

Early Childhood Outcomes (ECO) in First Steps and Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE) Questions and Answers

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*NOTE: Part C/early intervention is referred to as First Steps and
Part B/Local Educational Agency is referred to as ECSE throughout the document.*

ECO Collection

- 1. For First Steps, sometimes an infant is found eligible based on a medical condition. Can informal measures be used for the ECO rating without test results?** Answer: It is appropriate to use informal assessment results; however, all ECO ratings must have information collected from three sources: parent input, professional observation and assessment results. The ECO process should utilize existing information collected for eligibility determination or IFSP planning so that the determination of ECO ratings is not an extra step in the 45-day timeline.
- 2. For ECSE, sometimes children who are ‘speech only’ do not have test results for ECO outcome indicator 1 and 3. Can other measures be used to collect information for these outcome areas?** Answer: Yes. It is acceptable to use other measures, such as parent input, professional observation, or informal assessments.
- 3. Why is data on functional age or age equivalents optional on the MOSS form?** Answer: Assessment experts caution using age equivalents and prefer the use of standard scores or percentiles to age equivalents when reporting results to parents. The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) has not required the use of a specific assessment tool for ECO; however, tools that report scores in a functional age or age equivalent will be more congruent with the MOSS.
- 4. What specific information is shared between First Steps and ECSE?** Answer: Since each ECO rating requires three sources of information, the SPOE and ECSE should share information related to parent input, professional observations and informal or formal assessments in order to determine the ECO ratings. Parent input and professional observations may be available by both First Steps and ECSE. Since First Steps is not required to conduct an assessment as a child exits the program and ECSE may be conducting assessments to determine eligibility, it is important to share this information to determine a rating for First Steps exit/ ECSE entry.
- 5. If a standardized assessment (e.g., Brigance, DAYC) is conducted for an individual child for the specific purpose of ECO and not for evaluation/re-evaluation, does the parent receive a Notice of Action?** Answer: Yes. If a formal assessment is completed with a child solely for the purpose of ECO, then the parent must be provided notice. However, if a formal assessment is part of the typical process for all children in a particular program (i.e., all children in ECSE) and that information is also going to be used for ECO, then parent notice is not needed.

(Updated 3/14)

6. **Is ECO included as an assessment on the IEP for ECSE?** Answer: No. ECO is not an assessment; it is a synthesis of information related to the child's present level of abilities. The exit rating is completed using existing information from parent input, professional observations and formal or informal assessment results.
7. **How are parents informed of the ECO rating process?** Answer: DESE developed a parent guide that is given to First Steps and ECSE parents at the time the entry and exit rating is determined. According to the *Early Childhood Outcome Reporting Guide for Parents*, the data collection process is described to parents as follows: "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."

ECO Rating Determination

8. **When a child comes to ECSE from First Steps, must the district use the First Steps exit rating as the ECSE entry rating, or can the district do a separate ECO entry rating?** Answer: The First Steps exit and ECSE entry ratings do not have to match. It is acceptable for ECSE to do a separate entry rating. Both First Steps and ECSE should use the Decision Tree to determine ECO ratings. Discussion about the collection, time frame and how the two programs can collaborate to determine ECO ratings may be part of a child's transition conference meeting.
(Updated 3/14)
9. **If a child is in ECSE less than six months, are ECO ratings required?** Answer: It depends. If at the time a child enters ECSE there is less than six months before going to kindergarten, then no entry and no exit rating is determined. However, if at the time a child enters ECSE there is the potential to be in the ECSE program at least 6 months, then an entry rating is determined. If the child participates in ECSE at least six months, then an exit rating is determined when the child leaves ECSE.
10. **When does First Steps record the exit rating?** Answer: First Steps will assign an exit rating sometime within the last 30 days that the child participates in the First Steps program.
(Updated 3/14)
11. **If a child is retained and not attending kindergarten until the following year, when is the ECO exit rating completed?** Answer: The exit rating is determined when the child leaves the program. In this situation, a child is not rated until exiting ECSE the following year.
12. **If a child receives itinerant services only, is an ECO rating still completed?** Answer: Yes. Any child who has an IEP and receives services at least six months, regardless of the category of disability or amount of services, must have an entry and exit ECO rating.
13. **If the ECSE program is integrated, are ECO ratings required for all students disabled and nondisabled?** Answer: No. Only children with an IEP receive an ECO rating.
14. **What are the entry and exit dates for First Steps and ECSE?** Answer: The initial IFSP or IEP date is used as the date of entry into the program. For both First Steps and ECSE, the exit date is

the actual date that the rating was determined, but should be no later than the date the child exits the program. Exit data is recorded within 30 days prior to exiting the program.

