

**Ohio Early
Intervention
State Systemic
Improvement Plan
(SSIP)**

FFY 2020 (July 1, 2020– June 30, 2021)

Section A: Data Analysis

What is the State-identified Measurable Result (SiMR)?

Substantially increase the rate of growth in the percent of infants and toddlers with IFSPs who demonstrate improved social-emotional skills

Has the SiMR changed since the last SSIP submission?

Yes

Provide a description of the system analysis activities conducted to support changing the SiMR.

In the last SSIP cycle, Ohio Part C focused on substantially increasing the rate of growth in improving children's acquisition and use of knowledge and skills. The state made significant progress in this area, as well as in the broader EI system in implementing the steps and activities needed to achieve the state's identified outcomes in the first cycle. As DODD completed all of these steps and activities identified in first SSIP cycle, the state began to consider the next SSIP cycle, including selecting a new SiMR area in which to focus the state's SSIP efforts.

Both data and anecdotal evidence collected over the past several years suggest that Ohio needs to place additional emphasis on social-emotional development. In this timeframe, the percentage of children served in Part C in Ohio who substantially increased their rate of growth was lower in regard to positive social-emotional skills than the other two child outcomes areas. In rating IFSP outcomes over the last several years as part of the previous SSIP, the lead agency staff also recognized that IFSP outcomes addressing social-emotional development generally meet fewer criteria for high quality IFSP outcomes than other outcomes. Further, stakeholders have expressed increased interest in more closely focusing on social-emotional development among children served in Early Intervention. Finally, addressing social-emotional needs has become considerably more pressing as children and families experience challenges related to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Please list the data source(s) used to support the change of the SiMR.

- Child Outcomes Summary (COS) statements entered into the Early Intervention Data System (EIDS)
- IFSPs entered into EIDS
- Annual IFSP outcome ratings
- Anecdotal information from conversations with stakeholders
- Anecdotal information about the impact of COVID on social-emotional skills and mental health

Provide a description of how the State analyzed data to reach the decision to change the SiMR.

As indicated above, Ohio utilized ongoing data analyses completed for the APR and SSIP as well as anecdotal data to reach the decision to change the state's SiMR. Particularly, DODD took the results of the state's child outcomes indicators as well as several years of IFSP outcome ratings into consideration. Additionally, the state took broad stakeholder input and the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic into account and ultimately determined to focus on improving social-emotional outcomes as the state's new SiMR.

Please describe the role of stakeholders in the decision to change the SiMR.

DODD had discussions about the SSIP and SIMR at each Early Intervention Advisory Council (EIAC) and Stakeholder Group (Ohio’s Interagency Coordinating Council (ICC) and a broader group of stakeholders) meeting. The state’s EI stakeholders expressed increasing interest in more formally addressing children’s social-emotional needs over the past several years. This change also aligns with other initiatives outside of EI in which many of these stakeholders are involved. DODD had a discussion and formally proposed the new SIMR at the February 2021 meeting and the group overwhelmingly supported focusing the new SSIP cycle work on this SIMR area.

Is the State using a subset of the population from the indicator (e.g., a sample, cohort model)? (yes/no)

No

Is the State’s theory of action new or revised since the previous submission? (yes/no)

Yes

Please provide a description of the changes and updates to the theory of action.

The state created a new Theory of Action to go along with the newly selected SIMR, focusing on three improvement strategy areas:

- Improve the identification of children’s social-emotional strengths and needs through the assessment process, including the COS
- Improve the quality of IFSP outcomes addressing social-emotional skills
- Improve the delivery of evidence-based EI services and families’ ability to support social-emotional development

The Theory of Action describes and illustrates how, in all three improvement strategy areas, activities implemented at the state level will lead to improvement in practice at the local program level and increased knowledge and improved ability among families. Together, these will ultimately result in improvements in the state’s selected SIMR area. Additional details about each improvement strategy are included in the Theory of Action which can be accessed at the link included in the next section.

Please provide a link to the current theory of action.

<https://ohioearlyintervention.org/storage/ocali-ims-sites/ocali-ims-oei/documents/Ohio-SSIP-Theory-of-Action-FFY20-through-FFY25.pdf>

Please provide the data for the specific FFY listed below (expressed as actual number and percentages).

FFY20: 52.18%

Targets and Data

FFY	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Target	63.10%	52.00%	52.00%	53.00%	53.00%	54.00%	55.00%
Data	51.06%	52.18%					

Provide the data source for the FFY 2020 data.

