

INDICATOR 7: PRESCHOOL OUTCOMES

Prepared by ECO

Indicator #7: Percent of preschool children with IEPs who demonstrate improved:

- A. Positive social-emotional skills (including social relationships);
- B. Acquisition and use of knowledge and skills (including early language/communication and early literacy); and
- C. Use of appropriate behaviors to meet their needs.

INTRODUCTION

This summary is based on information reported by 59 states and jurisdictions in their FFY 2009 Annual Performance Reports (APRs) submitted to OSEP February, 2011. This year, for the first time, states compared actual data to targets using the APR format. The analysis for this report includes only information specifically reported in APRs or SPPs. A state or jurisdiction may have additional procedures or activities in place that they did not describe in their reports and are therefore not included in this summary.

DATA SOURCES

Child Outcomes Measurement Approach

States and jurisdictions use a variety of approaches for measuring child outcomes. When details of those approaches were not included in APRs, we used the information described in the most current SPP. A summary of state approaches is shown in Table 1.

Table 1

Child Outcomes Measurement Approaches (N=59)	
Type of Approach	Number of States (%)
COS process	36 (61%)
One statewide tool	9 (15%)
Publishers' online analysis	6* (10%)
Other	8 (14%)

*One of these states also uses the COS process for districts and service providers who choose not to use an online assessment.

Thirty-six states and jurisdictions (61%) use the Child Outcomes Summary (COS) process. Nine states and jurisdictions (15%) use one assessment tool statewide. Of these, four reported the use of the Battelle Developmental Inventory, Second Edition (BDI-2), one state named the Assessment, Evaluation, and Planning System (AEPS), one state uses the Work Sampling System (WSS), and one uses selected subtests of

the Brigance Inventory of Early Development II. Two states have developed their own assessment tools. One state, currently using another approach, plans in the future to collect outcomes data using a single tool statewide, to be selected through a stakeholder process.

Six states (10%) use publishers' online analysis systems, created and maintained by the publishers of the assessment tools, to produce reports based on assessment data entered on line. One of these states also uses the COS process for districts and service providers who choose not to use the online assessment. States using publishers' online analysis include three states that allow local agencies to choose from several tools and three states that require all programs to use the same tool. Of those using multiple tools, one state allows the use of CreativeCurriculum.net (CC.net), Work Sampling Online (WSO), and High/Scope; one state allows CC.net, AEPSinteractive (AEPSi), and High/Scope; and one allows CC.net, AEPSi, and the Brigance. Of those that require the use of one system, two states use CC.net and one uses AEPSi.

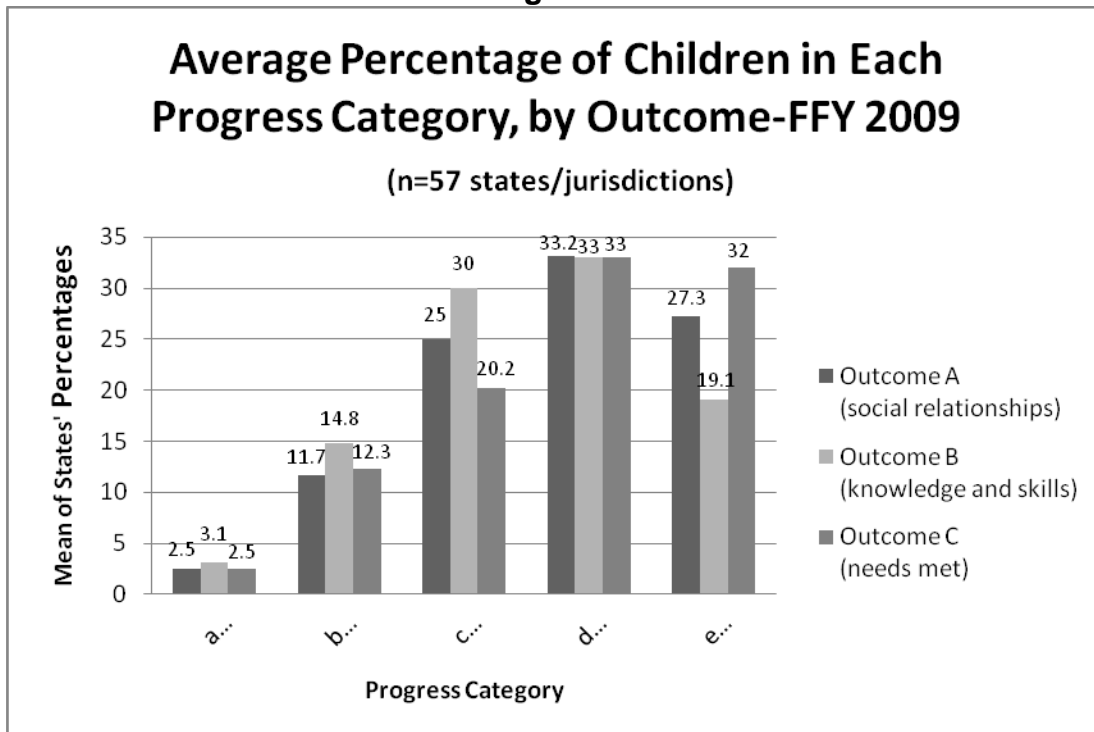
Eight states (12%) use other measurement approaches. These include a state-developed conceptual model that aligns assessment information with early learning standards, extrapolation of raw assessment data from the state data system, scores from Work Sampling Online (WSO) integrated with the COS process, and state-developed summary tools. The state currently using an extrapolation of raw assessment data reported that it is in the process of selecting a tool to be used statewide for child outcomes measurement.

