

## Frequently Asked Questions Related to the Florida Child Outcomes Measurement System (FCOMS)

### ***Child Population Included***

#### **Who are the children included in the Florida Child Outcomes Measurement System?**

##### *Early Steps Population*

Entry and exit assessment data must be collected for all infants and toddlers who are evaluated, determined eligible, and have an individualized family support plan (IFSP) for at least 6 months.

##### *Preschool Population*

Entry and exit assessment data must be collected for all preschool children who have been evaluated, determined eligible for special education, enroll in school, and have an individual educational plan (IEP) for at least 6 months. This includes children referred to Pre-K ESE from Child Find and may include children who have not entered through the Early Steps system, such as children in Head Start or VPK.

Detailed information is available in the *Flowchart and Decision Rules for Entry and Exit for Child Outcomes Assessments*, available on the TATS website at <http://www.tats.ucf.edu/>.

#### **Are children who have an IFSP or IEP and attend a charter school included in the child outcomes measurement system?**

Yes. All children who have an IFSP or IEP and who are anticipated to be in the program at least 6 months are included in the child outcomes measurement system.

#### **Are preschool-age children who attend private preschool included in the child outcomes measurement system?**

Children who attend a private preschool and who have an IEP are included in the child outcomes measurement system and should be assessed at entry and exit. Children who have a services plan (SP) are not included in the child outcomes measurement system.

#### **If a child determined eligible for prekindergarten services has not been served in Early Steps, must the child be included in the preschool measurement system?**

Yes.

#### **What is the assessment window for children who transition from Part C to Pre-K ESE prior to their third birthday?**

Children may transition from the Early Steps program to the Pre-K ESE program at any time during the school year in which the child turns 3. The assessment window would be aligned with the child's actual eligibility date rather than the child's 3<sup>rd</sup> birthday. When this occurs, the child's entry assessment record in the Data Manager should be clearly marked as an early transition in Program Note 2, Option Code 3. If the child has been served in Early Steps for at least 6 months at the time of early transition to Pre-K ESE, the child should have an exit assessment recorded in the Early Steps hierarchy of the Data Manager.

### ***Entry and Exit Considerations***

### **How are “entry” and “exit” defined?**

#### *Early Steps Population*

Entry is defined as the date of the initial IFSP—*not* when services begin.

Exit is defined as the date of disposition, consistent with prior written notice.

#### *Preschool Population*

Entry is defined as the date of the initial IEP or preschool IFSP— **not** when services begin.

Exit is defined as the date of dismissal from special education or May 31st prior to kindergarten entry, whichever comes first.

### **What domains of the BDI-2 full assessment or screening test are required for the purpose of Child Outcomes at entry and exit?**

The Personal-Social, Communication, and Adaptive domains are required for entry and exit.

The LEA or LES can make a local decision to administer additional domains. A joint decision should be made by the LEA and LES for children transitioning from Part C to Part B.

When must a failed Screening Test result (“refer”) be followed up with a full assessment in the failed domain?

Use of the Screening Test is described in detail in the revised Screening Test memo. In brief:

- Program entry: Any child scoring a “refer” in any required domain **MUST** be given the full assessment for that domain, and entered into the Data Manager as a New Assessment.
- Program exit: Any child scoring a “refer” in any required domain must be given the full assessment for that domain if the child was not typical at entry. A d/q is required in order to determine the child's progress category. If the child was typical in the domain at entry, the “refer” score is sufficient to determine the child's progress category. For further details, please see the revised Screening Test memo.

### **What is the entry date when the child’s IEP/IFSP is written but the services don’t begin right away?**

The date of the initial IEP or IFSP is considered the entry date for the child.

### **What procedure should be followed by LES and school districts if the assessment was not administered within the established assessment window?**

The assessment data should be entered into the Data Manager. The date of the assessment, as entered into the Data Manager, should be the actual date that the assessment was administered.

### **If a child has an initial IEP and the BDI-2 is not used as part of the eligibility process, and then the child is not enrolled in school within the assessment window defined in the Flow Chart, should the child be assessed using the BDI-2 when he/she does enroll in school?**

Yes. Even though the assessment will not be conducted in the defined assessment window, the BDI-2 assessment should be conducted and the data entered into the Data Manager.

### **If a child remains in the prekindergarten program an extra year and is kindergarten age, when is the exit assessment administered?**

If the child remains in the prekindergarten program an extra year, then the child is considered to be a prekindergarten child. The exit assessment should be administered in accordance with the flowchart—90 calendar days before to 30 calendar days after exit.

