

Indicator 7: Preschool Outcomes

Instructions and Measurement

Monitoring Priority: FAPE in the LRE

Results indicator: Percent of preschool children aged 3 through 5 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.

(20 U.S.C. 1416 (a)(3)(A))

Data Source

State selected data source.

Measurement

Outcomes:

- 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.

Progress categories for A, B and C:

- a. Percent of preschool children who did not improve functioning = [(# of preschool children who did not improve functioning) divided by (# of preschool children with IEPs assessed)] times 100.
- b. Percent of preschool children who improved functioning but not sufficient to move nearer to functioning comparable to same-aged peers = [(# of preschool children who improved functioning but not sufficient to move nearer to functioning comparable to same-aged peers) divided by (# of preschool children with IEPs assessed)] times 100.
- c. Percent of preschool children who improved functioning to a level nearer to same-aged peers but did not reach it = [(# of preschool children who improved functioning to a level nearer to same-aged peers but did not reach it) divided by (# of preschool children with IEPs assessed)] times 100.
- d. Percent of preschool children who improved functioning to reach a level comparable to same-aged peers = [(# of preschool children who improved functioning to reach a level comparable to same-aged peers) divided by (# of preschool children with IEPs assessed)] times 100.
- e. Percent of preschool children who maintained functioning at a level comparable to same-aged peers = [(# of preschool children who maintained functioning at a level comparable to same-aged peers) divided by (# of preschool children with IEPs assessed)] times 100.

Summary Statements for Each of the Three Outcomes:

Summary Statement 1: Of those preschool children who entered the preschool 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.

Measurement for Summary Statement 1: Percent = [(# of preschool children reported in progress category (c) plus # of preschool children reported in category (d)) divided by ((# of preschool children reported in progress category (a) plus # of preschool children reported in progress category (b) plus # of preschool children reported in progress category (c) plus # of preschool children reported in progress category (d))] times 100.

Summary Statement 2: The percent of preschool children who were functioning within age expectations in each Outcome by the time they turned 6 years of age or exited the program.

Measurement for Summary Statement 2: Percent = [(# of preschool children reported in progress category (d) plus # of preschool children reported in progress category (e)) divided by ((the total # of preschool children reported in progress categories (a) + (b) + (c) + (d) + (e))] times 100.

Instructions

Sampling of **children for assessment** is allowed. When sampling is used, submit a description of the sampling methodology outlining how the design will yield valid and reliable estimates. (See [General Instructions](#) on page 3 for additional instructions on sampling.)

In the measurement include, in the numerator and denominator, only children who received special education and related services for at least six months during the age span of three through five years.

Describe the results of the calculations and compare the results to the targets. States will use the progress categories for each of the three Outcomes to calculate and report the two Summary Statements. States have provided targets for the two Summary Statements for the three Outcomes (six numbers for targets for each FFY).

Report progress data and calculate Summary Statements to compare against the six targets. Provide the actual numbers and percentages for the five reporting categories for each of the three Outcomes.

In presenting results, provide the criteria for defining "comparable to same-aged peers." If a State is using the Early Childhood Outcomes Center (ECO) Child Outcomes Summary (COS), then the criteria for defining "comparable to same-aged peers" has been defined as a child who has been assigned a score of 6 or 7 on the COS.

In addition, list the instruments and procedures used to gather data for this indicator, including if the State is using the ECO COS.

7 - Indicator Data

Not Applicable

Select yes if this indicator is not applicable.

NO

Historical Data

Part	Baseline	FFY	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
A1	2008	Target >=	77.00%	77.00%	77.10%	77.20%	77.30%
A1	61.40%	Data	80.00%	86.59%	93.55%	79.31%	80.82%

Part	Baseline	FFY	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
A2	2008	Target >=	75.50%	75.50%	75.60%	75.70%	75.80%
A2	59.20%	Data	68.11%	71.64%	75.22%	71.52%	71.88%
B1	2008	Target >=	81.00%	81.00%	81.10%	81.20%	81.30%
B1	70.30%	Data	84.48%	81.60%	89.11%	75.19%	76.47%
B2	2008	Target >=	58.50%	58.50%	58.60%	58.70%	58.80%
B2	31.60%	Data	58.38%	55.97%	57.52%	55.63%	53.13%
C1	2008	Target >=	75.90%	75.90%	76.00%	76.10%	76.20%
C1	58.10%	Data	79.46%	84.34%	96.77%	79.12%	75.00%
C2	2008	Target >=	75.90%	75.90%	76.00%	76.10%	76.20%
C2	64.10%	Data	70.27%	68.66%	76.99%	70.20%	72.66%

