Hi everyone. My name is Christina Kasprzak and I’m pleased to share the results of this year’s national analysis of the 2016-2017 IDEA Part C and 619 child outcomes data. The national analysis was conducted by staff from the ECTA Center and the DaSy Center, led by Cornelia Taylor.

Our intended outcomes for today are to support participants in learning about the latest national child outcomes data including data patterns, and identifying where to find more information about the national analysis and resources to support your state and local data use.

Let’s get started with some very general background to set the stage for those of you who are a little newer to this work. For many years, there was an important emphasis on getting children into Part C and 619 services. Access to services was critical and there was a need to help families understand and access early intervention and preschool special education services. Along with access, there was a focus on compliance – making sure programs were meeting the federally mandated requirements. In the last 10 years or so, there has been a real shift from access and compliance to focusing on results. That doesn’t mean access and compliance are no longer important, but this new emphasis is about being accountable for the outcomes of children and families served. Another contextual background is to just keep in mind that all federal agencies are required to report on their program outcomes. For early intervention and preschool special education, OSEP uses the child outcomes data to: justify the funding of Part C and Part B Preschool, and to monitor state Part C results through the RDA processes.

In 2005, the Office of special education programs first started requiring states to report on these three, functional, child outcomes. States report on the percentage of children who have positive social emotional skills, including social relationships, acquire and use knowledge and skills including early language, communication and early literacy for preschoolers, and the use of appropriate behaviors to get their needs met.

For each of the 3 functional outcome areas, states report on five progress categories, which can be best understood as development trajectories. Along the bottom axis, is a child’s age in months. Along the side axis, a measure of the child’s functioning or growth. So the trajectory tracks a child’s growth over time. Category e is the group of children whose functioning was like the functioning of their same aged peers. Their functioning in the outcome area follows the predicted trajectory for a child at their age. Category d is the group of children whose functioning improved and reached the functioning comparable to their same-aged peers. So when they entered, they were below age expectations when they entered the program but reached age expectations in the outcome area by the time they were exiting. You can see the orange dotted line labeled d is below the straight line labeled e but then eventually increases and meets up with e. Category c is the group of children whose functioning that improves and moves closer to that of same aged peers but does not quite reach it. The green dotted line labeled c is getting closer to the solid line e but does not reach it. Category b is the group of children whose functioning improved but there was not change in trajectory. As represented by the blue dotted line b, these children show improved functioning over time but are not getting closer to functioning that is expected for their age. Finally, category a is the group of children whose functioning did not improve. These children show no change in their functioning while in services. Since children with disabilities ages 0-5 have a wide range of functioning, it’s important to understand that states will serve groups of children in all of these categories.

Finally, the outcomes data and the a-e progress categories are aggregated into two summary statements. The first is, Of those children who enter or exited the program below age expectations in an outcome area, the percentage who substantially increased their rate of growth by the time they exist the program. So we’re talking about the children who made **greater than expected growth**, and that’s c+d / a+b+c+d. The second summary statement is The percentage of children who were functioning within age expectations in an outcome area by the time they exit the program. So we’re talking about the children who **exited at or above age expectations** and that’s calculated by d+e / a+b+c+d+e

As you may know, there are some differences in how states measure child outcomes. There are 3 main approaches used by Part C and 619, and then a few states have designed their own ‘other’ or individual approach. The majority of states for Part C (75%) and for 619 (69%) use the Child Outcomes Summary Process. Some states use one tool statewide – and that is 14% for Part C and 17% for 619. And a few states are using publishers’ online systems – that’s 3 (or 5%) for C and 2 (or 3%) for 619. Over the years, a few states have changed approaches. We saw a slight change in this year’s approaches where two states moved from the COS process to one tool statewide. There are lots of considerations involved in changing approaches, and it’s important to keep in mind that no one approach is perfect. We certainly welcome you to contact TA at ECTA if you would like assistance with thinking through implications or ideas if you are considering changing approaches.