Ohio extracted the FFY20 SIMR data, along with all COS data, from the state EI data system. COS data for all children who were exited in FFY20, served in EI at least six months, and had entry and exit COS scores were included in the analysis. As the SIMR reflects data for the entire population of children included in the COS analyses, this percentage corresponds to Indicator 3A, Summary Statement 1 in Ohio's Annual Performance Report. Further details about data collection and analysis are included subsequently.

Please describe how data are collected and analyzed for the SiMR.

Beginning in January 2015, the Child Outcomes Summary process was integrated into the child and family assessment and overall IFSP process. At that time, Ohio began to collect the following Child Outcomes Summary statements (adopted from Maryland), using its data system, for each of the three outcome areas:

- Relative to same age peers, child's functioning might be described as like that of a much younger child. He shows early skills, but not yet immediate foundational or age expected skills in this outcome area
- Relative to same age peers, child is showing some emerging or immediate foundational skills, which will help him to work toward age appropriate skills in the area of (outcome).
- Relative to same age peers, child is not yet using skills expected of his age. He does however use many important and immediate foundational skills to build upon in the area of this outcome
- Relative to same age peers, child shows occasional use of some age expected skills, but more of his skills are not yet age expected in the area of this outcome
- Relative to same age peers, child shows many age expected skills, but continues to show some functioning that might be described like that of a slightly younger child in the area of this outcome
- Relative to same age peers, child has the skills that we would expect of his age in regard to this outcome; however, there are concerns
- Relative to same age peers, child has all of the skills that we would expect of a child his age in the area of this outcome

The COS is required as part of the initial assessment process, as well as annually, so entry COS are completed as part of the IFSP process and documented on Ohio's IFSP form, as well as in the state data system. Local programs use the COS decision tree, along with all the information discussed in the child and family assessments, to help IFSP team members choose which statement above best describes the child's development compared to same-age peers. Each statement corresponds to a score of 1 through 7, respectively.

Exit COS are also required for all children who have been served in Early Intervention in Ohio, and are exiting for a reason other than being deceased or loss of contact with the family. Although it's not a part of the IFSP process, the IFSP team, including the family, complete the Exit COS. An optional Exit COS form that mirrors the COS section of the IFSP form is available on the Ohio EI website and Exit COS statements are required to be entered in EIDS on the Exit page unless the child record is being exited due to one of the reasons mentioned above.

As described in the previous section, COS data for the FFY20 SIMR data, along with all COS data, were extracted from the state EI data system including all children who were exited in FFY20, served in EI at

least six months, and had entry and exit COS scores. Since Ohio's SIMR data encompasses the entire population included in the COS, the SIMR percentage was calculated in the same manner as all COS percentages: all children whose entry COS score was greater than 1 and whose exit COS score was higher than the entry score, divided by all children whose entry or exit COS score was below 6.

Optional: Has the State collected additional data (i.e., benchmark, CQI, survey) that demonstrates progress toward the SiMR? (yes/no)

No

Did the State identify any general data quality concerns, unrelated to COVID-19, that affected progress toward the SiMR during the reporting period? (yes/no)

Yes

Describe any data quality issues, unrelated to COVID-19, specific to the SiMR data and include actions taken to address data quality concerns.

Ohio integrated COS into the child and family assessment process in 2015, and transitioned from collecting COS ratings to COS statements at that time. DODD recognized the data quality challenges and concerns as this significant process transition occurred. While the implications regarding data quality became less significant over time, FFY18 was the first reporting year where all included COS data were collected using the new process.

In addition to the implementation of the new COS process, DODD provided a significant amount of technical assistance (TA), created numerous resources, and made available a considerable amount of data related to the COS process to the state's EI field over the last several years. Ohio implemented a new IFSP form in July 2019 that more prominently emphasized the assessment process, including completing the COS. The COS descriptor statements were placed directly on the IFSP form, and DODD required more active involvement of evaluation and assessment teams in documenting the evaluation and assessment results—including the COS statements—on the IFSP form. Additionally, this reporting year, DODD made significant updates to the COS resources page on the Ohio EI website, including posting a new, Ohio-specific decision tree for selecting COS statements. This updated page also includes a recording of a COS webinar, a COS "cheat sheet," resources for engaging families in the COS process, a program guide for monitoring the COS process, and national COS resources. Finally, the last two reporting years, the EI TA consultants placed a particularly substantial emphasis on the COS process in the local EI programs' TA and training plans.

