Where Are We and How Did We Get Here?

The Evolution of Accountability and Child Outcomes Measurement in Early Intervention and Early Care and Education

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Those working in the fields of early intervention and early care and education have surely been noticing the increased attention to concepts such as program evaluation, documentation, accountability, results, and outcomes. Increasingly, early intervention and early care and education programs and practitioners are asked to demonstrate the value of their work using new and more rigorous processes. Historically, early childhood programs have tended to report more on the *inputs* (e.g. budget, qualified staff, number of classrooms) or *processes* (e.g. staff development activities, number of days and hours of service) that go into their operation than on the *outcomes* of the program, that is, the benefits that children and families achieve as a result of having participated in a given program or service. Programs are now being asked to measure the extent to which desirable outcomes are being achieved rather than only describing the inputs or processes that were used to accomplish the work. Until very recently, early childhood programs had not developed mechanisms for regularly collecting and reporting data on child outcomes (ECO, 2004); such mechanisms are only now being developed. Currently, programs at the federal, state, and local levels are being asked to:

- articulate the outcomes that they desire for children and families;
- measure the extent to which these outcomes are being achieved;
- report on the progress that is being made; and
- use the information to make data-based decisions and implement continual quality improvement efforts.

To better understand the dramatic changes in how early intervention and early care and education programs are being asked to collect, report, and use data, this paper will review pivotal landmarks in the evolution of results-based accountability and outcomes measurement in all public programs and then will explore key events specifically related to accountability in early intervention and early care and education.

Evolution of Results-Oriented Government

It might seem as though intensified scrutiny on results is unique to early intervention and early care and education. But it is not; *ALL* publicly supported programs are under close examination. Simply put, we live in an age of accountability. As President Bush explained in his 2005 State of the Union Address,

> "My budget substantially reduces or eliminates more than 150 government programs that are not getting results….Taxpayer dollars must be spent wisely or not at all" (Bush, 2005).

The 2006 State of the Union Address followed suit,

> "Every year of my presidency we've reduced the growth of non-security discretionary spending. This year my budget will...reduce or eliminate more than 140 programs that are performing poorly or not fulfilling essential priorities"
> (Bush, 2006).

This trend toward accountability may seem like it appeared out of nowhere, but that is not so; our government has been trying to implement systems to evaluate the results of federally funded programs (and, in some cases, link the budgeting process to those results) for at least 40 years. Table 1 lists some notable federal initiatives.

Table 1. Notable Federal Accountability Initiatives

Date	Federal Accountability Initiatives
Mid 1960's	Lyndon Johnson's *Planning, Programming, and Budgeting System* was put in place to "substantially improve our ability to decide among competing proposals for funds and to evaluate actual performance" (Office of Management and Budget, 2004).
Early 1970's	The Nixon and Ford administrations implemented *Management by Objectives*, an initiative that attempted to clarify the goals of federal programs in order to make it easier to determine expected results (Office of Management and Budget, 2004).
Late 1970's	President Carter introduced *zero-based budgeting*, a process that asked programs to justify their cost effectiveness in order to make "good programs more effective and improve or weed out those which are wasteful or unnecessary" (Carter, 1979).
Early 1990's	The Clinton-Gore Administration created the *National Partnership for Reinventing Government* (NPR) to reform and streamline the way the federal government works, and make the federal government less expensive and more efficient (Clinton, 1993).

The 1992 book, *Reinventing Government: How the Entrepreneurial Spirit is Transforming the Public Sector,* described the need for results-based government and emphasized the need to measure not only inputs, but outcomes (Osbourne & Gaebler, 1992; ECO, 2004). This book helped focus the entire nation on the importance of program accountability and outcomes measurement. In 1993, Vice President Gore led the National Partnership for Reinventing Government. This task force issued the 1993 report *From Red Tape to Results: Creating a Government that Works Better and Costs Les*s (National Partnership for Reinventing Government, 1993). This report outlined 384 recommendations aimed at cutting waste, streamlining bureaucracy, and, in general, creating a government that works better and costs less. During that same year one of the most sweeping national efforts in accountability occurred when President Clinton signed the Government Performance and Results Act of 1993 (GPRA, 1993). GPRA seeks to "shift the focus of government decision-making and accountability away from a preoccupation with the activities that are undertaken…to a focus on the results of those activities…" (GAO, no date). The intent of GPRA is to transform government agencies into performance-based and results-oriented organizations. Among the primary purposes of GPRA is to improve congressional decision-making by providing legislators with objective information on the achievement of statutory objectives and on the relative effectiveness and efficiency of federal programs and spending (GPRA, 1993). Under GPRA, all federal agencies must develop strategic plans describing their overall goals and objectives, match these plans with quantifiable measures of performance (i.e. outcomes), and report annually on progress against these measures.