Targets

FFY	2024	2025
Target A1 >=	77.40%	77.50%
Target A2 >=	75.90%	76.00%
Target B1 >=	81.50%	81.50%
Target B2 >=	59.00%	59.00%
Target C1 >=	76.40%	76.40%
Target C2 >=	76.40%	76.40%

Targets: Description of Stakeholder Input

The Special Education Advisory Panel (SEAP) in Montana has been in existence since 2013. The SEAP is made up of 16 members, seven of whom are parents of students with disabilities. The panel is fully vested and broadly representative of Montana. Many of the panel members serve in other agency or organization leadership positions or on advisory councils as the voice of students with disabilities. This enables the SEA to draw insight and advice from a diverse group of stakeholders with an understanding of Montana’s unique needs and strengths.

In the 2024-25 and 2025-26 school years, the SEA asked for input on Indicators 3, 4, 9, and 10 from the SEAP. The SEA presented information on the SPP/APR as a whole and then dug into the specific indicators for feedback on targets and proposed methodological changes. The SEAP agreed with the SEA’s proposal. Meeting minutes from discussions with SEAP as well as presentation materials have been posted publicly for all stakeholder review and input on the state website for SEAP: <https://opi.mt.gov/Educators/School-Climate-Student-Wellness/Special-Education/Regulations-and-Guidance#10965413037-federal-requirements>.

In the spring of every school year, the SEA brings together parents, Montana’s Parent Training and Information center the Montana Empowerment Center (MEC), the SEAP, and other state agencies for a joint partnership meeting. During this meeting the SEA reviews the APR submitted in February. The SEA asks for suggestions on how to potentially improve the outcomes of the indicators along with doing a data drill down of the state data and district level data.

In addition to the above-mentioned stakeholders, the SEA worked with many other stakeholder groups that support students with disabilities. Those groups include but are not limited to:

Monthly Special Education Director’s calls

Montana Council for Exceptional Children (MCEC) – presented on updates at the SEA, national level, and writing compliant special education paperwork

Vocational Rehabilitation and Blind Services – strengthening our secondary transition

Summer Institute

Montana Council of Administrators of Special Education (MCASE)

Higher Education Consortium (HEC)

Dawson Community College – assisted in setting up level 2 of the ParaPathways Program

CSPD Regional Directors

FFY 2024 SPP/APR Data

Number of preschool children aged 3 through 5 with IEPs assessed

133

Outcome A: Positive social-emotional skills (including social relationships)

Outcome A Progress Category	Number of children	Percentage of Children
a. Preschool children who did not improve functioning	0	0.00%
b. Preschool children who improved functioning but not sufficient to move nearer to functioning comparable to same-aged peers	17	12.78%
c. Preschool children who improved functioning to a level nearer to same-aged peers but did not reach it	28	21.05%
d. Preschool children who improved functioning to reach a level comparable to same-aged peers	34	25.56%
e. Preschool children who maintained functioning at a level comparable to same-aged peers	54	40.60%

Outcome A	Numerator	Denominator	FFY 2023 Data	FFY 2024 Target	FFY 2024 Data	Status	Slippage
A1. Of those children who entered or exited the program below age expectations in Outcome A, the percent who substantially increased their rate of growth by the time they turned 6 years of age or exited the program. <i>Calculation: (c+d)/(a+b+c+d)</i>	62	79	80.82%	77.40%	78.48%	Met target	No Slippage
A2. The percent of preschool children who were functioning within age expectations in Outcome A by the time they turned 6 years of age or exited the program. <i>Calculation: (d+e)/(a+b+c+d+e)</i>	88	133	71.88%	75.90%	66.17%	Did not meet target	Slippage

Outcome B: Acquisition and use of knowledge and skills (including early language/communication)

Outcome B Progress Category	Number of Children	Percentage of Children
a. Preschool children who did not improve functioning	0	0.00%
b. Preschool children who improved functioning but not sufficient to move nearer to functioning comparable to same-aged peers	29	21.80%
c. Preschool children who improved functioning to a level nearer to same-aged peers but did not reach it	46	34.59%
d. Preschool children who improved functioning to reach a level comparable to same-aged peers	50	37.59%
e. Preschool children who maintained functioning at a level comparable to same-aged peers	8	6.02%

