

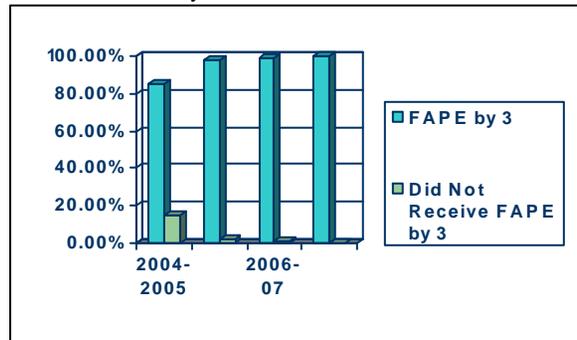
Program Report Card: State Department of Education / Early Childhood Special Education

Program Purpose: To provide a free appropriate public education by delivering individually designed special education and related services to eligible children ages 3 through 5 who have significant developmental delays or disabilities in accordance with state and federal law.

Contributes to Population Quality of Life Result: Early childhood special education contributes to the population result of the *Ready by Five, Fine by Nine* state investment plan. It allows for the provision of a free appropriate public education to children with significant developmental delays or disabilities beginning by a child's third birthday to address children's individual needs such that children make developmental and functional progress over time as a result of receiving services through an Individualized Education Program (IEP).

The performance measures for the Early Childhood Special Education Program are identified to: (1) ensure continuity of services for children with disabilities; (2) provide a profile of impact; and (3) identify the location of services for children with disabilities, if the data is available.

Performance Measure 1: The percent of children referred by the Connecticut Birth-to-Three System who have an IEP developed and implemented by their third birthday.



Story behind the baseline:

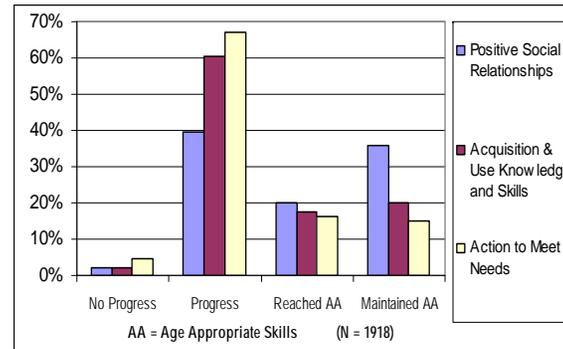
Performance Measure 1 indicates whether children who exit the Connecticut Birth-to-Three System at age 3 begin receiving their special education and related services by their third birthday (not including the summer unless the child qualifies for extended school year services). The goal is to ensure that a free appropriate public education is provided by the third birthday of a child and that a child receives, to the extent appropriate, uninterrupted services and supports designed to address their individual needs. Trend data indicates that over the four year reporting period, data went from 85.4 percent in 2004-05 to 99.8 percent in 2007-08. Early childhood special education has made annual progress towards

meeting the expectation of 100 percent. The Department's annual monitoring and data reporting have had a significant impact on this performance result.

Proposed actions to turn the curve:

- Ensure that the state data captures the activities of the field to ensure accurate and valid reporting.
- Provide technical assistance and support to ensure the reliability and timeliness of the data used for analysis and reporting.
- Monitor school districts.
- Provide targeted technical assistance in response to data regarding the provision of special education by age 3 for children coming from the Connecticut Birth-to-Three System.

Performance Measure 2: The percent of preschool children with an IEP who demonstrate progress in: positive social-emotional skills (including social relationships); acquisition and use of knowledge and skills (including early language/communication and early literacy); and use of appropriate behaviors to meet their needs.



Story behind the baseline:

Performance Measure 2 identifies data on the developmental and functional progress of children who receive special education and related services in the preschool grade. The Department of Education (SDE) requires school districts to utilize one assessment instrument to collect individual child assessment data. Children are given an assessment when they enter preschool special education and again when they exit preschool special education. The data represent the three learning areas of individual children: social skill development; acquisition and use of knowledge and skills; and the ability to meet individual needs. Data from 2007-08 identify that the majority of children receiving special education made growth over the course of time that they were receiving special education in the preschool grade. Child progress is indicated by demonstrating: (a) general progress as measured by the learning of new skills and behaviors; (b) significant growth by which a child attains skills at an age appropriate level; and (c) the maintenance of skills commensurate with their age over time. No progress in areas is also reported.

This initiative is known as the "Early Childhood Outcome" (ECO) requirement. This collection and reporting of child information on a state and national level is new. There is currently no national framework of progress data expectations at the preschool level for which states can benchmark their progress data. The 2007-08 data includes 1918 children. National standards provide guidance to states that establishing targets for improvement is not appropriate. Rather, individual yearly data is to be reported. Initial data collection and reporting on a small sample began in 2006-07. In accordance with national guidance, school years are not comparable.

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Proposed actions to turn the curve:

- Ensure that the state data captures the activities of the field in order to ensure accurate and valid reporting.
- Integrate this data collection with other Department data collections for use in analysis.
- Ensure the provision of training and technical assistance in response to data collection and analysis.
- Utilize the data to design and implement professional development and policy guidance for the field.

Performance Measure 3: The percent of preschool children with IEPs who receive special education and related services in settings with typically developing peers.

Data Unavailable

This measure examines the amount of time that a child receiving special education spends in a least restrictive environment. It would reflect the amount of time that a child with a disability is receiving services with typically developing children of the same age. The measure continues to be relevant to the work of the Department's accountability.

However, the data collection for this measure changed in the 2006-07 school year with the implementation of a new data system and is yet to be reinstated due to resources, staffing and federal public policy data definitions. It remains on the data development agenda for implementation in 2009-10.