

## The Challenge of Using Functional Behaviors for COSF Ratings

Ratings on the Child Outcomes Summary Form are based on the child's typical functioning across settings and situations as compared to the expected functioning for the child's same aged peers.

Functional behavior is when the child demonstrates meaningful behaviors in a meaningful context NOT whether the child can perform discrete behaviors or function under ideal circumstances or in a structured testing situation in one standardized way. Functional behaviors are what the child usually does and how the child uses his/her skills to accomplish tasks across settings and situations.

Discrete behaviors or isolated skills may or may not be important to the child's functioning on the outcome.

An example of an isolated skill is knows how to imitate a gesture when prompted by others. A functional behavior is a child watches what a peer says or does and incorporates it into his/her own play.

An isolated skill is "uses finger in pointing motion" A functional behavior is "the child points to indicates needs or wants."

An isolated skill is uses 2-word utterances. A functional behavior is the child engages in back and forth verbal exchanges with caregivers using 2-word utterances.

Functional behaviors are meaningful behaviors in a meaningful context. It is what the child does with the skills he or she has.

When determining ratings and documenting child behaviors in the Summary of Relevant Results on the Child Outcomes Summary Form be sure to think about functional behaviors of the child.. Determine the child's typical functioning across settings and situations at initial entry and permanent exit from the program in each outcome area.