Outcome B	Numerator	Denominator	FFY 2023 Data	FFY 2024 Target	FFY 2024 Data	Status	Slippage
B1. Of those children who entered or exited the program below age expectations in Outcome B, the percent who substantially increased their rate of growth by the time they turned 6 years of age or exited the program. <i>Calculation:</i> $(c+d)/(a+b+c+d)$	96	125	76.47%	81.50%	76.80%	Did not meet target	No Slippage
B2. The percent of preschool children who were functioning within age expectations in Outcome B by the time they turned 6 years of age or exited the program. <i>Calculation:</i> $(d+e)/(a+b+c+d+e)$	58	133	53.13%	59.00%	43.61%	Did not meet target	Slippage

Outcome C: Use of appropriate behaviors to meet their needs

Outcome C Progress Category	Number of Children	Percentage of Children
a. Preschool children who did not improve functioning	0	0.00%
b. Preschool children who improved functioning but not sufficient to move nearer to functioning comparable to same-aged peers	15	11.28%
c. Preschool children who improved functioning to a level nearer to same-aged peers but did not reach it	33	24.81%
d. Preschool children who improved functioning to reach a level comparable to same-aged peers	32	24.06%
e. Preschool children who maintained functioning at a level comparable to same-aged peers	53	39.85%

Outcome C	Numerator	Denominator	FFY 2023 Data	FFY 2024 Target	FFY 2024 Data	Status	Slippage
C1. Of those children who entered or exited the program below age expectations in Outcome C, the percent who substantially increased their rate of growth by the time they turned 6 years of age or exited the program. <i>Calculation:</i> $(c+d)/(a+b+c+d)$	65	80	75.00%	76.40%	81.25%	Met target	No Slippage
C2. The percent of preschool children who were functioning within age expectations in Outcome C by the time they turned 6 years of age or exited the program. <i>Calculation:</i> $(d+e)/(a+b+c+d+e)$	85	133	72.66%	76.40%	63.91%	Did not meet target	Slippage

