

Identifying Outcomes for Children in Blended Early Childhood Classrooms

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Ms. Mattie has just completed the Assessment, Evaluation, and Programming System (AEPS®; Bricker, 2002) on each child in her prekindergarten (pre-K) classroom and has data on every child's development across all areas. In addition, Ms. Mattie conducted a home visit with each child's family and has some idea of their concerns and priorities for the upcoming school year. She has also spent about 5 weeks with the children, and she knows the activities and materials they prefer and which friends like to play together. Given all of this assessment information, Ms. Mattie has to use the data to guide and continue the instruction she delivers. Her program requires that she follow the early learning standards for her state, which guide her about what 3- to 5-year-old children need to learn. Some children in Ms. Mattie's class are struggling with outcomes that are taught on a regular basis (e.g., concept of colors, shapes, and numbers). Moreover, Ms. Mattie has three children in her class with individualized education programs (IEPs) who have individual goals and two additional children who are not receiving special education but seem to be missing foundational skills or are demonstrating challenging behavior that is interfering with their learning. Ms. Mattie needs direction about what to teach each child in her classroom, along with the outcomes for which she is accountable according to her agency and state.

It is critical for teachers to engage in ongoing reflection and data-driven decision making in order for them to determine what outcomes to teach in a blended classroom. To this end, it is important for teachers to be aware of what they are trying to accomplish in a given activity, routine, or interaction. The “what” teaching element of the curriculum framework is referred to as the *scope and sequence*. *Scope* refers to the breadth of what is taught in a pre-K classroom (i.e., content/developmental areas), and *sequence* refers to the order in which outcomes are taught (see Chapter 2). Grisham-Brown and Pretti-Frontczak (2013) described three different types of instructional sequences. First, skills can be taught in a developmental sequence, which is a generally agreed-on order in which children acquire skills, taking into account the fact that the children's culture or the presence of a specific impairment may affect the sequence. Second, research has shown that some skills lay the foundation for children to learn other skills, resulting in teaching in pedagogical sequences. For example, rhyming is often taught as a foundational skill for learning early literacy skills. Finally, skills may be taught in a logical sequence, meaning that teachers select skills based on what makes the most sense to teach a child at a given point in time. For example, if a child does not have a functional way to express his or her wants and needs, then that skill might be taught before other skills.

Teachers in a blended classroom must identify three types of outcomes in their classroom and plan instruction accordingly. Common outcomes, which are expectations that states, agencies, funding sources, and programs have for all children within a given age group, need to be identified. Second, *targeted outcomes* are defined as skills that require more

support in order to help children who are struggling or whose learning and development has stalled. Finally, individualized outcomes are foundational skills or prerequisite behaviors that children need to learn in order to gain access to, participate in, and make progress toward the common outcomes that other children are learning. Individualized outcomes are based on a child's unique needs and are often documented on various individualized plans, including IEPs for children with identified disabilities (Johnson, Rahn, & Bricker, 2015). Yet, children who will need this level of support may not qualify for special education services. The purpose of this chapter is to describe common, targeted, and individualized outcomes, with emphasis on how they are identified. We provide information on instructional strategies that are effective and efficient for teaching each type of outcome in Section II of this book. In addition, we discuss the importance of determining whether outside variables might be affecting children's learning.

COMMON OUTCOMES

Common outcomes for all young children are increasingly likely to be set by national organizations and federal or state policies (see Chapter 2; Schumacher, Irish, & Lombardi, 2003). Common outcomes as described here should not to be considered synonymous with the Common Core State Standards (CCSS: National Governors Association for Best Practices & Council of Chief State School Officers, 2010), but, rather, they are a set of knowledge and skills that serve as the scope and sequence for children in any state or region or those associated with a particular early childhood education (ECE) program (e.g., Head Start). Common outcomes, as we define them, are often categorized by age or grade level and organized around various content areas, including language and literacy, mathematics, science, social-emotional, and social studies (Seefeldt, 2005). Common outcomes may also be categorized by developmental areas (e.g., motor, cognition, communication, social) or subject area (e.g., literacy, math, science) found within a curriculum-based assessment (CBA) or a comprehensive curriculum. As such, common outcomes are designed to organize, prioritize, and frame what all children are to learn at various stages or ages of development or education (e.g., Copple & Bredekamp, 2009; National Research Council, 2001). Common outcomes often represent the values and priorities of primary stakeholders, such as policy makers, educators, and community members, and are designed to inform curriculum design, implementation, and evaluation for children with and without disabilities. In other words, teachers and teams are expected to design activities, implement learning opportunities, and evaluate all children's progress toward the content and skills noted in the common outcomes. Four sources of common outcomes can be found in early childhood literature and are described in the following sections.

Early Learning Standards

Common outcomes have primarily been defined by early learning standards since 2001. A *standard* is defined as a “general statement that represents the information, skills, or both, that students should understand and be able to do” (Bodrova, Leong, Paynter, & Semenov, 2000, p. 33). Furthermore, “standards are not standardized, nor are they a set of curricula. Standards are sets of well-articulated and well-understood student competencies” (Kurtenbach, 2000, p. 1). For example, “recognizes and demonstrates an understanding of environmental print” and “indicates an awareness of letters that cluster as words, words in phrases or sentences by use of spacing, symbols, or marks” are two examples of state-level standards for children in pre-K. These standards (also referred to as *content standards*, *child* or *learning outcomes*, *indicators*, and *foundations*) guide programs in terms of what should be addressed/introduced at a given age or grade level.