Recent Accountability Initiatives

In 2001 President Bush initiated the *President's Management Agenda* (PMA) aimed at strengthening management practices and fostering accountability so that federal managers and employees could better focus on and produce results (OMB, 2006). A key principle of the PMA is that performance should significantly influence policy-making and budget decisions. Among the five government-wide initiatives of the PMA is the Budget and Performance Integration Initiative. The overall goal of this Initiative is for all programs to achieve their expected results

and continue to improve performance. Toward that end, the Bush Administration is systematically assessing every federally funded program using the Program Assessment Rating Tool, frequently referred to by the acronym PART (OMB, 2005d). The PART is intended to hold agencies accountable for the performance of their programs. One of the primary purposes of PART is to inform decisions about how our government should allocate limited budgetary resources. The intent is that, based on the PART ratings, low priority and low performing programs will be reduced or eliminated, so that funding can be redirected to higher performing alternatives. The PART rates each federal program as Effective, Moderately Effective, Adequate, Ineffective, or Results Not Demonstrated (programs that do not have acceptable measures or have yet to collect performance data). To date, 80% of federal programs have been evaluated by the PART; all federal programs will have completed assessments by the end of 2006 (OMB, 2006). Based on the most recent assessments, 72% of the programs that have been evaluated are considered Performing, meaning that they have ratings of Effective, Moderately Effective, or Adequate. 28% of Federal programs are considered Not Performing, meaning that they have been rated as Ineffective or Results Not Demonstrated (OMB, 2006).

In addition to accountability measures already in place, there are emerging initiatives on the horizon. One such initiative is the Bush Administration's proposed Sunset Commission. If the proposal passes, this bipartisan Commission will review each federal program on a schedule established by Congress to determine whether it is producing results and should continue to exist. Programs will automatically terminate according to the schedule unless Congress takes action to continue them (OMB, 2005b). The movement toward accountability and results-based budgeting in publicly funded programs is a train that "ain't gonna stop."

Reform, Standards, and Accountability in Education

While the federal government has been pursuing its course of program accountability, the field of education has been embarking on efforts aimed at educational reform. Although program accountability and educational reform had separate origins, they ultimately intersected. The Carnegie Foundation's 1983 report *A Nation at Risk*, stimulated conversations regarding educational reform (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983*)*. This federally sponsored study reported that the quality of education in the United States lagged behind that of other industrialized nations, concluding that "…declines in educational performance are in large part the result of disturbing inadequacies in the way the educational process itself is often conducted" (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983*)*. This report spurred action, including the 1986, *A Nation Prepared: Teachers for the 21st Century,* a response that helped focus reforms in elementary and secondary education schools and teacher preparation (Carnegie Forum on Education and the Economy, 1986). A decade later a study reported that secondary students with disabilities were achieving less than desired outcomes (Wagner et al, 1993; ECO, 2004). Reports such as these have provided increased knowledge about educational outcomes for students with disabilities (ECO, 2004).

The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB, 2001) is the most recent reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA). NCLB is a major catalyst to educational reform, standards, and accountability. Signed into law by President Bush, this dramatic revision of ESEA mandates significant target setting, reporting, and accountability requirements and challenges for states. Among the provisions of the law, states must expand the scope and frequency of student testing, improve their accountability systems, guarantee teacher qualifications, make measurable annual progress in raising the percentage of students proficient in reading and math, and narrow the test-score gap between advantaged and disadvantaged students (U.S. Department of Education, 2005; Education Commission of the States, 2005).

