



Photo: MaryBeth Gronenthal

# nectac Evaluation Highlights

Client Feedback from March 2010 - September 2011

Compiled February 2012

Christina Kasprzak, Jacqueline Marshall, Elizabeth Jones & Adriane Terrell

## Evaluation Plan and Methods

The NECTAC Evaluation Unit systematically collects and analyzes data to describe the quantity and nature of the technical assistance services provided by NECTAC staff. The Unit also evaluates the quality and relevance of NECTAC services and products and whether TA recipients use the information and resources gained to improve state and local systems and practices serving young children with disabilities and their families. In addition to ongoing evaluation efforts, in September 2011, a national evaluation was conducted with all Part C and Section 619 Coordinators from all states and jurisdictions. The national evaluation included questions addressing utilization of NECTAC services and products, perceptions about quality and relevance of NECTAC TA, and impacts of NECTAC TA in improving systems and services. The highlights presented in this report include data from all evaluation efforts from March 2010 to September 2011.

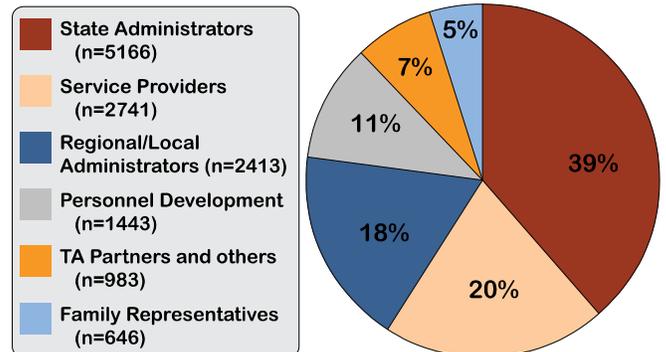
## Major Findings – Documentation

NECTAC staff provided more than 1030 TA services to Part C and Section 619 programs in all 60 states and jurisdictions. Most of the staff time (74%) was spent on individualized TA where the TA was focused on a single state with a specific issue or TA request. The remaining 26% was spent on cross-state TA where the TA was designed for clients in multiple states, such as the 2010 and 2011 OSEP Leadership Mega Conferences, the 2010 conference on Measuring Child and Family Outcomes, the 2011 conference on Measuring and Improving Child and Family Outcomes and the Tenth and Eleventh National Early Childhood Inclusion Institutes and others.

A total of 13,392 individuals (with some individuals participating multiple times) received NECTAC TA services. More than a third (39%) were state level administrators, typically Part C and 619 Coordinators and staff.

Twenty percent (20%) were local teachers, service providers and therapists who directly serve young children with disabilities and their families. Other TA recipients included local and regional administrators (18%), personnel development system staff (11%) such as State TA systems staff, national TA partners (7%) and family members and family organization representatives (5%).

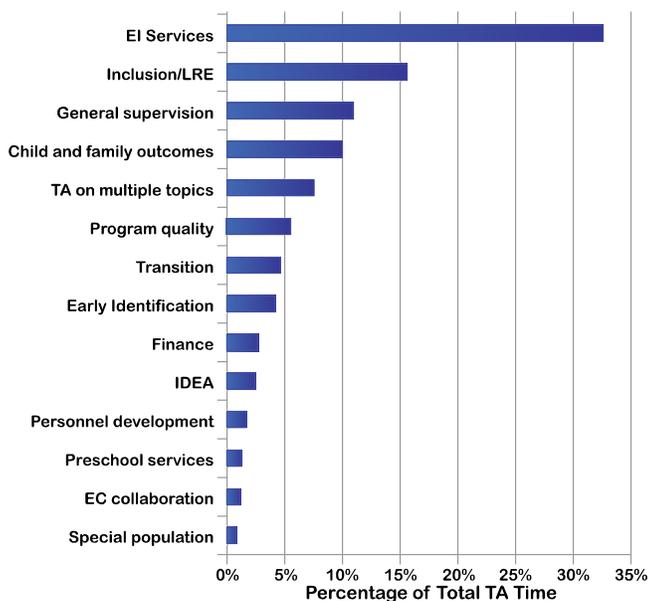
**Proportion of Participant Types Included in All NECTAC TA Services by System Level**  
Total Number of Participants = 13,392



NECTAC also provided TA to a variety of other clients including federal agency staff from various programs, professional organizations, national and regional TA providers, private consultants, and the media.

NECTAC provided TA on a variety of topics related to the implementation of IDEA. The greatest amount of time was spent supporting states in the areas of implementing evidence-based EI services, including IFSP process, service coordination and natural environments (32%), expanding opportunities for young children with disabilities to receive services in inclusive environments/LRE with their peers (15%), building effective general supervision and monitoring systems to ensure compliance with IDEA and quality services (11%) and developing and implementing systems for measuring child and family outcomes (10%).

