

# Treating the First Assessment Period as a Baseline

## Results Matter Assessment



**COLORADO**  
Department of Education  
P-3 Office

*Please read carefully as this is an official change in Results Matter assessment policy effective Fall 2019.*

### Capturing True Baseline Data

A child's very first assessment rating period serves as a baseline for measuring and comparing subsequent progress. This initial portfolio of observations and documentation demonstrates where a child is along the continuum of development before any instruction and intervention has been provided. A true baseline is important for measuring growth, particularly in the context of preschool special education assessment and Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) Preschool Outcomes reporting where child growth is measured from entry to and exit from preschool special education services on several outcomes.

In order to reflect baseline information and subsequently show the greatest amount of progress, ratings for a child's first assessment period should be based on the earliest observations and information available. Teachers are encouraged to enter ratings in the first period as soon as they have sufficient documentation for any objectives. They do not need to wait for the standard checkpoint rating window (i.e., two week-window before the deadline) in the child's baseline period to finalize their baseline data. This does not mean, however, that teachers should rush to score all objectives in the first few weeks, which is not feasible given the overall number of assessment objectives. Rather, an assessor's mindset should be to score as soon as baseline evidence becomes available.

After determining ratings in the first checkpoint period, staff can continue capturing documentation to be considered in the following period. For children that have been evaluated for special needs and placed on an IEP, information from formal evaluation reports can be used as documentation and should be entered into the online tool as soon as possible. As with other ongoing assessment, special educators and general educators should partner closely to capture this information online.

#### **What does this mean in practice with GOLD and COR Advantage?**

This baseline scoring process means treating the scoring process in GOLD and COR Advantage a bit differently in the first assessment period.

**For teachers using GOLD, it is not just about using preliminary ratings.** While preliminary ratings are still helpful, determining the earliest possible baseline score means **moving more quickly from entering preliminary ratings to scoring and finalizing areas under the Assess>Checkpoint by Child/Class options.** When developing the ILP for family conferences, teachers could draw from more recent preliminary ratings that do not necessarily need to be converted into new finalized ratings for the period.

**For teachers using COR Advantage, this means not entering scores more than one time for the same objective in the baseline period,** since the online system stamps whatever the highest rating was within a period regardless of the order in which they were entered (teachers do not "finalize" in this system).

## Family Communication and Individual Learning Plans

Some programs may be concerned with not having the most current assessment scores at the time of family conferences that would show children's current developmental picture. One possible solution is to move the first conference earlier in the baseline period. Also, staff could customize the information selected for the Individual Learning Plan (ILP) and include more up-to-date developmental information. Please note, children receiving state funds for preschool are required to have an ILP. CDE strongly encourages the use of an ILP as the primary tool for family conferences. CDE advises programs to consider family input in the ILP as well as other non-Results Matter information they have about a child. The information for the ILP does not need to come entirely from the assessment system.

Resources for developing ILPs:

- [Click here](#) for a suggested process for developing ILPs.
- [Click here](#) for instructions on how to create an ILP in GOLD.



## Children Placed on an IEP Mid-Year

Some children are placed on an IEP after the start of the school year, sometimes not until well into the second or third checkpoint periods. In this case, teachers should keep what has already been scored so far in the period corresponding to the child's IEP entry date and instead of waiting until the standard checkpoint rating window, follow the baseline guidance above for the objectives that are still un-scored.



## WHOM SHOULD I CONTACT FOR MORE INFORMATION?

If you have questions or would like to discuss this guidance further with CDE staff, please contact your regional preschool specialist: <https://www.cde.state.co.us/cpp/contact>