

Outcomes for Children Served through IDEA’S Early Childhood Programs: 2014-15

In 2014-15, children with delays or disabilities who received services under the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA) showed greater than expected developmental progress. Many children exited the program functioning within age expectations, and most made progress.

States’ Part C and Part B Preschool programs report data annually on three outcomes:

1. Social relationships, which includes getting along with other children and relating well with adults
2. Use of knowledge and skills, which refers to thinking, reasoning, problem-solving, and early literacy and math skills
3. Taking action to meet needs, which includes feeding, dressing, self-care, and following rules related to health and safety



In 2014-2015, for Part C (birth through age 2),

- ◆ The percentage of children who showed greater than expected growth was between 67% and 75% across the three outcomes. These children were acquiring skills at a faster rate when they left the program than when they began it.
- ◆ The percentage of children who exited the program functioning within age expectations ranged from 50% for knowledge and skills to 59% for social relationships.

In 2014-15, for Part B Preschool (ages 3 through 5),

- ◆ The percentage of children who showed greater than expected growth was between 77% and 79% across the three outcomes.
- ◆ The percentage of children who exited within age expectations ranged from 53% for knowledge and skills to 64% for taking action to meet needs.

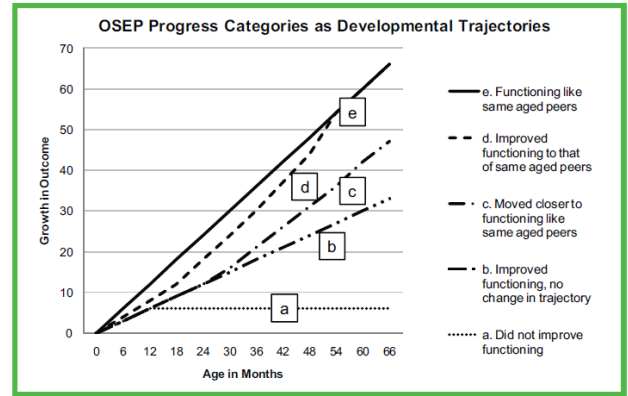


IDEA-funded programs serve children with the full range of delays and disabilities including children with severe disabilities and degenerative conditions. Individualized goals are established for each child. Children with severe disabilities may acquire skills slowly, and some may even lose skills. For other children, interventions help them catch up with children their age. Until these data were collected, it was not known that such a high percentage of children in both programs were showing greater than expected growth during their time in the programs and that a substantial percentage were within age expectations when they left them. Additional data reported by states showed that nearly all children acquired new skills during their time in the programs (98% for all outcomes for both Part C and Part B Preschool). States are increasingly using these child

	Showed greater than expected growth (%)	Exited the program within age expectations (%)
Part C—Early Intervention (birth through age 2)		
Social relationships	67	59
Knowledge and skills	74	50
Action to meet needs	75	58
Part B—Preschool (ages 3 through 5)		
Social relationships	78	58
Knowledge and skills	79	53
Action to meet needs	77	64
<p>Note: Data for Part C are based on 42 states weighted to represent the nation. Data for Part B Preschool are based on 45 states weighted to represent the nation.</p>		

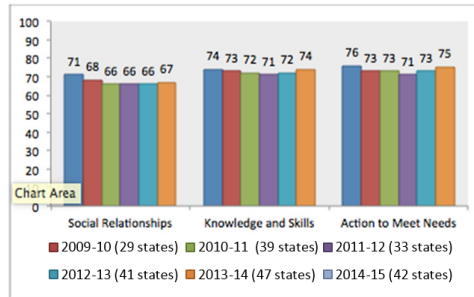
What is Greater Than Expected Growth?

Developmental science has provided information about the skills children master at different ages. Knowledge of what is expected for each age enables us to identify children who are developing too slowly. Children who are substantially behind their peers are referred to as having a developmental delay. The solid line on the graph (line e) illustrates typical development. All the other lines represent some kind of delay in the early years. If Angela is 12 months old with the skills of a 6-month-old, without intervention it is likely that she will continue to grow at the same rate and have the skills of a 9-month-old at 18 months. We provide intervention services because Angela is acquiring skills at about half the rate she should be and will continue to fall further behind her peers. This pattern of growth is illustrated in line b on the graph. The purpose of intervening is to change the child's rate of skill acquisition. Lines c and d illustrate children whose growth was greater than expected because their growth rate with intervention was greater than their growth rate before intervention. The children with growth pattern d catch up to what is expected of their age. States report the percentage of children in each of the five growth trajectories to the U.S. Department of Education. The percentages of children showing greater than expected growth and exiting within age expectations are computed from these five percentages.

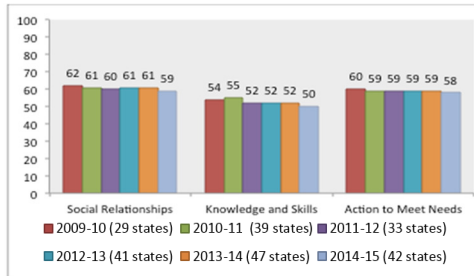


Part C— Early Intervention: Data Across Years

Children Showing Greater Than Expected Growth (%)

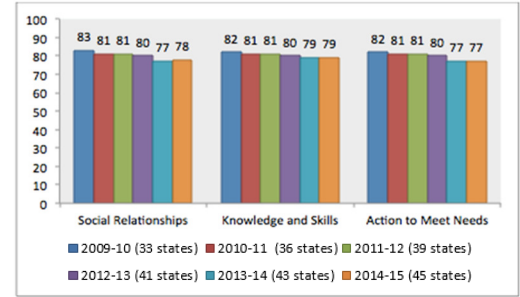


Children Exiting Within Age Expectations (%)

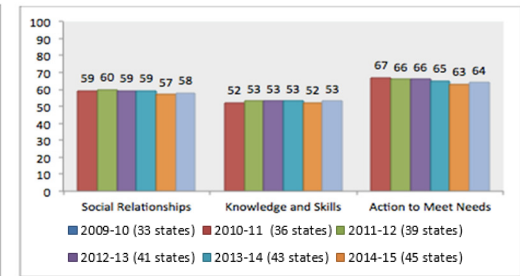


Part B— Preschool: Data Across Years

Children Showing Greater Than Expected Growth (%)



Children Exiting Within Age Expectations (%)



Trends Over Time

The national data have shown slight year-to-year fluctuations. States are still building the capacity to collect valid and reliable data (see "Quality of Data"). Until all states have procedures in place for reporting accurate data, it will remain difficult to determine whether slight year-to-year changes are due to programmatic differences or higher data quality.

Quality of Data

Collecting data on outcomes for young children with disabilities is a complex and relatively new activity for states. States are at various stages in implementing procedures for measuring child outcomes data. The first year that any state had child outcomes data for a full cohort of children was 2008-09 and some have shifted data collection approaches over the years. States have made varying degrees of progress toward having reliable statewide data and it takes several years for quality improvement practices to be reflected in outcomes data. Over time, the number of states that met the criteria for quality data for inclusion in these analyses generally has increased, as shown in the legend of the charts above. Data quality is expected to continue to improve in future years because many states have initiatives under way to address quality issues. States continue to improve the quality of their data and they also are conducting analyses to guide program improvement.