

## **COSF Discussion Prompts**

*Revised 10/2/06*

The pages that follow provide a few ideas for some types of questions or prompts that could be used to elicit conversation about a child's functioning with regard to the three global child outcome statements. As teams discuss child functioning in these outcomes areas, they generally draw on many sources of information and ask excellent questions that provide a specific description of what the child generally does with regard to each outcome. However, some teams have looked for further guidance about the kinds of questions that might help them focus on functional skills and span many of the components reflected in each outcome. The list that follows is by no means a comprehensive list of the types of questions or topics that might be discussed. It also is not intended to be used as a checklist necessary for discussion or as a checklist that will always constitute a complete discussion. However, it might provide some ideas to expand team approaches. It also may be helpful if individuals new to the COSF are quickly training other staff in using it and want more information for that purpose. As you begin to use this resource, we encourage you to share comments and additions with us at [staff@the-eco-center.org](mailto:staff@the-eco-center.org) so that we can include and circulate them as well!

## Outcome 1: Child has positive social relationships.

Thinking about relating to adults, relating to other children, and (for those older than 18 months) following rules related to groups or interacting with others.

- △ How does the child relate to his/her parent(s)?
- △ How does the child relate to other relatives or extended family and close family friends (e.g., grandparents, aunts, extended kin, etc.)? Do these interactions with people differ depending on the setting the child is in with these people?
- △ How does the child interact with familiar caregivers (e.g., child care providers, babysitters)?
- △ How does the child relate to strangers? At first? After a while? In different settings and using different approaches?
- △ How does the child interact with/respond to 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, etc.)?
- △ How does the child interact with/react to peers (e.g., at child care, in the park, in the neighborhood, in brief interactions in stores or at restaurants)?
- △ How does the child relate to his/her siblings, cousins, or kids he/she sees frequently?
- △ What is the child's eye contact with others like? Does it differ across situations or with different people?
- △ How does the child display his/her emotions?
- △ How does the child read and react to the emotions and expressions of others?
- △ How does the child respond to touch from others?
- △ How does the child maintain interactions with people?
- △ In what situations and ways does the child express delight or display 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?
- △ Does the child display awareness of routines? How?
- △ How does the child respond to transitions 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 and in what situations are interactions with others initiated?
- △ How does the child engage in mutual activity (e.g., joint attention, communicate to convey desire to engage, initiate interaction or play, follow rules for mutual games)?
- △ Does the child seek out others after an accomplishment? How?
- △ Does the child seek out others after frustration or when angry? How?
- △ Does the child participate in games (e.g., social, cooperative, rule-based, with turn-taking)? What do the child's interactions look like in these situations?
- △ Does the child display an awareness of rules and expectations? How? Does the child behave differently in different contexts (e.g., quieter in church, more active outside)?
- △ Does the child attempt to resolve his/her conflicts? How? What do these actions look like with peers, parents, etc.?
- △ How does the child respond when others are not attending to him/her?
- △ How does the child respond when someone arrives? Someone new? Someone familiar? How does the child respond when someone leaves?
- △ Talk about the child's functioning with regard to turn-taking, showing, and sharing? With adults? With other children?
- △ **How is a typically developing child of the same age likely to act in these situations?**

## **Outcome 2: Child acquires and uses knowledge and skills.**

Thinking, reasoning, remembering, and problem solving; understanding symbols; and understanding the physical and social worlds.

- △ How does the child use the words and skills she/he has in everyday settings (e.g., at home, at the park, at child care, at the store, with other kids, at child care, in restaurants, with different people)?
- △ Tell me about a time when he/she tried to solve a problem (e.g., overcome an obstacle/problem interfering with something important to him/her). What did he/she do?
- △ What concepts does the child understand? Does the child incorporate these into strategies that he/she uses to accomplish something meaningful? How?
- △ How does the child understand and respond to directions and requests from others?
- △ How does the child imitate others' actions (e.g., peers, adults) across settings to learn or try new things?
- △ How does the child display understanding of differences in roles, characteristics, and expectations across people and situations (with increasing age role understanding may change from immediate household roles and differences to more external community helper roles)?
- △ Can the child use his/her understanding to communicate problems or attempt the solutions that others suggest (e.g., try new strategies that they haven't thought of based on gestures or suggestions using words they know)?
- △ Can the child answer questions of interest in meaningful ways?
- △ Does the child use something learned at one time at a later time or in another situation?
- △ Does the child display an awareness of the distinctions between things (e.g., object characteristics, size differences, differences in object functions)?
- △ What does the child do if an action or a strategy attempted isn't successful? (e.g., how does he/she try to modify approach, show persistence, etc.)
- △ How does the child demonstrate her/his understanding of symbols into concepts, communication, and play?
- △ How does the child interact with books, pictures, and print?
- △ 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?
- △ Does the child's play show attempts to modify strategies/approaches and to try new things? How?
- △ Are there kinds of knowledge and skills that are not similar to same age peers and/or that might interfere with acquiring and using knowledge and skills?
  
- △ **How is a typically developing child of the same age likely to act in these situations?**

### **Outcome 3: Child takes appropriate action to meet his/her needs.**

Taking care of basic needs; getting from place to place and using tools; and (if older than 24 months) contributing to own health and safety.

- △ What does the child do when she/he can't get or doesn't have what she wants?
- △ What does the child do when he/she wants something that is out of reach or hard to get?
- △ What does the child do when he/she is upset or needs comfort?
- △ What does the child do when she/he is hungry?
- △ What does he/she do when he/she is frustrated?
- △ What does the child do when she/he needs help?
- △ How does the child convey his/her needs?
- △ How are the child's actions to seek help or to convey his/her needs different from one setting to another? How do they differ with different people? (e.g., child care vs. home vs. community setting, with parent vs. grandparent, familiar person vs stranger)
- △ Tell me about the child's actions when dressing and/or undressing?
- △ What does the child do before and after peeing and pooping?
- △ What does the child do at mealtime (eating, drinking)? Are there differences across settings and with different people?
- △ How does the child get started playing with toys? What does the child do when he/she is interested in a different toy than he/she has?
- △ Tell me about the child's actions/reactions with regard to hygiene (toothbrushing, washing hands/face, blowing nose, etc.)?
- △ Does the child show awareness of situations that might be dangerous? What does he/she do (give examples, (e.g., to dropoffs, hot stoves, cars/crossing streets, strangers, etc.)?)
- △ 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?
- △ Are the actions the child uses to meet his/her needs appropriate for his/her age? Can he/she accomplish the things that peers do?
- △ How does the child respond to delays in receiving expected attention and/or help from others?
- △ How does the child respond to challenges?
- △ Does the child display toy preferences? How do you know?
- △ How does the child get from place to place when desired or needed?
- △ What does the child do when she/he is bored? How does she/he amuse her/himself or seek out something fun?
- △ How does the child respond to problematic or unwanted peer behavior?
- △ How does the child use materials to have an effect (e.g., drawing materials, tools, etc.)?
  
- △ **How is a typically developing child of the same age likely to act in these situations?**