The prevalence of state standards for young children has dramatically increased since the 1980s. Almost every state has pre-K early learning standards, and half have a process in place to monitor a program’s use of the standards (Scott-Little, Lesko, Martella, & Milburn, 2007). Individual states commonly have standards posted on their department’s web site. For example, the early learning content standards for Kentucky are found on the Kentucky Governor’s Office of Early Childhood web site (see <http://kidsnow.ky.gov/Improving-Early-Care/Pages/Tools-and-Resources.aspx>). Furthermore, national resources are available to guide states in issues related to early learning standards, such as developing/revising early standards and aligning standards with assessment and curricula (see e.g., <http://www.earlylearningguidelines-standards.org>).

Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework

Familiarity with the Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework (HSELOF) (<http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/hs/sr/approach/cdelf/index.html>) is essential for teachers serving children in Head Start programs. The HSELOF is designed to serve as a guide to Head Start programs as they engage in ongoing assessment and progress monitoring of children’s skills, abilities, knowledge, and behaviors. The framework consists of five central domains (i.e., approaches to learning; social-emotional; language and literacy; cognition; and perception, motor, and physical) that should be addressed for children birth to 5 years of age in Early Head Start and Head Start programs. In addition to the domains, there are subdomains within each domain. For example, the subdomains for social-emotional include relationships with adults, relationships with other children, emotional functioning, and sense of identity and belonging. Goals within each subdomain are broad behaviors and skills and developmental progression that lead toward each goal for each age level. Indicators for pre-K students are also identified; these are

specific skills children need to know before entering kindergarten. Head Start programs are required to align their curricula, assessment, and professional development practices with the framework.

Office of Special Education Program Outcomes

Beginning in 2005, the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) developed three child outcomes for young children receiving services from Part C (early intervention) and Part B 619 (early childhood special education) of IDEA. The purpose of the outcomes is to assist with measuring progress of young children with disabilities receiving special education services. Programs must measure children's progress on the outcomes when they enter and exit early intervention and pre-K. The outcomes are as follows:

1. Positive social-emotional skills (including social relationships)
2. Acquisition and use of knowledge and skills (including early language/communication [and early literacy])
3. Use of appropriate behaviors to meet their needs

Common Core State Standards

Since 2009, 43 states and the District of Columbia have adopted the CCSS, which is a set of standards in math and literacy. The CCSS affects young children in that the standards begin in kindergarten. Five areas of math are covered in kindergarten, including counting and cardinality (e.g., counting and comparing numbers of objects), operations and algebraic thinking (e.g., understanding concepts of addition and subtraction), number and operations in base 10 (e.g., gain foundation for place value), measurement and data (e.g., understand measureable attributes), and geometry (e.g., identify shapes). Following are 9 literacy standards that must be addressed in kindergarten.

1. Ask and answer questions about text.
2. Retell familiar stories.
3. Identify characters, setting, and main story events.
4. Ask and answer questions about unknown text in story.
5. Recognize common types of texts.
6. Identify author and illustrator.
7. Describe relationship between illustrations and story.
8. Compare experiences of characters in story.
9. Engage in group reading activities.

IDENTIFYING COMMON OUTCOMES

As previously stated, the challenge of assessing state or agency standards (i.e., common outcomes) is that they are typically written in a broad manner that is not easily measurable. For example, “shows increasing awareness of print in classroom, home, and community settings” is one of the indicators in the HSELOF. This indicator involves the attainment of a variety of skills such as pointing to words, pretending to read words, and recognizing name in print. This is an example of using typical developmental sequences to demonstrate attainment of a broader standard. Teachers need to use CBAs to identify the skills that relate to the attainment of the standard. It also is important that teachers understand the developmental sequences of the skills that lead to the attainment of the standard. Teachers and teams must also be able to assess each child’s progress toward standards, regardless of the child’s developmental level. Alignment documents among various state and program standards/outcomes and commonly used CBAs are generally available on publishers’ web sites. For example, Teaching Strategies has aligned individual state standards, Head Start outcomes, and CCSS with items on the TSGold assessment (<http://teachingstrategies.com/search/alignment>).

Instructional Considerations

Information about strategies for teaching common outcomes may be found in Chapter 6. It is critical that teams and teachers attend to the interrelatedness of development when designing instruction using early learning standards as the foundation for what young children learn. In other words, given that standards are typically based on content areas (e.g., literacy, math, science, social studies), it is critical that teachers understand how various skills from across developmental domains (e.g., social-emotional, motor, adaptive) and content areas are interrelated and interdependent and avoid focusing just on the behaviors listed in the standards. For example, if a teacher wants a child to complete an art activity alongside other children in a small group using crayons, paints, clippings from magazines, stencils, and felt, then the teacher needs to consider all skills a child needs or requires to be successful in the activity and not only those aligned with state standards. The teacher would need to ensure that the child is able to sit in a child-size chair, manipulate objects, understand basic spatial concepts, share and exchange objects, and follow simple directions. The activity is inherently composed of skills from various domains of development and content areas. A comprehensive and integrated curriculum framework attends to both developmental and content areas considered key to children’s overall growth and development. In other words, skills targeted for young children to learn should be framed or connected to developmental areas and content areas. In fact, most skills organized by developmental area can easily be merged or aligned with specific content areas. The challenge for teachers and teams comes when their assessment tool is organized by developmental areas and the outcomes listed in state or agency

