An Examination of the Quality of State Data on Part C and Part B Preschool Child Outcomes

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Background

The Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) requires that state agencies overseeing Part C (birth through 2 years of age) and Part B Preschool (ages 3 through 5) submit data on child outcomes annually. In February 2015, states reported data on the progress of all children who exited the programs between July 1, 2013, and June 30, 2014. This was the sixth time that states reported child outcomes data. OSEP does not require specific tools or methodologies, so states use a variety of approaches to collect the data. See Table 1 for information about approaches by states and territories.

Table 1. State Approaches to Collecting Outcomes Data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Approach</th>
<th>Part C—Early Intervention: Data Across Years</th>
<th>Part B—Preschool: Data Across Years</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Child Outcomes Summary (CSS) process only</td>
<td>43 (77%)</td>
<td>42 (77%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>One tool outcome</td>
<td>6 (16%)</td>
<td>6 (16%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public/private analyses</td>
<td>2 (5%)</td>
<td>6 (16%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other approaches</td>
<td>3 (5%)</td>
<td>2 (3%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

States report data for five Progress Categories and two Summary Statements for each of three Child Outcomes.

Child Outcomes

- Percent of infants and toddlers/preschoolers with IFSPs/IEPs who demonstrate:
  - Positive social-emotional skills (including social relationships);
  - Acquisition and use of knowledge and skills (including early language/communication); and
  - Use of appropriate behaviors to meet their needs

Progress Categories

- OSEP Progress Categories as Developmental Trajectories
- Part C—Early Intervention: Data Across Years
- Part B—Preschool: Data Across Years

Summary Statements

1. Of those children who entered or exited the program below age expectations in each outcome, the percentage who substantially increased their rate of growth by the time they turned 5 years of age (for Part C) or 6 years of age (for Part B Preschool) or exited the program. (c+d)/(a+b+c+d)
2. The percentage of children who were functioning within age expectations in each outcome by the time they turned 3 years of age (for Part C) or 6 years of age (for Part B Preschool) or exited the program. (d)/(a+b+c+d)

Quality of the Outcomes Data

ECTA and DaSy explored three approaches to computing national estimates:

1. Averaging the state percentages across the states (each state weighted as one).
2. Including all states and weighting their percentages by child count.
3. Over time across states (Figure 3)

Issues to consider:

- Would it be possible to determine a level of performance on child outcomes that would be considered sufficient?
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- How long after the implementation of improvement in a state would it be until you saw changes in the child outcomes data? How would you need to look at the data to relate your improvement activities to the changes in child outcomes?

Discussion

- How long after the implementation of improvement in a state would it be until you saw changes in the child outcomes data? How would you need to look at the data to relate your improvement activities to the changes in child outcomes?

Figure 1: Part C Percentage of Children Exiting at Age Expectation Compared across Three Methods for Computing National Estimate, 2013-2014

Figure 2: Child Outcome Data across Years

Figure 3: State Variation across All States: Exit within Age Expectations—Knowledge and Skills, 2013-2014