

# Indicator 7: Preschool Outcomes

## A Family Guide to the Child Outcomes Summary (COS) Process



New Jersey Department of Education  
Office of Special Education



### What is the Child Outcomes Summary (COS) Process?

The COS Process is a way to look at a child's development and celebrate their progress in early childhood special education. It helps determine how the child is learning, developing, and building new skills over time and how teams can best support their growth.



### Why is it important?

The COS Process gives a big-picture view of the child's educational growth. It helps families and educators:

- Understand strengths and needs.
- Set goals for learning.
- Measure progress overtime.



### Will the COS Process require an additional assessment?

The COS Process is not an assessment. Instead, it's a synthesis of information from different sources—including assessments, observations, and input from families and professionals. It brings all that information together to give a big-picture view of how a child is doing in everyday routines across three key areas of development.



### When is the COS Process used?

The COS Process is completed at 2 points throughout the child's time in early childhood special education. It is completed within the first and last 30 days of a child starting and ending early childhood special education.



### How can families help?

Families know their child best! Family input helps create a full picture of how the child is doing.

- Share stories, routines, and observations.
- Ask questions.
- Be part of meaningful conversations.

The COS Process looks at how children use their skills in everyday routines, across all settings and situations, by focusing on three key outcomes:

#### Outcome 1

##### Positive Social-Emotional Skills (Including Social Relationships)

- How the child interacts with family members, familiar adults, and other children.
- How the child shows emotions, expresses their needs, and builds relationships.
- How the child shares, takes turns, and participates in social routines.

#### Outcome 2

##### Acquisition and Use of Knowledge and Skills (Including Early Language/Communication and Early Literacy)

- How the child explores new ideas and learns through play.
- Development of early language, thinking, and problem-solving skills.
- How the child uses imagination, asks questions, and shows curiosity.

#### Outcome 3

##### Use of Appropriate Behaviors to Meet Their Needs

- How the child uses actions, words, or tools to get what is needed.
- Ways the child moves, eats, gets dressed, or takes care of basic needs.
- How the child shows independence in everyday routines.



**Let's Work Together!**



The COS process is a team effort between families and professionals. Together, everyone works to support the child's growth and success every step of the way!