Table 3.1. Alignment among content areas, benchmarks for Kentucky's early learning standards, and developmental areas

| Content area | Kentucky early learning standards (benchmarks) | Developmental area |
|------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Language arts | Book appreciation and knowledge Phonological awareness Alphabet knowledge Print concepts and conventions Early writing | Receptive and expressive language Cognitive Fine motor |
| Mathematics | Numbers and counting Shapes and spatial relations Comparisons and patterns Measurement | Cognitive |
| Science | Scientific skills and method | Cognitive Expressive language |
| Health/mental wellness | Independent behavior Social cooperation Social problem solving | Adaptive Social-emotional |
| Social studies | History and events Understand surroundings Economic concepts Follow rules within home, school, and community Roles and relationships within family and community Diversity | Cognitive Social-emotional Expressive and receptive communication Adaptive |
| Physical development | Locomotor skills Nonlocomotor skills Combines motor skills Eye–hand coordination | Gross motor Fine motor |

standards are organized solely by content area or are organized by both developmental and content areas. Teachers need to take the time to cross-walk or align their ongoing assessment practices with state or agency standards so that they can see the relationship between skills, whether they are organized developmentally or by content area. Table 3.1 illustrates the alignment among content areas, benchmarks for Kentucky's early learning standards, and developmental areas.

TARGETED OUTCOMES

There are at least two instances when teachers and teams need to consider addressing targeted outcomes for individual or small groups of children. The first instance is when children are struggling to demonstrate a common outcome. Children may struggle for a number of reasons, including having difficulty performing an aspect or component of a larger set of skills, having difficulty with a concurrent or related set of skills, having difficulty with generalizing use of the common outcome, or having difficulty with adapting to changing conditions and situations. The second instance is when learning and development appear to have stalled. Children's development has stalled when there is limited change or improvement over time.

In other words, the child's performance does not continue to reflect higher forms or more complex forms of the common outcome. Any number of variables may hamper or interrupt development and learning, including lack of impulse control, needing unusually long periods of time to process and take action, performance quality, or the inability to demonstrate the common outcome in multiple and varied ways over time. Thus, we define and use the word *struggling* to refer to instances in which an individual or small group of children may be having difficulty with some aspect of learning the common outcome. We define and use the word *stalled* to refer to instances in which a child or small group of children has stopped making progress or where there is an interruption in learning and development associated with a common outcome (Pretti-Frontczak, 2014).

Whether a child or group of children is having difficulty or whether there is a lack of changes in performance over time is something that is determined once a child has received consistent and quality universal instruction. In fact, children will require more support from time to time to address things they struggle with doing or when their performance over time has stalled, regardless of their strengths or identified disability. What becomes essential is gathering, summarizing, and analyzing formative assessment information to help teachers and teams plan and revise instruction (Grisham-Brown & Pretti-Frontczak, 2011).

Formative assessment data also help teachers and teams identify the targeted outcomes that become the focus of instructional efforts. When formative assessment data reveal that a subset of children are struggling to learn or their learning and development has stalled, a teacher or team should identify and intervene on these more targeted outcomes. The following section provides examples of targeted outcomes and describes how to identify them.

Examples of Targeted Outcomes

What should be the focus of instruction when teachers and teams have examined their formative assessment data and concluded that individual or small groups of children need instruction regarding a targeted outcome? What is the targeted outcome that should be taught? This is a critical question to ask and not an easy one to answer. Unfortunately, we change the location of where instruction is delivered (e.g., move instruction to a corner of the room, to the hallway, to a different room in the building), we change the person who delivers the instruction (e.g., turn to a resource teacher or specialist), we change the frequency of instruction (e.g., begin to deliver massed trials), or we change the instructional strategy (e.g., use more adult-directed strategies) when a child struggles or when his or her performance has stalled. Although it is important to consider changing locations, personnel, frequency, and strategies as part of quality universal instruction, we must also change what is being taught when a child has greater and more individualized needs. Examples of what can be taught when a child is struggling or when learning and development has stalled are provided in Table 3.2.

