



## Measuring Child and Family Outcomes MSDE Course Syllabus

**Presenter:** Anne Brager

**EILA Coordinator:** Linda Carling  
Johns Hopkins University School of Education  
Center for Technology in Education

### Overview/

**Description:** This timely course is offered as states begin to measure the impact of their Early Intervention Programs on the children and families that they serve. Federal policies today require all funded programs to provide evidence that their services result in positive outcomes. For Early Intervention Programs, each state must measure child and family outcomes and report results on an annual basis.

The Office of Special Education Programs has identified three child and three family outcomes as indicators of program effectiveness. Child outcome indicators include children who demonstrate improvement in:

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

Family outcome indicators include responses from families participating in Part C who report that early intervention services have helped the family:

- A. Know their rights;
- B. Effectively communicate their children's needs; and
- C. Help their children develop and learn.

Information on both child and family outcomes will be used to demonstrate how EI is beneficial to its participants; how it makes a difference in the lives of infants and toddlers with disabilities and their families. Positive results will reflect effective programs and are closely tied to continued funding. Outcome data can also be used to highlight areas of program effectiveness and to guide program and service improvement efforts.

A major challenge for early intervention providers is to understand the need for measuring common outcomes on each child they serve and the potential benefit of this data to inform program policy and direction. Assessing young children within the context of the settings and activities in which children and their families spend time is an ongoing process. Assessment information is used for program planning and evaluation of individual children and families. Providers must now apply assessment information to determine the level of functioning of young children with disabilities in each of the three areas when compared to their same aged peers. States are developing outcomes measurement systems that specify how outcome data is to be collected and summarized and how the outcomes are to be measured and reported.

To respond to this requirement, MSDE has developed an Early Childhood Accountability System (ECAS) for measuring outcomes for infants, toddlers, and preschoolers with disabilities and their families. A state-wide Part C database includes data on the present levels of development in all domains for all eligible children, based on the results obtained by using the most appropriate assessment tools and methods. Validation studies are under way to determine if the database information is consistent with direct responses from providers about a child's functioning in the three outcome areas.

The Measuring Child and Family Outcomes course is designed to give Fellows an understanding of the “big picture” of federal requirements and how the measurement of the child and family outcomes will respond to these requirements. The course provides information about the origins of federal accountability systems, understanding the three functional child outcomes, and collecting, measuring and reporting outcomes. It supports Fellows in using child outcome data in various ways to help their programs and to recognize best practices in child assessment when applied to outcome measurement through readings, discussion, and team activities. The key outcome of the MCFO course is for practitioners and program administrators to understand the importance of outcomes measurement in providing effective early intervention supports and services to children and families.

**Targeted Audience:**

Participants in the EILA online cohort

**Rationale/Context:** The Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE), Division of Special Education/Early Intervention Services (DSE/EIS) and Johns Hopkins Center for Technology in Education (CTE), are

offering the second annual Early Intervention Leadership Academy (EILA) during the year of 2007-2008. This unique program is designed to prepare aspiring and current leaders in local Infants and Toddlers programs. Time away from work will be kept to a minimum by delivering most of the course activity in an online format.

**Timeline:** Five sessions including a face-to-face course kickoff.

**Outcomes:** Participants will:

- Describe the need for federal program accountability; PART tool ratings
- Describe OSEP's response to outcomes measurement;
- Understand the mechanisms of state planning and annual reports of target indicators;
- Identify how functional child outcomes differ from skill based ones
- Identify best practices in early childhood assessment and outcomes measurement;
- Comparing MD's approach to outcomes measurement with other state approaches
- Identify and compare uses of outcome data for different stakeholder groups;
- Describe the role of the Child Outcomes Summary Form for validation in Maryland's approach. Identify OSEP's criteria for establishing the extent to which a child is making progress
- Describe MD's system of family outcomes measurement Identify uses of data at the federal, state, local, provider and child and family level.
- Successfully interpret potential findings, meanings and actions for data.