the district uses a different measurement tool at entry than at exit):	

Section Two of the ND COSF provides separate sections for each child outcome area. Each section provides an area for the team to document the rating for the outcome area as well as the Sources of Information and Supporting Evidence which was used by the team to determine the rating.

Child Summary Ratings

Outcome Area 1 - Positive Social-Emotional Skills (Including Social Relationships)

- Relating with adults
- Relating with other children
- Following rules related to groups or interacting with others

1a. **To what extent does this child show age-appropriate functioning, across a variety of settings and situations, on this outcome?**

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Child uses no immediate foundational skills across settings and situations.	Child rarely uses immediate foundational skills across settings and situation.	Child uses immediate foundational skills across settings and situations most or all of the time.	Child rarely uses age -appropriate skills. More behavior is not age-appropriate than is age-appropriate.	Child uses a mix of age-appropriate and not age-appropriate behavior and skills all of the time.	Some concerns about child's functioning with regard to the outcome area.	The child uses age-appropriate behavior and skills in all or almost all everyday situations.

	Rating	**Sources of Information**	**Supporting Evidence**
Entry			
Exit			

1b. (If question 1a has been answered previously): **Has the child shown *any* new skills or behaviors related to positive social-emotional skills (including positive social relationships) since the last outcomes summary?** (Check one)

Progress	Yes	1→	Describe progress:
	No	2	

What types of <u>Sources of Information</u> should the team consider?

Many types of information could be considered in selecting a rating. In addition to the state approved Anchor Tool, results from other types of information may include but are not limited to: parent and clinical observations, curriculum-based assessments, norm-referenced assessments, service provider notes about performance in difference situations, and progress and issues identified in the IEP present level of educational and functional performance.

What is included in the <u>Supporting Evidence</u> section of the ND COSF?

The Supporting Evidence should: correspond to the specific outcome area; cover all appropriate aspects of the outcome; provide examples of the child's everyday functioning in the outcome area; provide discipline specific evidence to support the outcome area; and provide an overall picture of how the child functions for the outcome area across settings and situations. (see Appendix - Quality Assurance Checklist and Directions)

When does the team complete the entry scores and exit ratings?

Entering Part B early childhood special education services could be when a child: 1) is newly identified as eligible for Part B; 2) transitions from Part C to Part B; 3) enters a ND ECSE program from another state; or 4) reenters a program after an exit rating was completed. Entry ratings can be determined up to 60 days upon entrance into early childhood special education services.

The ND ECO Process must also be completed when a child exits early childhood special education services if they have been receiving services for at least 6 months. Exit ratings should be completed during the time period right before the child leaves the early childhood special education services or by the time the child turns 6 years of age.

When does the team complete the ND COSF section relating to Progress?

The team must complete questions relating to progress at the same meeting when the team completes the child's exit rating. Check yes or no to indicate if the child has made progress since the entry rating date. Progress is defined as the acquisition of at least one new skill or behavior related to the outcome. Next, the team must describe the general nature of the progress in the space provided.

What is the Quality Assurance Checklist?

To assure consistent high quality data within each ND Child Outcomes Summary Form (ND COSF), the ND Early Childhood Outcomes Committee developed and piloted the ND COSF - Quality Assurance Checklist. The ND COSF Checklist is completed by individuals responsible to assure quality data within their district/unit. The information gathered from the review will provide valuable information which will assist in determining training needs for the district/unit.

A complete copy of the Quality Assurance Checklist and Directions is located in the Appendix.

What resources are available to assist in the team in determining the child's rating scale?

Several companion pieces can serve as resources for unique barriers that may be encountered by the team when completing the ND COSF. The Early Childhood Outcomes Center has developed the *Decision Tree for Summary Rating Discussions*. The Decision Tree represents a series of questions about the extent to which a child exhibits age-appropriate skills and behaviors. Responses to questions on the Decision Tree guide the user to a specific rating category on the 7-point scale. Walking through the questions can guide a rating-scale discussion or confirm a final rating decision. The Decision Tree is located at:
http://ecoutcomes.fpg.unc.edu/resources/decision-tree

Additional resources from the ECO Center include:
Child Outcome Summary Form (COSF) Discussion Prompts at:
http://www.ectacenter.org/~pdfs/meetings/outcomes2007/COSF_discussion_prompts_4-4-07.pdf

Age-Expected and Immediate Foundational Skills and the Child Outcome Summary Form (COSF) 7-Point Rating Scale at:
http://ectacenter.org/~pdfs/eco/IA6Immediate_foundational_skills.pdf

What if We Can't Reach Consensus? at:
http://ectacenter.org/~pdfs/eco/Consensus.pdf

Section 7
Family Involvement

An important component to a comprehensive early childhood outcomes system is the information that is gathered from parents about their child. Parents and other family caregivers have unique insights about their child's capabilities across settings and daily routines. Involving the family in determining the rating on the child outcome summary form will increase the accuracy of the data because of the variety and array of information parents have about their children. Parents are keen observers of their child's behavior and have the greatest investment in their progress.

To assist parents and other interested individuals in developing a basic understanding of the early childhood outcomes process, the ND ECO Committee has developed a brochure, *North Dakota Early Childhood Outcomes Project*, included in the Appendix. This brochure addresses the following questions:

1. What are Early Childhood Outcomes?
2. How will the outcome date be gathered?
3. When the information about my child is compiled, will our names be included?
4. Who needs this information?
5. How will this information be used?

It is recommended that the brochure be given to the parents before the ND ECO Process begins.

The Team Process

Parents should participate in team discussions relating to the determination of the early childhood outcomes ratings for their child. However, this process should be seamless and be infused into the Evaluation and IEP processes.

Throughout the entire sequence of activities from initial referral for evaluation to the development of the IEP which includes the ND ECO Process, parents are expected be active participants in team activities, contributing information about their child. During the child's IEP meeting, input should also be gathered by asking questions about their child's development as it relates to the three outcome areas.

Parent input relating to their child's functioning can be gathered in the three child outcome areas in a variety of ways. The ECO Center has developed documents that will assist in gathering information from families to determine the extent to which their child is functioning according to expectations for his or her age. These documents include: **"***Script" for Team Discussion of Outcomes Rating* found at: http://www.ectacenter.org/eco/assets/pdfs/Team_discussion_of_outcomes.pdf and *Including Families in the Rating Discussion* found at: http://www.fpg.unc.edu/~eco/assets/pdfs/Role_of_Families.pdf

As part of the COSF rating discussions, the team must remember that the ratings are a function of program evaluation, not individual child evaluation. The parent must be made aware that assigning a rating to their child is necessary for determining the impact those services have had on their child at the end of their preschool services. Since these data are needed for federal accountability for early childhood special education services, child's assessment data must be included in the aggregation of the data.

