

Quality, Relevance and Impact of **nectac** Services and Products

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“NECTAC TA helps me to understand the intention of the policy and create strategies to follow the policy in a way that will benefit children and families in my state.”

~619 Coordinator

“Our TA Contact is knowledgeable, responsive and resourceful. When we need assistance, we know she will understand the challenge we are addressing and provide timely and relevant information. She interacts with us as colleagues, always respecting our ideas and perspectives, and helping us expand the breadth and depth of our knowledge base.”

~Part C Coordinator

“The NECTAC website is typically my first stop when searching for current, relevant information.”

~619 Coordinator

Part C and Section 619 Coordinators who responded to a query in September 2011 overwhelmingly agreed that NECTAC TA, including both services and products, are of high quality, relevant to their work, and contributing to improved state infrastructure, local program implementation, and practices. The query was sent to 125 state coordinators and a total of 67 responses from state coordinators were received. Respondents included 35 Part C Coordinators and 32 Section 619 Coordinators representing 46 states and jurisdictions.

Use of NECTAC Products and Services

In 2010-2011, Part C and Section 619 Coordinators from all states and jurisdictions received TA from NECTAC via:

- listservs for Part C and Section 619 programs, weekly eNotes newsletters, and
- participation in NECTAC cross-state TA which included national conferences, workshops and webinars.

In addition, 93% of Part C and 88% of Section 619 programs received individualized technical assistance which included:

- stakeholder group facilitation,
- trainings,
- ongoing systems change TA, and
- less extensive individualized TA typically provided via telephone, email or webinar.

Most (66%) of the respondents reported they use NECTAC TA 'often,' 30% reported 'sometimes' and only 4% said 'rarely.' No one said they 'never' use NECTAC TA.

Quality and Relevance of NECTAC TA Services and Products

Respondents agreed or strongly agreed that overall NECTAC TA services and products were high quality (100% of 62 respondents) and relevant (100% of 59 respondents). When asked to explain why they had agreed or had disagreed that NECTAC provides high quality and relevant TA, many shared their perceptions of NECTAC staff as responsive, knowledgeable and resourceful, and their perceptions of NECTAC TA as “helpful,” “comprehensive,” “accurate,” “appropriate,” and “cutting edge.”

In addition, respondents described the many resources and topical TA they received and the impacts of NECTAC services and products in improvements to:

- state infrastructure,
- local infrastructure, and
- practices to better serve young children with disabilities and their families.

Improved State Infrastructure

“NECTAC staff has consistently provided timely, informed and comprehensive support on a variety of issues, including child outcomes, monitoring and supervision, and fiscal issues and monitoring.”
~Part C Coordinator

“NECTAC materials and guidance documents assist us in making needed revisions to policies and practices.”
~Part C Coordinator



“While we are working on updating our Transition Guide we have used many resources from NECTAC to guide us in making policy and procedure decisions. I refer to the NECTAC website first when looking for information.”
~619 Coordinator

When asked the extent to which they agreed that their state infrastructure had improved as a result of NECTAC TA, 100% of those who answered (n=56) agreed or strongly agreed that their state infrastructure had improved and identified the following areas of improvement:

Areas of State Infrastructure Improvements	n	%
Policies and procedures	46	82
Guidance	43	77
General supervision/monitoring	25	45
Interagency relationships	20	36
Financing	10	18
Child find mechanisms	7	13
Other: IFSP forms, RTI and LRE, early childhood transition, systems change, extended IFSP option, evidence based practices	6	11

Some descriptions of state infrastructure improvements included: development of a child outcomes manual and improved data collection, general supervision processes, transition guidance, interagency agreements, professional development on inclusion, Part C financing and interagency collaboration.

Examples cited by Part C and Section 619 Coordinators:

- *“[NECTAC TA] helped us to: understand the OSEP approach to correction of non-compliance; develop policies and procedures for the Extended IFSP Option and implement this initiative; change our methodology to assess child outcomes.”* **~Part C Coordinator**
- *“NECTAC TA services resulted in a state procedures manual for child outcomes, a quality crosswalk between our state Early Learning Foundations and Child Outcomes, and a plan for providing professional development and support for our local programs on the child outcomes process.”* **~619 Coordinator**
- *“Last fall, we began a process of significant restructuring of our state system. NECTAC provided extraordinary assistance to us in gathering critical data from other states. They were able to turn our request into a useable product in an amazingly short span of time.”*
~619 Coordinator
- *“NECTAC participation in an OSEP on-site monitoring visit assisted us in identifying procedural changes to address some monitoring and family support issues. Their support continues to assist us in strengthening our fiscal monitoring.”* **~Part C Coordinator**

Improved Local Infrastructure

"Our local programs are receiving high quality support because of the guidance and quality [of the] webinars, handouts and information I received from NECTAC on child outcomes and transitions."