Table 3.2. Examples of Tier 2 outcomes

| Examples of what to teach when child or children are struggling | Examples of what to teach when child or children's learning has stalled |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>Targeted outcome: Component of a complex skill</p> <p>Children should be able to demonstrate common outcomes that have multiple components and steps as they grow and learn. When a child or group of children is having difficulty with a certain aspect or component of a complicated set of tasks, these aspects or components can become the targeted outcomes.</p> <p>Problem solving and associations are two examples of common outcomes that have multiple components.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Problem solving</i> can be defined as “the ability to address a situation by completing one or all of the following steps/components: 1) recognizing the problem, 2) thinking of possible solutions, 3) carrying out solutions, and/or 4) evaluating the outcome” (Pretti-Frontczak, Jackson, Korey-Hirko, Brown, & Smith, 2013, p. 27). • Thus, if a child or group of children is struggling, then they may be able to do steps 1, 2, and 3 but require more support to perform the step 4. Step 4 (i.e., the component of evaluating the outcome) becomes the targeted outcome. • <i>Demonstrating knowledge and skills surrounding association concepts</i> is another example of a common outcome that comprises multiple components. This common outcome actually comprises four components (i.e., four different association concepts), including quantity, size, space, and time. In this instance, a child or group of children may need additional support to address a single component of the common outcome by having teachers and teams focus on the targeted outcome of quantity associations. | <p>Targeted outcome: Latency</p> <p>Children should be able to take action within a reasonable amount of time and with some degree of planning and purpose. When a child or group of children's development and learning have stalled, they may struggle with a long latency period or a lack of a latency period.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A child demonstrates a significant time lag (i.e., long latency period) from when a directive is given or initiation is determined until he or she takes action. This child may need constant and frequent reminders and encouragement, may be noncompliant, and may have difficulty recovering from high emotional states to more neutral emotional states. Thus, decreasing the latency between the stimulus and the child's response becomes the targeted outcome. • A child does not demonstrate a time lag (i.e., no latency period) and often engages in impulsive actions or rushes to demonstrate/initiate the required/desired task with no or little time between directive or request and his or her action. This child may also have difficulty with delaying gratification or developing and executing a plan with logical steps. This child may have few inhibitions and struggle with stopping, feeling, and thinking before taking an action. Thus, the targeted outcome revolves around executive functioning skills, such as problem solving or persistence, to help the child better plan and act on his or her feelings. |
| <p>Targeted outcome: Concurrent skill development</p> <p>Development in the early years is characterized by its high degree of variability, interrelatedness, and interdependence. In other words, the whole child is developing, and the complexities of learning are affected by many factors, making it hard to determine if a child is just doing something at a different yet acceptable rate of growth, or if he or she is struggling. For example, children are concurrently or simultaneously learning the common outcomes of one-to-one correspondence, labeling, and comparing and contrasting when learning about associations (i.e., relationships or connections between objects, people, or events).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When a child or group of children is struggling with concurrent common outcomes, teachers and teams may need to target a single concurrent skill that is related to the desired common outcome. For example, comparing/contrasting may be the targeted outcome when teaching comparing/contrasting concurrently. | <p>Targeted outcome: Quality of performance</p> <p>Children performing a desired task are often able to demonstrate a concept or skill in such a way that it may hinder the accuracy of the performance. The quality of the children's performance is the concern.</p> <p>Examples of concerns with quality, which becomes the targeted outcome, include intelligibility (talks too loud, too soft, too fast, too slow), interactions with others (too friendly, too withdrawn), or levels of engagement (too energetic, too passive, too effortful, too effortless, too few, too many).</p> |

(continued)

Table 3.2. (continued)

| Examples of what to teach when child or children are struggling | Examples of what to teach when child or children's learning has stalled |
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| <p>Targeted outcome: Generalized use</p> <p>A child or group of children may also need targeted outcomes that address their lack of generalization (i.e., lack of use/demonstration of the common outcome) to a variety of materials, people, events, or locations. In other words, a child or group of children may be struggling with demonstrating a common outcome in a variety of locations, with a variety of people, or with a variety of materials. How to use skills in other locations, with other people, or with a variety of materials becomes the targeted outcome.</p> <p>Targeted outcome: Adjusting and adapting</p> <p>All children may have difficulty with adjusting or adapting to changing conditions or situations at one time or another; however, when this difficulty keeps a child from making progress, teachers and teams may need to provide more focused support to help the child.</p> <p>Examples of a child or group of children struggling with adapting or adjusting include</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Difficulty applying sufficient force to grasp or manipulate objects such as pencils, paintbrushes, hammers, and spoons • Difficulty knowing how strong of a grasp is needed to open a variety of objects, including bottles, doors, cans, and containers • Difficulty following rules or expectations at school that differ from home or community settings (e.g., child care center) • Difficulty adjusting to social norms and routines that differ between home and school or different days of the week • Difficulty directing attention in order to count objects, sort objects, participate in a group activity, or follow directions <p>Helping the child or group of children adapt and adjust to changing conditions and situations becomes the targeted outcome.</p> | <p>Targeted outcome: Increasing complexity of responses</p> <p>Children begin to combine skills in new and more complex ways as they grow and learn. Furthermore, they are able to do things that are more abstract and not preferred.</p> <p>For example, there will be times when most of the children in a class continue to learn to count higher quantities of objects and use increasingly complex terms regarding quantity (e.g., equivalent, amount, aggregate, sum, set). Yet, individual or small groups of children may continue to only count up to 10 objects and only use basic quantity terms such as <i>more</i>, <i>some</i>, and <i>few</i>.</p> <p>When a child tends to use an earlier or easier skill, such as pointing to a desired object in response to questions instead of giving a verbal response, which would be more appropriate for his or her age, is another example of stalled progress.</p> <p>When a child or group of children's development and learning have stalled, it can mean they have stopped moving from single to multiple means of expression, moving from simple to complex demonstrations of knowledge and skills, moving from concrete to abstract thinking and doing, and moving from what is familiar and preferred. How to move toward the harder, complicated, more abstract, or even less preferred version of the skill becomes the targeted outcome.</p> |

From Pretti-Frontczak, K. (2014). *Addressing targeted outcomes as part of a multi-tiered system of support*. Brooklyn, NY: B2K Solutions, Ltd.; from Pretti-Frontczak, K., & Winchell, B. (2014). *Manual for assessing patterns in early childhood Development*. Brooklyn, NY: B2K Solutions, Ltd.

