Subset of Critical Questions about Early Intervention and
Early Childhood Special Education

# Activity:

1. At your table, review the following subset of critical questions from the DaSy Critical Questions resource (full resource can be found at <https://dasycenter.org/resources/critical-questions/> ).
2. Identify the top 2-3 questions (either the larger question or the sub-questions below) that are a priority for your district/program/state. Write the question “code” (e.g., 1.A.1) on the provided sticky notes.

# Section 1: Child- and Family-Level Questions

| 1.A. Characteristics of Children and Families |  |
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| 1.A.1. What are the characteristics of children and families receiving early intervention or early childhood special education (EI/ECSE)? | A symbol of bread and butter signifying an essential question. |
| 1.A.1.b. What are the characteristics of children and families currently enrolled in EI/ECSE (e.g., disability, demographics,[[1]](#footnote-1) risk[[2]](#footnote-2))? | A symbol of bread and butter signifying an essential question. |
| 1.A.1.c. How have the characteristics of children and families enrolled in EI/ECSE changed over time (e.g., disability, demographics,1 risk2)? | A symbol of bread and butter signifying an essential question. |

| 1.B. IDEA Services and Settings |  |
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| 1.B.1. What are the characteristics of the services and supports provided to children/families in early intervention/early childhood special education (EI/ECSE)? | A symbol of bread and butter signifying an essential question. |
| 1.B.1.a. What percentage of children in EI/ECSE were planned to have each type of service (e.g., occupational therapist, physical therapist) according to their Individual Family Service Plan (IFSP) or Individualized Education Plan (IEP) within a given time period (e.g., the past month or year)? | A symbol of bread and butter signifying an essential question. |
| 1.B.1.b. What percentage of children received each type of service within a given time period (e.g., the past month or year)? | A symbol of bread and butter signifying an essential question. |
| 1.B.1.c. What amount of each type of service (e.g., frequency, intensity, total hours) do children in EI/ECSE receive? | A symbol of bread and butter signifying an essential question. |
| 1.B.1.d. What is the relationship between the amount of services planned and the amount of services received? | A symbol of bread and butter signifying an essential question. |

| 1.B. IDEA Services and Settings (continued) |  |
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| 1.B.3. What factors help explain differences in the type and amount of services that children and families receive? | A symbol of bread and butter signifying an essential question. |
| 1.B.3.a. What child characteristics (e.g., disability, age at entry, socioeconomic status [SES]) are related to differences in services and length of time in the program? | A symbol of bread and butter signifying an essential question. |
| 1.B.3.b. How do the type and amount of services vary by local early intervention services program/school district? | A symbol of bread and butter signifying an essential question. |
| 1.B.3.c. What program characteristics (e.g., geography, size, service-delivery model, finance/reimbursement methods) are related to differences in services and length of time in program? | A symbol of a mountain climber representing an aspirational question |
| 1.B.4. What characteristics of services are related to better outcomes for children and families? | A symbol of bread and butter signifying an essential question. |
| 1.B.4.a. What is the relationship between child outcomes and length of time in service? | A symbol of bread and butter signifying an essential question. |
| 1.B.4.b. What is the relationship between type and quantity of services, service setting, and child outcomes?  | A symbol of bread and butter signifying an essential question. |
| 1.B.5. Are young children receiving IDEA services in settings that are for all children? | A symbol of bread and butter signifying an essential question. |
| 1.B.5.a. What percentage of children with IFSP/IEPs are receiving IDEA services in settings that are for all children (e.g., state-operated prekindergarten, Head Start)?  | A symbol of bread and butter signifying an essential question. |
| 1.B.5.b. What are the characteristics of children with IFSP/IEPs receiving IDEA services in settings that are for all children (e.g., disability category, race/ethnicity, dual language learner [DLL], age, SES)? | A symbol of bread and butter signifying an essential question. |
| 1.B.5.c. What percentage of children with IFSP/IEPs are receiving IDEA services in specialized/special education settings?  | A symbol of bread and butter signifying an essential question. |
| 1.B.5.d. What are the characteristics of children with IFSP/IEPs receiving IDEA services in specialized/special education settings (e.g., disability category, race/ethnicity, dual language learner [DLL], age, SES)? | A symbol of bread and butter signifying an essential question. |
| 1.B.6. What is the relationship between the IDEA service setting and child outcomes? | A symbol of a mountain climber representing an aspirational question |
| 1.B.6.a. How do child outcomes for children who receive IDEA services in settings that are for all children compare with the child outcomes for those who receive IDEA services in other settings? | A symbol of a mountain climber representing an aspirational question |
| 1.B.6.b. What is the relationship between the number of settings in which children receive IDEA services in a given time period (e.g., in a year) and child outcomes? | A symbol of a mountain climber representing an aspirational question |

