

Frequently Asked Questions About the Family Outcomes Survey – Revised (FOS-R)

1. What is the revised version of the Family Outcomes Survey?

After a specific request and supplemental funding from Texas, staff at the ECO Center began work on updating the Family Outcomes Survey. A revised version was developed based on feedback from stakeholders to better assist states in measuring family outcomes and determining the helpfulness of early intervention programs. The Family Outcomes Survey-Revised (FOS-R) consists of two parts: Section A focuses on the five family outcomes and contains 24 items, and section B focuses on the three helpfulness indicators required for OSEP reporting and contains 17 items. While the core concepts measured remain the same as in the original Family Outcomes Survey, the revised version contains more detailed information to guide program improvement activities and uses a modified survey format.

2. Why did you make a revision?

The original Family Outcomes Survey was developed with extensive stakeholder input, but after a few years of use, states were able to provide additional feedback on how well the survey was working. Three main issues were raised. First, the survey format used a 7-point scale, with descriptors for ratings of 1, 3, 5, and 7 and no descriptors for ratings of 2, 4, and 6 (to allow for “in between” ratings). For some families, this format created a perception of a long and complicated survey because of the amount of reading required within each question and the number of pages required to present the items. Second, state staff wanted more detail about the concepts included in the original Family Outcomes Survey. More items were recommended to make the scale more useful for program improvement purposes such as identifying staff development needs or possible changes in policy or practice. Finally, some states and federal officials recommended using more than a single item for each of the three helpfulness indicators because they believed this approach would be more informative and valid.

3. What is the new format of the survey?

The Family Outcomes Survey-Revised (FOS-R) uses a simplified format for both the family outcome items and the helpfulness indicators. Section A uses a 5-point rating scale which assess the extent to which families have achieved each outcome item, ranging from 1 = Not at all, 2 = A little, 3 = Somewhat, 4 = Almost, and 5 = Completely. Section B also uses a 5-point scale and assesses the helpfulness of early intervention, ranging from 1 = Not at all helpful, 2 = A little helpful, 3 = Somewhat helpful, 4 = Very helpful, and 5 = Extremely helpful. The revised survey is two pages, with the family outcome items on one page and the helpfulness items on the other page. Items are grouped into each of the five outcomes and the three helpfulness indicators.



4. How many items were added and how many items stayed the same?

Of the 24 family outcomes items, 10 items are similar or identical to items from the earlier version of the survey. The remaining 14 items are new. All 17 helpfulness indicator items are new.

5. How long does it take to complete?

During initial data collection, families generally took about 10 minutes to complete the survey. Although there are more questions, the use of consistent response options without detailed descriptions under each question allowed families to answer more quickly. The consistent response options also will be helpful when the survey is administered by phone.

6. Is an online version of the survey available?

To support initial data collection in Texas and Illinois, an online version of the FOS-R was created. Although the ECO Center does not currently support an online version of the survey, we are willing to work with interested states to determine how best to support development.

7. What are the psychometric properties of the revised survey?

The revised survey exhibits excellent psychometric properties. Cronbach's alpha, a measure of internal consistency, is noted for each subscale below:

- Outcome 1: Understanding your child's strengths, needs, and abilities, $\alpha = .73$
- Outcome 2: Knowing your rights and advocating for your child, $\alpha = .78$
- Outcome 3: Helping your child develop and learn, $\alpha = .87$
- Outcome 4: Having support systems, $\alpha = .78$
- Outcome 5: Accessing the community, $\alpha = .91$

- Indicator 1: Knowing your rights, $\alpha = .90$
- Indicator 2: Communicating your child's needs, $\alpha = .74$
- Indicator 3: Helping your child develop and learn, $\alpha = .94$

For additional information about the psychometric properties of the tool, see the following:

Bailey, D. B., Raspa, M. R., Olmsted, M. G., Novak, S. P., Sam, A. M., Humphreys, B. P., Nelson, R., Robinson, N., & Guillen, C. (2010). *The development and psychometric validation of the Family Outcomes Survey-Revised Version: Findings and recommendations for early intervention*. Manuscript in preparation.

The Early Childhood Outcomes (ECO) Center is interested in continuing to collect data on the psychometric properties of the scale and/or relationships between the FOS and the FOS-R in states that choose to implement it. For more information about participating in this effort, please contact Melissa Raspa at mraspa@rti.org.



8. How do I report data to OSEP using the revised survey?

Since the revised version of the survey contains more than one item for each of the OSEP helpfulness indicators, we recommend that states calculate a mean score for each indicator. If the mean score for a family is 4.0 or above, then that family will have met that indicator. Examples follow:

Score for a family who has met Indicator 1: Knowing your rights

Item 1 = 5

Item 2 = 5

Item 3 = 3

Item 4 = 4

Mean score = 4.25

Score for a family who has not met Indicator 1: Knowing your rights

Item 1 = 5

Item 2 = 4

Item 3 = 3

Item 4 = 3

Mean score = 3.75

First, count the number of families who meet the criteria for each indicator (i.e., mean value ≥ 4.0 on associated items). Then, divide the number of families who meet the criteria for each indicator by the total number of families who completed the survey and multiply the result by 100 to get the percentage of families to report to OSEP. For example, If 90 families meet the criteria for Indicator 1 and 100 families completed the survey, the percentage reported to OSEP would be 90% (or $90/100 = .90 \times 100$) for Indicator 1.

9. Can the FOS-R be used with families in general early childhood programs who are not receiving early intervention?

The items are written for use with families in early intervention programs. Most of the items also are broadly applicable to the broader early childhood population. States interested in a modified version of the survey for use with a broader population of families should contact Melissa Raspa at mraspa@rti.org.

10. Are translations available for the FOS-R?

At this time, ECO has only an English version of the FOS-R. However, we are working with states that are interested in translating the survey into other languages. For more information, visit the ECO website at www.the-eco-center.org.



11. Can states continue to use the original Family Outcomes Survey?

The original FOS was shown to have good psychometric properties and remains a viable option for states that prefer that format. We will continue to house resources related to the original FOS on the ECO website.

Additional information about the FOS-R will be posted at www.the-eco-center.org as it becomes available.

Suggested Citation: The Early Childhood Outcomes Center (2010). *Frequently asked questions about The Family Outcomes Survey – Revised (FOS-R). Version 1: March 15, 2010*. Menlo Park, CA: Author.

Report available at: http://www.fpg.unc.edu/~eco/assets/pdfs/FOS_FAQs.pdf