Briefly, let’s review the methodology for calculating the national estimates. We have been conducting the national analysis for more than 10 years now, and so we can see current and trend data around the outcomes. The national estimates are computed using the average across states, weighted by child count. Two quality criteria were used to identify which states, of all 50 states plus the District of Columbia, meet the data quality standards. The first is data completeness. Data completeness is defined in Part C as a minimum of 28% of exiters included in the outcomes data. For 619 completeness is defined as a minimum of 12% of the count of children ages 3–5 included in the outcomes data. We eliminated states that were conducting sampling themselves because we had no metric for estimating the extent of missing data. The second data quality criterion was that states’ data had "reasonable" patterns. Because outliers in data patterns are often indicators of questionable data quality, we established criteria for reasonable parameters of the "a" and "e" progress category percentages. Progress category "a" includes children with the most significant delays and degenerative conditions who do not make any progress or who regress from entry to exit. We established a cutoff of 10% of children in progress category "a" as reasonable based on historical patterns. Progress category "e" includes children who enter and exit at age expectations in the outcome area. On the basis of historical data, we established a cutoff of 65% of children in progress category "e" as the reasonable limit.

The data in this line graph show the number of states that met criteria for inclusion in the national analysis for the last 10 years. The trend data show that over time more and more states have met the minimum criteria for inclusion in the national estimates. When we started back in 2008, only 19 Part C states and 15 619 states met the minimum criteria. Now we’re close to all states – at 43 619 and 46 Part C.

These two tables show the reasons and numbers of states excluded from this year’s analysis. You can see the process includes excluding states if they are sampling and also if a state is missing exiting or child count data. Without this data, we are unable to measure their completeness of data. For Part C, we had 2 states excluded due to sampling, 1 due to missing data, and 2 due to patterning. For 619, we had 3 states excluded due to sampling, 1 due to missing data, 2 due to patterning, and 2 due to missing child count data.

At a glance, these are our National Child Outcome Data for 2016-2017, for Early Intervention and Preschool Special Education. Starting with Part C, we can see the first column is Summary Statement 1 which is children who made greater than expected growth - that is 67% in Social Relationships, 73% in knowledge and skills, and 75% in action to meet needs. So in each category, two-thirds to three-fourths of children were making greater than expected growth (changing growth trajectories). If we look at the Summary Statement 1 data for Preschool 619, that’s column 3 – we can see that 80% or more of children are making greater than expected growth in each of the 3 outcome areas. If we look at Summary Statement 2: for Early Intervention, we see there that the national averages are between 49-57% and for Preschool 619, the national averages for exiting at age expectations are between 56 and 65%. Further interpretation of these data can be made in looking at trend data as well as setting up comparisons.

Let’s look a little closer at the state by state completeness data . This bar chart is for part C. In the bar chart, each green bar represents a different state with the state reported % of children included in their outcomes data for the year. On the low end, we’re looking at one state reporting down around 5% and on the upper end, a state that is reporting around 100%. You can see that the national average is 65% (which has increased just slightly from last year). But there’s a huge range or variation in states. States are using a variety of strategies to address issues of missing data. We know that completeness of data is a critical part of having quality data for decision-making.

Similarly, here’s a bar chart showing the completeness data for Part B Preschool for the year. Again, the completeness data ranges dramatically across states. On the low end we have a state with approximately 1% and on the high end a state at 68%. Remember that 619 completeness data are calculated based on child count, so that’s very different from Part C’s exiting data. It’s only a proxy but it’s the best proxy we have at the national level. We know that a lower percentage of children in the child count data can be expected to be included in the child outcomes data (which includes children who exited during the year and had at least 6 mo of services). Clearly data completeness is a data quality issue many states are working on to increase the quality and therefore usefulness of their outcomes data.

These two graphs are trend data for the part c child outcomes for the last 5 years. Notice that each line color is a different outcome area. The left chart is Part C, Summary Statement 1 (greater than expected growth), and the chart on the right is Part C, Summary Statement 2 (exit at age expectations). Across 5 years of national averages, we can see the data have not changed a lot over time – there is some noticeable consistency in the national averages over time. While there are slight increases and decreases, we don’t see any dramatic changes. You might also notice the order has remained consistent over time as well. So the Purple color line on the first chart shows that the average percentages for Summary Statement 1 for Social Relationships has been the lowest of all three outcome areas ever year. Action to meet needs is the highest of the three, represented by the light green bar.