Educational Outcomes and Standards are Linked

Along with the increased attention to outcomes measurement in education, has been a parallel movement toward standards-based education. In general, standards-based education refers to: 1) setting content standards for what students should know and be able to do (in each grade and in each subject area); 2) assessing students' progress in achieving those standards; and 3) holding schools accountable for results (Battelle for Kids, 2006). The development of standards is inextricably linked to outcomes. Although NCLB has certainly accelerated states' efforts related to assessments, accountability, and teacher quality, states were beginning to put standards-based education in place well before NCLB became "a measuring stick for state education policy efforts" (EPERC 2006). Consider these indicators from the recent report *Quality Counts at 10: A Decade of Standards-Based Reform:*

- 30 states and the District of Columbia have English and math standards rated by the American Federation of Teachers as clear and specific at the elementary, middle, and high school levels, up from 28 states and the District in 2004 and just 15 states and the District in 1998 (EPERC 2006).

- 47 states and the District now use tests aligned with state standards at the elementary, middle, and high school levels in English and math, up from 46 states last year and 29 states during the 1999-2000 school year (EPERC 2006).

- States also have ratcheted up their accountability efforts in recent years, though certain areas have seen more movement than others. All states now provide school report cards, which commonly include student test scores broken down by race, family income, limited English proficiency, and disability (EPERC 2006).

Accountability in Special Education

Legislative efforts have supported accountability for schools serving children with disabilities. The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 1997 (IDEA, 1997) mandated that state- or district-wide assessments must include children with disabilities and publicly report participation and performance information for students with disabilities (Thurlow et al, 2003). The Comments section of the regulations clarified:

> "In order to ensure that students with disabilities are fully included in the accountability benefits of State and district-wide assessments, it is important that the State include results for children with disabilities whenever the State reports results for other children. When a State reports data about State or district-wide assessments at the district or school level for nondisabled children, it also must do the same for children with disabilities" (IDEA, 1997).

Special education (and early intervention) efforts have also linked outcomes measurement with monitoring. In 1998, the federal Office for Special Education Programs (OSEP) introduced the Continuous Improvement Monitoring Process (CIMP) to help monitor states' implementation of IDEA '97 (Federal Resource Center for Special Education, 2001). The data-driven CIMP was aimed at assuring that results for infants, toddlers, children, and youth with disabilities were improving. In 2003, OSEP's Continuous Improvement and Focused Monitoring System (CIFMS) was initiated to monitor and enforce the implementation of IDEA (Westat, 2003). The purpose of CIFMS is to drive and support improved results for children with disabilities while continuing to require that states protect the individual rights of children with disabilities and their families. Incorporating elements of the CIMP, CIFMS was created to target resources on those performance issues most closely related to improved results for children with disabilities and on those states most in need of improvement on those performance issues.

IDEA 2004 dramatically changed federal monitoring procedures for states, establishing new, and more rigorous, requirements for how Part C and Part B will report on progress. This reauthorization also brought IDEA into closer harmony with NCLB. OSERS Assistant Secretary John Hager remarked on December 13, 2005 that NCLB is referenced 33 times in the most recent reauthorization of IDEA (Hagar, 2005). According to IDEA 2004:

> "The primary focus of Federal and State monitoring activities…shall be on improving education results and functional outcomes for all children with disabilities (IDEA 2004, (616(a)(2)(A)); and Ensuring that States meet the program requirements…with a particular emphasis on those requirements that are most closely related to improving educational results for children with disabilities" (IDEA-2004: (616(a)(2)(B)).

Accountability and Standards in Early Care and Education

The accountability movement has impacted early childhood programs. In 2002, the federal initiative *Good Start, Grow Smart* was launched to help states and local communities strengthen early learning to ensure that young children enter kindergarten with the skills they need to succeed at reading and other early learning activities (White House, 2002). A central outcomes-measurement component of this initiative requires every Head Start center to assess children's early literacy, language, and numeracy skills. The Head Start *National Reporting System* was developed to collect data in these areas from every local program to inform program effectiveness and target staff training and program improvement efforts.

