



Data Measurement Common Terms

This resource serves as a glossary of key terms associated with performance measurement in continuous quality improvement efforts. Examples of how each key term is used are also provided. **For more information contact us at FamilyFirstChapin@Chapinhall.org.**

Term	Other names	Definition	Examples
Outcomes	Lag measures Long-term outcomes Distal outcomes	Performance measures that show the extent to which children and families are achieving long-term desired results related to permanency, safety, and well-being.	Of all children who entered foster care in a 12-month period, the percentage who discharged to permanency within 12 months of entering care.
Lead measures	Proximal outcomes Short-term outcomes Three common types: - Process - Quality - Capacity	Measures of system functioning that may predict or lead to improved outcomes .	See below
Process measures	Activities ¹ Outputs ¹	Lead measures that describe how and what services are delivered (e.g., frequency, type, dose, etc.)	Percentage of teens initially placed in group placements Percentage of applicable children receiving monthly sibling visits
Quality measures		Lead measures that describe how well services are delivered.	Percentage of staff that rated training XYZ, by rating ("Very satisfied," "Somewhat satisfied," etc.)
Capacity measures	Inputs ¹	Lead measures that describe the resources an agency allocates to implement services and support its workforce (e.g., financial, human capital, technological, infrastructural, etc.)	Percentage of workers who have been trained in the agency's practice model Staff vacancy rates Caseload ratios

¹ From logic model terminology

Term	Other names	Definition	Examples
Baseline		<p>A minimum or starting point used for comparison.</p> <p>Often, a baseline is your average or current performance, to which you will compare future performance to see if performance is improving.</p> <p>Baselines can also help inform targets that are reasonable and appropriate.</p>	<p>Over the past five fiscal years (FY), on average 30% of children who entered care each FY achieved permanency within 12 months of entering.</p> <p>On average, X% of children with siblings in care have at least one monthly visit.</p> <p>Over the past two FYs, the median number of months from TPR to adoption finalization was 3 months.</p>
Target	Goal	A level of performance you want to achieve.	<p>We will increase the percentage of children who achieve permanency within 12 months of entry from 30% (our baseline) to 40% (our target) by October 31, 2022.</p> <p>A useful formula for setting targets is "From X to Y by When." ² The example above uses this formula.</p>
Benchmark	Standard	<p>Benchmarks generally come from outside of your organization and refer to best practices or levels of performance that other agencies have been able to achieve. You can compare current and future performance to benchmarks to see if your performance is consistent with best practices or what is considered possible.</p> <p>Benchmarks can become targets or be used to inform the development of performance targets appropriate for your agency.</p>	<p>The national standards determined by the Children's Bureau for the Child and Family Services Reviews statewide data indicators. For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - On average (across all states), 42.7% of children who entered care during 4/1/11 – 3/31/12 achieved permanency within 12 months of entry. <p>Casey Family Programs recommends a 5:1 worker-to-supervisor ratio.³</p> <p>Casey Family Programs recommends a case-carrying staff vacancy rate no higher than 15%.³</p>

² From *The Four Disciplines of Execution* (2016) by McChesney, Covey, and Huling.

³ From *A Child Welfare Leader's Desk Guide to Building a High-Performing Agency: 10 Practices Part One* (2015) by the Annie E. Casey Foundation. Available at <https://www.aecf.org/resources/10-practices-part-one/>