ACTUAL PERFORMANCE

Fifty-seven states and jurisdictions provided progress data in two ways: 1) by progress category and 2) by summary statement. One additional state reported summary statement, but not progress category data. The data presented by progress category include the percentages of children who a) did not improve functioning, b) improved functioning but not sufficient to move nearer to functioning comparable to same-aged peers, c) improved functioning to a level nearer to same-aged peers but did not reach it, d) improved functioning to reach a level comparable to same-aged peers, and e) maintained functioning at a level comparable to same-aged peers. The summary statement data include percentages of children who, by the time they turned 6 years of age or exited the program 1) substantially increased their rate of growth and 2) were functioning within age expectations. The number of children reported in the data ranged from 9 to 9,314.

Figure 1 shows the percentages of children reported in each progress category for each outcome, averaged across states and jurisdictions. This presentation of the data weights each state/jurisdiction equally, providing an average across states of the progress category data.

Figure 1



Across the three outcomes, a general pattern is evident, wherein the lowest percentages of children were reported in category “a” (no progress), with percentages increasing in category “b” (progress but not nearer to same age peers), category “c” (nearer to same age peers), and category “d” (reached same age). Percentages of children reported in category “e” (maintained age-expected functioning) then show a decrease from those reported in category “d.” The patterns are particularly similar for Outcomes A (positive social relationships) and C (getting needs met), although Outcome C shows slightly higher percentages in “e” and slightly lower percentage in “c.” The pattern for Outcome B (knowledge and skills) is a bit different than the other two outcomes, with higher percentages of children reported in categories “a,” “b,” and “c,” and much lower percentages reported in category “e.”

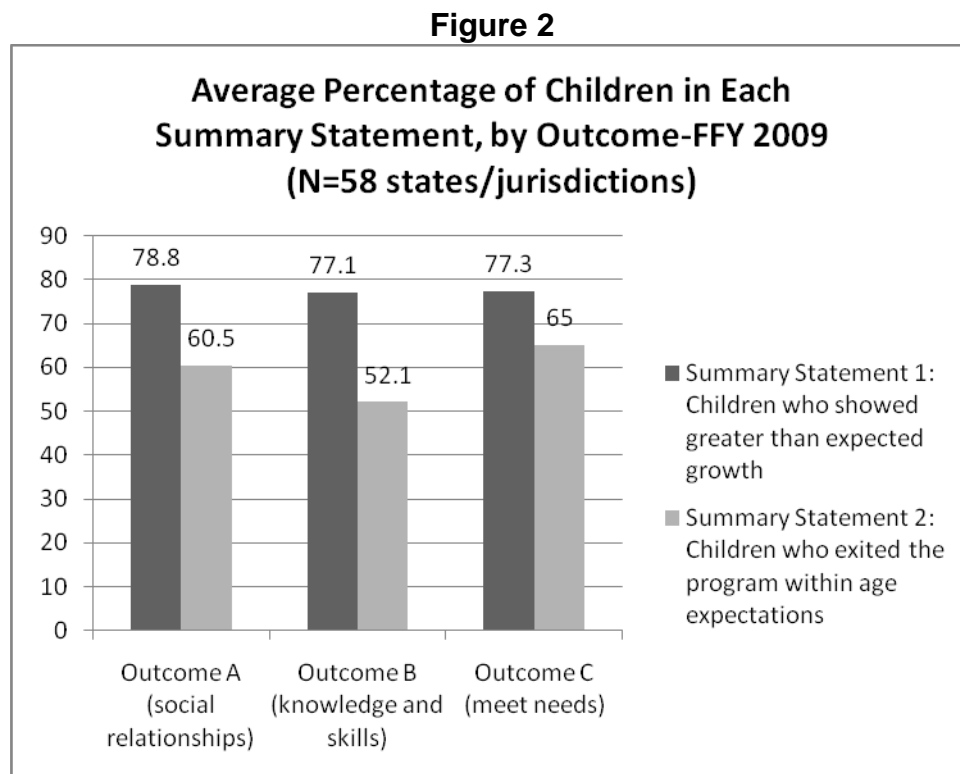
Data by Summary Statement

Summary statement data were available from 58 states and jurisdictions. The summary statements and formulas for calculating them are as follows.

Summary Statement 1: Of those children who entered the program below age expectations in each outcome, the percent who substantially increased their rate of growth by the time they turned 6 years of age or exited the program $(c+d/a+b+c+d)$.

Summary Statement 2: The percent of children who were functioning within age expectations in each outcome by the time they turned 6 years of age or exited the program $(d+e/a+b+c+d+e)$.

Figure 2 shows the average percentages of children reported for each summary statement across outcomes.



Additional analyses were completed to examine relationships in the summary statements and progress categories with geographic region, child count (size of state) and percent served in state. There was little variation seen in any of these comparisons.