Identifying Targeted Outcomes

Teachers and teams should identify patterns as they gather, summarize, and analyze formative assessment information (Grisham-Brown & Pretti-Frontczak, 2011; Tomlinson, 2014). *Patterns* are defined as recurring events, meaning those that repeat in a predictable manner, and include the following scenarios—a child applies too much force every time he or she holds or manipulates an object, a child requires multiple reminders to comply every time he or she is asked to stop one activity and start another, and adults are aware that a child will likely grab or rush to an object he or she wants.

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Identifying patterns (through analysis of formative assessment data) helps determine the targeted outcome.

Looking for patterns is like playing the board game Clue, in which players aim to predict who committed the crime, the location where the crime was committed, and the weapon that was used. For example, a player may predict that Miss Scarlett committed the crime in the library with the candlestick, based on the evidence collected during the game. Similarly, teachers and teams are using the evidence (i.e., formative assessment data) to find recurring events or events that repeat in a predictable manner when they are looking for patterns in children's behaviors. For example, teachers and teams using the common outcome of participation would analyze formative assessment data they gathered and summarized to determine if a child (or group of children) is able to participate in large groups, in small groups, or during one-to-one activities. Furthermore, teachers and teams might determine if a child or group of children is able to participate in a variety of activities including those that are routine, child directed, or planned. Finally, teachers and teams would determine if children are able to participate with verbal reminders, full support, or visual cues. In essence, teachers and teams are trying to determine which behaviors and events are recurring or predictable, meaning they will occur at the same time, under the same conditions, and in the same way. Such information will help determine why a child is struggling or why his or her performance has stalled. Examples of patterns include but are not limited to patterns of unexpected performance, need for assistance, and interfering behaviors (see Table 3.3).

All too often, however, teachers and teams only look for problems or deviations from what is expected when they identify patterns. A more powerful and informative pattern to begin with is related to a child's strengths. Patterns of strengths are indicators that the child's development is on target and concerns or more intensive interventions are not warranted. Thus, teachers and teams should start with the pattern of strength by looking at attributes such as whether the child or group of children

- Is independent (defined differently for each child) and can work on their own to complete tasks, get needs met, and participate in daily routines
- Demonstrates flexibility in terms of starting and stopping actions, what they play with, what they eat, whom they interact with, and when they are redirected
- Is adaptable to the situation or circumstances (i.e., they can adapt to increasing challenges or demands, changes in the environment from what they expected, and differences in caregiving expectations)
- Consistently demonstrates a set of skills
- Demonstrates generative skills that they can use under changing conditions and demands over time (e.g., they are able to change the size of their grip, amount of force, and action made when opening a variety of doors and containers)

Table 3.3. Patterns and examples

| Pattern | Definition | Brief explanation/examples |
|-----------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Pattern of unexpected performance | Represents instances in which the child demonstrates a skill that seems higher or harder than what is expected for his or her age or is missing a skill that is easier or should have emerged earlier in development. This pattern is sometimes referred to as having <i>splinter skills</i> . | <p>Development and learning during the early years tends to follow predictable sequences. Developmental milestones is one type of sequence with which teachers and teams are familiar. Pedagogical is another type of sequence for which research and experience tells us the order that most children will learn a particular set of skills. A pattern of unexpected performance is observed when children do not follow expected developmental or pedagogical sequences.</p> <p>Children who are sequential language learners may exhibit a pattern of unexpected performance. For example, they may appear to have more advanced language because they have memorized key phrases, but they appear to have a delay at the same time because of the number of words they use.</p> <p>Children with disabilities often will demonstrate patterns of unexpected performance in which they have what many refer to as <i>splinter skills</i>. For example, they may be able to perform skills expected of their age in some developmental areas (or may even be advanced in certain areas), but they may be missing foundational or earlier skills in other areas of development because of their disability.</p> |
| Pattern of assistance | Represents instances in which objects from the environment or people have to complete part or all of the task/response for the child | <p>Assistance alone does not warrant concern because assistance might be expected based on what is known about developmental expectations. Furthermore, assistance is not merely presenting a prompt, cue, or reminder. <i>Assistance</i> here refers to an adult or peer having to complete part or most of the common outcome for the child.</p> <p>Although some level of assistance is commonly required for all children who are learning a new skill, the amount of assistance should decrease over time.</p> <p>Assistance can emerge as a concern when children need assistance beyond what is expected of a novice learner, beyond the children’s age or present level of ability or developmental readiness, beyond cultural differences, or beyond a lack of prior exposure.</p> <p>For example, a child who is 4 years old needs reminders of how to follow a familiar social routine, or a child who is 5 years old needs help to manipulate objects.</p> |