Parent participation is critical to the work of the team. When the parent is involved as a team member, the team is capable of gathering all relevant information, reviewing the information with thorough interpretation, and making decisions based on common understanding.

Section 8
Children with Articulation/ Phonological Impairments

As part of the ND Early Childhood Outcomes, ND ECO, Process, results from an approved Screening Tool, instead of a comprehensive Anchor Tool, can be considered by the multidisciplinary team for children with a suspected articulation/phonological impairment only. In addition to the approved Screening Tool, the child's team must continue to provide a comprehensive articulation/phonological assessment.

The results of the approved Screening Tool and comprehensive articulation/phonological assessment will assist the team in several ways. The Screening Tool results will: 1) provide a brief summary of the child's functional ability in the three child outcome areas, 2) assist the team in determining the impact of the articulation/phonological impairment as it relates to the child's overall functioning, and 3) assure that there are no other areas of concern for a child. If, after reviewing the Screening Tool and communication assessment results, the team determines that additional assessment information is needed, then an approved Anchor Tool must be administered as part of the process.

What are the steps of the adapted ND ECO Process?

The steps of the adapted ND ECO Process to be used by teams for children with a suspected articulation/phonological impairment include:

1. When a child enters into early childhood special education services, discuss the ND ECO Process with parents and professionals. The North Dakota Early Childhood Outcomes Project Brochure provides general information that will assist in this discussion.

2. As part of the process to gather information needed to determine the child's outcome ratings, determine and administer the most appropriate approved Screening Tool. The results from the approved Screening Tool provide a brief summary of the child's functional ability in the three child outcome areas and assure that there are no other areas of concern for a child. In addition to the approved Screening Tool, the child's team must continue to provide a comprehensive articulation/phonological assessment. After reviewing the Screening Tool and communication assessment results, the team may determine that additional assessment information is needed, and then an approved Anchor Tool must be administered as part of the process.

3. As part of the IEP process, the team should discuss the three child outcomes areas and the COSF rating score that most closely matches to the child's performance using the Screening Tool and communication assessment results and other valuable information from IEP Team Members.

4. Complete the ND Child Outcomes Summary Form by selecting the appropriate ratings that characterize the child's skills and behaviors in each outcome area and provide evidence to support these ratings. Entry ratings can be determined up to 60 days upon entrance to early childhood special education services.

5. The ND ECO Process must also be completed when a child exits early childhood special education services if they have been receiving services for at least 6 months. Following the ND ECO Process, exit and progress ratings should be determined during the time period right before the child leaves early childhood special education services or by the time the child turns 6 years of age.

The initial list of assessment measures came from a survey conducted by the North Dakota Department of Public Instruction, Office of Special Education (2006). The survey asked each special education unit in North Dakota to share information about the early childhood assessment measures currently being used in the school districts served by the special education unit. The ND ECO Committee participated in an extensive process of reviewing each assessment measure and examined them against predetermined criteria that contained multiple properties that were considered essential for an adequate assessment measures.

How were the approved Screening Tools chosen?

Screening Tools that met the specified criteria were selected for inclusion in the pilot-site field testing process. The ND ECO pilot site examiners then used each of the Screening Tools to determine their effectiveness in meeting the stated outcomes of the process. The Screening Tools that have been selected and approved meet the necessary criteria described on page 9 of this document. The reader is encouraged to check the following NDDPI website for updates to the approved Screening Tool list.
https://www.nd.gov/dpi/SchoolStaff/SpecialEd/EarlyChildhoodSpecialEducation/

How is a Screening Tool approved for statewide use?

The ND ECO Committee reviews new Anchor Tools and Screening Tools nominated by users in the field. ECSE teachers and other professionals who wish to refer an assessment measure to the Committee should complete the form found in Section 4 of this document and submit it with a copy of the assessment kit, scoring booklet, and examiner's manual.

The Committee will review the assessment measurement, rate the assessment measure against the stated criteria, and provide feedback to the referral source. If a decision is made to approve the assessment measure, the selection will be immediately added to the list of approved Screening Tools. The Screening Tool may be approved for limited field-testing. If this is the case, arrangements would be made with the referral source for the collection of field-test data that would be gathered for subsequent review by the Committee.

Appendices

ND Early Childhood Outcomes Project Brochure

ND Early Childhood Outcomes Process Anchor Tool List

Foundational Skills by Keith Gustafson

ND COSF Quality Assurance Checklist and Directions

Questions and Answers – ND Early Childhood Outcomes Process

Who needs this information?

The Department of Public Instruction, Office of Special Education, and preschool programs that serve children with disabilities are required to report on these outcomes as part of an Annual Performance Report (APR). This is required by the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP). Summary information is available to the general public and is published annually.

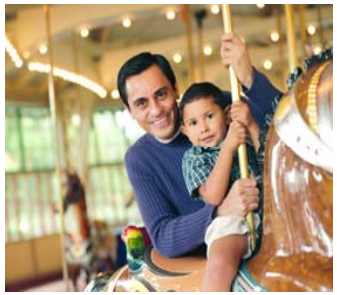
How will this information be used?

ND is committed to assuring that young children with disabilities receive high-quality services and supports. This new process of measuring child outcomes will assist in improving results for all young children with disabilities. The data will be used to:

- Provide information on how programs are making difference for the children and families
- Provide information to improve early childhood special education in North Dakota
- Provide data to demonstrate results to all stakeholders at the local, state and federal level.

The Office of Special Education Program uses each state's data to determine how well the state's programs have helped young children. They submit an annual report to the U.S. Congress as required in the new IDEA law (Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004).

North Dakota Early Childhood Outcomes Project



Kirsten Baesler, State Superintendent
Department of Public Instruction
600 E Boulevard Ave, Dept 201
Bismarck, ND 58505-0440

What are Early Childhood Outcomes?

The federal government requires states to report certain information about a child's progress to determine whether local school district programs are making a positive difference for young children with disabilities. This is not additional reporting about your individual child. It is more like a "report card" for the program itself.