PROGRESS AND SLIPPAGE

Tables 2 and 3 show the extent to which states and jurisdictions made progress or had slippage, based on a comparison of actual data from FFY 2008 to FFY 2009. States are categorized as having made meaningful progress or slippage as follows: progress if they increased >1% over FFY 2008; slippage if they decreased >1% from FFY 2008; and no change if they changed <1% in either direction. Table 2 shows that for Summary Statement 1 (children who increased their rate of growth) more states and jurisdictions made progress than had slippage in Outcomes A (social relationships) and C (getting needs met). Data for Outcome B (knowledge and skills) showed slightly more slippage for this summary statement. Across outcomes, 17-24% of states and jurisdictions showed negligible change (less than 1% difference).

Table 2

Progress and Slippage for Summary Statement 1: Children Who Increased their Rate of Growth			
	Number and percent of states and jurisdictions that made progress	Number and percent of states and jurisdictions that had slippage	Number and percent of states and jurisdictions with < 1% change
Outcome A (social relationships)	26 (45%)	18 (31%)	14 (24%)
Outcome B (knowledge and skills)	21 (36%)	22 (38%)	15 (26%)
Outcome C (action to meet needs)	26 (45%)	22 (38%)	10 (17%)

For Summary Statement 2 (Table 3), children who were functioning within age expectations at exit, more states and jurisdictions made progress than had slippage for Outcomes B (knowledge and skills) and C (getting needs met). Data for Outcome A (social relationships) showed that seven more states and jurisdictions had slippage than made progress. Twelve to nineteen percent of states and jurisdictions showed negligible (less than 1%) differences between their FFY 2008 and FFY 2009 data.

Table 3

Progress and Slippage for Summary Statement 2: Children Who Were Functioning Within Age Expectations at Exit			
	Number and percent of states and jurisdictions that made progress	Number and percent of states and jurisdictions that had slippage	Number and percent of states and jurisdictions with < 1% change
Outcome A (social relationships)	21 (36%)	28 (48%)	9 (16%)
Outcome B (knowledge and skills)	26 (45%)	25 (43%)	7 (12%)
Outcome C (action to meet needs)	26 (45%)	21 (36%)	11 (19%)

States and jurisdictions provided a number of different explanations for progress and slippage in their APRs. Some attributed progress to successful improvement activities that improved data quality as well as services. Several states and jurisdictions reported better use of tools as a result of training and TA and improved assessment practices. Monitoring, better guidance, and clearer expectations were also said to improve the accuracy of the data. A few states cited program changes that improved their outcomes data, such as the placement of children in settings with peers developing according to age expectations, especially for Outcome A (social relationships), which allows children “an opportunity to learn and practice skills.”

States and jurisdictions attributed slippage to improved data accuracy, data quality issues, child characteristics, and program issues. Those using publishers' online systems noted that correction of cut scores for progress categories resulted in more accurate, but lower, outcomes data. States and jurisdictions using the Child Outcomes Summary (COS) process also said that correcting the tendency to "inflate" ratings through training on age expected child development, for example, also resulted in more accurate, but lower, outcomes data. Data entry errors and inconsistent use of assessment tools reportedly contributed to poor data quality. Other states and jurisdictions said that children in the FFY 2009 data had more significant needs than in early data sets, due to factors such as stricter eligibility criteria and an increase in children with autism. As the number of children reported in the outcomes data increases, according to some states and jurisdictions, and as the frequency and duration of data collection increase, the data will include more children who stayed in the program longer because of significant needs. Program issues that may have led to slippage were described to include the need for more resources and support in certain programs within states.

Several states and jurisdictions said that they were not able to interpret changes, given the limitations of the data. At least three years of data would be needed to establish trends, according to some. Others cited the need for more data to improve the representativeness of the data, especially in states that were still "phasing in" the child outcomes data collection statewide.

Trends over Time

Tables 4, 5, and 6 compare the percentages of children reported in each progress category, per outcome, over the past three years. Table 4 shows that for Outcome A, percentages of children reported in categories "a" and "b" have decreased or stayed about the same. Percentages in category "c" increased slightly (1-2 points), while those in category "d" increased by six points. Perhaps most notable, percentages of children reported in category "e" have decreased by eight points since FFY 2007. Some states and jurisdictions noted in their APRs that percentages reported in category "e" have decreased because there are now more children in the data set who stay in the program longer, an indication that they have more significant needs. Others noted that percentages of children in category "e" have decreased as teachers and service providers have become more accurate in their comparison of children's functioning with same-aged peers who are developing according to age expectations.

Table 4

Average Percentages of Children Reported in Each Progress Category: Outcome A					
	“a”	“b”	“c”	“d”	“e”
FFY 2009	2.5%	11.7%	24.5%	33.2%	27.3%
FFY 2008	4%	12%	23%	30%	31%
FFY 2007	4%	12%	22%	27%	35%
<i>Note: Percentages may not all add up to 100% due to rounding</i>					

A similar pattern is evident for Outcome B (Table 5), with percentages decreasing slightly for category “a,” staying about the same for category “b,” slightly increasing for category “c.” Percentages for category “d” increased by six points since FFY 2007, and percentages for category “e” decreased by eight points.