| 1.D. Child and Family Outcomes |  |
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| 1.D.1. What are the outcomes for children and families participating in early intervention/early childhood special education (EI/ECSE)? | A symbol of bread and butter signifying an essential question. |
| 1.D.1.a. How many children exiting EI/ECSE showed greater than expected growth (summary statement 1) and exited within age expectations (summary statement 2)? How do the patterns compare across child outcomes? | A symbol of bread and butter signifying an essential question. |
| 1.D.1.c. What outcomes do families achieve during their time in EI/ESCE (e.g., helping their child develop and learn, being able to advocate for their rights)? | A symbol of bread and butter signifying an essential question. |
| 1.D.1.d. How have child and family outcomes changed over time, and how do the trends compare across outcomes (for the state and local programs)? | A symbol of bread and butter signifying an essential question. |
| 1.D.2. What factors are related to better outcomes for children and families participating in early intervention or early childhood special education (EI/ECSE)? | A symbol of bread and butter signifying an essential question. |
| 1.D.2.a. How do child and family outcomes differ by child and family characteristics (e.g., disability, demographics,[[3]](#footnote-3) and risk[[4]](#footnote-4))? | A symbol of bread and butter signifying an essential question. |
| 1.D.2.b. What is the relationship between family outcomes and child outcomes? | A symbol of bread and butter signifying an essential question. |
| 1.D.2.c. How do outcomes for children and families differ by characteristics of IDEA services received (e.g., length of time in service, type and quantity of service, service setting, service-delivery model, and quality of services)? | A symbol of bread and butter signifying an essential question. |

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| 1.D.3. What are the long-term outcomes of children who participate in early intervention/early childhood special education (EI/ECSE)? | A symbol of bread and butter signifying an essential question. |
| A symbol of bread and butter signifying an essential question.1.D.3.a. What percentage of children who exit EI/ECSE at age expectations do not have an IEP in K-12 (e.g., in kindergarten, in third grade, in grade 12, at graduation, ever)?  |
| A symbol of bread and butter signifying an essential question.1.D.3.b. What are the characteristics of children who exit EI/ECSE at age expectations and withoutan IEP but who subsequently receive an IEP later in K-12? How do they differ from EI/ECSE recipients who do not receive special education services later in K-12?  |
| A symbol of a mountain climber representing an aspirational question1.D.3.c. What percentage of children who have received EI/ECSE are achieving at grade level later in K-12 (e.g., at grade 3, grade 6)? What percentage of children who exit EI/ECSE at age expectations achieve at grade level later in K-12? How do these percentages compare with the percentage of their classmates achieving at grade level?  |