The required information is specific to three outcome areas. An outcome is the benefit experienced as a result of a service or a program. These areas are broad and are designed to examine the variety of skills and abilities your child uses throughout the day. The evaluation process will look at your child's functioning in each outcome area at the beginning of his/her time in the early childhood special education program and then again at the end of his/her time in the program. The results should demonstrate the progress made by your child between entering and leaving the program.

The three outcome areas are:

(1) Children have positive social relationships.
(2) Children acquire and use knowledge and skills (like early communication and literacy skills).
(3) Children take appropriate action to meet their needs.

How will the outcome data be gathered?

Multiple sources of information will be used to assign a rating for your child in the three outcomes areas. Most of the information is already collected as part of determining your child's eligibility for special education and related services and developing an individualized education plan, IEP. This process will incorporate an approved state assessment tool.

When the information about my child is compiled, will our names be attached?

The outcome data gathered relating to your child will be shared in a way that protects your child's confidentiality. Data on individual children will be combined for reporting to provide an overall picture of the progress that children make during their participation in early childhood special education in North Dakota. Your name or your child's name will not be attached to the information that is reported publicly.

ND Early Childhood Outcomes Process
Anchor Tool List
Updated July 2010

1. *Battelle Developmental Inventory - Second Edition
2. *Developmental Assessment of Young Children (DAYC)
3. *Brigance Inventory of Early Development - II
4. *Assessment, Evaluation, and Programming System for Infants and Children (AEPS) – Second Edition
5. *Carolina Curriculum for Preschoolers with Special Needs
6. Psychoeducational Profile – Third Edition
7. *Hawaii Early Learning Profile for Preschoolers (HELP)

*Crosswalks can be found at http://ecoutcomes.fpg.unc.edu/category/topic/crosswalks

Approved Screening Tools For Children with Articulation/Phonological Impairments

1. Battelle Developmental Inventory – Second Edition Screening Test
2. Developmental Indicators for the Assessment of Learning DIAL-3
3. Brigance Inventory of Early Development – Screen II

North Dakota Child Outcomes Summary Form

Child's Name:	**Date of Birth:**
ENTRY Ratings: Date entry summary ratings were completed:	
Date Preschool Special Education Services began:	
Persons involved in deciding the entry summary ratings (name, role):	
Anchor Tool used for the Entry Ratings:	
EXIT Ratings: Date exit summary ratings were completed:	
Date Preschool Special Education Services ended:	
Exit Rating not completed because:	
Persons involved in deciding the exit summary ratings (name, role):	
Anchor Tool used for the Exit Rating (A description of how and to what extent different tools are comparable in what they measure must be provided if the district uses a different measurement tool at entry than at exit):	

Child Summary Ratings

Outcome Area 1 - Positive Social-Emotional Skills (Including Social Relationships)

- Relating with adults
- Relating with other children
- Following rules related to groups or interacting with others

1a. To what extent does this child show age-appropriate functioning, across a variety of settings and situations, on this outcome?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Child uses no immediate foundational skills across settings and situations.	Child rarely uses immediate foundational skills across settings and situation.	Child uses immediate foundational skills across settings and situations most or all of the time.	Child rarely uses age - appropriate skills. More behavior is not age-appropriate than is age-appropriate.	Child uses a mix of age-appropriate and not age-appropriate behavior and skills all of the time.	Some concerns about child's functioning with regard to the outcome area.	The child uses age-appropriate behavior and skills in all or almost all everyday situations.

	Rating	Sources of Information	Supporting Evidence
Entry			
Exit			

1b. (If question 1a has been answered previously): **Has the child shown *any* new skills or behaviors related to positive social-emotional skills (including positive social relationships) since the last outcomes summary?** (Check one)

Progress	Yes	1→	Describe progress:
	No	2	

Outcome Area 2 - Acquiring and Using Knowledge and Skills

- Thinking, reasoning, remembering, and problem solving
- Understanding symbols
- Understanding the physical and social worlds

2a. To what extent does this child show age-appropriate functioning, across a variety of settings and situations, on this outcome?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Child uses no immediate foundational skills across settings and situations.	Child rarely uses immediate foundational skills across settings and situation.	Child uses immediate foundational skills across settings and situations most or all of the time.	Child rarely uses age-appropriate skills. More behavior is not age-appropriate than is age-appropriate.	Child uses a mix of age-appropriate and not age appropriate behavior and skills all of the time.	Some concerns about child's functioning with regard to the outcome area.	The child uses age-appropriate behavior and skills in all or almost all everyday situations.

	Rating	Sources of Information	Supporting Evidence
Entry			
Exit			

2b. (If question 2a has been answered previously): **Has the child shown *any* new skills or behaviors related to acquiring and using knowledge and skills since the last outcomes summary?** (Check one)

Progress	Yes	1→	Describe progress:
	No	2	

Outcome Area 3 - Taking Appropriate Action To Meet Needs

- Taking care of basic needs (e.g. showing hunger, dressing, feeding, toileting, etc.)
- Contributing to own health and safety (e.g. follows rules, assists with hand washing, avoids inedible objects)
- Getting from place to place (mobility) and using tools (e.g., forks, strings attached to objects)

3a. To what extent does this child show age-appropriate functioning, across a variety of settings and situations, on this outcome?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Child uses no immediate foundational skills across settings and situations.	Child rarely uses immediate foundational skills across settings and situation.	Child uses immediate foundational skills across settings and situations most or all of the time.	Child rarely uses age - appropriate skills. More behavior is not age-appropriate than is age-appropriate.	Child uses a mix of age-appropriate and not age appropriate behavior and skills all of the time.	Some concerns about child's functioning with regard to the outcome area.	The child uses age-appropriate behavior and skills in all or almost all everyday situations.

	Rating	Sources of Information	Supporting Evidence
Entry			
Exit			

3b. (If question 3a has been answered previously): **Has the child shown *any* new skills or behaviors related taking appropriate action to meet needs since the last outcomes summary?** (Check one)

Progress	Yes	1→	Describe progress:
	No	2	

Foundational Skills

By Keith Gustafson – Director
Northern Plains Special Education Unit

What are foundational skills?