### NECTAC TA Time by Topic Area



## Publications

During this reporting period, NECTAC staff published a number of resources to benefit Part C and Section 619 staff and the entire TA&D network. Key publications included (ordered by most recent date):

- [Part B SPP/APR 2011 Indicator Analysis \(July 2011\)](#)
- [Part C SPP/APR 2011 Indicator Analysis \(July 2011\)](#)
- [The Importance of Early Intervention for Infants and Toddlers with Disabilities and their Families](#)
- [The Outcomes of Early Intervention for Infants and Toddlers with Disabilities and their Families](#)
- [Evaluation Summary of the Expanding Opportunities Interagency Inclusion Initiative](#)
- [Part C Lead Agencies - NECTAC Notes, No. 26](#)
- [States' Accountability and Progress in Serving Young Children With Disabilities](#)
- [Eligibility Policies and Practices for Young Children Under Part B of IDEA](#)
- [NECTAC Technical Assistance Model for Long-Term Systems Change: Three State Examples \(Full Report; Executive Summary\)](#)
- [Quality Indicators of Inclusive Programs/Practices: A Compilation of Selected Resources](#)
- [Part C Updates—11th Edition](#)
- [Autism in the Classroom: A Group of Students Changing in Population and Presentation](#)
- [Part B SPP/APR 2010 Indicator Analysis \(July 2010\)](#)
- [Part C SPP/APR 2010 Indicator Analysis \(July 2010\)](#)

- [Essential Elements of High Performing, High Quality Part C Systems—NECTAC Notes No. 25](#)
- [Section 619 Profile—17th Edition](#)
- [NECTAC TA Collaborations](#)
- [Evaluation Highlights: Client Feedback March 2009 - March 2010](#)

In addition, NECTAC facilitated client listservs, distributed weekly [eNotes](#) to 2110 subscribers (archived online), and built new pages and updated existing pages to ensure up-to-date information is available regarding topics relevant to implementing Part C and Section 619 on the [NECTAC website](#). The NECTAC website provided products via downloads at over 25,000 per month.

## Collaboration with TA Partners

NECTAC collaborates with a variety of partners in order to ensure the quality of NECTAC TA, increase the quality of partner organizations' TA, and to reduce duplication of efforts. In this reporting period, 76% of NECTAC Major TA services documented involved collaboration with TA partners. NECTAC's most frequent TA partners were the Early Childhood Outcomes Center (ECO), the Regional Resource Centers Program (RRCP), the Technical Assistance Coordination Center (TACC) and the Data Accountability Center (DAC). Additionally, collaborations frequently occurred with the National Child Care Information and Technical Assistance Center and Head Start TA providers around Expanding Opportunities. Feedback from a recent TA partner evaluation showed some very positive results. On a scale of 1-5 with 4 being "agree" and 5 "strongly agree," TA partners reported NECTAC consistently provides a high quality contribution to our work (mean= 4.5), collaboration with NECTAC benefits my organization's work on behalf of young children with disabilities and their families (mean= 4.6), and based on past collaborative experience with NECTAC, I look forward to collaborations in the future (mean= 4.7). Types of collaborative work conducted in this reporting period included:

- Collaboratively planned and/or implemented major cross-state TA
- Participated in planning others' conferences, meetings, and webinars
- Presented at others' conferences and workshops
- Invited others to present at our national conferences
- Convened two and participated in five OSEP priority teams
- Participated in other projects' advisory boards
- Invited others to participate in the NECTAC Advisory Board

## Evidence of Client Satisfaction

The **quality** and **relevance** of NECTAC TA were rated on a scale of 1-5 with 5 being the highest rating. Ratings from ongoing participant evaluation forms conducted shortly after TA events resulted in an average mean rating of 4.5 for quality and 4.5 for relevance. Additionally, the national evaluation conducted with all Part C and Section 619 Coordinators from all states and jurisdictions in September 2011 showed that 100% of respondents “agreed” or “strongly agreed” that NECTAC provides high quality services and products, and that NECTAC services are relevant to EI/ECSE policies and practices.

## Evidence of Project Effectiveness

To evaluate project effectiveness, NECTAC measures the immediate and longer term outcomes of NECTAC TA through participant evaluation forms, interviews, and the national evaluation. Immediate outcomes were rated at 4.4 overall across this reporting period. As presented in the table below, most respondents (65-100%) reported improved state and local infrastructure and/or improved practices.

% of NECTAC TA Recipients who Reported Improved State and Local Systems and Practices			
	State	Local	Practices
Major Individualized TA	89%	95%	74%
Major Cross-State Events	72%	100%	65%
Systems Change Initiatives	85%	94%	71%
NECTAC National evaluation (conducted September 2011)	100%	93%	98%

## State Level Improvements

Ongoing data collection efforts showed that individual respondents reported that TA services resulted in improvements to state system infrastructure (Major Individualized TA, 89%, Major Cross-State, 72%, and Systems Change Initiatives, 85%). The national evaluation showed that 100% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that their state level infrastructure had been improved because of the services and/or products received from NECTAC. Those who agreed or strongly agreed were asked to indicate the area(s) in which they had made improvements. The top three areas of change were:

- State Policies and Procedures (82%)
- State Guidance (77%)
- General supervision and monitoring (45%)