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Table 3.3. (continued)

| Pattern | Definition | Brief explanation/examples |
|---------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Pattern of interfering behavior | Represents instances in which a child demonstrates something other than the desired or expected concept or skill | <p>By identifying patterns of interfering behaviors, teams can focus on supports and strategies that will help the child demonstrate more constructive responses, such as being helpful, playing with friends, sharing, taking the perspective of others, and being adaptable to changing events.</p> <p>Not all interfering behaviors are aggressive or purposeful; however, many times they are (e.g., hitting, biting, throwing). At times, behaviors can interfere given that the child (by choice or otherwise) is unable to maintain or establish attention, walks away from interactions or tasks, or even outright refuses to participate.</p> <p>Examples of interfering behaviors may include</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aggression (e.g., biting, kicking, screaming, hitting) • Destruction (e.g., throwing, slamming, ripping, tearing) • Repetition • Distraction (e.g., picking skin, showing interest in another activity or person) • Self-injurious (e.g., head banging, self-biting) • Arguing (e.g., outbursts, yelling) • Refusal/protest (e.g., pushing materials away) • Ignoring • Withdrawal • Disengagement, complacency • Lack of responsiveness and initiation |

From Pretti-Frontczak, K., & Winchell, B. (2014). *Manual for assessing patterns in early childhood development*. Brooklyn, NY: B2K Solutions, Ltd.

INDIVIDUALIZED OUTCOMES

Grisham-Brown and Pretti-Frontczak stated that individualized outcomes are “foundational skills and/or prerequisite skills that are tied to a common expectation or standard” that are “designed to ensure full access, participation, and progress toward common outcomes” (2013, pp. 229, 230). Although individualized family service plan outcomes and IEP goals and objectives are priority outcomes for children with disabilities, other children in blended classrooms may need instruction on foundational and prerequisite skills. For example, a child with challenging behavior may need more individualized instruction on a social skill that is preventing his or her access to classroom activities and routines.

It is important that teachers develop measurable and observable statements (often called *goals* and *objectives*) when addressing individualized outcomes in order for systematic instructional strategies to be designed, implemented, and evaluated. The following section describes 1) how to select individualized outcomes based on assessment

information, 2) steps for prioritizing outcomes, and 3) suggestions for writing statements that will guide instruction and enhance learning.

Selecting Individualized Outcomes

A number of quality indicators have emerged across the literature related to selecting individualized outcomes, including measurability, functionality, generality, and addressability (McWilliam, Jung, & Pretti-Frontczak, 2004; Pretti-Frontczak & Bricker, 2001). McWilliam (2009) suggested that individualized outcomes should include those that promote a child's participation in daily routines and is necessary or useful at home, in school, and in the community. Measurability is not only a recommended practice but is also federally mandated when developing children's IEP goals and objectives. Measurability ensures that a criterion is used to determine the success of the intervention and document changes in a child's performance (i.e., a criterion level of performance is noted for each behavior). Furthermore, the behavior must be observable in order to be measurable. Observable behaviors are those that can be seen or heard and which multiple people can agree have occurred (i.e., the behavior is an action that has a beginning and end). For example, "child responds with verbal or motor action to group direction provided by an adult" and "child greets peers by vocalizing, verbalizing, hugging, patting, touching, or smiling" are examples of measurable and observable target behaviors, whereas "child participates during group activities" and "child improves interactions with peers" are not.

Although identifying and writing measurable and observable behaviors is important, it is equally important to attend to whether the behaviors 1) are critical for children's participation in daily routines, 2) can be used in a variety of settings and conditions, and 3) are stated in a way that all team members can understand. Table 3.4 provides definitions and examples of four quality indicators. Teachers should consider the quality indicators as they strive to select meaningful behaviors (skills and processes) for children to acquire and use across their daily routines.

Prioritizing Individualized Outcomes

Given the number and types of skills and processes children learn during the early years, it is often difficult for teachers and teams to determine which to address at any given time. Teachers and teams need rules that help them prioritize individualized outcomes based on a child's needs, strengths, and interests. Without procedures for prioritizing, teachers and teams may become overwhelmed and feel that all skills and processes are of equal importance and require equal instructional time and progress monitoring efforts. Teachers can adopt the following set of practices to avoid these challenges:

- Engage in comprehensive assessment practices to ensure prioritized outcomes are developmentally appropriate for an individual child.

Table 3.4. Definitions and examples of each of the four quality indicators

| Quality indicator | Definition | Examples |
|-------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Measurability | Measurable behaviors contain a criterion or level of acceptable performance. The target behavior should also be observable, meaning it can be seen or heard and multiple people can agree it has occurred (i.e., the behavior is an action that has a beginning and end). | Walks 15 feet without assistance Prints first name correctly Zips coat independently Pours liquids without spilling Gives toy to peer without reminders |
| Functionality | Functional behaviors are those children need in most or all situations to 1) ensure access to activities and events, 2) promote independence, and 3) increase interactions with others and the environment. Without functional behaviors, someone else will likely have to perform tasks for the child (e.g., carry the child, feed the child). | Moves around the environment independently Communicates wants, needs, and ideas Initiates toileting routine Feeds self |
| Generality | Generative behaviors are those that represent generic processes or groups of related behaviors (e.g., problem solving, maneuvering, manipulating, preparing, participating) rather than specific or discrete skills (e.g., states two classroom rules, walks on a balance beam for four steps, stacks three blocks, gets puzzle and brings to table, follows directions at circle time). Generative behaviors are also ones that children can use across settings, people, materials, and events and that assist children in adapting to changes in the physical environment and expectations. | Manipulates various toys (e.g., puppets, books, blocks, hammers, musical instruments), objects (e.g., spoons, juice pouches, pencils), and materials (e.g., buttons, zip-pers, strings) with both hands. Manipulation of toys, objects, and materials is needed across daily activities (e.g., dressing, toileting, feeding) and can be used when interacting with a variety of people (e.g., family members, friends, teachers). |
| Addressability | Addressability ensures that targeted behaviors can be taught across daily activities and can be taught or easily elicited by various team members (i.e., the target behaviors are written with little or no professional jargon). | Plays using one object to represent another object (e.g., uses a stick as a pencil, uses a crayon as a bottle, uses a block as a telephone). Alternates between speaker and listener roles (e.g., pauses after making a comment or asking a question and looks toward communicative partner) when talking with familiar adults (e.g., parents, teachers, therapists) and peers during daily activities. |