With this increased focus on the COS, Ohio believes the percentage for Ohio's SIMR, along with the percentages for other COS indicators, now more accurately reflect child outcomes. Because the state intends to continue placing substantial emphasis on the COS and expects local programs to continue to make improvements in the COS process, Ohio acknowledges that these percentages could continue to decline for some additional period of time.

Did the State identify any data quality concerns directly related to the COVID-19 pandemic during the reporting period? (yes/no)

Yes

If data for this reporting period were impacted specifically by COVID-19, the State must include in the narrative for the indicator: (1) the impact on data completeness, validity and reliability for the indicator; (2) an explanation of how COVID-19 specifically impacted the State's ability to collect the data for the indicator; and (3) any steps the State took to mitigate the impact of COVID-19 on the data collection.

While COVID-19 may not have directly impacted the collection of the SIMR data, DODD recognizes that completing assessments, including the COS, virtually likely impacted these data. Because of the pandemic, local programs quickly transitioned from completing assessments and COS in person to conducting these activities almost exclusively virtually. As indicated by local programs and families, completing assessments in this manner proved to be challenging in some circumstances and may have been less effective; however, completing the assessments virtually also facilitated the use of observation, interviewing, and the review of other relevant information about the child in the assessment process rather than relying primarily on the tool. The pandemic also created many unique hurdles for families that likely ultimately impacted children's development across the board, but particularly in the social-emotional area. Because COS has been a significant focus of TA and training efforts in Ohio EI over the past several years, it is difficult to determine how much changes in COS data, including the SIMR, are due to these efforts versus the impact of the pandemic. DODD will keep this in mind while analyzing and interpreting data over the next several years and continue to examine and tease out the impact of the pandemic.

Section B: Phase III Implementation, Analysis and Evaluation

Is the State's evaluation plan new or revised since the previous submission?

Yes

If yes, please provide the following information: a description of the changes and updates to the evaluation plan; a rationale or justification for the changes; and, a link to the State's current evaluation plan.

Because Ohio selected a new SIMR to proceed with the state's SSIP work going forward, DODD also identified new broad improvement strategies and outcomes to improve the SIMR. As such, DODD also created a new evaluation plan that reflects data identified as needed to measure progress in the implementation of these newly selected outcomes. The evaluation plan follows a structure similar to the state's previous SSIP and is aligned with and streamlined to address the new SIMR. The improvement strategies are centered around making improvements in the assessment process, IFSP outcome development, and delivery of evidence-based EI services. In each of these improvement strategy areas, the short-term outcomes focus on ensuring the needed resources, trainings, and data are available to local programs and families. The intermediate outcomes are centered around increased knowledge and improved practice among local programs and increased understanding and participation among families in each of these three areas. Finally, the long-term outcome across the board is Ohio's newly selected SIMR area, which focuses on substantially increasing children's rate of social-emotional growth. The evaluation plan can be found on the Ohio EI website:

<https://ohioearlyintervention.org/storage/ocali-ims-sites/ocali-ims-oei/documents/Ohio-SSIP-Evaluation-Plan-FFY20-through-FFY25.pdf>

Provide a summary of each infrastructure improvement strategy implemented in the reporting period.

Ohio did not implement any infrastructure improvement strategies this reporting year. Much of the focus among lead agency staff and local programs was on analyzing data, providing TA, and creating resources related to the COVID-19 pandemic, including the distribution of American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds. Additionally, Ohio completed all the activities included in the previous SSIP cycle and selected a new SIMR for this cycle. As such, DODD focused on completing data and infrastructure analyses, selecting new improvement strategies, and developing a new Theory of Action and evaluation plan over the past year. The implementation plan is still in progress, and the state will continue to work over the next several months to finalize the activities needed to address short-term, intermediate, and long-term outcomes.

Describe the short-term or intermediate outcomes achieved for each infrastructure improvement strategy during the reporting period including the measures or rationale used by the State and stakeholders to assess and communicate achievement. Please relate short-term outcomes to one or more areas of a systems framework (e.g., governance, data, finance, accountability/monitoring, quality standards, professional development and/or technical assistance) and explain how these strategies support system change and are necessary for: (a) achievement of the SiMR; (b) sustainability of systems improvement efforts; and/or (c) scale-up.