These are the same two outcomes trend charts but for the preschool section 619 data – these national estimates have also been consistent over time. There have been slight changes from year to year but no major dips or jumps. The first chart shows the Summary Statement 1 data and all the average percentages are very close together – there’s very little differences from year to year or from outcome to outcome. In contrast, chart 2 (Summary Statement 2) you can see more obvious differences between the percentages for the 3 outcome areas. Percentages for Knowledge and skills (the blue line) is down in the lower 50s while percentages for social relationships (the purple line) is consistently in the high 50s.

We switch now to talking about state-level variation and patterns.

This bar chart shows the national estimates in Part C – this is Summary Statement 2 (children who exited within age expectations) in outcome 2, which is knowledge and skills. Each green bar represents a state’s percentage reported. Of the 51 states included here, we have state reported averages from 17% all the way up to 74%.

This bar chart shows the Preschool data for Summary Statement 2 (children who exited within age expectations) in outcome 2 – knowledge and skills. Of the 51 states included here, we have state reported averages from 8% all the way up to 78%. These kinds of variations get us asking questions about why such variation exists across states? What reasons might be behind the differences? States are in a unique position to conduct extensive analyses to better understand their outcomes data – how it relates to child and family characteristics, programmatic activities, or other factors. At the national level, we have limited ability to dig deeper into the data, but we have tried a few additional analyses.

One analysis we conducted was to look at the data by % served in the state. If we start with a general assumption or hypotheses that a state that serves a higher % of children will have a population of children with a wider range of functioning. In contrast, a state that serves a lower % of children will have a population of children with more severe disabilities. If we want to test that hypothesis, we might run the analysis we have here -- examining the % of children who exited the program at age expectations by % served. In all three outcome areas, we see that states with higher percentages served show higher percentages of children exiting at age expectations.

We ran the same analysis for the preschool 619 data. We don’t see the same patterns at all. States serving a higher % of children in preschool did not report a higher % of children exiting at age expectations. So that challenges the assumption we made. We’d have to dig deeper to understand why – could it be related to other state characteristics/variables? Could there be data quality differences? Is there something innately different with 619 that would explain that would challenge the assumption that higher % served should be related to higher % of children exiting at age expectations? This was just an example of analyses we’ve run and could inspire you to examine your own state data more closely to understand it and help you use it.

A key resource available to state Part C and Section 619 Coordinators is your State Data Quality Profile for child outcomes data. The profiles were sent to all coordinators and includes the following contents: It includes comparisons of state data to national data; Trend data for summary statements as well as the a-e progress categories; And it includes analyses related to the two quality criteria – completeness and patterns. We would like this data quality profile to be a useful tool to states and we have staff who are available to look at your profile with you if you have questions about the content or how you might interpret and use the data.

Here’s a look at the types of charts and data in the profiles, including: Comparisons of the state to national data; and Trends for summary statements over time – not just your state percentages but also average and standard deviations.

Here’s another example of data available in the profile --- this one is the state completeness data and again shows not only the state percentage but the average and standard deviation. Remember that these profiles are specifically shared with State Part C and 619 Coordinators. If you are a coordinator and would like to request another copy, please contact the ECTA center. If you are not a coordinator and are interested, you should contact your state part c or 619 coordinator. Coordinators who would like support with reviewing, understanding and interpreting the profiles can also contact ECTA for support.

In closing, there are a few key resources to remind you about. The four resources highlighted here are: 1. Our annual 2-pager with the highlights from this year’s national analysis, 2. An online collection of child outcomes data reports that states have produced for local programs, 3. A brief that addresses year to year changes in state child outcomes data – to help stakeholder understand what it means (and doesn’t mean), and 4. a link to a collection of national resource to support states using the COS process. In addition, you can contact your TA providers at ECTA and DaSy for support as you are working on your child outcomes data collection, analysis, and use.

Thank you.