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- Obtain information regarding team members' concerns to ensure that prioritized outcomes are needed across settings and contexts.
- Understand the difference between common outcomes for all children, targeted outcomes for children who are struggling or whose development has stalled, and those that require systematic instruction for individual children.

- Select individualized outcomes that address multiple areas of need. For example, teaching a child to manipulate objects promotes play development, promotes independence with feeding and dressing, and is critical for early writing development and therefore addresses multiple areas of need.

Writing Individualized Outcomes Using an Antecedent-Behavior-Consequence Formula

Teachers and teams working in inclusive settings are increasingly expected to write individualized plans for all children, not only those with disabilities. For example, Head Start teachers have to identify individualized outcomes and write individualized plans for all children in their program (Head Start Bureau, 2003). Furthermore, some state and agency standards designed for all children may be written in broad terms and may not provide the level of information or detail necessary to guide instruction. For example, a Kentucky early learning benchmark reads, “shows interest and understanding of basic concepts and conventions or print,” (Kentucky Governor’s Office of Early Childhood, 2002) and a HSELOF (2015) indicator reads, “demonstrates flexibility, imagination, and inventiveness in approaching tasks and activities.” Broad statements such as these may leave teachers wondering what specifically to teach and how to monitor children’s progress toward such concepts.

A straightforward formula has been suggested when developing individualized outcomes (e.g., Alberto & Troutman, 2012; Johnson et al., 2015; Kizlik, 2003). The formula for writing effective individualized outcomes includes three components. First, the antecedents under which the individualized outcome will occur and can be observed or the occurrence or event that happens before the behavior should be noted. Second, a measurable behavior (i.e., one that is defined, has a beginning and an end, and is an action or verb and becomes the individualized outcome) is determined. Third, a performance criterion that includes how well the child is to perform the individualized outcome, how often the child is to repeatedly perform the behavior at criterion (e.g., for 2 consecutive days), and how often progress will be assessed (e.g., weekly) is specified. Grisham-Brown and Hemmeter (1998) also suggested adding specific activities in which the individualized outcome can be taught. Table 3.5 provides examples of individualized outcomes written using the ABC formula. Table 3.6 provides a summary of resources that teachers and teams can use to help them develop and write individualized outcomes for children, particularly IEPs for children with disabilities. Using the ABC formula helps to ensure that instructional efforts are clear and all team members understand expected child performance.

IMPORTANT OUTCOME SELECTION CONSIDERATIONS

There are three important considerations for teachers and teams to make as they engage in data-driven decision making around who needs to learn what and the most effective and efficient instructional practice that

Table 3.5. Examples of target behaviors written using an antecedent-behavior-criterion formula

| Antecedent/condition | Behavior | Criterion |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| During daily activities (e.g., small group, center time, snack time, outdoor play) . . . | → Sam will manipulate a variety of objects, toys, and materials . . . | → that require use of both hands at the same time, while performing different movements. Sam will manipulate three different objects, toys, and materials one time a day for 2 consecutive weeks. |
| During daily transitions . . . | → Sam will go from one activity to the next . . . | → without crying, hitting others, or throwing materials two times per week for 3 consecutive weeks. |
| During daily activities (e.g., small group, center time, snack time, outdoor play) and when asked, "What do you want?" . . . | → Sam will express her wants and needs using two- or three-word verbal utterances . . . | → at least once during three different activities within a 1-week period. |

should be applied. Fidelity is the first consideration and is discussed in detail in Chapter 7. It is hard to assume that a change in what children are being taught is needed without assurances that instruction is delivered as intended. Rather, fidelity data may support changes to how an instructional strategy is used; how often, when, and where it is delivered; and how it is delivered versus changes to what is being taught. The second consideration