~Part C Coordinator

"The [TA on] major systems restructuring impacted our local system of interagency early childhood supports and services most."

~619 Coordinator



"NECTAC assisted our state with the development of a new IFSP format, including helping find what other states are doing and reviewing drafts. They also assisted us with developing a plan for training and ongoing technical assistance to our contractors and vendors."

~Part C Coordinator

When asked the extent to which they agreed that their local infrastructure had improved as a result of NECTAC TA, 93% of those who answered (n=46) agreed or strongly agreed that their local infrastructure had improved and identified the following areas of improvement:

Areas of Local Infrastructure Improvements	n	%
Guidance	35	81
Policies and procedures	31	72
General supervision/monitoring	17	40
Interagency relationships	17	40
Child find mechanisms	8	19
Personnel recruiting, training, supervision	6	14
Financing	3	7
Other: IFSP forms, RTI and LRE, early childhood transition, systems change, extended IFSP option, evidence based practices	6	14

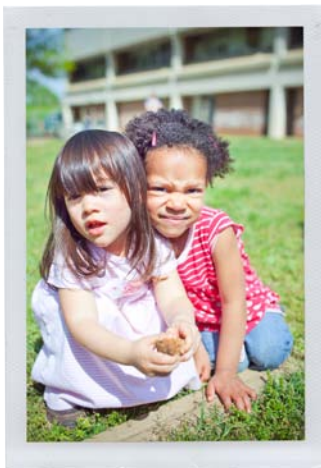
Some descriptions of local infrastructure included: guidance related to specific practices, interagency supports and services, transition guidance, and training and TA.

Examples cited by Part C and Section 619 Coordinators:

- "NECTAC helped us get focused monitoring in place which has led to identifying and tracking improvement in local programs."*
~Part C Coordinator
- "NECTAC provided TA to [our state] in recreating our general supervision system, through work with our stakeholders, from the state Part C level down to the local program level, resulting in a more streamlined and efficient system."* **~ Part C Coordinator**
- "Interagency collaboration at the LEA level has increased... services are improving and participating agencies have become more aware and appreciative of the need to plan, deliver, and monitor services in a systematic way."* **~619 Coordinator**
- "In bi-annual meetings with our local supervisors, I have shared NECTAC information to provide a national picture and current information so local agencies understand the relationship between local-state-federal policies. We have refined our polices, forms, PD and TA using NECTAC resources and based upon what has been shared."* **~619 Coordinator**
- "A NECTAC representative assisted with presentations to local programs and as a member of the [State] Assessment Think Tank composed of national, state and local experts which resulted in major changes in [our state's] assessment process and tools utilized."* **~Part C Coordinator**

“Regarding professional development with inclusion, we are highlighting local programs that have exemplary practices through the work of Expanding Opportunities.”

~ 619 Coordinator



“NECTAC staff always have cutting edge information, they know how to get it out there and make the necessary connections and networking. They always follow through and they are very knowledgeable and responsive. They really go the extra mile and are excellent at individualizing what a state needs.”

~619 Coordinator

Improved Practices

When asked the extent to which they agreed that local practices in their state had improved as a result of NECTAC TA, 98% of those who answered (n=42) agreed or strongly agreed that practices had improved and identified the following areas of improvement:

Areas of Practice Improvements	n	%
Direct service or teaching practices	28	67
Data collection and monitoring participation	22	52
IFSP/IEP development	21	50
Screening and/or assessment practices	20	48
Other: transition practices, direct services or teaching practices around inclusion, extended IFSP option	3	7

Some descriptions of how local practices had improved related to improving assessment practices and IFSP/IEP development, integrating outcomes data collection with the IFSP/IEP process, inclusive practices and family centered practices.

Examples cited by Part C and Section 619 Coordinators:

- *“The materials and webinars that were shared with my state and local programs are improving the way IEPs are being developed and the way teachers are providing ongoing assessment practices in an intentional manner to improve the developmental growth of the children they work with.” ~619 Coordinator*
- *“With NECTAC assistance, a new IFSP document and process has been developed. This will drive improved assessment practices and services. The new IFSP has helped shape our DMS redesign and data collection capabilities will be enhanced because of NECTAC assistance with our new IFSP document.” ~Part C Coordinator*

Conclusion

NECTAC’s TA services and products address a wide range of state system development needs impacting state infrastructure, local program implementation, and practices with infants, toddler, and preschool aged children with disabilities and their families. More information can be found at www.nectac.org. We welcome your comments and questions at nectac@unc.edu.

Additional copies of this document are available at: http://www.nectac.org/~pubs/quality_relevance_impact_nectac.pdf

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