Table 5

Average Percentages of Children Reported in Each Progress Category: Outcome B					
	“a”	“b”	“c”	“d”	“e”
FFY 2009	3%	14.8%	30%	33%	19.1%
FFY 2008	4%	14%	29%	30%	23%
FFY 2007	4%	15%	27%	27%	27%
<i>Note: Percentages may not all add up to 100% due to rounding</i>					

The pattern is similar also for Outcome C (Table 6). Percentages for category “a” slightly decreased from FFY 2007 to FFY 2009, stayed about the same for category “b,” increased slightly for category “c” and increased by seven points in category “d.” For Outcome C, the percentages of children reported in category “e” decreased by seven points.

Table 6

Average Percentages of Children Reported in Each Progress Category: Outcome C					
	“a”	“b”	“c”	“d”	“e”
FFY 2009	2.5%	12.3%	20%	33%	32%
FFY 2008	3%	12%	19%	30%	35%
FFY 2007	4%	13%	18%	26%	39%
<i>Note: Percentages may not all add up to 100% due to rounding</i>					

Tables 7 and 8 show the average percentages of children reported for the Summary Statements for FFY 2008 and FFY 2009. The summary statement data were averaged across the 58 states and jurisdictions in order to provide a national picture. Table 7 shows that percentages increased by one to three points for Summary Statement 1

(children who increased their rate of growth) across the outcome areas From FFY 2008 to FFY 2009.

Table 7

Average Percentages of Children Who Increased Their Rate of Growth (Summary Statement 1)		
	FFY 2008*	FFY 2009
Outcome A	76%	78.8%
Outcome B	75.6%	77.1%
Outcome C	74.9%	77.3%

Please note: the FFY 2008 Indicator Report had data for Summary Statement 1 and 2 reversed. FFY 2008 data presented in Table 7 are correct.

Table 8 shows data for Summary Statement 2 (children functioning within age expectations at exit). Across the three outcomes, percentages decreased slightly or stayed approximately equal.

Table 8

Average Percentages of Children Who Were Functioning Within Age Expectations at Exit (Summary Statement 2)		
	FFY 2008*	FFY 2009
Outcome A	61.1%	60.5%
Outcome B	53.2%	52.1%
Outcome C	65.2%	65.0%

Please note: the FFY 2008 Indicator Report had data for Summary Statement 1 and 2 reversed. FFY 2008 data presented in Table 8 are correct.

The number of children included in progress data continues to grow. Whereas last year 32 states included 1,000 or more children, this year 37 states included 1,000 or more children. States and jurisdictions reporting data for fewer than 1,000 children decreased from 26 (last year) to 21 (this year). Table 9 summarizes the numbers of children included in progress data reported across states and jurisdictions over the past three years.

Table 9

Total Number of Children Included in Progress Data			
Number of children reported	Number of States and Jurisdictions		
	FFY 2007 (N=58)	FFY 2008 (N=58)	FFY 2009 (N=58)
10 or fewer	1	1	1
10-99	11	7	6
100-499	14	6	4
500-999	10	12	10
1000-1999	8	7	9
2000-2999	5	10	11
3000-4999	5	11	9
5000-8999	3	3	7
9000+	1	1	1
	Range: 3- 10,157	Range: 3- 9,967	Range: 9- 9,314

Another way to look at the number of children states and jurisdictions reported for outcomes data is by percent of child count, as shown in Table 10. Nationally, about 40% of preschoolers are 5 years old according to 618 data. Therefore a high estimate of the percentage to include in outcomes would be close to 40%. The numbers of children included in outcomes data are still increasing. Whereas 26 states and jurisdictions (49%) included less than 20% of their child count in FFY 2008, only 17 states and jurisdictions (34%) included less than that in FFY 2009. It should be noted that these percentages include four states that are using a sampling methodology for child outcomes. The number of states and jurisdictions including 30-40% of their child count, on the other hand, increased from 12 (23%) in FFY 2008 to 16 (33%) in FFY 2009.

Table 10

Percent of Child Count included in Outcomes Data		
Percent of Child Count	Number of States/ Jurisdictions (%) FFY 2008	Number of States/ Jurisdictions (%) FFY 2009
<10	11* (21%)	6* (12%)
10- <20%	15 (28%)	11 (22%)
20- <30%	12 (23%)	12 (24%)
30- <40%	12 (23%)	16 (33%)
40- <50%	1 (2%)	4 (8%)
>50%	2 (4%)	0 (0%)
	N=53**	N=49**
*4 states are using a sampling methodology for child outcomes **Ns=the number of states and jurisdictions for whom child count data were available		

Trends in Nationally Representative Data

Collecting data on outcomes for young children with disabilities is a complex undertaking and a new activity for states. States are at various stages in implementing procedures for measuring child outcomes data, and not all states were able to report high quality data for FFY 2009. Therefore, the ECO Center conducted more sophisticated analyses to determine national averages that better represent the national picture by weighting the data by child count (so that bigger states are weighted more heavily than smaller states). In the following additional analyses, “best quality data” is based on 33 states with the highest quality data.