- 15. Who completes the entry/exit data and who reports the data?** Answer: For First Steps: The rating is completed by the service coordinator and reported in WebSPOE. For ECSE: The rating is completed by the ECSE teacher and the district reports the data to DESE. In cases where ECSE services are not provided directly by the child's home district (e.g., an ECSE co-op), the district providing the ECSE services generally reports the data to DESE for those children.
- 16. If a child is evaluated in First Steps or ECSE and determined eligible, but parent refuses services, is a rating completed?** Answer: Only children who are eligible and served under an IFSP/IEP receive an entry rating. If the parent refuses to proceed with IFSP/IEP development and no services are provided, no rating is given.
- 17. When is the First Steps exit rating/ ECSE entry rating completed for a First Steps child with a summer third birthday?** Answer: In general, the First Steps exit is determined at the end of the summer when the child transitions to ECSE. Therefore, it is acceptable for ECSE to wait to determine the entry rating until the child enters ECSE. The discussion of ECO ratings may be part of the First Steps transition conference, which is held about four months prior to the child's third birthday.
(Updated 3/14)
- 18. Is there any information on the validity and/or reliability related to the MOSS?** Answer: No, it is not applicable. The MOSS is a data collection/synthesis tool.

ECO Data Reporting

- 19. Where do I keep the ECO information in the child's file?** Answer: ECO information is maintained in the child's special education file. If a child transfers, when special education information is sent the completed MOSS may be sent to the new district as part of the child's record. It is not mandatory that the completed form be sent but the form must be maintained in the child's special education file.
(Updated 3/14)
- 20. What happens to the ECO rating if a child transfers?** Answer: It depends on the type of transfer.
- Transfers within the state:** It is expected children have only one entry and one exit rating for First Steps or ECSE. This means district/SPOE A will complete the entry rating and District/SPOE B will complete the exit rating. DESE will match the child's entry information with the exit information using the individual identifier number (MOSIS ID) for each child.
- Transfers out of the state of Missouri:** If a child is in First Steps or ECSE for more than six months, the teacher/service coordinator completes the exit rating at the time the child leaves the program. For ECSE: If there is insufficient information to complete an exit rating, indicate in the child's file that an exit rating was not completed due to insufficient information. No exit date or ratings would be reported for the child. For First Steps: If there is insufficient information to complete an exit rating, indicate in the child's WebSPOE record that an exit rating was "not applicable" and select the reason "unable to locate the child/family" from the drop down box.
- Transfers into the state of Missouri:** First Steps and ECSE must conduct an entry rating when a child first enrolls in the program, if the child will be in the program at least 6 months.

- 21. How do we report exit/entry on compensatory IFSPs for First Steps and Extended School Year for ECSE?** Answer: For children receiving compensatory IFSP services past the third birthday or ECSE ESY services, the exit date would be the usual end date for the program, rather than the extended end date. For example, if a child turns three on March 1st but receives compensatory services from First Steps until April 1st, the exit date would be March 1st.
- 22. What if the district cannot locate the entry rating for transfer children?** Answer: The district will not need to locate the entry rating as long as it is confirmed one was completed. If the district is not sure whether or not an entry rating was completed, complete the rating scale and report it to DESE. DESE will watch for multiple entry ratings for the same child and adjust accordingly.
- 23. In what way is DESE planning to disaggregate the data?** Answer: DESE is required to publicly report these data for each district/SPOE. ECSE data will be included in the Special Education District Profile, while First Steps data will be included in the SPP\APR Data by SPOE report. The public report will include the five outcome reporting categories as well as the two summary statements for each indicator area.
- 24. How are First Steps and ECSE data reported to DESE?** Answer: For First Steps: The child's entry rating is recorded in WebSPOE when entering the initial IFSP meeting information and the exit rating is recorded in WebSPOE before the child's record is closed. For ECSE: All entry and exit data compiled during that school year are reported at the end of the school year using the MOSIS Student Core file due June 30th. A child may have entry or exit or both ratings reported in a given year. However, most children will have entry ratings submitted in one year, and exit ratings submitted in a subsequent year.
- 25. How do districts obtain the MOSIS number for ECSE children?** Answer: Every district should apply for a MOSIS ID for all children receiving services through the district, which includes children receiving ECSE services. The submission process is the same as for students in grades K-12. District ECSE personnel should contact the district's central office to determine who is responsible for the MOSIS application.

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