# Section 2: Practioner-Level Questions

| 2.A. Practitioner Characteristics |  |
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| 2.A.1. What are the characteristics of practitioners working in early intervention/early childhood special education (EI/ECSE)? | A symbol of bread and butter signifying an essential question. |
| 2.A.1.a. What are the demographic characteristics of EI/ECSE practitioners (e.g., age, gender, ethnicity/race, language[s] spoken)? | A symbol of bread and butter signifying an essential question. |
| 2.A.1.b. What are the levels of education and years of experience of EI/ECSE practitioners? | A symbol of bread and butter signifying an essential question. |
| 2.A.1.c. How many EI/ECSE practitioners have specific types of credentials/licenses (e.g., EIS, preschool, special education, licensed therapist)? | A symbol of bread and butter signifying an essential question. |
| 2.A.1.d. What is the turnover rate among EI/ECSE practitioners (by year, state, or local program)? | A symbol of a mountain climber representing an aspirational question |
| 2.A.1.e. What percentage of those working with children with IFSP/IEPs and their families entered the field with the academic preparation and/or experience for working with young children and families? | A symbol of a mountain climber representing an aspirational question |
| 2.A.3. What ongoing professional development do early intervention/early childhood special education (EI/ECSE) practitioners receive? | A symbol of a mountain climber representing an aspirational question |
| 2.A.3.a. What professional development activities do EI/ECSE service providers/teachers participate in during employment? | A symbol of a mountain climber representing an aspirational question |
| 2.A.3.b. How much professional development (e.g., hours, continuing education units [CEUs]) did EI/ECSE practitioners receive over a given time period (e.g., in a year, over a 5-year period) by role and profession? | A symbol of a mountain climber representing an aspirational question |
| 2.A.3.c. How much professional development specific to EI/ECSE did EI/ECSE practitioners receive over a given time period (e.g., in a year, over a 5-year period) by role and profession? | A symbol of a mountain climber representing an aspirational question |

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# Section 3: Local Early Intervention Services (EIS) Program- and Local Educational Agency (LEA)-Level Questions

| 3.A. EIS Program/LEA Characteristics |  |
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| 3.A.1. What are the characteristics of local early intervention services programs and local educational agencies? | A symbol of bread and butter signifying an essential question. |
| 3.A.1.b. What are the characteristics of EIS programs/LEAs in the state (e.g., number of children served, number of providers in program, average funding per child)? | A symbol of bread and butter signifying an essential question. |
| 3.A.1.d. What is the EI/ECSE practitioner to child ratio for each EIS program/LEA overall? By type of profession/role? | A symbol of a mountain climber representing an aspirational question |

| 3.B. EIS Program/LEA Performance |  |
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| 3.B.1. How well are local early intervention services programs and local educational agencies supporting children and families? | A symbol of bread and butter signifying an essential question. |
| 3.B.1.a. How do child and family outcomes compare across EIS programs/LEAs? Are some EIS programs/LEAs meaningfully (e.g., statistically) different from the state?3.B.1.c. What percentage of EIS programs/LEAs provide IDEA services in general early care aneducation settings? What percentage of their children receive IDEA services in these settings? | A symbol of bread and butter signifying an essential question.A symbol of bread and butter signifying an essential question. |

| 3.C. Funding and Expenditures |  |
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| 3.C.1. What is the cost of providing early intervention/early childhood special education (EI/ECSE) services to children and families? | A symbol of bread and butter signifying an essential question. |
| 3.C.1.a. What major funding streams and allocations support children participating in EI/ECSE (e.g., federal, state, local)? | A symbol of bread and butter signifying an essential question. |
| 3.C.1.c. What is the cost to each local EIS program/LEA to provide EI/ECSE services? | A symbol of bread and butter signifying an essential question. |
| 3.C.1.d. What is the average cost per child for EI/ECSE services statewide? For each EIS program/LEA? | A symbol of bread and butter signifying an essential question. |
| 3.C.1.e. What are some of the factors (e.g., demographics of population, geography) that are related to differences across EIS programs/LEAs in the average cost per child? | A symbol of bread and butter signifying an essential question. |

1. Demographics include characteristics such as race, ethnicity, gender, socioeconomic status (SES), and language. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Risk includes characteristics that place children at risk for developmental delays or disabilities, such as prematurity and abuse or neglect.

Coding:

These are essential questions are those that a comprehensive, well-functioning state data system should provide the data to answer.

 These are aspirational questions that are valuable to ask and answer. They are more complex and require more information or more linkages to other data systems than would be expected even with a high-quality system. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Demographics include characteristics such as race, ethnicity, gender, SES, and language. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Risk includes characteristics that place children at risk for developmental delays or disabilities, such as prematurity and abuse or neglect. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)