

The Challenge of Identifying Immediate Foundational Skills

An important developmental concept for understanding how to make a child outcome rating is the concept of foundational skills as defined by the Early Childhood Outcomes Center.

Some of the skills and behaviors that develop early in a child's life serve as the foundation for later skills and behaviors. In other words, later skills build on earlier skills in predictable ways.

Earlier skills that serve as the base for later skills and are conceptually linked to the later skills are called foundational skills. Development in the early childhood years proceeds through several layers of foundational skills with skills and behaviors becoming more complex as a child gets older.

All the skills that lead to higher levels of functional behavior are foundational skills. The set of skills and behaviors that occur developmentally just prior to age-expected skills and behaviors can be described as the immediate foundational skills. They are the most recent set of foundational skills that children master before age expected functioning.

If a child has functional behaviors like that of a slightly younger child, the child is probably demonstrating immediate foundational skills. The child's functioning does not meet age expectations, but the child has skills and behaviors that occur developmentally just prior to age expected functioning and are the base on which to build age-expected functioning.

For further information on immediate foundational skills, refer to the hand-out from the Early Childhood Outcomes Center, *Age-Expected and Immediate Foundation Skills and the Child Outcome Summary Form 7-Point Rating Scale* available on this web-site.