

Guidance for Preparing and Running COSF Team Discussion Activity

Before the event:

1. Invite 1-3 people to bring a child's case to the training event.
2. Considerations:
 - a. overall, it is helpful to have a variety of examples with regard to the child's functioning (i.e. it helps the group understand the whole scale if examples include a child that is lower functioning, a child that is higher functioning, and a child that may falls somewhere in between)
 - b. overall, it would be good to have some variety in age but best if the child is not about to age out of the program
 - c. for a specific case, it is essential that a provider bring an example where they know the child and have worked with the child personally
 - d. for a specific case, it is important the provider having information from multiple sources of data (e.g. formal assessment, observation, parent interview)
 - e. it is best if the case is a child who has recently been assessed and who has not been in the program for much longer than your state's 'near entry' definition

At the Event:

1. Invite one provider to take the 'hot seat'
2. Ask the provider to share a little bit about the child/case they brought (e.g. chronological age, reason for referral, etc.)
3. Next, ask the provider to focus in on outcome one and tell the group about how the child is function with regard to outcome 1. Remind them what outcome 1 includes (you may want to refer back to the slide definition).
4. When the provider is done with basic information about the outcome; turn to the whole group and ask– “What else do you want to know about this child's social relationships?” If needed, prompt them to ask about:
 - Formal assessment scores; items relevant to this outcome only
 - Observation
 - Family input (parents, grandparents, siblings)
 - Other providers' input (day care)
 - Functioning across different settings and situations – grocery store, neighborhood, family events, school, playground, etc.
5. Keep the discussion going until you feel enough information has been shared. Don't let participants rush to a number. When it seems enough information has been discussed, ask participants if they are ready to start talking about how the child's functioning compares to age expectations for this outcome area.
6. If the group is ready, walk through the decision tree questions to facilitate the group discussion. Start with, “Does the child ever function in ways that would be considered age-appropriate with regard to this outcome?”.
 - As participants respond, ask them what they heard that led them to that answer (their rationale); ask for examples of the child's function that were

or were not age appropriate. Remind them of examples you heard, if they don't mention some you think are important.

- Remind the group of the child's chronological age and ask the group what we would expect for a child that age.
- Remind the group to think across settings and situations.

7. Possible conversation prompts for groups having difficulty reaching consensus:

- a. Suggest that they re-visit documents that give examples of the breadth of content covered in each outcome. Have they discussed the child's skills regarding those aspects of the outcomes? Are the comments being considered relevant to the outcome up for rating discussion?
- b. I hear you describing the child's skills with regard to [insert content], what information do you have about the child's skills in [insert another relevant setting or situation or outcome component that hasn't yet been discussed]?
- c. Tell me about the kinds of evidence that suggest to you this child has [insert modifier] age-expected behavior or has [insert modifier] immediate foundational skills?
 - When have you observed or documented those skills?
 - In what situations?
 - How frequently does that occur?
 - Were the accommodations/supports available in that setting those that are usually available to the child? What were they?
 - You identified this as an immediate foundational skill. Are there other steps in the sequence of development that need to occur between developing this skill and the age-expected skills in this area?
 - Is there other information you need or want to be better equipped to make this decision?
 - Has everyone on the team had a chance to talk about the skills they have observed and the evidence they are considering in reaching a rating? (Is any one person dominating conversation and that is part of the problem?)
- d. What do most [insert child's age] year olds do with regard to this skill [or this outcome area]?
- e. How does the child's disability/the child's delay/the change in the child's approach to these skills impact his/her ability to function in achieving this outcome RIGHT NOW?
- f. Ratings are based on the child's functioning RIGHT NOW at one point in time. Thinking about the child's skills that have been discussed...
- g. Right now is the child showing skills that are expected for his/her age?

- h. Right now, is the child showing skills that are immediate foundations for the skills that other peers his/her age are showing?
 - i. How often? Can you describe what they are and when and where they occur?
 - j. What is the key difference between a X vs a X [insert numbers of ratings that are sources of disagreement]? What skills (or lack of skills) stand out in making you choose that number [or insert differentiating language associated with number]?
 - k. I hear a lot of discussion about wanting ratings to agree with eligibility. With some kids and in some states there is a lot of overlap between achievement of functional outcomes and eligibility; with other kids and in other states, there is not. Eligibility may focus a lot on testing done in contexts that differ substantially from those common in everyday functioning. Eligibility may or may not allow certain kinds of accommodations or supports; to the extent that these are available to the child in everyday situations, then they would be allowed in considering outcomes ratings. Eligibility usually is organized around specific domains whereas the functional outcomes are organized in a different way that could lead to different conclusions. Taking all this into account, let's set eligibility decisions aside for a moment (though not necessarily the data you got to help make them), what do the child's skills and actions suggest about the child's functioning right now with regard to the outcome?
- 8. Repeat 3-6 with outcome 2
 - 9. Repeat 3-6 with outcome 3
 - 10. Review the 3 ratings. Ask the group for general comments about the rating process.