Checking Outcome Data for Quality: Looking for Patterns

Pattern	Rationale	Analyses
1a. Children will differ from one another in their entry scores in reasonable ways (e.g., fewer scores at the high and low ends of the distribution, more scores in the middle). 1b. Children will differ from one another in their exit scores in reasonable ways. 1c. Children will differ from one another in their OSEP progress categories in reasonable ways.	Evidence suggests EI and ECSE serve more mildly than severely impaired children (e.g., few ratings/scores at lowest end). Few children receiving services would be expected to be considered as functioning typically (few ratings/scores in the typical range) at entry.	1. Look at the distribution of rating/scores at entry and exit and the percentages reported to OSEP. 2. Look at the percentage of children who scored as age appropriate (or not) on all three outcomes at entry and at exit.
2. Functioning in one outcome area will be related to functioning in the other outcome areas.	Children with significant challenges tend to have impaired functioning in two or three areas whereas children with milder delays have a mild delay in one or two areas and may show typical functioning in other area(s). For many, but not all, children with disabilities, progress in functioning in the three outcomes proceeds together	Look at the relationship across the outcomes at entry, at exit, and across the OSEP progress categories. 1. Crosstabulations (Outcome 1 by Outcome 2, etc) 2. Correlation coefficients (Outcome 1 correlated with Outcome 2, etc)
3. Functioning at entry within an outcome area will be related to functioning at exit (or – children who have higher functioning at entry in an outcome area will be the ones who are high functioning at exit in that outcome area).	Children tend to retain their rates of growth over time or to move to rates of growth that are close to earlier rates. Some may move to slightly higher or even lower trajectories but most children will not show extreme changes (e.g., from very slow growth to typical growth).	1. Correlation coefficients between entry and exit scores for each outcome 2. Crosstabs between entry and exit scores for each outcome

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4a. Most children will either hold their developmental trajectories or improve their trajectories from entry to exit.	There are more children served in EI and ECSE who will maintain or improve developmental trajectories than there are children who are likely to move to slower developmental trajectories.	Comparison of distributions of COSF ratings, standard scores, or some other metric that takes age into account. (Why can't we use raw scores on an assessment for this?) at entry and exit.
4b. Most children will not show huge changes in a year (or between entry and exit??).	See # 3.	1. Time 2 scores minus Time 1 scores 2. 2. Crosstabs of scores at each time point
5. Entry, exit, and OSEP progress category distributions from year to year should be similar (assuming the same kinds of children are being served).	Entry distributions reflect the nature of the children being served. If the eligibility criteria, child find efforts or other factors that impact who is served do not change, then the same kinds of children should be served from year to year resulting in similar entry distributions. Likewise, if program factors do not change then we would expect to see similar levels of child progress between entry and exit from year to year.	1. Frequency distributions of entry data in 2007, 2008, etc. 2. Frequency distributions of exit data in 2007, 2008, etc. 3. Frequency distributions of OSEP Categories in 2007, 2008, etc.
6. If local areas are serving similar kinds of children, scores at entry should be similar. If programs are equally effective, scores at exit and the OSEP percentages should be similar.	Similar to #5 above.	1. Frequency distributions of entry and exit, OSEP percentages by local areas (Use the data for programs serving 30 or more children.) 2. Means and standard deviations (and Ns!) by local area.

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7. Entry and exit scores and OSEP categories should be related to the nature of the child's disability.	Entry scores for children with milder disabilities should differ from those of children with more severe disabilities. Similarly, children with disabilities impacting, for example, social relationships, will on average have lower scores for Outcome 1 than other children.	1. Frequency distributions for each disability group 2. Means and standard deviations for each disability group
8. Scores at entry and exit and percentages on the OSEP progress categories should not be related to certain characteristics (e.g., race/ethnicity).	If programs are serving similar kinds of children from different demographics groups (e.g., race/ethnicity, gender), then the scores at entry for these groups should be similar. Also, assuming the program has an equal level of effectiveness with all racial/ethnic groups, exit scores and OSEP percentages will not differ by race/ethnicity or gender.	1. Frequency distributions for each group 2. Means and standard deviations for group

Note: If there is a reason to believe a predicted pattern would not hold in your state, then you would not expect to see that pattern in your data. Are there other patterns that would be predicted?