The national estimates for FFY 2009 were based on the data from the states with the highest quality data under the assumption that the states with poor quality data introduce error into the national estimate. Criteria used for determining the highest quality data included the percentage of children included in the data (eliminating states with less than 12% of their 3-5 year old child count in the data), or extreme or odd patterns in the “a” or “e” categories (>10% in “a” or 65% in “e” in one of the outcomes). The findings from all states were weighted by child count to be nationally representative; the 33 states with the highest quality data are presented for comparison in the figures below.

Figure 3 compares the average summary statement data from this year’s 33 “best quality” states and jurisdictions with the national averages for Outcome A (social relationships). The figure compares last year’s “best” data with the national averages from last year’s SPPs (FFY 2008) for Outcome A. The resulting patterns are quite similar. For Summary Statement 1 (children who increased their rate of growth), the “best” data are higher than the national averages – about five points higher for FFY 2008 and about three points higher for FFY 2009. For Summary Statement 2 (children who were functioning within age expectations at exit), the “best” data are slightly lower than the national averages – about three points lower for both FFY 2008 and FFY 2009. The “best” data, as well as the national averages, for both summary statements are very similar, or exactly equal, across the two years. For Summary Statement 1, the national averages were only about three points higher for FFY 2009 compared to FFY 2008. The “best quality” data were almost equal. For Summary Statement 2, the national averages were only about three points lower for FFY 2009 compared to FFY 2008. The “best quality” data were exactly equal.

Figure 3

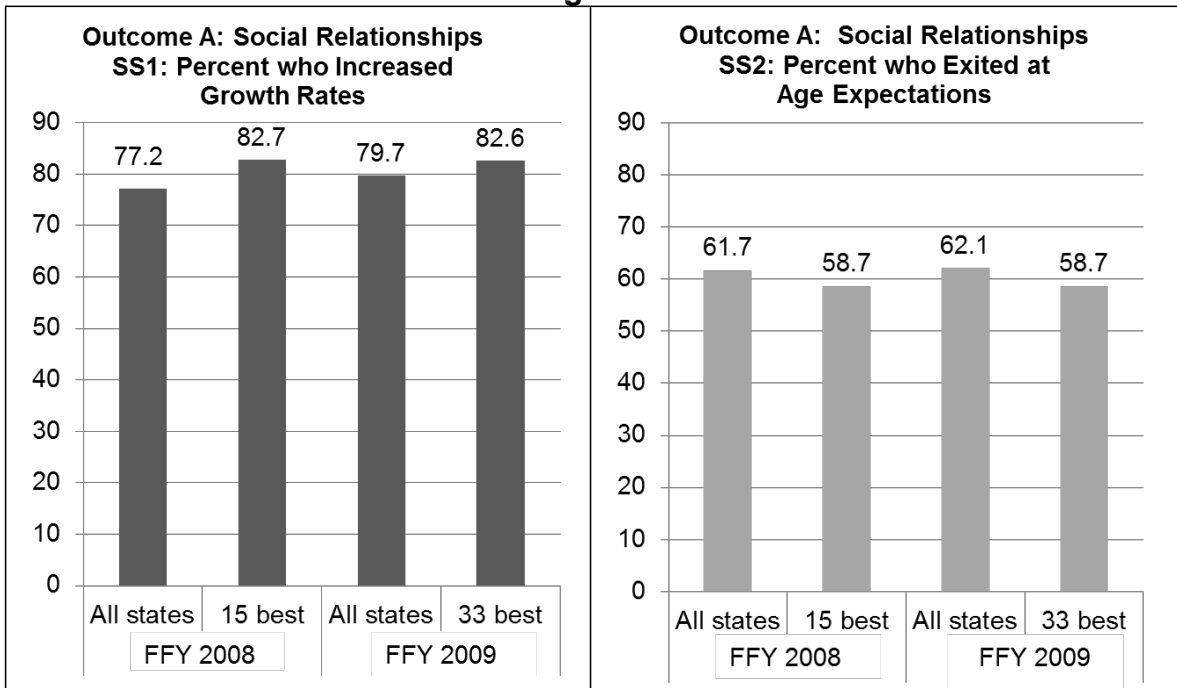


Figure 4 compares the average summary statement data from this year’s 33 “best quality” states and jurisdictions with the national averages for Outcome B (knowledge and skills). They also compare last year’s “best” data with the national averages from last year (FFY 2008) for Outcome B. As found for Outcome A, the resulting patterns for Outcome B are quite similar. For Summary Statement 1, the “best” data are higher than the national averages – about seven points higher for FFY 2008 and about four points higher for FFY 2009. For Summary Statement 2, the “best” data are slightly lower than the national averages – about five points lower for FFY 2008, with less than one point difference for FFY 2009. The “best” data, as well as the national averages, for both summary statements are very similar, or exactly equal, across the two years. For Summary Statement 1, the national averages were only about two points higher for FFY 2009 compared to FFY 2008. The “best quality” data only differed by one point. For Summary Statement 2, the national averages were almost equal for FFY 2009 compared to FFY 2008, and the “best quality” data differed by only one point.