**For children exiting the pre-kindergarten program, is it possible to extend the exit assessment window beyond June 30, to the end of July so additional time is available to complete the testing?**

No, that is not possible for children exiting the prekindergarten program. Children exiting Part C between June 1 and June 30 will continue to have 30 days for exit assessment.

**If a child moves from one Early Steps program to another or from one school district to another, is this considered exiting the program?**

No. Moving to another LES or school district is not considered exiting the program.

**How should local programs deal with children who transfer in from another LES or district and children who move from one local program to another within Early Steps or Pre-K programs?**

Children who transfer from one LES to another or from one school district to another will not be included in Child Outcomes reporting at either the state or local level. Therefore, the LES or school district into which the child transferred is not required to input entry BDI-2 data from the sending program or to evaluate the child for entry or exit. For children transitioning from Part C to Part B after a local program transfer, the LES may administer the shared data point assessment according to local agreements. However, the LES would identify the child in the BDI-2 Data Manager in Program Note 2, Option Code 1 (Other-Not for Child Outcomes). If the school district uses this evaluation data as a shared data point for entry purposes, the school district should enter the raw scores into the BDI-2 Data Manager and identify "Part B Entry" for Program Note 2.

There would be an entry assessment recorded in the Data Manager by the sending program/district, but there would be no exit assessment recorded.

**What child outcome data must be entered for children for whom the 6 month or annual re-determination of eligibility indicates they are no longer eligible for Early Steps (i.e. children with a Disposition Code L)?**

For all children found no-longer eligible for Early Steps following a 6-month or annual redetermination (i.e. children with a Disposition Code L), an exit evaluation should be conducted with either the BDI-2 Screener or the full BDI-2 for child outcomes purposes. This evaluation should be entered into the BDI-2 Data Manager and identified as "Part C Exit" for Program Note 2. As with all exit evaluations conducted with the BDI-2 Screener, if a child found no longer eligible at re-determination receives a BDI-2 Screener score of "Refer" using the -1.5 Standard Deviation cut point for any of the three domains used for Child Outcomes measurement, the full BDI-2 must be administered for that domain unless the child was typical at entry in that domain.

**If a parent of a child who has been in Early Steps does not want to be referred to the school district and exits to another community provider, must the LES administer an exit assessment?**

Yes. The exit assessment must be administered for any child with an IFSP for at least 6 months.

**Are children who move into Florida from out of state considered a part of the child outcome measurement system even if they have been receiving services in the other state?**

Yes. An entry assessment must be administered for any child who is anticipated to be in the Early Steps or prekindergarten program in Florida at least 6 months. If a school district uses the

out-of-state IEP, the assessment must be administered within 30 days of accepting the out-of-state IEP. If the district writes a new IEP, then the assessment must be administered within 30 days of the new IEP. For Early Steps, the assessment must be administered within 30 days of the development of the Florida IFSP.

**Can a BDI-2 administered in another state be used as the entry assessment?**

Yes. Any BDI-2 administered within the assessment window may be used as an entry assessment.

***The Assessment Window***

**If a child is assessed during the entry assessment window, but does not access services for a time longer than the recommended amount of time between successive assessments (i.e., 6 months), should the BDI-2 be re-administered and the more recent scores used as the entry data point?**

No. As clearly detailed in the Flowchart, the entry assessment window is related to the date of the IEP or IFSP, not the date when the child accesses services.

***Extended School Year***

**Does the child's planned participation or lack of participation in extended school year (ESY) affect the exit testing window?**

No. The assessment window does not change based on the child attending ESY. For the child going to kindergarten in the fall, the exit window is still 90 calendar days before May 31st to 30 calendar days after this date.

**If a child is initially evaluated in February and will receive ESY services in June and July and then is going to kindergarten in August, does the child need to be assessed before he leaves extended school year in the summer?**

Yes. June 30 is the end of the assessment window for preschool children regardless of whether or not the child participates in ESY services.

***Considerations Related to Assessing Children who Are English Language Learners***

**What assessment considerations apply to children who do not speak either English or Spanish?**

The following information is excerpted the *Battelle Developmental Inventory Examiner's Manual*:

Assessing a child whose first language is not English raises a concern when administration requires oral instructions, because the child may not comprehend what he or she is being asked to do. In such circumstances, test results may not accurately reflect the behaviors that the test intended to measure nor the actual abilities and skills of the child. ... A child may present any one of a vast array of unique language backgrounds. Examples include regional dialects, bilingualism, varying degrees of proficiency in two different languages, use of the native language in one situation (e.g. social or religious) but use of English in another (e.g. in school or with peers), or use of one language for oral communication and another for written communication. The examiner must determine the best means for addressing each during administration and test interpretation. (pp. 11–12)

If the examiner believes that a score obtained for a child who is an English language learner is not valid, this must be noted in the child's assessment record in the Data Manager. For details on how an invalid score is to be noted, please see the *BDI-2 Data Manager™ Guide*, accessible at <http://www.tats.ucf.edu/>.