Foundational skills are also referred to as *prerequisite* skills or *precursor* skills. They are the building blocks that children learn to utilize to develop subsequent, higher-level skills. For example, a child doesn't immediately learn to say words or to talk. There are several foundational skills, or building blocks, that the young infant has learned and mastered that are integrated into the higher level skills referred to as "talking". The foundational skills are found in all domain areas including social, motor, cognitive, adaptive, and communication. The infant has learned several social foundational skills including interacting and engaging in turn taking with other people, making joint reference to objects with people, and socially attending to interactive games with adults and children. The young infant has mastered vocal foundational skills including how to make the mouth formations and breathing skills necessary for the cooing sounds, the babbling sounds, and the production of simple word sounds such as "ma-ma", "ba-ba" and "da-da". The infant has mastered cognitive foundational skills including knowing that by making sounds and words the infant will "get something". The infant has also learned to imitate the behaviors and sounds of the parent, enabling the infant to begin reproducing the sound combinations heard in words.

Foundational skills are also referred to as prerequisite skills or precursor skills. They are the building blocks that children learn to utilize to develop subsequent, higher-level skills.

Communication foundational skills consist of the skills learned in differentiated responses based on physiological needs. The concept is referred to as "readability of infant behaviors". Parents respond differentially to variations in infant behavior based on what they "think" the infant wants. They interpret a certain cry to mean the infant is hungry, another cry or whimper to mean the infant is uncomfortable with a wet diaper, and irritability to mean that the infant is tired.

Because the parents are consistent in their treatment of the infant based on imputed intent, the infant's differentiated responses are slowly shaped and pretty soon they begin showing signs of irritability when they are tired, whimpering when they have a wet diaper, and crying in a certain way when they are hungry.

The parent has literally shaped the communicative behaviors of the young infant; but most importantly, the infant has learned to respond differentially to various states of comfort and distress. These early foundational skills of communication are later replaced with the more advanced skill of saying “I’m hungry” or “I’m tired”.

As the cerebral cortex matures over time, the infant learns volitional movements including head control, stretching and flexing, reaching out with the arms, kicking, and turning. The infant learns to control the reflexive eye movements resulting in purposeful tracking and the ability to switch focal points. The same movements found in the basic reflexive patterns, including the increase and decrease in muscle tone, are still being used, but now the infant has learned to “use” the reflexive movements volitionally.

All subsequent skills build on earlier learned foundational skills

As the infant becomes more adept at controlling the movements, and purposefully executing movement, the basic reflexes are no longer observed. They have become “integrated” into the higher-level movement skills.

All subsequent skills build on earlier learned foundational skills. For example, the very young infant can hold a small object in a hand using the strong grasp reflex. As the grasp reflex is integrated, the infant will be able to release the object held, letting it fall to the ground. Later the infant learns to control the release, directing the object to fall into a can or a box. Later the infant will learn to hold the object (block) with a grasp involving only the thumb and index finger and release the objects quickly. They will then learn to release them, by placing one block upon the other. The basic grasp and release skills evolve into the complex activity of stacking blocks from two and three on up to ten or twelve. Eventually the young child will learn to release objects to make complex block constructions, complete puzzles, and perform daily living tasks.

What is an immediate foundational skill?

A functional outcome is composed of many, many foundational skills, cutting across several domains. Some of the skills and behaviors that develop early serve as the foundation for later skills and behavior. The skills build on earlier skills in predictable ways.

Teachers, therapists and parents can use the earlier skills to help children move to the next higher level of functioning developmentally.

Development in the early childhood years proceeds through several levels of foundational skills with skills and behaviors becoming more complex and more proficient as the child gets older. All skills that lead to higher levels of functional abilities are foundational skills. However, the set of skills and behavior that occur developmentally just prior *to* age-expected functioning can be described as the immediate foundational skills in that they are the most recent set of foundational skills that children master and move beyond.

A child whose functioning is like that of a younger child is probably showing immediate foundational skills. If the child's functioning does not meet age expectations, but is similar to the skills and behaviors that occur developmentally just prior to age expected functioning and are the basis on which to build age-expected functioning.

A child whose functioning might be described as like that of a much younger child does not meet age expectations, nor does the child demonstrate skills and behaviors on which to build age-expected functioning. The child has foundational skills, but not yet at an immediate foundational level. An example is a child who has not yet learned the pragmatics for the functional outcome of "asking the caregiver several questions across a variety of settings in the home to acquire information and knowledge". Several foundational skills may have been observed such as uses single words in labeling objects and actions, uses 3 to 5 word utterances, communicates for a variety of purposes, and engages in conversational turn-taking with mom. All of these are wonderful foundational skills, but none of them are immediate foundational skills. An immediate foundational skill would be the child uses "what, where, why and who to ask a question of the mom." After the child has learned that "last" foundational skill, all subsequent skills for that particular functional outcome become embellishments, elaborations, refinements, and generalizations of the final foundational skill.

What do the foundational skills look like?

Foundational skills can appear as either appropriate skills that would be performed by a child much younger than the child being observed or they can appear as inappropriate skills that the child has learned. For example, a three year old child may be observed to use single words to "get what is needed" thus evidencing communicative intent. The young child may use words such as "ba-ba" for bottle, "mo" for more, or "dow" for "let me down." This would be consistent with skills that would be performed by a child much younger than the child, but a developmentally appropriate form of the behavior. Or a young child may be using behaviors to express communicative intent. The young child may scream to indicate they want "down", cry to indicate the desire for "more", and may kick or hit at someone to indicate they want to discontinue an activity. The behaviors have communicative intent, but appear to be an inappropriate method for gaining adult attention or communicating. The behaviors are actually a foundational skill seen in very young infants, less than six months of age. This is in contrast to using single words to communicate, which would be a foundational skill at the 12-18 month level.

How do I know the development level of the foundational skills that I am observing?

Knowledge of the age-level placement of developmental skills is derived from background experience in observing young children and examining the developmental principles underling typical child development. Psychologists, pediatricians and other developmental specialists discuss typical child development using the concept of intraindividual change to describe the change in behaviors observed in one child over time. As a child grows and develops over time, the behaviors observed in that child change, take on new forms, and become more complex. These changes reflect the intraindividual change in the one child being observed. When the same changes are observed in all children at roughly the same chronological age, the change is referred to as interindividual. Interindividual change reflects what is referred to as a developmental function***,*** a milestone, or developmental skill.

A developmental function or milestone consists of a skill observed in all children at the same stage of maturational readiness, and within a relatively specific time interval. The task of observers of child development is to examine the intraindividual change in a given child and to compare that observation to the typical change seen in all other children of the same chronological age, or maturational level. When the observed change is consistent with the expected patterns of other children of the same age, we would attribute the change to the typical maturational process, imputing the change to the developmental function under consideration.