Parallel to the trend toward more attention to outcomes in early care and education is a significant increase in the development of early learning standards. *Good Start, Grow Smart* promotes states' creation of voluntary guidelines on pre-reading and language skills that are aligned with K-12 guidelines. A recent report by SERVE reported that 27 states had developed early learning standards as of 2002, most of them since 1999 (Scott-Little, Kagan, & Frelow, 2003; SERVE, 2005). By 2004, the number of states increased to 41 (Scott-Little & Kagan, 2004; SERVE, 2005).

Accountability in Early Intervention and Early Childhood Special Education

Part C (IDEA Grants for Infants and Families) and Preschool Special Education Section 619 of Part B (IDEA Preschool Grants) are federally funded and so must meet the Government Performance and Results Act of 1993 requirements for reporting on progress in attaining specific indicators (GPRA, 1993). Part C collects data and reports annually on four GPRA Indicators and Section 619 collects data and reports on three Indicators. Table 2 lists the GPRA Indicators from the Fiscal Year 2007 Program Performance Plan for the U.S. Department of Education (U.S. Department of Education, 2006). Part C and Section 619 are also required to participate in the Program Assessment Rating Tool (PART). Table 2 also lists the PART Program Performance Measures for Part C and Section 619. The GPRA Indicators were initially used to develop the PART Measures. As of April, 2006 the two lists are closely aligned; in the past they have differed because they change over time, but at different intervals. The GPRA Indicators are published each February with the President's budget request while the PART Measures do not necessarily change annually.

Table 2: GPRA Indicators and PART Program Performance Measures

Program	GPRA Indicators	PART Program Performance Measures
IDEA Grants for Infants and Families (Part C)	• The number of states that serve at least 1 percent of infants in the general population under age one through Part C	• The number of States that serve at least 1 percent of infants in the general population under age one through Part C
	• The number of states that serve at least 2 percent of infants and toddlers in the general population, birth through age 2, through Part C	• Number of states that serve at least 2 percent of infants and toddlers in the general population birth through age 2 through the Infants and Families program
	• Percentage of children participating in Part C that demonstrate positive social-emotional skills (including social relationships); acquire and use knowledge and skills (including early language/communication); and demonstrate appropriate behaviors to meet their needs	• The percentage of children participating in the Infants and Families program who demonstrate positive social-emotional skills (including social relationships); acquire and use knowledge and skills (including early language/ communication); and demonstrate appropriate behaviors to meet their needs
	• The percentage of families participating in Part C that report that early intervention services have helped them (1) know their rights; (2) effectively communicate their children's needs; and (3) help their children develop and learn	• Percentage of participating families participating in Part C that report that early intervention services have increased their family's capacity to enhance their child's development
	• Percentage of children receiving services in home or in programs designed for their typically developing peers	• The percentage of children receiving early intervention services in the home or in programs designed for typically developing peers
IDEA Preschool Grants (Section 619 of Part B)	• The percentage of preschool children with disabilities receiving special education and related services who demonstrate positive social-emotional skills (including social relationships); acquire and us knowledge and skills (including early language/ communication and early literacy); and use appropriate behaviors to meet their needs	• The Percentage of children with Disabilities aged three through five participating in the Preschool Grants program who demonstrate positive social-emotional skills (including social relationships); acquire and use knowledge and skills (including early language/communication and early literacy); and demonstrate appropriate behaviors to meet their needs
	• Percentage of preschool children who receive special education in settings with typically developing peers	• The percentage or children receiving special education and related services in settings with typically developing peers
	• Number of states with at least 90% of preschool special education teachers fully certified in the areas in which they are teaching	• The number of States with at least 90 percent of preschool special education teachers fully certified in the areas in which they are teaching
Reference	U.S. Department of Education (2006) FY 2007 Program Performance Plan http://www.ed.gov/about/reports/annual/2007plan/program.html	OMB (2006) ExpectMore.gov http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/expectmore/

In completing the PART questionnaire for Part C and Section 619 (completed for 2002), OSEP used research reports, GPRA performance plans and reports, and program monitoring reports among other sources. On the most recent PART assessments, both Part C and Section 619 received ratings of Results Not Demonstrated (as did roughly half of all federal programs assessed). For Part C, the PART assessment found that:

> "While the program has met its goal relating to the number of children served, it has not collected information on how well the program is doing to improve the educational and developmental outcomes of infants and toddlers served" (OMB, 2006).

