

## Orienting Families to the Child Outcome Summary (COS) Process

**Instructions:** Early intervention teams are responsible for ensuring that all team members, include the family members and caregivers who spend significant time with the child are oriented to the Child Outcome Summary (COS) process and prepared to fully participate. Please use the talking points below to engage the family in a dialogue about the COS process and their role in contributing to the collaborative rating process. Prior to beginning the discussion check with the family member about what they already know and only use the bullet points necessary to complete the orientation. Make sure you check for understanding periodically to ensure family members are knowledgeable and confident enough to fully contribute.

### Talking Points

- Parents and early intervention providers want to ensure that services are helping the child develop and learn. The Child Outcome Summary Process is one way of determining how well early intervention is meeting each child's needs.
- Every child in the United States who participates in early intervention is measured on three child outcomes. While your child's IFSP outcomes were written specifically for your child and family, the three areas we look at were determined by the U.S. Department of Education and are the same for every child in the country. We will discuss both sets of outcomes.
- Each of the outcomes helps us know how well your child is participating in activities and routines in your home and in the community (including the childcare program if applicable).
- When we look at the outcomes or all children enrolled in our program, we get a good picture of how well our program is meeting the needs of all children.
- When the Office of Special Education Programming in Washing DC looks at all the data we and other states supply them about individual children, they get a good picture of how well the country is meeting the needs of children enrolled in early intervention.
- The three outcomes that measure every child's development are: (1) positive social emotional skills, including social relationships family, adults, and other children; (2) learning and using new knowledge and skills, including communication and problem-solving skills; and (3) using appropriate behaviors to meet their needs, including moving, feeding, and taking care of basic needs.
- Each team member has a role in determining your child's progress with regard to each of the three child outcomes.
- Your service coordinator leads the discussion and ensure that each team member, including you has an opportunity to describe how he/she sees the child with respect to each outcome.
- As the parent, your role is to help us understand how your child demonstrates each of the outcomes during your everyday family activities and routines.
- Together the team uses our knowledge of child development to determine how your child compares to his/her same-age peers and selects one of seven descriptions that best match your child's level of functioning.
- Once a year at your child's annual IFSP meeting your child's team gets together to discuss your child's progress toward the IFSP outcomes we developed together specifically for him/her, determine how his/her development compares to his/her same age peers in three areas, and determine whether or not he/she has made growth.
- What questions do you have about the process or your role?

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Adapted from:

National Parent Technical Assistance Center (2013). A family guide to participating in the child outcomes measurement process. Minneapolis, MN, PACER Center.