When the observed change is not consistent with our knowledge of the typical developmental functions of other children of the same chronological age, our task is to trace the behavior backward in the development sequence of the evolution of developmental functions, or foundational skills, and determine the developmental placement of the actual skill observed.

There are several reference charts and sources that may be used to determine the age level placement of the skill(s) being observed. Examples of reference materials include Early Learning Guidelines, developmental checklists, curriculum referenced assessment material that uses age level placements of items, and other developmentally referenced and norm referenced instruments that contain normative data on age of acquisition for individual items.

For example, one of the functional outcome areas is “Positive social-emotional skills including relating with adults, relating with other children, and flowing rules related to groups or interacting with others.” Typical social-emotional skills that we would see in a 3-year old would consist of being able to express emotions and feelings, being able to understand the rules and directions for daily living routines and simple games, and being able to use language to engage other children in play activities. A child being observed might not use language to interact with other children in play activities, but might be observed to “watch other children”, showing an interest in their activities. The child being observed might even approach the playgroup, offer a toy to anther child, or imitate the motor activities of another child. It is obvious in our observation that the child we are assessing is not demonstrating skills at the three-year-old level, but is demonstrating age appropriate foundational skills at a younger age. The skills we have observed consist of:

- Showing an interest in the activities of other children,
- Approaching other children to initiate play,
- Offering a toy to anther child, and
- Imitating the motor activities of another child.

Our next challenge is to determine the extent to which the foundational skills observed deviate from the expected norms for a typically developing child. A series of questions, directly related to the ECO Outcomes form, that will assist you in making that determination, are listed below.

1. Is the highest-level skill observed an immediate foundational skill, with the next possible variation of the skill being the age-appropriate skill desired?
2. If there are higher-level skills yet to be developed, prior to the immediate foundational skills, are the skills observed similar to a child who is slightly younger?
3. If the foundational skills observed are not consistent with those of a slightly younger child, are they consistent with that of a younger child?
4. How often does the child display immediate foundational skills across settings and situations?
5. If a child does not yet show functioning expected of a child his or her age in any situation, the child’s functioning might be described as like that of a much younger child, evidencing no immediate foundational skills, and only very limited foundational skills. Is this pattern consistent with the observations, reports, and assessment performance?

ND Child Outcome Summary Form
Quality Assurance Checklist

Child's Name_____ ☐ entry rating review ☐ exit rating review
Person completing the ND COSF review_____ Date of review_____
Child's Case Manager _____

Checklist Components				Comments
1. ND COSF was completed in a timely manner For entry – up to 60 days upon entrance to ECSE services	☐yes ☐no ☐n/a			
For exit – time period right before the child leaves ECSE services	☐yes ☐no ☐n/a			
2. The child's IEP team completed the ND COSF	☐yes ☐no ☐n/a			
3. All areas of the COSF were completed Demographic Section completed	☐yes ☐no ☐n/a			
Respond Yes (Y), No (N) or Not Applicable (NA) for each outcome	**Outcome** **1**	**2**	**3**	
Entry and/or Exit ratings for each outcome (as appropriate)				
Sources of Information were listed				
Supporting Evidence was provided for each outcome				
For Exit COSF, answers were given for each "b" section.				
4. Multiple Sources of Information Multiple Sources of Information were documented				
Approved Anchor Tool was listed				
5. Supporting Evidence is functional and addresses each outcome area Evidence relates to the outcome area				
Evidence covers appropriate aspects of the outcome area				
Evidence includes examples of the child's functioning				
Discipline-specific evidence is included				
Evidence includes performance across settings and situations				
6. Supporting Evidence supports assigned rating Evidence supports rating criteria				
Sufficient evidence to support rating				
Evidence shows comparison to child's age				
For exit rating, progress number was checked and progress described				

ND Child Outcomes Summary Form
Quality Assurance Checklist
Directions

To assure consistent high quality data within each ND Child Outcomes Summary Form (ND COSF), the ND Early Childhood Outcomes Committee developed and piloted the ND COSF - Quality Assurance Checklist. It is recommended that the ND COSF Checklist be completed by individuals responsible to assure quality data within their unit/district. The information gathered from the review of unit/district ND COSFs will provide valuable information which will assist in determining training needs for the district/unit.

Provided below are the directions to complete each section of the ND COSF Checklist. Each section within the directions corresponds with each section found on the Checklist.

Directions

Enter the child's name and check if you are reviewing entry rating data and/or exit rating data. Enter the date of the review, the person completing the review and the case manager responsible for the completion of the ND COSF for the file being reviewed.

1. ND COSF was completed in a timely manner

Entry Data can be determined up to 60 days upon entrance to early childhood special education services. Exit data should be gathered during the time period right before the child leaves early childhood special education services or by the time the child turns 6 years of age if they are receiving ESCE services beyond their 6th birth date. If the team did not complete the entry and/or exit rating in a timely manner, check no and review the data within the COSF for an explanation of the delay and note the reason in the comment section. This information may also be located in the section *Exit Rating not completed because.*

2. The child's IEP team completed the ND COSF

The ND COSF should be completed as part of the child's IEP process. IEP team members should be listed on the top section of the ND COSF. If the team completed the ND COSF, check "yes". If the IEP team did not complete the COSF, check "no" and state who completed the COSF in the comment section.

3. All areas of the ND COSF were completed

The focus of #3 is to assure that all appropriate sections within the ND COSF are **completed.** Sections 4-5-6 focus on the quality of the information within each section.

Demographic Section -

If all appropriate (entry and/or exit information) areas of the demographic section of the ND COSF are completed, check yes for this part of #3. This assures that areas have been completed. If areas are not completed, check no and add additional information in the comment section.

Top areas of the ND COSF that must be completed are:

- Child's name and birth date
- Date Entry/Exit Ratings (if child is exiting) were completed
- The reason there is no Exit rating is explained (if appropriate)
- Date preschool services began/ended
- Team members (names and their roles)
- Anchor Tool used for Entry and Exit (if child is exiting) Ratings

Outcome Areas -

To assure that information relating to each outcome area is completed, review and respond with a Yes, No, or NA for Outcome 1, 2, and 3. The Child Summary Rating Section of the ND COSF are:

- Entry/Exit (if the child is exiting) Ratings
- Sources of Information
- Supporting Evidence
- If it is an exit meeting, the "b" question, regarding Progress, must be addressed for each outcome area

4. Multiple Sources of Information were considered

Many types of quality information should be considered in determining a rating. In addition to the state-approved Anchor Tool, results from other types of information may include but are not limited to: parent and clinical observations; curriculum-based assessments; norm-referenced assessments; service provider notes about performance in different situations; and the child's IEP. Review the Sources of Information for each outcome area to assure that multiple sources of quality information were documented for each outcome and that the state-approved Anchor Tool was documented in each outcome area.