Part	Reasons for slippage, if applicable
A2	<p>The decrease in performance for Outcome A, Summary Statement 2 (A2) from FFY 2023 to FFY 2024 was 5.71 percentage points. The state conducted data analysis to determine the reason for the decrease and subsequent slippage and determined that one of the most notable reasons was the difference in entrance ratings for preschool students in FFY 2023 compared to FFY 2024. Indeed, in FFY 2023, 46.09% of the preschool students received an entrance Child Outcomes Summary (COS) rating of 6 or 7 (overall age-expected functioning). This was nearly 4 percentage points higher than the same entrance ratings for preschool students in FFY 2024 (42.11% of preschool students in FFY 2024 received entrance COS ratings of 6 or 7). Accordingly, in FFY 2024 there was a larger percentage of preschool students entering preschool not within the age-expected functioning range, thus necessitating much more substantial growth from entrance to exit in order to meet criteria for age-expected functioning. It is much more challenging to enter preschool with a COS rating of 2 and attain an exit COS rating of 6 or 7 as compared to entering preschool with a COS rating of 5 and attaining an exit COS rating of 6 or 7. Accordingly, fewer preschool students were able to exit functioning within age expectations in FFY 2024 as compared to FFY 2023, due in part to the lower COS ratings assigned upon entrance.</p> <p>The fact that preschool students had entrance COS ratings that were lower in FFY 2024 could be a lingering impact of COVID. Students exiting preschool or turning 6 years old during the 2024-25 may have been eligible for preschool or for early intervention programs during the years of 2020-2022. If, due to health concerns, preschool or early intervention providers had limited ability to provide services or parents declined services due to health concerns (which was observed), children may not have had exposure to social-emotional skills, including social relationships, in foundational years. Thus, these children may not have as readily acquired the social-emotional skills that are the focus of Outcome A. This is supported by the decrease in performance on this indicator over the prior three years.</p> <p>Additionally, in slippage analyses the state observed an overall decrease in performance on A2 for 5 LEAs in the state. One of these was among the larger LEAs in the state and comprised 12.78% of the statewide data for Indicator 7. The large population of this LEA resulted in more substantial impacts on the statewide data, thus likely contributing to the overall slippage for this indicator.</p>
B2	<p>The decrease in performance for Outcome B, Summary Statement 2 (B2) from FFY 2023 to FFY 2024 was 9.52 percentage points. The state conducted data analysis to determine the reason for the decrease and subsequent slippage using similar analysis as described in the slippage statement for A2. Interestingly, there was a very small increase (count of 3 records) in the number preschool students who received an entrance COS rating of 6 or 7 (overall age-expected functioning), which differs from what was found in A2. However, when looking at the lowest COS entrance ratings of 1-3, the state observed an increase of 26.47% from FFY 2023 to FFY 2024. Accordingly, in FFY 2024 there was a larger percentage of preschool students entering preschool with skills well below age-expected functioning, thus necessitating much more substantial growth from entrance to exit in order to meet criteria for age-expected functioning. It is much more challenging to enter preschool with a COS rating of 2 and attain an exit COS rating of 6 or 7 as compared to entering preschool with a COS rating of 5 and attaining an exit COS rating of 6 or 7. Accordingly, fewer preschool students were able to exit functioning within age expectations in FFY 2024 as compared to FFY 2023, due in part to the lower COS ratings assigned upon entrance.</p> <p>As noted in the slippage statement for A2, the fact that more preschool students had entrance COS ratings of 1-3 in FFY 2024 than in FFY 2023 could be a lingering impact of COVID. Students exiting preschool or turning 6 years old during the 2024-25 may have been eligible for preschool or for early intervention programs during the years of 2020-2022. If, due to health concerns, preschool or early intervention providers had limited ability to provide services or parents declined services due to health concerns (which was observed), children may not have had exposure to knowledge and skills in foundational years that limited their ability to acquire and use these skills upon entering preschool. Thus, these children may not have as readily acquired and used the knowledge and skills – including language skills - that are the focus of Outcome B. This is supported by the decrease in performance on this indicator over the prior three years.</p> <p>Additionally, in slippage analyses the state observed an overall decrease in performance on B2 for 8 LEAs in the state. Two of these were among the larger LEAs in the state and comprised 24.81% of the statewide data for Indicator 7. The large population of these LEAs resulted in more substantial impacts on the statewide data, thus likely contributing to the overall slippage for this indicator.</p>
C2	<p>The decrease in performance for Outcome C, Summary Statement 2 (C2) from FFY 2023 to FFY 2024 was 8.75 percentage points. The state conducted data analysis to determine the reason for the decrease and subsequent slippage using similar analysis as described in the slippage statements for A2 and B2. For C2, the state observed an overall decrease of 8.33% in the number of preschool students who received an entrance COS rating of 6 or 7 (overall age-expected functioning), similar to what was found in the slippage statement for A2. Additionally, when looking at the lowest COS entrance ratings of 1-3, the state observed an increase of 20.69% from FFY 2023 to FFY 2024, similar to what was found in the slippage statement for B2. This confluence of factors resulted in a larger percentage of preschool students entering preschool with skills well below age-expected functioning in FFY 2024, thus necessitating much more substantial growth from entrance to exit in order to meet criteria for age-expected functioning. It is much more challenging to enter preschool with a COS rating of 2 and attain an exit COS rating of 6 or 7 as compared to entering preschool with a COS rating of 5 and attaining an exit COS rating of 6 or 7. Accordingly, fewer preschool students were able to exit functioning within age expectations in FFY 2024 as compared to FFY 2023, due in part to the lower COS ratings assigned upon entrance.</p> <p>As noted in the slippage statements for A2 and B2, the fact that fewer preschool students had entrance ratings of 6 and 7 and more preschool students had entrance COS ratings of 1-3 in FFY 2024 as compared to FFY 2023 could be a lingering impact of COVID. Students exiting preschool or turning 6 years old during the 2024-25 may have been eligible for preschool or for early intervention programs during the years of 2020-2022. If, due to health concerns, preschool or early intervention providers had limited ability to provide services or parents declined services due to health concerns (which was observed), children may not have had exposure to use of appropriate behaviors foundational years that limited their ability to acquire and use these skills to meet their needs upon entering preschool. This is supported by the decrease in performance on this indicator over the prior three years.</p>

Does the State include in the numerator and denominator only children who received special education and related services for at least six months during the age span of three through five years? (yes/no)

YES

Sampling Question	Yes / No
Was sampling used?	NO

Did you use the Early Childhood Outcomes Center (ECO) Child Outcomes Summary (COS) process? (yes/no)

YES

List the instruments and procedures used to gather data for this indicator.

Montana uses a standardized required editor-based reporting form to collect entering and exiting preschool outcomes data. The form is included in our special education module within our state-wide student data system, along with all required special education forms. The report is run by the Part B data manager.

Provide additional information about this indicator (optional)

7 - Prior FFY Required Actions

None

7 - OSEP Response

7 - Required Actions