Early Childhood Outcomes
Conversation Starters

**Directions:** Use these questions to **guide your team’s discussion** of the child’s performance across the child outcome indicators. These questions are **NOT designed to be a checklist** of performance but to help your team understand what information about the child’s skills across settings relates to which of the child outcome indicators. These questions can also provide a way to focus the team’s discussion.

**Outcome Indicator #1:** Children have positive social/emotional skills (including positive social relationships)

- Build and maintain relationships with children and adults.
- Regulate their emotions.
- Understand and follow rules.
- Communicate wants and needs effectively.

**Conversation Starters:**

- How does the child relate to his/her parents and with familiar caregivers (e.g., child care providers, babysitters)?

- How does the child interact with people in community settings (e.g., park, library, church, grocery store, with neighbors on walks, at the bus stop, in restaurants, at playgroups or outings)?

- How does the child interact with/react to peers (e.g., at child care, in the park, in the neighborhood, in brief interaction in stores or restaurants)?

- What is the child’s eye contact with others like? Does it differ across situations or with other people?

- Tell me about the situations and ways that the child expresses delight or displays affection.

- In the child’s interactions, are there behaviors that may interfere with relationships or seem inappropriate in interactions expected for the child’s age (e.g., screaming, biting, tantrums)? How often does this occur? In what situations? In what situations does it not occur?

- How does the child respond to transition in routines or activities? Are the child’s actions different for familiar transitions versus new transitions or different across settings or with different people?

- How does the child participate in games (e.g., social, cooperative, rule-based, with turn-taking)? What does the child’s interactions look like in these situations?

- **How would you expect other children of this age to act in these situations?**
Outcome Indicator #2: Children acquire and use knowledge and skills (including early language/communication and early literacy for 3-5 year olds)
- Display an eagerness for learning.
- Explore their environment.
- Engage in daily learning opportunities.
- Show imagination and creativity in play.

Conversation Starters:
- How does the child use the words and skills s/he has in everyday settings (e.g., at home, at the park, at child care, at the store, with other kids, in restaurants, with different people)?
- How does the child understand and respond to directions and requests from others?
- Tell me about a time when s/he tried to solve a problem (e.g., overcame an obstacle, solved a problem about something important to him/her). What did s/he do?
- Does the child display an awareness of the distinctions between things (e.g., object characteristics, size differences, differences in object functions)?
- How does the child’s play suggest understanding of familiar scripts for how things work, what things are related, what comes next, and memory of previous actions in that situation?
- How does the child demonstrate his/her understanding of symbols into concepts, communication, and play?
- How does the child interact with books, pictures, and print?
- How would you expect other children this age to act in these situations?
Outcome Indicator #3: Children use appropriate behaviors to meet needs

- Move from place to place to participate in everyday activities and routines.
- Meet their self-care needs (feeding, dressing, toileting, etc.) Their ability to meet self-care needs allows them to participate in everyday routines and activities.
- Seek help when necessary to move from place to place.
- Use objects such as spoons, crayons, and switches as tools.

Conversation Starters:

- How does the child display toy preferences or preferences for certain people?
- What does the child do when s/he can’t get or doesn’t want what s/he wants?
- How does the child get from place to place when desired or needed?
- What does the child do when s/he needs help? How does the child convey his/her needs?
- Tell me about the child’s actions/reactions with regard to hygiene (e.g., tooth brushing, washing hands/face, blowing nose).
- How does the child show awareness of situations that might be dangerous (e.g., drop offs, hot stoves, cars/crossing streets, strangers)?
- Are there situations when a problem behavior or disability interferes with the child’s ability to take action to meet needs? How consistently? How serious is it? Does the child take alternative approaches? What are those?
- What does the child do when s/he is bored? How does s/he amuse her/himself or seek out something fun?
- How does the child use materials to have an effect on his/her environment and activities (e.g., switches to turn on toys, using utensils for eating)?
- How would you expect other children this age to act in these situations?