The summary for Preschool is also dire. Among the findings the PART assessment concludes:

> "The Department has no performance information on preschool children with disabilities served by this program. While an upcoming study should provide some information on child outcomes, the results of this study are several years away, and will not provide data on program effectiveness,' and "The program has no long-term performance goals or annual performance data related to student outcomes" (OMB, 2006).

The Results Not Demonstrated ratings of these two programs have grave implications – the PART assumes that "a program that cannot demonstrate positive results is no more entitled to funding, let alone an increase, than a program that is clearly failing" (White House, 2004). The PART findings for both Part C and Section 619 recommended that the upcoming re-authorization of IDEA should increase states' accountability for child outcomes.

The Current Status of Outcomes Measurement for Part C and Part B of IDEA

The recommendation from the PART findings that IDEA should increase states' accountability for child outcomes was put in place in the most recent re-authorization of IDEA, the Individuals with Disabilities Improvement Act of 2004 (IDEA 2004). In short, the IDEA 2004 monitoring provisions require all states to:

- Submit a State Performance Plan (SPP) by December 2, 2005. The SPP is a performance plan listing six years of measurable and rigorous targets for every federally required indicator of every performance area established under the priority areas of IDEA-2004. The Part C SPP requirements include indicators relative to child outcomes, family outcomes, receiving services in a timely manner, services provided in natural environments, transition planning, child find, and general supervision. The Preschool SPP requirements include indicators relative to child outcomes, family outcomes, receiving services in settings with typically developing peers, receiving services at age three, and general supervision.

- Monitor all Local Education Agencies (LEA) for Part B and Early Intervention Service Programs (EIS) for Part C located in the State, using quantifiable indicators in each of the priority areas, and using such qualitative indicators as are needed to adequately measure performance (IDEA 2004: 616(a)(3)).

- Submit an Annual Performance Report (APR) detailing the progress made toward the targets on the SPP, and

- Publicly report each year on the performance of each LEA or program on each required indicator in relation to the targets set for the state.

Based on the information provided in the APR, information obtained through monitoring visits, and any other public information made available, OSEP will determine if each state meets the requirements and purposes of IDEA or needs assistance or intervention in implementing the requirements (IDEA 2004: 616(d)(1)).

Child outcomes is one of the indicators on which state Part C and Section 619 programs must report. In October 2003 OSEP funded the Early Childhood Outcomes Center (ECO, 2005), a five-year, multi-institutional project aimed at addressing the need for an outcomes measurement system. ECO's goal is to "promote the development and implementation of child and family outcome measures for infants, toddlers and preschoolers with disabilities that can be used in national and state accountability systems" (ECO, 2005). ECO uses consensus building, collaboration, technical assistance, and research to help states build systems for collecting outcomes data that can be reported to OSEP and used in their own program improvement efforts. ECO led a one-year consensus–building process that led to the identification of three child outcomes and five family outcomes. OSEP adopted these child and family outcomes with some modifications for Part C and Section 619. The child outcomes have been incorporated into the required indicators identified for the SPP in IDEA 2004. Table 3 lists the child outcomes indicators.

Table 3. OSEP Child Outcomes Indicators

Part C Child Outcomes Indicators	Preschool Child Outcomes Indicators
The percent of infants and toddlers with IFSP's who demonstrate:	The percent of preschool children with IEP's who demonstrate:
1. positive social-emotional skills (including social relationships);	1. positive social-emotional skills (including social relationships);
2. acquisition and use of knowledge and skills (including early language/communication); and	2. acquisition and use of knowledge and skills (including early language/ communication and early literacy); and
3. use of appropriate behaviors to meet their needs.	3. use of appropriate behaviors to meet their needs.

States are required to report on three categories for each child outcome indicator for both Part C and Preschool:
1. The percent of children who reach or maintain functioning at a level comparable to same-aged peers.
2. The percent of children who improved functioning.
3. The percent of children who did not improve functioning.

