

ECO

Early Childhood Outcome Reporting Guide for Parents

Produced by the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

WHAT IS ECO DATA REPORTING?

Beginning in February 2007, all states must submit information to the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) at the U.S. Department of Education regarding the progress children are making in First Steps and Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE) programs.

The federal government wants data in order to determine whether these programs are making a positive difference for children. This report does not address your individual child but is a statewide report for both programs.

OSEP has identified three specific areas to measure a child's progress. These areas are:

- social relationships
- acquisition and use of knowledge and skills (like early communication skills)
- taking appropriate action to meet his or her needs.

These areas are very 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 area at the beginning of his or her time in the early childhood program and then again at the end of his or her time in the same program.

The results should demonstrate the progress made by your child between entering and leaving the program. Such results are called outcomes.

HOW WILL THE DATA BE COLLECTED?

Multiple sources of information will be used to assign a rating for your child in each of the three areas. Most of this information is already collected as part of determining your child's eligibility for the program and in developing an individualized plan for your child. These plans are called Individualized Family Service Plans (IFSP) for children in First Steps and Individualized Education Programs (IEP) for children in ECSE programs.

Much of the information will be gathered from talking with you, other caregivers who are involved in your child's life and professionals who have observed your child. Your child's First Steps service coordinator or ECSE teacher will likely ask you questions about your child's emotions and behaviors, how he or she relates to adults and other children, what activities he or she enjoys, and how your child communicates wants and needs. If formal testing is necessary to obtain the information, you will be asked for your written consent.

WHEN WILL THE DATA BE COLLECTED?

In October 2006, First Steps and ECSE programs began collecting this data on all children eligible for services. Children are given a rating when they enter the program and another rating when they leave the program.

The ratings address the frequency with which your child demonstrates skills in each of the three areas on a scale of 1-5:

1 = Not Yet 2 = Emerging 3 = Occasionally
4 = Frequently 5 = Completely

The ratings are assigned by your child's service coordinator or teacher.

HOW WILL THIS INFORMATION BE USED?

The Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education is required to report the data in its annual performance reports beginning in February 2007. The data may be used at the federal, state and local levels to demonstrate the effectiveness of the early childhood services your child received. The information will always be shared in a way that protects your child's confidentiality, and individual scores will not be reported. The ratings will be a part of your child's First Steps or ECSE record, and you may access the information at any time. The information will transfer with your child if you move to another part of the state. The transfer of this information is necessary so that a final rating can be obtained when your child exits the program.

If you have any questions about this process, please contact your child's First Steps service coordinator, ECSE teacher or the Division of Special Education at the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.



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The Division's services are primarily supported by federal funds appropriated in accordance with provisions of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.

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