Figure 4

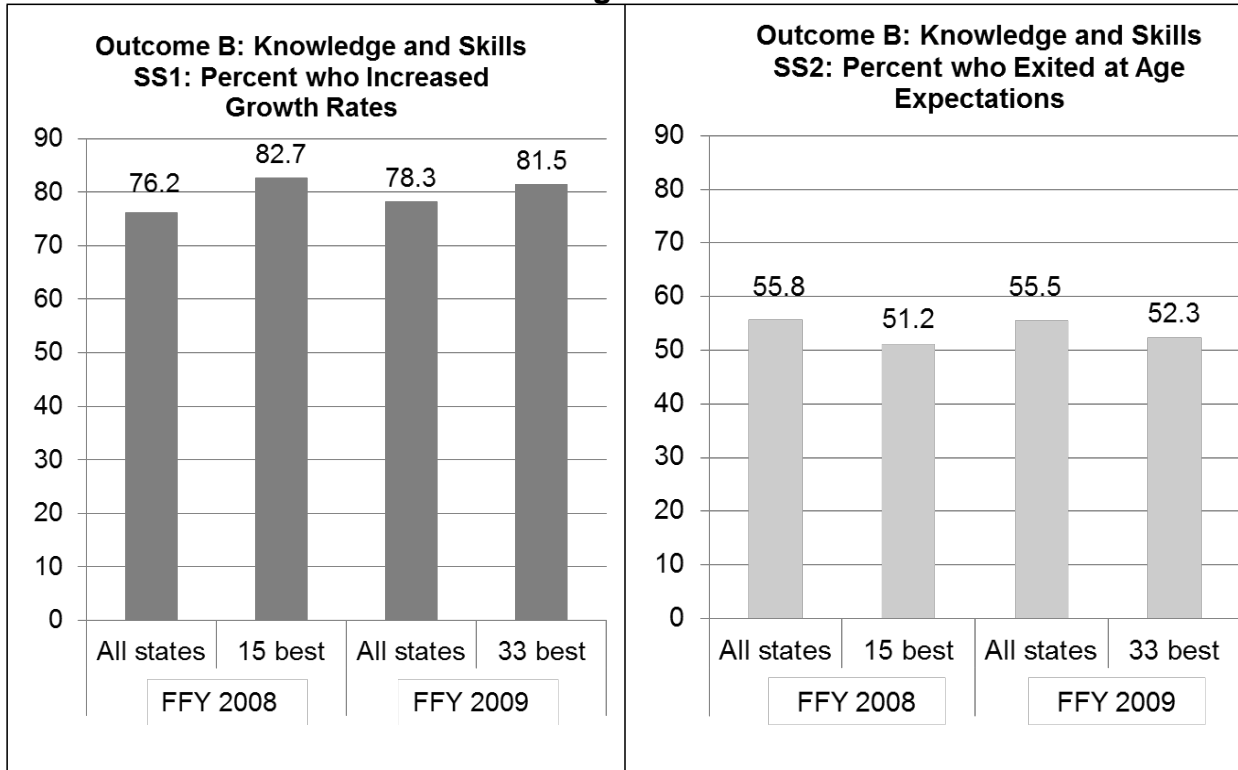
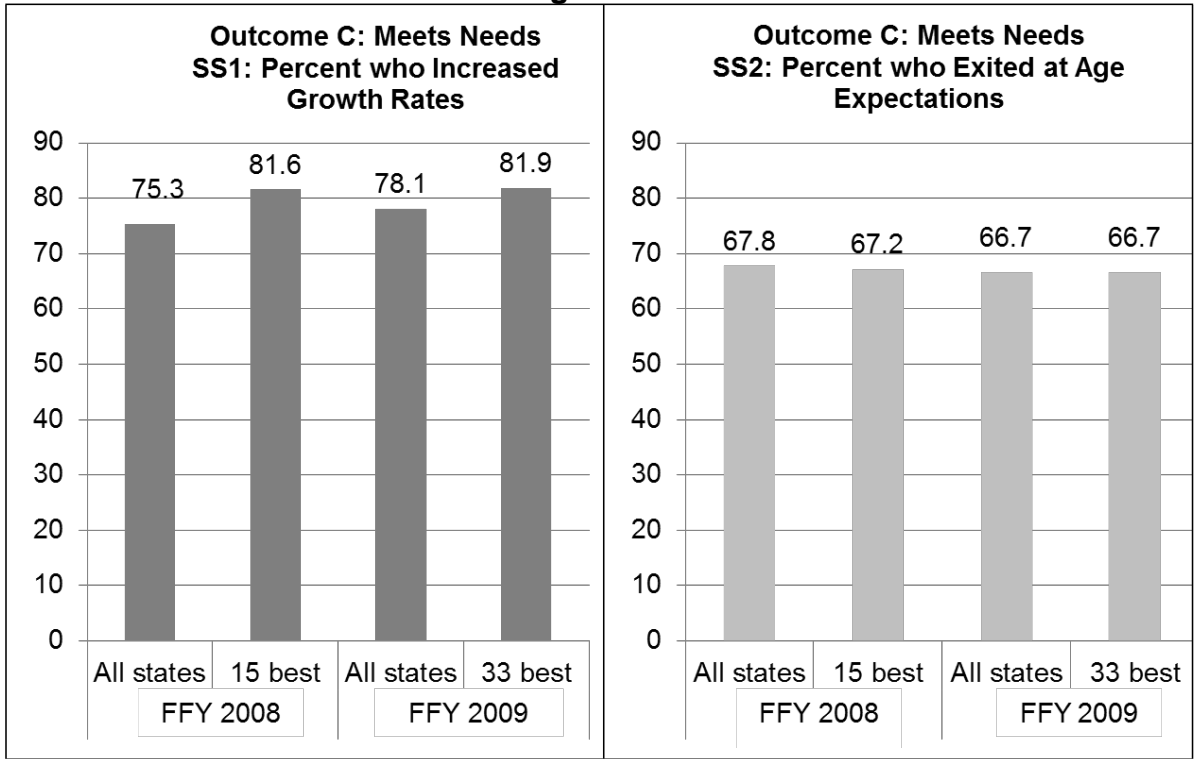


