

## Ohio EI FFY24 State Systemic Improvement Plan (SSIP) Summary

### *SSIP Overview and Ohio's SSIP History*

The State Systemic Improvement Plan (SSIP) is a comprehensive multi-year plan for improving results for infants and toddlers with disabilities and their families, focusing on a specific State-Identified Measurable Result (SIMR). The SSIP involves completing in-depth data and infrastructure analyses; selecting broad improvement strategies and short-term, intermediate, and long-term outcomes; determining specific activities, which are aligned with evidence-based practices (EBPs), needed to achieve each outcome; and collecting and analyzing data to evaluate progress. Stakeholder involvement is vital in each aspect of the SSIP. Each year, states must report on their plan's progress within the state's Annual Performance Report (APR).

From FFY13 to FFY19, Ohio's SSIP focused on improving acquisition and use of knowledge and skills among children served in Early Intervention (EI). As Ohio's EI system completed all the activities identified in the first SSIP cycle, the lead agency and EI stakeholders shifted focus for the FFY20 to FFY25 SSIP cycle. Both data and anecdotal evidence suggested that Ohio needed to place additional emphasis on social-emotional development. Additionally, addressing social-emotional needs became more pressing as children and families experienced and continue to experience unique challenges related to the COVID-19 pandemic. Thus, Ohio's SSIP work through FFY25 will focus on the SIMR below.

### *Ohio's SIMR*

***Substantially increase the rate of growth in the percent of infants and toddlers with IFSPs who demonstrate improved social-emotional skills***

### *Evaluation and Implementation Plan*

Ohio's SSIP work focuses on the following three broad improvement strategies:

- Improve the identification of children's social-emotional strengths and needs through the assessment process, including the child outcomes summary (COS) process
- Improve the quality of individualized family service plan (IFSP) outcomes addressing social-emotional skills
- Improve the delivery of evidence-based EI services and families' ability to support social-emotional development

Ohio's Theory of Action summarizes the short-term, intermediate, and long-term outcomes and activities associated with each of the improvement strategy areas. The state's evaluation plan outlines the outcomes and includes evaluation questions, how we will know each outcome is achieved, and the measurement and data collection methods for each outcome. Both of these documents are available on the EI website: <https://ohioearlyintervention.org/federal-reporting-and-postings>.

### **Evidence-Based Practices**

Ohio identified Division for Early Childhood (DEC) Recommended Practices (RPs) that align with the state's new SIMR and outcomes. The RPs the state will implement with this SSIP include:

- **RP A4** - Practitioners conduct assessments that include all areas of development and behavior to learn about the child's strengths, needs, preferences, and interests (Improvement Strategy 1)
- **RP A7** - Obtain information about the child's skills in daily activities, routines, and environments such as home, center, and community (Improvement Strategy 1)
- **RP F4** - Practitioners and the family work together to create outcomes or goals, develop individualized plans, and implement practices that address the family's priorities and concerns and the child's strengths and needs (Improvement Strategy 2)
- **RP F5** - Practitioners support family functioning, promote family confidence and competence, and strengthen family-child relationships by acting in ways that recognize and build on family strengths and capacities (Improvement Strategy 3)
- **RP TC1** - Practitioners representing multiple disciplines and families work together as a team to plan and implement supports and services to meet the unique needs of each child and family (Improvement Strategy 3)

The selected EBPs align with the Theory of Action and outcomes identified as needed to implement each improvement strategy area: RPs A4 and A7 address conducting quality assessments; RP F4 addresses creating quality, individualized IFSP outcomes; and RPs F5 and TC1 address service delivery and increasing family capacity.

### **Evaluating Progress**

As part of the state's evaluation plan DODD collected and analyzed the following data this year:

- Parent understanding of their child's social-emotional strengths and needs;
- Parent involvement in developing outcomes that support social-emotional development;
- Parent ability to support their children's social-emotional development.

These data are described in more detail in the full FFY24 SSIP report and associated appendices.

### **Stakeholder Involvement**

This reporting year, the state again collected data directly from families regarding their understanding of their child's social-emotional strengths and needs and confidence in and ability to support their child's social-emotional development through the state's annual EI family questionnaire. As is done each year, the lead agency shared quantitative data and responses to open-ended items from the questionnaire with local EI programs. In addition to stakeholder input related to social-emotional outcomes and development, Ohio's EI stakeholders provided integral feedback regarding the state's Developmental Specialist Certification rule, due for five-year review July 1, 2026.