### ***Testing Accommodations***

#### **What accommodations are available for children with disabilities?**

Chapter Two of the *Battelle Developmental Inventory Examiner's Manual* (pages 36–42), identifies allowable accommodations for children with disabilities. Individuals administering the BDI-2 are advised to carefully review this section of the manual.

As with all developmental assessments, there will be certain test items that cannot be adjusted to accommodate children with all types of disabilities. In making accommodations, the examiner needs to be sure the construct being measured is not altered.

### ***Parent Consent and Data Sharing***

#### **Is written parent consent required to administer the BDI-2 to measure child outcomes?**

If administration of the assessment is a part of the child's initial evaluation or, for preschool-age children, is a part of the reevaluation process, then parent consent is required, consistent with the same procedures that are required with regard to written notice and parent consent.

However, parent consent is not required if the assessment is being administered as part of the child outcomes measurement system (e.g., at the close of the preschool year for all preschool children with disabilities exiting the program outside the reevaluation process). The following information is from the Office of Special Education Programs:

“In general, if the SEA [State Education Agency] or LEA [Local Education Agency or lead agency] collects, uses, or maintains information about an eligible child to meet the requirements of Part B [Part C], including reporting on child outcomes, prior written parental consent is not required under Part B [Part C].”

#### **If the assessment is administered as an end-of-the-year assessment outside of the reevaluation process and the LES or district has not obtained consent, is it permissible to consider this information at a later time when making a determination regarding dismissal?**

Yes. Title 34 §300.305, Code of Federal Regulations, entitled *Additional requirements for evaluation and reevaluation*, requires that IEP teams review a wide array of information as part of the reevaluation process when determining what additional data, if any, are needed to determine whether a child is still a child with a disability. The data sources cited include classroom-based, local, and state assessments, classroom-based observations, observations by teachers and related services providers, and input from the parent.

#### **Must parent consent be obtained by the LES to provide the assessment data (“shared data point”) to the school district?**

Yes. Any information that is exchanged between LESs and school districts (other than Notification) requires written parental consent.

#### **May LES release data from assessments administered by a private provider?**

The LES that have obtained prior written parental consent may release the results of assessments administered by a private provider. The consent form must list the specific documents that will be released and to whom they will be released. Confidentiality provisions and prior written consent to release information provisions apply to all of the Early Steps records and it does not matter how those records were acquired (i.e., through a provider whom the LES has paid to provide the service vs. an entity that they did not pay) or whether specific services were paid for through Part C funds.

**What information should be shared with the parent? What information cannot be shared with the parent?**

Parents have the right to receive information concerning their child's assessment results and test scores. Graphs on the front page of the Record Form can be a useful tool in explaining results to parents. In addition, if item-level data have been entered into the Data Manager, a parent report is available to give to parents. Copies of completed protocols, record forms, and test booklets should not be given to parents as this would compromise the security of the assessment.

***Prematurity***

**Should BDI-2 scores be adjusted for prematurity?**

No. When the BDI-2 is used for accountability purposes, the child's score must be calculated based on actual chronological age. When scores are computed through the Data Manager, the software uses the child's birth date and test date to calculate the child's actual chronological age at the time of the assessment. The child's actual birth date must therefore be entered in the child's record.

***Significant Delay***

**How are assessment results for children with significant delays to be treated?**

If proper administration procedures are followed, a raw score of 0 can be a valid score. Raw subdomain scores of 0 typically correspond to a scaled score of 1, or, for very young infants in some subdomains, 2. The minimum possible scaled score in any domain aligns with a standard score of 55. Therefore, the lowest standard score obtainable on the BDI-2 is a score of 55. This score is 3 standard deviations below the mean and corresponds to a percentile rank of 0.1. Thus, only two possibilities exist in terms of measurement of the most significantly delayed children. Either the assessment is determined to be valid, in which case any raw scores of 0 (in one or more domains) translate into standard scores of at least 55; **or** the assessment is determined not to be valid.