States are asked to report on the percentages of children who fit into these three categories between two points in time, entry into and exit from the state's Part C and Section 619 programs. One potential problem is that various states may be interpreting these two points in time somewhat differently.

In contrast to the Head Start Bureau's requirement that all Head Start programs use one consistent assessment tool for the National Reporting System, OSEP has left the door open for state early intervention and preschool special education programs to choose the specific assessment instruments and processes they will use to measure child outcomes. On December 2, 2005, the states submitted their SPP's to OSEP, describing how they will collect and report their outcomes data. States must now put systems in place to do just that.

How do we get data on child outcomes for Part C and Section 619?

As Figure 1 illustrates, there is a natural progression of accountability. The White House and Congress are increasingly asking federal programs for outcomes data, ostensibly for the purpose of maintaining effective stewardship of programs funded by tax dollars. To comply, OSEP has mandated that states collect and submit such information. The states, in turn, are requiring that local programs collect the data. Local programs ask practitioners to collect and

report data on children served by Part C and Section 619 from at least two points in time in order to measure progress. Practitioners use assessment processes to collect child outcomes information. Data collected by practitioners are then converted to aggregate data that report on the child outcomes indicators.

Figure 1: How we get data on child outcomes

White House and Congress require federal programs to report outcomes data	→	OSEP requires states to collect and report outcomes data	→	States require local programs to collect and report child outcomes data	→	Local programs require practitioners to collect and report child outcomes	→	States convert data into aggregate reports on child outcomes indicators
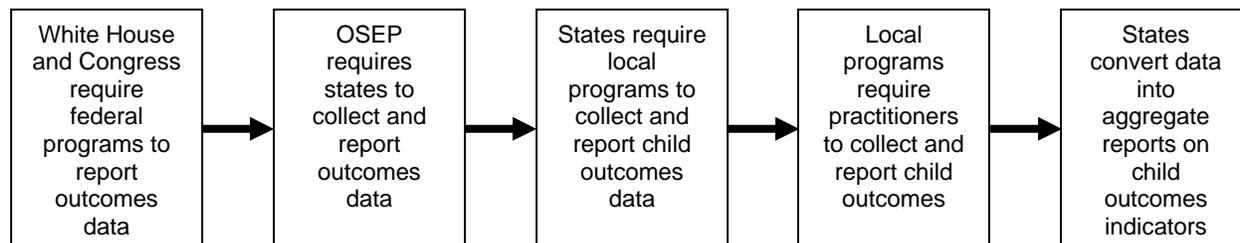
When Worlds Collide

The challenge of creating statewide child outcomes measurement systems is made more complex and difficult because of competing accountability requirements. Consider programs that serve children who are developing typically and children who have disabilities or delays. Such programs are likely to rely on multiple funding sources, each with its own requirements for reporting child outcomes. How can these programs avoid the burden of needing to report to too many "accountability masters?" Consider children who are enrolled in two or more early childhood programs. For these children, there are likely to be two or more differing state and/or federal accountability requirements. How can programs avoid the over-assessment of these children? How can programs avoid redundant reporting requirements? One key challenge for states' Part C and Section 619 programs is to develop child outcome measurement systems that meet OSEP's requirements, but also integrate with other state and federal data collection and reporting systems and, to the extent possible, reduce duplication of efforts.

Where are we heading?
The evolution of accountability brings us to the challenge at hand: creating statewide systems in which early interventionists, teachers, and other early care and education practitioners collect and report data on child outcomes. The specific details for how this work will occur in any one state depend on the unique SPP developed by that state. However, all states, programs, and practitioners share a number of similar challenges:

- We have not previously collected and reported child outcomes data on this large a scale; we are in uncharted waters and are learning as we go. For instance, we are just learning how to aggregate and report data that is collected by more than one assessment process. One promising option is the use of the ECO Child Outcomes Summary Form (ECO, 2005).

- The new requirements represent additional, and new, work for programs and practitioners and we already had our plates full; we need to problem solve how to accomplish this work in ways that integrate, rather than compete with, existing service delivery processes, and avoid adding stresses to children, families, providers, and systems.