5. Supporting Evidence was functional and addressed each outcome area

Does the evidence correspond to the appropriate outcome area?

Does the information provided in the Supporting Evidence section relate to the appropriate outcome per area? In other words, does the evidence for Outcome 1 relate to social relationships, Outcome 2 to acquisition and use of knowledge and skills, Outcome 3 to taking action to meet needs?

Does the evidence cover all appropriate aspects of the outcome?
In Outcome 1, for example, does the evidence address relationships with peers as well as adults? In Outcome 2, does the evidence address thinking and problem-solving as well as language development, etc.? In 0utcome 3, does the evidence address feeding, dressing, getting from place to place, etc.?

Is the evidence functional?
Are examples of functioning provided? In other words, does the Supporting Evidence section include examples of the child's every-day functioning with emphasis on "how" the child is able to carry out meaningful behaviors in a meaningful context, rather than a list of skills or items from an assessment tool?

Is appropriate discipline-specific evidence provided to support the targeted outcome?
For example, if speech skills are concerns, do speech concerns related to socialization appear under Outcome 1, speech concerns related to learning appear under Outcome 2, and speech concerns related to getting needs met appear under Outcome 3?

Does the documentation include evidence of the child's performance across settings and situations?
The Supporting Evidence information should provide an overall picture of how the child functions for each outcome area across a variety of typical settings and people in their life. For example, the evidence should include information from the several settings the child participates in, i.e. preschool, home, community. It should also show evidence of how the child participates in a variety of situations such as playing with peers, self-help skills at school and at home.

6. Supporting Evidence supported the assigned rating

In other words, if the rating is:
7 -- Does the Supporting Evidence illustrate age-appropriate skills and behaviors?
6 – Does the Supporting Evidence illustrate skills and behaviors that are age appropriate but with an identified area of concern?
5 – Is there a mix of skills and behaviors that are age-appropriate and not age appropriate?
4 – Are there a few examples of skills and behaviors that are age appropriate, but mostly not age appropriate?
3 – Does the Supporting Evidence reflect immediate foundational skills, and no age-appropriate skills?
2 – Are there a few examples of immediate foundational skills, but most skills and behaviors are much lower than age expectations?
1 – Does the Supporting Evidence reflect skills and behaviors that are much lower than age expectations, with no immediate foundational skills?

Is enough information provided to support the rating given?
The Supporting Evidence should provide a summary of key information that supports the rating. This would include information related to the Anchor Tool.

Does the evidence reflect the child's functioning compared to same-age peers?
For example, for ratings of 1 and 2, do the child's skills and behaviors reflect those of a much younger child? For a rating of 5, does the evidence reflect a mixture of age-appropriate and not age-appropriate skills and behaviors all of the time?

Does the evidence support the progress rating for children who are exiting?
Does the evidence support the progress rating? Progress is defined as the acquisition of at least one new skill or behavior related to the outcome since the entry date. If the team checked yes, the child made progress, then the team must describe the general nature of the progress in the space provided, *Describe Progress:*

*Adapted from the The Early Childhood Outcomes Center document - **Guidance for Reviewing Completed Child Outcomes Summary Forms (COSFs): Quality Assurance** - 9/08*
http://www.fpg.unc.edu/~eco/assets/pdfs/Guidance_for_reviewing_COSFs.pdf

Questions and Answers
ND Early Childhood Outcomes Process

Updated April 2016

1. Why do we need to collect entry and exit data information for preschool children receiving special education and related services?
The federal government requires states to report certain information about children's progress to determine whether or not local school district programs are making a positive difference. The ND Department of Public Instruction, Office of Special Education, and preschool programs that serve children with disabilities are required to report this data as part of an Annual Performance Report. The US Department of Education, Office of Special Education uses each state's data to determine how well the state's programs have helped young children.

2. What is the age range for preschool children to be included in the ND Early Childhood Outcomes (ND ECO) Process?
Preschool children to be included in the ND ECO Process are children ages three through five years of age who will be receiving preschool services for at least six months. If a child enters preschool services and will not be receiving preschool services for longer than 6 months, the district will not complete entry or exit scores for the child.

Entry Data

3. When should the entry data be collected?
Entry data must be collected when a child enters Part B early childhood special education services. Entry into Part B early childhood special education services could be when a child: 1) is newly identified as eligible for Part B; 2) transitions from Part C to Part B; 3) enters a ND ECSE program from another state; or 4) reenters a program after an entry and/or exit rating were completed. Entry data can be determined **within** 60 days **of** early childhood special education service **start date**.

4. How should the Part B preschool team implement the ND ECO process for children transitioning from Part C?
As part of the process to determine Part B eligibility the team must complete the NDDPI Evaluation Process. If an Anchor Tool has been used as part of this evaluation process and this information is current for the child, you may use the results of this assessment to complete the Child Outcome Summary Form.

5. Are summer months counted in the timelines? What about ESY?
Summer does count as part of the 6-month time frame. If a child enters preschool services and it is unknown if the child will be participating in ESY preschool services, the team must collect entry data.

6. For children to be included in this data collection they must have received services for 6 months or more. Do children need to be in the same program for 6 months?
No, 6 months refers to time in service.

7. Does a child's time in service need to be consecutive?
Six months of service is generally 6 months of consecutive service. However, if a child is in a program 2 months, leaves and takes a month to move with his family and enrolls in another program across the state where he receives services for another 4 months, this would be considered equivalent to 6 months of consecutive service.

Anchor Tools

8. How were the ND Anchor Tools chosen?
The ND Early Childhood Outcomes Committee established criteria to evaluate assessment tools after consideration of federal and state requirements. The Committee then met to evaluate assessment tools currently used nationally and in ND. The tools which meet the criteria were chosen as Anchor Tools to be piloted by the Project Sites. Pilot Project sites then provided feedback to assure that each Anchor Tool met criteria. **In 2016, the Early Childhood Special Education Advisory Committee reviewed survey results from early childhood professionals across the state. The results from that survey, indicated that the ND Anchor Tools were still deemed appropriate by the early childhood professionals. It was noted that professionals should use the current revision when administering such anchor tools.**

9. How does the team decide which Anchor Tool to use for a child?
The decision as to what Anchor Tool to use will require careful consideration of a number of factors. The decision making process prior to selecting the Anchor Tool for a given child, or group of children, consists of balancing several variables. Some of these variables include: 1) the child's disability and the appropriateness of the Anchor Tool being considered; 2) factors relating to the administering and scoring of the Anchor Tool; and 3) the availability of Anchor Tools.