Figure 5 shows the same patterns for Outcome C (meets needs) as found for Outcomes A and B. Again, the “best” data for Summary Statement 1 are higher than the national averages – about seven points higher for FFY 2008 and about four points higher for FFY 2009. For Summary Statement 2, the “best” data are slightly lower than or equal to the national averages – less than one point lower for FFY 2008 and exactly equal for FFY 2009. The “best” data, as well as the national averages, for both summary statements are very similar, or exactly equal, across the two years. For Summary Statement 1, the national averages were only about three points higher for FFY 2009 compared to FFY 2008. The “best quality” data differed by less than one point. For Summary Statement 2, the national averages were only one point higher for FFY 2009 compared to FFY 2008. The “best quality” data also differed by only one point.

Figure 5



While one might have expected wide variation across the two years of data for the three different outcomes comparing “best quality” to national averages, in fact the patterns are strikingly similar. Lack of wide variation in the data patterns suggests that data for this indicator are, thus far, quite stable. The stability further suggests that states and jurisdictions have been successful in their efforts to develop and implement measurement systems that produce child outcomes data.

IMPROVEMENT ACTIVITIES

States and jurisdictions conducted improvement activities during FFY 2009 that emphasized data quality through training and TA, data analysis, monitoring, continued improvements to data systems, and review of policies and procedures. In addition, more states and jurisdictions included activities for improving program quality this year. Details follow.

Training and TA

States and jurisdictions continued to provide ongoing training activities and TA through face-to-face workshops, monthly staff development, webinars, web-based/ on-line training modules, and regional training. States and jurisdictions were finding creative ways to offer “refresher” training and training for new providers, as evident in this improvement activity:

- Planning was initiated and action taken to create on-line modules that can be used as a refresher for individuals already trained in the administration of the instrument. In collaboration with the publisher, filming of training sessions was conducted with school district practitioners and modules are now in production.

Professional development on child outcomes measurement was also provided during regularly scheduled events designed for more general purposes, such as presentations at the annual conferences of provider groups, administrators, families, and other stakeholders. The activity below illustrates this type of effort:

- In an effort to expand the venues in which information is presented and to gain exposure to individuals working with young children in child care, Head Start programs, and other community settings, an overview of the child outcome summary process was presented at the 2009 Fall Conference of the Association for the Education of Young Children. The session included an overview of the process, forms used, and the importance of all sources of information to look at the child functionally.

Training and TA targeted specific topics, such as assessment practices, improving the use of assessment tools, and learning how to use new assessment tools. For states and jurisdictions using the Child Outcomes Summary (COS) process, targeted training and TA addressed the topic of age-expected child development, as well as strategies for improving ratings, such as the use of the “decision tree” for outcome ratings and an emphasis on documenting the rating. These improvement activities provide examples of targeted training and TA:

- The SEA is working with Teaching Strategies GOLD to develop face-to-face and distance learning offerings as the agency transitions to one assessment.
- State personnel continued to access and utilize the information and resources from national professional organizations (e.g. National Association for the Education of Young Children, the Division of Early Childhood, etc.) to embed evidence-based assessment practices into the state outcome system.
- Targeted training was held across the state to reinforce the use of the decision tree in the rating process and additional information about comparison to typically developing students was provided. The result of the training is demonstrated by the actual data showing the districts are rating children with increased inter-rater reliability and thus, have a consistent understanding of the child’s functional outcomes compared to typically developing peers.

Training and TA also targeted specific groups, such as LEAs not meeting state targets for this indicator, related service providers who need to be involved in child outcomes measurement, and data entry staff as they transition to new data systems. The following activity provides an example of training and TA targeted for related service providers:

- Training activities were specifically designed to foster the development of authentic assessment and implementation of CreativeCurriculum.net within the context of speech language therapy sessions. Attention was given to assisting SLPs in extending assessment competencies into all three outcome categories.

Data Analysis

Many states and jurisdictions conducted and reviewed data analyses to check the quality of the data, identifying irregular patterns that might indicate errors in the data. State personnel also worked with LEA personnel to look for patterns in the data for quality assurance purposes. These improvement activities provide examples:

- Three months prior to running the final preschool outcomes measurement report for OSEP, the state ran a trial report. A comparison of that data was made to the information provided by each district to the state earlier in the year regarding entry and exit data. Feedback was then provided to each district regarding the data obtained. Districts in need of support were provided technical assistance in the form of e-mail, telephone contact or on-site visits; depending on the level of support required to ensure validity and accuracy of data.
- Analyses were run which looked specifically at progress categories “a” & “e” across the three outcomes. Progress category totals across the three outcomes were also computed. The pattern analysis and summary statement scores of individual LEAs identified concerns regarding the quality of some of the data submitted. Individual LEAs were identified for further technical assistance based on the data check process.
- Annually update the COSF pattern-checking tool as a means for local ECSE leaders to continue to validate the quality of COSF data submitted.

