Additional Guidance for Completing the COSF

From The Early Childhood Outcome Center

Data Sources

- Ratings are expected to take into account the child's functioning across a full range of situations and settings. Therefore, information from many individuals in contact with the child could be considered in deciding on a rating. These may include (but are not limited to): parents and family members, caregivers or child care providers, therapists, service providers, case managers, teachers, and physicians. If there is not enough information available about a child's functioning across settings and situations, you will need to gather more information before you can decide on a rating.
- Many types of information could be considered in selecting a rating. These may include (but are not limited to): parent and clinical observation, curriculum-based assessments, norm-referenced assessments, service provider notes about performance in different situations, and progress and issues identified in the IFSP/IEP or individualized planning process.

Formal Assessment Tools

- Depending on the assessment tool, assessment tools can be a useful source of information for reaching a summary decision but resulting information should be placed in context with other information available about a child. Many assessment tools are domain-based and were not designed to provide information about functional behaviors and functioning across a variety of situations. Knowing that a child has or has not mastered assessment items that are related to the outcome provides helpful information but the information should be used in conjunction with what else is known about the child. A high score on a set of items in a domain related to the outcome might not mean the child has achieved the outcome and, conversely, a low score might not mean the child has not achieved it.

- Ratings should reflect the child's current functioning across settings and in situations that make up his/her day. Ratings should convey the child's functioning across multiple settings and in everyday situations, *not* his/her capacity to function under unusual or ideal circumstances.

- A standardized testing situation is an unusual setting for a young child. If the child's functioning in a testing situation differs from the child's everyday functioning, the rating should reflect the child's everyday functioning.

Cultural Diversity

- If the child is from a culture that has expectations that differ from published developmental milestones for when young children accomplish common developmental tasks, such as feeding themselves or dressing themselves, use the expectations for the child's culture to decide if the child is functioning at the level expected for his or her age.

Premature Babies

- If the child was born prematurely, use the expectations for the child's chronological age, not the corrected age. The intent of the form is to describe the child's current functioning relevant to expectations for his or her age. Presumably over time and with support, many children born prematurely eventually will perform like same-age peers.

Assistive Technology

- If assistive technology or special accommodations are available in the child's everyday environments, then the rating should describe the child's functioning using those adaptations. However, if technology is only available in some environments or is not available for the child, rate the child's functioning with whatever assistance is commonly present. Ratings are to reflect the child's **actual** functioning across a range of settings, *not* his/her capacity to function under ideal circumstances if he or she had the technology.