10. Does the child's teams have to use the same measurement tool for data collected near entry and exit?
It would be best practice to use the same Anchor Tool for entry and exit data. If a child's team uses a different measurement tool at entry than at exit, they should provide a description of how and to what extent different tools are comparable in what they measure.

Outcome Areas

11. What is a functional outcome?
Functional outcomes relate to behaviors, knowledge, and skills that are meaningful to children in their everyday lives. The outcomes refer to actions that children need to be able to carry out and to knowledge that they need to have in order to function successfully across a variety of settings and ultimately to be successful in kindergarten and later in school. To be successful in these settings, it is important for children to be able to, for example, get along with others, follow the rules in a group, continue to learn new things, and take care of their basic needs in an appropriate way.

12. How are the functional outcomes different from developmental domains?
Many assessment tools examine children's development in different domains. Domains are areas of development such as social, fine motor, gross motor, cognitive, or language. Functional outcomes refer to behaviors that are meaningful in the context of a child's everyday living. Functional outcomes focus on what the child can do and needs to be able to do in the context of his or her life. These are integrated behaviors that usually cross multiple domains and allow children to achieve something meaningful. Domains refer to areas of development that contribute to successful functioning but are not themselves the functioning.

13. What are the three outcome areas that the ND ECO Process measures?
The ND ECO process measures functional outcomes in the following three areas: children have positive social relationships; children acquire and use knowledge and skills; and children take appropriate action to meet their needs.

14. What are some examples of behaviors related to making and maintaining positive social relationships in age appropriate ways?
- ☐ Demonstrate attachment with the significant caregivers in their lives.
- ☐ Initiate and maintain social interactions.
- ☐ Behave in a way that allows them to participate in a variety of settings and situations, for example, on the playground, at dinner, at the grocery store, in child care, etc.
- ☐ Demonstrate trust in others.
- ☐ Build and maintain relationships with children and adults.
- ☐ Regulate their emotions.
- ☐ Understand and follow rules.
- ☐ Solve social problems.

15. What are some examples of behaviors related to children acquiring and using knowledge and skills across a variety of everyday routines and activities?
- ☐ Display curiosity and an eagerness for learning.
- ☐ Explore their environment.
- ☐ Explore and play with people and objects including toys, books and other materials.
- ☐ Engage in daily learning opportunities through manipulating toys and other objects in an appropriate manner.
- ☐ Use vocabulary either through spoken means, sign language, or through augmentative communication devices to communicate in an increasingly complex form.
- ☐ Learn new skills and use these skills in play, for example, by completing a puzzle or building a fort.
- ☐ Acquire and use the precursor skills that will allow them to begin to learn reading and mathematics in kindergarten.
- ☐ Show imagination and creativity in play.

16. What are some examples of behaviors related to children taking appropriate actions to meet their needs?

☐Uses gestures, sounds, words, signs or other means to communicate wants and needs.
☐Meet their self-care needs (feeding, dressing, toileting, etc.). Their ability to meet self-care needs allows them to participate in everyday routines and activities.
☐Uses objects (for example, forks, pencils, crayons, clay, scissors, switches, other devices, etc.) as tools in appropriate ways.
☐Move from place to place to participate in everyday activities, play, and routines.
☐Seek help when necessary to move from place to place.
☐Seek help when necessary to assist with basic care or other needs.

17. Must the preschool child's IEP have annual goals related to the three outcomes areas?
No, annual goals must address outcome area(s) only if the IEP team decides that the child has needs in one or more of the areas.

Child Outcome Summary Form

18. What is the Child Outcome Summary Form (COSF)?
The COSF is a process developed by the Early Childhood Outcomes Center that provides a common metric for describing children's functioning compared to age expectations in each of the three outcome areas required by OSEP. The COSF provides a way for a team to summarize the child's level of functioning using information from many sources including assessment tools and parent and provider reports. The COSF can be used: 1) When the state wants to use multiple sources of information to describe 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.

19. **Is the COSF an assessment instrument?**
The COSF is not an assessment instrument. It is a form used for summarizing across multiple sources of information about the child. The COSF allows states to address the OSEP reporting requirement as well as look at the child outcomes data in other ways. Using the COSF does not require that programs collect more data about children's progress; it is a mechanism that allows them to summarize assessment information for federal reporting as well as for their own purposes, such as for accountability, program planning, and program improvement.

20. **What is the COSF Scale?**
The Child Outcome Summary Form Scale is a 7-point scale used to capture a child's current level of functioning across a variety of settings and situations that make up his/her day. Rating decisions should convey the child's typical functioning across typical settings, not his/her capacity to function under ideal circumstances.

21. Are the scores on the COSF determined by comparing the student to same-aged peers?
Yes, the purpose of the summary is to get an overall picture of the child within the variety of settings and the people in his or her life. The team needs to decide the extent to which the child displays behaviors and skills expected for his or her age related to each outcome area. Team discussions and the use of a state accepted Anchor Tool and the ND COSF will allow for this comparison.

22. Why is the progress of children with a disability being compared to expectations for same age peers?
States are required to compare the functioning of children receiving early childhood special education services to age expectations because age expectations provide a common standard for all young children. To record that children made progress between entry and exit would not provide strong evidence for the effectiveness of the program. Also, one of the goals of early childhood services is to prepare children to succeed in kindergarten and, in kindergarten, children will be expected to meet grade level standards. Not all children will be able to function comparable to same age peers at the end of early childhood services, but the NDDPI collects data as to how many children have achieved or moved closer to functioning at an age expected level.

23. Children with severe disabilities may not improve functioning to a level nearer to same-aged peers, but they often do make progress. Will this progress be reflected in federal reporting?
Children who make progress but have not moved closer to functioning like same aged peers are counted as children who made progress. Small steps of individual progress are counted as progress when determining the child's exit ratings.