- States, by and large, do not have infrastructures in place that are sufficient for implementing a system; key mechanisms need to be developed for collecting, submitting, analyzing, and sharing data, linking with other outcomes systems, providing training and technical assistance, monitoring data collection activities, etc.

- We have not been allocated additional funding for the outcomes reporting; we need to either complete this work within existing funding allocations or secure new sources of funding.

Despite such formidable challenges, we also are presented with a range of opportunities. We have the opportunity to:

- Bring early childhood assessment processes into alignment with recommended practices.
- Align early childhood assessment practices with early intervention and early care and education content guidelines and quality standards.
- Enhance our ability to monitor and understand children's progress.
- Add to our knowledge base of evidence-based practices.
- Collect data that will contribute to program evaluation and continual quality improvement efforts.
- Use data to make better decisions at the child, program, and policy levels.

Lastly, we have the opportunity to demonstrate the value and benefits of our programs; this is particulary important given the federal government's trend toward performance-based budgeting. An urgent responsibility of professionals in early intervention and early childhood special education is to demonstrate positive results and advocate for continued and increased funding for programs that benefit young children and their families.

Early childhood outcomes measurement might best be viewed as a journey rather than a destination. There is no definitive roadmap. The stakes are high. The challenges are formidable. But we are also presented with the opportunity to use results-based accountability to our advantage, to enhance our capacity to support young children's learning, development, and participation.

A Short List of Web Based Resources on Outcomes Measurement and Results Based Accountability for Part C and Section 619

The Early Childhood Outcomes Center (ECO) Web Site
The ECO Center was funded by the Office of Special Education Programs to develop an approach for collecting data on child and family outcomes for the Part C early intervention and Part B preschool programs of IDEA (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act). The ECO Center seeks to promote the development and implementation of child and family outcome measures for infants, toddlers, and preschoolers with disabilities that can be used in local, state, and national accountability systems. The ECO web site is an essential resource and includes articles, resources, presentations, and late-breaking news about outcomes measurements systems in early childhood. http://www.fpg.unc.edu/~eco/pages/overview.cfm

The National Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center (NECTAC) Web Site
The NECTAC supports the implementation of the early childhood provisions of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). Their mission is to strengthen service systems to ensure that children with disabilities (birth through five) and their families receive and benefit from high quality, culturally appropriate, and family-centered supports and services. Their web site includes a treasure trove of useful information, announcements, publications, resources, and essential links related to early intervention and preschool special education. You go visit the NECTAC home page (at http://www.nectac.org/) or go directly to their section on accountability at: http://www.nectac.org/topics/quality/quality.asp

2005 Summer Institute Handouts
The OSEP Summer Institute was held on August 11-12, 2005 in Washington, DC. The Institute was created to assist states in the development of high quality 6-year State Performance Plans (SPPs). The Institute informed States regarding the Annual Performance Report (APR) process and future plans and expectations for the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) and State monitoring. Through this web site you can access key guidance documents that were distributed at the Institute. http://www.federalresourcecenter.org/frc/si05.htm

Program Assessment Rating Tool

Both one-page summaries and more in-depth reports of the most recent PART assessments for both Part C (IDEA Grants for Infants and Families) and Preschool Special Education Section 619 of Part B (IDEA Preschool Grants) can be accessed in the PART Department of Education reports at http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/budget/fy2006/pma/education.pdf.

ExpectMore.gov
The content on ExpectMore.gov is developed by the U.S. Office of Management and Budget and Federal agencies. On this site you will find ratings for all federal programs on the Program Assessment Rating Tool (PART).
http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/expectmore/index.html

U.S. Department of Education FY 2007 Program Performance Plan
This FY 2007 Program Performance Plan presents the individual program performance plans, which align to the individual program's provisions and the audience that it serves. In addition, selected measures from these plans have been identified as key measures at the strategic level: http://www.ed.gov/about/reports/annual/2007plan/program.html
These strategic-level measures are presented in the *FY 2007 Performance Plan* at: http://www.ed.gov/about/reports/annual/2007plan/index.html

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