## Local Level Improvements

Ongoing data collection efforts showed that individual respondents reported that TA services resulted in improvements to the local infrastructure and system (Major Individualized TA, 95%, Major Cross-State, 100%, and Systems Change Initiatives, 94%). The national evaluation results showed that 93% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that their local level infrastructure had been improved because of the services and/or products received from NECTAC. Those who agreed or strongly agreed were asked to indicate the area(s) in which they had made improvements. The top four areas of change were:

- Local Guidance (81%)
- Local Policies and Procedures (72%)
- General supervision and monitoring (40%)
- Local Interagency relationships (40%)

Some examples of client comments related to state and local systems changes as a result of NECTAC TA are:

*“NECTAC provided technical assistance to [our state] in recreating our general supervision system. Through work with our stakeholders we completely revamped our General Supervision system from the Part C level all the way down to the local program level involvement, which has resulted in a much more streamlined and efficient system.”*

*“As a result of the NECTAC services and products, we now have 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.”*

## State Examples of Systems Changes

In this reporting period, NECTAC worked intensively with a number of states on new or continuing systems change initiatives related to topics of inclusion, outcomes, transition, early intervention services, etc. In evaluating the individualized TA, all states reported some type of improvements to their state and local systems and/or services. Two state examples of systems changes are presented below:

### Texas Preschool Program TA on Child Outcomes

NECTAC partnered with ECO to provide major TA on measuring child outcomes to the Texas Section 619 program in order to build the capacity of the regional service centers that provide TA to the Texas districts. A series of **three trainings** focused on improving the quality of child outcomes data, analyzing and using data, involving families in the child outcomes data

collection process, and integrating the child outcomes data collection into the IEP process. These trainings have resulted in a number of systems impacts:

- The state’s preschool guidelines were cross-walked with the child outcomes to create the [Early Childhood Outcomes and Prekindergarten Guidelines Alignment](#) as a resource for general education and special education teachers statewide to improve COSF ratings.
- The state developed a child outcomes brochure to inform families about the child outcomes measurement process.
- The state has improved the quality of their child outcomes data by making data analysis and pattern checking a critical part of their data collection and reporting process.

Additionally, two districts reported using resources from the NECTAC/ECO trainings to create free online trainings that include actual case studies for hands-on training. These have been made accessible to other districts across the state.

### **Idaho 0-5 Initiative on Early Childhood Transition**

NECTAC partnered with the WRRC to assist Idaho with a systems change initiative that focused on improving guidance and collaboration to ensure smooth early childhood transitions for young children with disabilities and their families. Accomplishments of the Idaho Part C and Section 619 systems for this reporting period include:

- Revised the state interagency agreement and clarified [Idaho’s Definition of “Potentially Eligible” for Part B Services](#).
- Developed the [Idaho Parts C and B Joint Policy/Guidance On Early Childhood Transition](#), explaining policies and procedures and the state’s expectations of how school districts and the regional programs interact.
- Created an interagency protocol document for the regional and district levels designed to assist in the development of local interagency agreements that include concrete details of how programs and districts will work together to ensure smooth transitions.

Staff in Idaho reported that the state interagency agreement was signed, the process of dual notification was implemented, and local programs are revising their local interagency protocols to match state guidance.

### **Changes in Practices**

Ongoing data collection efforts showed that individual respondents reported that TA services that focused on improving practices had reported improvements (Major Individualized TA, 74%, Major Cross-State,

65%, and Systems Change Initiatives, 71%). The national evaluation results showed that 98% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that practices in their state had been improved because of the services and/or products received from NECTAC. Those who agreed or strongly agreed were asked to indicate the area(s) in which they had made improvements. The top three areas of change were:

- Direct service or teaching strategies (67%)
- Data collection and monitoring participation (52%)
- IFSP/IEP development (50%)

Some examples of client comments related to practice changes as a result of NECTAC TA are:

*“The materials and webinars that were shared with my state and local programs is 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.”*

*“We have used many of the strategies learned at the Inclusion Institute last year to begin placing children with disabilities into typical childcare settings with the help of Inclusion Facilitators.”*

### **Conclusion**

In this reporting period, NECTAC provided TA services to all states and jurisdictions and met all its performance objectives. Services have been reported by TA recipients as high quality and relevant to their policies and practices. Evaluation data show that NECTAC has strengthened service systems to ensure that children with disabilities (birth through 5 years) and their families receive and benefit from high quality, culturally appropriate and family-centered supports and services.

### **Keep the feedback coming!**

We appreciate all the time and thoughtfulness that our clients put into providing feedback to NECTAC. For more information about the work of the National Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center, please visit our website at <http://www.nectac.org>

The National Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center (NECTAC) is supported by cooperative agreement H326H060005 with the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP), U.S. Department of Education (ED). Grantees undertaking projects under government sponsorship are encouraged to express their judgment in professional and technical matters. Opinions expressed do not necessarily represent the Department of Education’s position or policy.

**Project Officer:** Julia Martin Eile  
**Project Director:** Lynne Kahn