24. If a child has the same entry and exit rating, can the team document a "no" in the Progress section of the ND COSF?
A "no" response to the progress question means the child has not shown any new skills or behaviors relating to the outcome between entry and exit. To receive the same rating on the scale at two time points, the child has to have acquired new skills, because as children get older it takes more skills to receive the same rating.

25. What are immediate foundational skills?
Some of the skills and behaviors that develop early serve as the foundation for later skills and behavior, or, expressed another way, later skills build on earlier skills in predictable ways. Immediate foundational skills are earlier skills that serve as the base and are conceptually linked to the later skills. These skills can be used to help children move to the next higher level of functioning developmentally.

26. What is the ND ECO Process Quality Assurance Checklist?
To assure consistent high quality data within each ND Child Outcomes Summary Form (ND COSF), the ND Early Childhood Outcomes Committee developed and piloted the ND COSF - Quality Assurance Checklist. The ND COSF Checklist is completed by individuals responsible to assure quality data within their district/unit. The information gathered from the review of unit/district ND COSFs will provide valuable information which will assist in determining training needs for the district/unit. A complete copy of the Quality Assurance Checklist and Directions is located in the Appendix of the ND ECO Process Guide.

27. What should be listed in the Supporting Evidence section?
As stated in the Quality Assurance Checklist Directions, the Supporting Evidence should: correspond to the specific outcome area; cover all appropriate aspects of the outcome; provide examples of the child's everyday functioning in the outcome area; provide discipline specific evidence to support the outcome area; and provide an overall picture of how the child functions for the outcome area across settings and situations.

Exiting a Child from Early Childhood Special Education Services

28. When should the child's IEP team complete exit data for the child?
Exit data should be gathered during the time period right before the child leaves the early childhood special education services or by the time the child turns 6 years of age if they are receiving ECSE services beyond their 6th birth date.

29. Once the team has completed the exit ratings information on the ND COSF, what process should be used to save and finalizing the information in TieNet?
When it is time to enter the necessary exit rating information in TieNet:
☐Click on the *Edit This Section* button
☐Entry the necessary exit ratings information and progress ratings information and
☐Click *Save, Done Editing.*

30. Does the early childhood outcome assessment at exit constitute a re-evaluation?
The outcome assessment at Part B 619 exit is not considered a reevaluation. However, if a reevaluation is already occurring, the assessment may be used for both purposes and the reevaluation requirements will apply. If the team is not completing the exit rating as part of a reevaluation process, the team does not need to complete the complete evaluation process, e.g. student profile, assessment plan and integrated written assessment report.

31. If a child moves to another ND district does the team complete an exit rating?
The team would not complete an exit rating if a child moves to another district in ND. Following district procedures and TieNet procedures, the child's records will be made available to the new school district. The new district would then be responsible for the completion of the exit rating at the appropriate time.

32. If the child moves to another state does the team complete an exit rating?
If the child is moving out of state and has received preschool services for at least six months, you would complete the exit rating for the child. If the child has not received preschool services for at least 6 months, enter the date preschool special education services ended on the child's ND COSF and provide a statement why exit ratings were not completed, e.g. not received services for 6 months.

33. What do you do if a child is removed from ECSE services unexpectedly?
This is considered an exit from a program. If the child has an entry COSF completed, then leaves Part B and has not been in the program for 6 months, no outcome summary rating data will be completed. Enter the date preschool special education services ended on the child's ND COSF and then provide a statement why exit ratings were not completed, e.g. not received services for 6 months. If the child has been in the program for 6 months then exits unexpectedly, exit outcome summary ratings would be entered for the child. If the team is not able to complete the Anchor Tool before the child exits, the team must complete the exit ratings with the current available information.

Data Reporting

34. Can the State determine when the N size is too small to report child outcomes?
States and districts must look at other public reporting standards, including those used in their state to report Adequate Yearly Progress under No Child Left Behind. In North Dakota, the N size is 10 students per district.

Transfer Children

35. If a child moves in from another state with or without current early childhood outcome ratings, is it necessary for our program to rate the child again using the Child Outcomes Summary Form?
When a child has been receiving Part C or Part B services in another state and moves into a program in ND, it is necessary to gather the appropriate information and make an entry rating in the three outcome areas using the COSF. New entry ratings on the ND COSF is necessary even if the child was rated in the early childhood outcomes areas in his/her previous state program. Children moving in from another state are new to ND and therefore need new entry ratings.

Parent Involvement

36. Can a parent refuse to have their child's assessment data used for purposes of the OSEP's outcomes data collection?
District professionals are encouraged to provide information to families about the purposes of OSEP's child outcomes data collection. Since these data are needed for federal accountability for the Part C and Part B programs, families cannot refuse to have their child's assessment data included in the aggregate.

37. **Does the child's team need to get parental consent to administer the Anchor Tool for the entry and exit ratings?**
If the collection of outcome information is used as part of the child's initial evaluation or reevaluation the district must provide prior written notice and obtain parent consent. Also, parental consent is required when information is collected on an individual child that is not being obtained for all individuals of that age, e.g. ND ECO exit ratings. If a parent refuses consent to administer an Anchor Tool, the team must complete the ratings with the current available information.

38. What are the roles for parents in the outcome rating process?
Parents provide valuable input as members of the team for the Evaluation and IEP Process. Parents should participate in team discussions relating to the determination of the Early Childhood Outcomes ratings for their child. As part of these discussions, the team must remember that the COSF ratings are a function of program evaluation, not individual child evaluation.

Articulation Only Children

39. Do districts need to assess children in all three outcome areas even when it is not an area of concern? (e.g. children who are determined to have a disability in the area of speech)
Yes, all preschool children receiving special education and related services must be assessed in all three outcome areas.

40. **Is it necessary to use one of the state approved Anchor Tools for a child with articulation/phonological impairments only?**
As part of the ND ECO Process, results from an approved Screening Tool, instead of a comprehensive Anchor Tool, can be considered by the multidisciplinary team for children with a suspected articulation/phonological impairment only. In addition to the approved Screening Tool, the child's team must continue to provide a comprehensive articulation/phonological assessment. The results of the approved Screening Tool and comprehensive articulation/phonological assessment will assist the team in several ways. The assessment results will: 1) provide a brief summary of the child's functional ability in the three child outcome areas, 2) assist the team in determining the impact of the articulation/phonological impairment as it relates to the child's overall functioning, and 3) assure that there are no other areas of concern for a child. If, after reviewing the Screening Tool and communication assessment results, the team determines that additional assessment information is needed, then an approved Anchor Tool must be administered as part of the process.