Ohio has developed the following short-term outcomes as part of the state's new evaluation plan:

- Local programs and families have increased access to resources, trainings, and data related to assessing social-emotional strengths and needs through assessment process, including the COS
- Local programs and families have increased access to resources, trainings, and data about their role in the team development of IFSP outcomes supporting social-emotional development
- Local programs and families have increased access to resources, trainings, and data related to supporting social-emotional development through evidence-based service delivery

As indicated in the previous section, the state focused on developing the plan to make progress in the state's newly selected SIMR area this reporting year. Some of the activities needed to achieve short-term and intermediate outcomes are in progress, as the state is analyzing data and creating resources and trainings related to social-emotional development. The state will continue to execute activities needed to achieve these outcomes over the next several years. DODD will establish timelines for completing the state's short-term, intermediate, and long-term outcomes as the implementation plan is finalized over the next several months.

The short-term outcomes focus on identifying needs and making needed trainings, resources, and TA available. As such, these outcomes involve many aspects of the systems framework. Issues and needs will be identified via the data, accountability/monitoring, quality standards, and technical assistance areas. The implementation of new resources and trainings involves the professional development area, which also involves the finance area in some cases in order to make these trainings and resources available.

These outcomes are necessary for achievement of the SIMR and sustainability of systems improvement efforts as they lay the foundation for achieving the intermediate and long-term outcomes. In order to facilitate increased knowledge and improve practices, which will be attained via activities to achieve the intermediate and long-term outcomes, the state must first provide and implement applicable information, resources, and trainings to address needs identified in each improvement strategy area.

Did the State implement any new (newly identified) infrastructure improvement strategies during the reporting period? (yes/no)

No

Describe each new (newly identified) infrastructure improvement strategy and the short-term or intermediate outcomes achieved.

N/A

Provide a summary of the next steps for each infrastructure improvement strategy and the anticipated outcomes to be attained during the next reporting period.

Over the next reporting year, Ohio will continue to have discussions about additional activities needed to achieve the state's identified outcomes and make progress in the SIMR area. The state will finalize its implementation plan including identifying associated infrastructure areas, applicable evidence-based practices, and timelines for completion of each selected activity. DODD also expects to achieve or make substantial progress in the short-term outcomes over the next year by ensuring the needed training, resources, and data are available to local programs and families.

List the selected evidence-based practices implemented in the reporting period:

Ohio primarily focused on gathering information and developing a new plan over the past year, but did ensure each local program has access to an Early Childhood Mental Health (ECMH) consultant this reporting year, which is related to the state's new SIMR. Over the course of this SSIP cycle, the state will implement the following DEC Recommended Practices (DEC RPs) related to the SIMR along with activities needed to achieve outcomes over the next several years:

- RP A4
- RP A7
- RP F4
- RP F5
- RP TC1

Provide a summary of each evidence-based practice.

A description of each of the EBPs Ohio follows:

- **RP A4** - Practitioners conduct assessments that include all areas of development and behavior to learn about the child's strengths, needs, preferences, and interests. (Improvement Strategy 1)
- **RP A7** - Obtain information about the child's skills in daily activities, routines, and environments such as home, center, and community (Improvement Strategy 1)
- **RP F4** - Practitioners and the family work together to create outcomes or goals, develop individualized plans, and implement practices that address the family's priorities and concerns and the child's strengths and needs (Improvement Strategy 2)
- **RP F5** - Practitioners support family functioning, promote family confidence and competence, and strengthen family-child relationships by acting in ways that recognize and build on family strengths and capacities. (Improvement Strategy 3)
- **RP TC1** - Practitioners representing multiple disciplines and families work together as a team to plan and implement supports and services to meet the unique needs of each child and family. (Improvement Strategy 3)

Provide a summary of how each evidence-based practice and activities or strategies that support its use, is intended to impact the SiMR by changing program/district policies, procedures, and/or practices, teacher/provider practices (e.g. behaviors), parent/caregiver outcomes, and/or child/outcomes.

The selected EBPs align with the newly developed Theory of Action and outcomes identified as needed to implement each improvement strategy area: RPs A4 and A7 address conducting quality assessments; RP F4 addresses creating quality, individualized IFSP outcomes; and RPs F5 and TC1 address service

delivery and increasing family capacity. Because these EBPs will be integrated into activities needed to achieve the identified outcomes and the achievement of these outcomes will ultimately lead to improvement in the SIMR, the selected EBPs thus also impact this improvement.

Describe the data collected to monitor fidelity of implementation and to assess practice change.