Monitoring

Improvement activities addressed the need to incorporate a review of child outcomes measurement practices into statewide monitoring systems. Strategies for monitoring outcomes measurement included the record review, the use of a “quality assurance checklist” and corrective action plans, as shown in these examples:

- State monitoring procedures will be implemented to include strategies for examining assessment practices and outcome rating activities during record reviews and focused monitoring activities. The SEA will work with the LEAs to

carefully examine outcome data and use this information for local program reform.

- Through requests from early childhood special education professionals from throughout the state, the Early Childhood Outcomes Committee developed and piloted a Quality Assurance Checklist. Components within the checklist focus on establishing consistent and quality data throughout the state. The checklist will be incorporated into and used for the overall and ongoing monitoring system. Results from these monitoring activities will allow for individualized technical assistance for districts requiring corrective actions and or improvement with components of this indicator.

Continued Improvements to Data Systems

States and jurisdictions continued to improve their data systems to allow more in-depth analysis of outcomes data. Fields for additional data elements were added to capture variables that might influence outcomes, such as type of service, total hours of service, and placement. Outcomes data were linked to broader data systems to facilitate linkage with information about demographics. States and jurisdictions also enhanced their data systems to help identify potentially missing data. Examples of activities to improve data systems included the following:

- Worked with the Student Accountability Information System (SAIS) staff to create a process and procedures for interfacing with Teaching Strategies GOLD data.
- Enhancements to the SPP7 online application were introduced prior to the start of the 2009-2010 data collection to ensure greater data integrity. The application validated a child's age at entry and at exit. In addition, the enhancement verified the child was in the program for at least 6 months prior to exiting. A variety of data reports were created and accessible to districts. The reports will allow districts to link other data elements to progress data for complex data analysis. Regions continued to provide technical assistance and training to districts concerning reporting requirements and the enhancements to the SPP7 online application.
- Future enhancements will include a "Red Flag" system to indicate that a child has turned six and needs to be exited from the system.

Review of Policies and Procedures

States and jurisdictions continued to meet with stakeholders to review policies and procedures for collecting and reporting child outcomes data. Improvement activities described the review of policies for the use of specific assessment tools, decisions about "tweaking" forms, aligning outcomes measurement with early learning standards and recommended curricula, as well as integrating outcomes measurement with IEP processes. States and jurisdictions continued to update policy and procedural guidance for dissemination to local programs. Examples follow.

- State conducted “intensive stakeholder and subject matter expert reviews of proposed new assessment (Teaching Strategies GOLD).”
- State began “IEP Outcome Integration” work in developing and implementing a process for assisting LEAs on integrating outcomes measurement with the IEP process to make child outcome measurement more efficient and effective.
- Modifications to the current Child Outcomes Q & A were a main focus of the Child Outcomes Workgroup throughout the 2009-2010 year. The document was reorganized and procedures were updated in response to common questions that are received from county B-3 and LEA staff throughout the year. The policies and procedures were discussed and developed jointly to ensure a Birth-to-Six perspective. Revisions to the current document were completed in the spring of 2010.

Program Improvement

In addition to activities for improving data quality, states and jurisdictions described their efforts to improve programs in FFY 2009. Activities addressed, for example, improved instructional practices, transition, use of content standards, and effective communication with families. Examples of program improvement activities include the following.

- Professional development on the use of developmentally appropriate evidence-based instructional strategies focused on early literacy and math, language and communication, motor development, social-emotional development and behavior.
- Guide By Your Side Program: Second year of expansion to include support around transition from Part C to Part B; family focus and support in identifying child’s unique needs around language, social emotional, literacy and academic development; program served 62 families during 2009-2010.
- The Early Learning Standards (ELS) specify developmental expectations for preschool children. They are grouped around five areas of children’s development including: Approaches to Learning, Social Emotional, Mathematics, Language and Literacy, and Physical Development and Health. They are supported by practice and scientific research and are performance based. This training provided opportunities for participants to thoroughly review and understand the standards; identify their indicators; and use them as a guide for decisions about an integrated curriculum, appropriate materials, and classroom environments that meet the developmental needs of all children in inclusive classrooms. Continue to provide professional development and training in the Early Learning Content Standards, including information on IEP accommodations in relationship to the standards.
- A parent brochure and laminated reference card were disseminated by the Parent Training and Information Center and LEAs. In partnership with the state, the PTI continues to work with families in understanding parental needs for effective communication with education staff.

CONCLUSIONS

Although collecting and reporting child outcomes data for young children with disabilities is a complex undertaking, states are increasingly able to report high quality data for this indicator. The numbers are very stable across the two years suggesting that the national estimates based on states with the highest quality data are credible estimates. Most states are implementing a series of improvement activities that focus on ensuring high quality data including professional development activities and different types of data analysis and monitoring activities. Some states are also beginning to use their data to make decisions about program improvement, thus beginning to implement improvement activities focused on implementing evidence-based practice