Table 3.6. Resources for developing target behaviors for young children

| |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Allen, E., & Cowdery, G.E. (2015). <i>The exceptional child: Inclusion in early childhood classrooms</i> (8th ed.). Stamford, CT: Cengage Learning. |
| Bateman, B.D., & Linden, M. (2012). <i>Better IEPs: How to develop legally correct and educationally useful programs</i> (5th ed.). Longmont, CO: Sopris West Educational Services. |
| Deiner, P.L. (2013). <i>Inclusive early childhood education: Development, resources, and practice</i> (6th ed.). Belmont, CA: Wadsworth. |
| Grisham-Brown, J., Pretti-Frontczak, K., Hawkins, R., & Winchell, B. (2009). Addressing early learning standards for all children within blended preschool classrooms. <i>Topics in Early Childhood Special Education, 29</i> , 131–142. |
| Horn, E., Lieber, J., Li, S., Sandall, S., & Schwartz, I. (2000). Supporting young children's IEP goals in inclusive settings through embedded learning opportunities. <i>Topics in Early Childhood Special Education, 20</i> , 208–223. |
| Jung, L.A. (2007). Writing SMART objectives that fit the ROUTINE. <i>Teaching Exceptional Children, 39</i> (4), 54–58. |
| Lignugaris-Kraft, B., Marchand-Martella, N.E., & Martella, R.C. (2001). Writing better goals and short-term objectives or benchmarks. <i>Teaching Exceptional Children, 34</i> (1), 52–58. |
| Pretti-Frontczak, K., & Bricker, D. (2000). Enhancing the quality of individualized education plan (IEP) goals and objectives. <i>Journal of Early Intervention, 23</i> , 92–105. |

is grounded in the understanding that early development is highly inter-related and interdependent. Take, for example, the ability to count objects. When children are able to count objects in correct order, they need a variety of interrelated skills, including recall, comprehension, memory, symbolism, sequencing, labeling, and one-to-one correspondence. Children will appear to be struggling or their performance will appear stalled at times because of difficulties with one or more related behaviors versus the common outcome. Making sure that universal instruction is being delivered toward all related skills is needed in these instances.

Finally, four variables may influence how outcomes are selected because they may affect a child's progress but not necessitate teaching different outcomes (see Table 3.7). Specifically, teachers and teams should consider how a child's age, cultural differences, teacher characteristics, and child characteristics may affect when a child needs continued learning opportunities related to an outcome and not additional instruction on a different outcome.

Table 3.7. Variables that influence outcome selection

| Variable | Description |
|-------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Age | For the most part, children acquire new skills with the passage of time, and they become more able as they get older. Furthermore, there is immense variability in the early years as to when children are expected or tend to acquire various skills. Thus, before teachers and teams become too concerned, they should familiarize themselves with the typical developmental sequences and time lines under which children acquire various skills and provide allowances for children to progress at different rates and in different sequences. |
| Cultural differences | Children live within families, and families live within larger communities, each of which consist of differing beliefs, values, and traditions. There are times when a child's performance may differ from what is expected in one culture but may be on track given another culture's beliefs and practices. Teachers and teams should be sensitive to cultural differences and how that might affect both what and how children are learning. |
| Teacher characteristics | Teacher characteristics such as style, temperament, and preferences may influence a teacher's reaction to situations and interpretation of the data. For example, if a teacher's own style is to talk often and be very expressive, then he or she may see a child who tends to be nonverbal as having a delay or attributing a negative attribute (e.g., concluding the child is withdrawn). It will be important for teachers to reflect on how their own views, characteristics, and values are affecting decisions about the children in their class. |
| Child characteristics | Similar to the idea that children develop and learn at different rates and in different ways, each individual child has his or her own set of preferences and temperaments, which further affects how and when various skills may be demonstrated. Teachers and teams need to, as best they can, determine which things might be just part of a child's makeup (e.g., being shy, taking more time to process, wanting things a particular way) and when something warrants instructional consideration. These child characteristics should be considered when thinking about what to teach and how to teach. |

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SUMMARY

This chapter described what learners in blended classrooms need to be taught. Common outcomes are established by local, state, and national learning standards and need to be taught to all learners. Targeted outcomes should be identified and taught when children's development is stalled or they are struggling in a particular area. Finally, individualized outcomes should be selected for children when they are missing a foundational skill that prevents them from gaining access to, participating in, and making progress toward common outcomes. Children in blended classrooms may likely need to learn all three types of outcomes. The challenge for teachers in blended programs is deciding when to teach what skills to which child. The curriculum maps in many ECE programs are pacing guides that suggest teaching all children skills in a specific sequence. Although such tools may simplify planning, they do not account for the individual needs of children in blended classrooms. The framework described in this chapter for identifying what to teach children is strongly recommended in lieu of predetermined skill sequences. Chapters 5, 6, and 7 describe universal, focused, and systematic instruction. Each type of instruction lends itself to instruction of common (universal), targeted (focused), and individualized (systematic) outcomes.

LEARNING ACTIVITIES

1. What are the differences among common outcomes for all children, targeted outcomes for some children, and individualized outcomes for particular children?
2. Contact the state department responsible for overseeing programs for preschool-age children to request a copy of your state's pre-K standards. Explain how the standards are being addressed in the program in which you are working. If you are not working in a program, then contact a local program and interview a staff member about how his or her program is addressing the standards.
3. Select a classroom activity that is typically engaging to the children in your classroom. Identify how the following could be addressed by the activity. How does the activity allow for children with different ability levels to participate? Provide concrete examples. How does the activity consider the different cultural, physical, and social-emotional experiences and environments of the children in your classroom? How does the activity allow for children to be challenged just above their development? What changes might you make in the activity to address these issues?
4. Review a child's individualized plan (preferably an IEP). To what extent are the goals and objectives measurable and observable? Are they functional, generative, and able to be addressed by all team members?

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