Because the selected EBPs align with the Theory of Action and outcomes and will be integrated into the activities that are part of the state's implementation plan, the data collected as part of the state's evaluation plan will be utilized to monitor the fidelity of implementation to assess practice change. As part of the evaluation plan, DODD will collect ongoing data regarding how well social-emotional strengths and needs are being identified through the assessment process, including the COS; parent understanding of their child's social-emotional strengths and needs; quality of IFSP outcomes that address supporting social-emotional development; parent involvement in developing outcomes that support social-emotional development; provider ability to deliver evidence-based EI services to support social-emotional development; and parent ability to support their children's social-emotional development.

Describe any additional data (e.g. progress monitoring) that was collected that supports the decision to continue the ongoing use of each evidence-based practice.

N/A

Provide a summary of the next steps for each evidence-based practices and the anticipated outcomes to be attained during the next reporting period.

As DODD finalizes the activities needed to achieve each outcome identified as needed to make improvements in the SIMR area, the next steps for each evidence-based practice will also be established. The state will make progress toward achieving short-term outcomes this year by first identifying areas where additional information or professional development is needed related to social-emotional strengths, needs, and development in the assessment process, development of IFSP outcomes, and service delivery. Using this information, DODD will then determine which trainings and resources need to be revised or created.

Additionally, DODD will continue to offer existing trainings and other TA and professional development opportunities related to these improvement strategy areas including trainings covering the RBI, Newborn Behavioral Observations (NBO), motivational interviewing, the Battelle Developmental Inventory, the Bayley Scales of Infant and Toddler Development, the Devereux Early Childhood Assessment (DECA), and Ecomapping.

Describe any changes to the activities, strategies, or timelines described in the previous submission and include a rationale or justification for the changes. If the State intends to continue modifying the SSIP without modifications, the State must describe how the data from the evaluation support this decision.

While Ohio is focusing its SSIP work on the same three broad improvement strategy areas as the previous plan, the state's identified outcomes now focus on social-emotional development, consistent with the newly selected SIMR. As such, the activities needed to achieve these outcomes are also changing and will be streamlined to address social-emotional needs and improve social-emotional development. Because this is a new plan, DODD is establishing timelines for completing each of these activities as part of the state's implementation plan. Activities needed to achieve short-term outcomes

include the state creating and providing resources and trainings; those needed to achieve intermediate outcomes focus on local programs and families gaining knowledge and skills; and long-term activities center around making improvements at the child level. These activities will be implemented in all three improvement strategy areas and will be focused on the state's SIMR area.

Section C: Stakeholder Engagement

Description of Stakeholder Input

DODD values the feedback from families when implementing activities to improve outcomes for children with disabilities and their families. The state solicits feedback broadly from its EI field through its bi-weekly newsletter, in a more targeted manner from its ICC and broader stakeholder group at quarterly meetings, and directly from families via the state's annual Family Questionnaire. Additional details regarding stakeholder input in selecting a new SIMR are included in section A and more specific details about stakeholder involvement in key improvement efforts follow in the next section.

Describe the specific strategies implemented to engage stakeholders in key improvement efforts.

In addition to extensive involvement in the selection of the state's new SIMR (as described in Section A), the EIAC and stakeholder group have been, and continue to be, heavily involved in all aspects of Ohio's new SSIP. The group participated in the infrastructure analysis at the May 2021 meeting, identifying strengths and opportunities for growth related to Governance; Professional Development; Technical Assistance; Quality Standards; Accountability/Monitoring; Finance; and Data. At the November EIAC and stakeholder meeting, the group was given a link to provide input regarding activities and potential data related to each of the three improvement strategy areas. Additionally, the stakeholders were engaged in multiple conversations over several years around Ohio's APR targets, including the targets selected for the state's SIMR area. DODD has shared the state's new Theory of Action and evaluation plan with the state's EI field and will collaborate with stakeholders in finalizing the activities to be included in the implementation plan.

Were there any concerns expressed by stakeholders during engagement activities?

No

Describe how the State addressed the concerns expressed by stakeholders.

N/A

Additional Implementation Activities

List any activities not already described that the State intends to implement in the next fiscal year that are related to the SiMR.

As a new SIMR was chosen, Ohio will be finalizing the short-term, intermediate, and long-term activities to be implemented in this SSIP cycle over the next few months. More details regarding these activities will be included in next year's report.

Provide a timeline, anticipated data collection and measures, and expected outcomes for these activities that are related to the SiMR.

Timelines for completion of activities will be established over the next few months as the activities are finalized. The data collection measures and outcomes are included in the state's evaluation plan and a link for this plan is provided in Section B of this document.

Describe any newly identified barriers and include steps to address these barriers. Provide additional information about this indicator (optional).

N/A