Thinking Functionally
(within age-expected bounds)

Early Child Outcomes are functional.
Thinking about young children’s outcomes from a functional framework requires a shift from a more traditional viewpoint of child development.

Characteristics of functional outcomes…
- Include things which are meaningful to the child in the context of everyday living
- Are an integrated series of behaviors or skills that allow the child to achieve outcomes
- Emphasize how the child is able to integrate (behaviors) across developmental domains to carry out complex meaningful behaviors

Functional outcomes are NOT…
1) A single behavior
2) The sum of a series of discrete behaviors
3) Based on developmental domains (like many assessments)
4) Trying to separate child development into discrete areas (e.g., communication, gross motor, cognitive, etc.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Thinking Functionally (within age-expected bounds)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Not just...</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Know how to make eye contact, smile, and give a hug</td>
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<tr>
<td>Know how to imitate a gesture when prompted by others</td>
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<tr>
<td>Use finger in pointing motion</td>
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<td>Show a skill in a specific situation</td>
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**Items to Consider When Measuring Functional Outcomes**

1. What does the child typically do?
2. What is the child’s actual performance across settings and situations?
3. How does the child use his/her skills to accomplish tasks?

*It is not assessing the child’s capacity to function under ideal circumstances*