The BDI-2 manual offers the following cautions about using valid 0 scores:

"A total subdomain score of 0 is a valid score that, once obtained, should not be summarily dropped or ignored. Technically, however, a 0 raw score provides an unknown degree of precision in estimating a person's ability. Therefore, use caution when children obtain 0 raw scores." (p. 60)

For children with valid assessments, progress will be assessed based on changes in the raw scores (indicating the child's progress in relation to her/his developmental status on entry) and standard scores (indicating the child's change in status compared to the normative sample). The Florida Child Outcomes Accountability System will not use assessment scores that the examiner has flagged as invalid. \* See Chapter 3 of the Data Manager Guide on the TATS

website ([http://www.tats.ucf.edu/docs/COMSM/DataManager\\_Guide\\_for\\_the\\_Florida\\_Birth-to-Five\\_Child\\_Outcomes\\_Measurement\\_System.pdf](http://www.tats.ucf.edu/docs/COMSM/DataManager_Guide_for_the_Florida_Birth-to-Five_Child_Outcomes_Measurement_System.pdf))

### ***Behavioral Difficulties during Test Administration***

#### **If the child had behavioral difficulties during the assessment, should the child's scores be entered into the Data Manager?**

Yes. If the assessor deems the score for a particular domain to be invalid, this must be noted in the child's assessment records in the "Test Observation" field, as prescribed in the Data Manager Guide. Scores for all assessed domains should nonetheless be entered into the Data Manager.

#### **If the child has been assessed on the BDI-2 on more than the two required occasions (program entry and program exit), are these additional assessment scores required to be entered into the Data Manager?**

No. The only assessment data that need to be entered into the Data Manager for accountability purposes are those for entry and exit. However, **if** additional assessment records are entered into the Data Manager, then there needs to be an indication, within the "Data Point" (Program Note) field, that the assessment was not administered for accountability purposes. This is accomplished by selecting the option, "Other—not for child outcomes system," as described in the Data Manager Guide. \* See Chapter 3 of the Data Manager Guide on the TATS website ([http://www.tats.ucf.edu/docs/COMSM/DataManager\\_Guide\\_for\\_the\\_Florida\\_Birth-to-Five\\_Child\\_Outcomes\\_Measurement\\_System.pdf](http://www.tats.ucf.edu/docs/COMSM/DataManager_Guide_for_the_Florida_Birth-to-Five_Child_Outcomes_Measurement_System.pdf))

### ***Administration of the Assessment***

#### **What is the possibility of conducting arena assessment?**

The BDI-2 is appropriate for use in an arena assessment.

#### **What staff can administer the BDI-2?**

The following description of user qualifications and professional qualifications is from the *Battelle Developmental Inventory (2nd Edition), Examiner's Manual*.

Preschool, kindergarten and primary school teachers, special educators, and infant intervention providers are the primary user groups for the BDI-2. Related services providers, such as speech-language pathologists, adaptive physical education specialist, psychologist, and diagnosticians are also likely to use the BDI-2 to measure the functional abilities of young children. Educational aides who have considerable experience working with the children being assessed may appropriately use the BDI-2 or parts of it if they have received comprehensive training in its administration and demonstrated proficiency in its use through supervised practice with the instrument. **All staff/providers who administer the BDI-2 for Florida's Child Outcomes Measurement System must have completed a BDI-2 training workshop delivered by individuals who have completed the Florida BDI-2 Train-the-Trainer.**

### ***Data Collection and Maintenance***

#### **What assessment data does the state need for the purpose of the Child Outcomes Accountability System?**

Assessment data for assessments administered when a child enters and exits the Early Steps and/or pre-kindergarten program must be entered into the Data Manager following procedures described in the Data Manager Guide. These data enable the state to determine the appropriate category in which to place the child for the purposes of annual accountability reporting.

**If a child transitioning from Early Steps to Part B was assessed by Early Steps, who keeps the original scoring booklet if the manual scoring form was used? Is just the scoring sheet shared with Part B?**

The original scoring booklet should be filed in the child's record maintained by the agency that evaluated the child. A copy of the protocol may be provided to the LEA if the parent has signed an authorization for release of information that includes this information specifically.

**When an assessment is administered as the "shared data point," what hard-copy records should be kept by Early Steps and what records kept by the school district?**

The original scoring booklet should be filed in the child's record that is maintained by the agency that evaluated the child. A copy of the protocol or the All Scores Report may be provided to the other agency if the parent has signed permission for release of information that specifically includes the BDI-2 assessment.

**If a child is exiting Pre-K and fails the screener, is it necessary to administer the full BDI-2?**

See the Revised Screener Memo dated October 25, 2013, posted on the TATS website at <http://www.tats.ucf.edu/>.