

Research and Training Center in Service Coordination

Issue 2

Division of Child and Family Studies

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Project Description

The Research and Training Center in Service Coordination is conducting a series of studies that will lead to the development of promising practices in the provision of effective service coordination. The center is a partnership of two agencies, University of Connecticut Health Center (Mary Beth Bruder, Principal Investigator and Glenn Gabbard, Co-Principal Investigator) and University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (Gloria Harbin, Co-Principal Investigator). There are three strands of participants for the center: families, service providers, and system administrators. Members of these groups participate in all project activities.

Surveys

Surveys were distributed to Part C coordinators in 57 states and territories. Completed surveys were received from all 50 states (100% return) and 5 of 7 territories (71% return). Family surveys were distributed to 951 parent leaders. Nearly 300 responses were received yielding a 32% return. Part C offices in 55 states and territories were contacted via telephone regarding service coordination training in their respective states and territories. Forty-eight states participated in the telephone interview (87% response).

The following includes some of the major findings of the **Part C** survey (based upon responses from 50 states and Puerto Rico):

- ❖ All key stakeholders possess similar, positive values that facilitate effective service coordination.

Project Goals

1. To study and describe current models of service coordination across the nation.
2. To identify outcomes of effective service coordination.
3. To describe recommended practices in effective service coordination.
4. To measure effective and accessible service coordination through the use of new methodology and existing tools.
5. To develop and validate training models for effective service coordination.
6. To disseminate information nationally about findings and recommendations.

- ❖ A third of states are considering changing their service coordination model.
- ❖ Service coordination models are reported to be working “somewhat” to “slightly somewhat.”
- ❖ Only 25 states specify the size of the caseload a service coordinator may have. Sizes range from 9 to 70 children.

Some of the findings of the **Parent Leader** survey include:

- ❖ Families feel that service coordination is most important during periods of transition or crisis.
- ❖ Over 80% of the families contend that it is “easy” to “extremely easy” to access service coordination in their state, while over 15% claim it is “difficult” to “impossible.”
- ❖ When asked if service coordination is effective in ensuring that an IFSP reflects the services and supports a family and child

- ❖ need, 38% of the families surveyed stated that service coordination is “extremely effective” and 48% stated it is “somewhat effective.” Fourteen percent of respondents feel that service coordination is “somewhat” or “completely ineffective.”
- ❖ Less than 25% of the families feel that service coordination is “effective” in linking families with advocacy services.

Findings from the **Curricula** survey include:

- ❖ Forty percent of the 48 states responding to the survey contend that they do not provide specific training in service coordination.
- ❖ Forty-six percent of the 48 states responding claim they do not have separate standards or requirements for service coordinators.
- ❖ The average length of training for new service coordinators is under 3 days.
- ❖ Half of the 48 states are revising or creating service coordinator training curricula.

Dissemination

Drafts of three monographs are completed—National Parent Leader Survey Report, National Status of Service Coordination Policies and Models, and National Survey of Training and Curricula for Service Coordinators. (Note: the monographs report data from the three surveys noted above.)

Focus Groups

As of December 2000, 46 focus groups have been held in four states (CT, IN, MA, NC). Stakeholders include service coordinators, service providers, childcare providers, families, programs administrators, and physicians.

Participants of these groups were asked to consider the question, “If service coordination

was of the highest quality for children, families, and systems, how would you know it?”

The outcomes generated by the focus groups are incorporated into a Delphi survey, which is a method of building consensus by consolidating the opinions of a group or groups. The process involves a series of “rounds” of data collection in which participants are asked to rate items in terms of their importance. With each round, the list of items is reduced based on participants’ responses, resulting in a final list of outcomes. The first round of Delphi surveys was mailed during the week of December 4, 2000.

Getting A National Perspective On Outcomes

In addition to asking stakeholder groups in our four focal states (CT, IN, MA, NC) to identify optimal outcomes of service coordination and strategies for achieving those outcomes, we will consult a set of national experts on their thoughts. We will meet with Part C administrators, ICC Chairs, and parent leaders attending the Office of Special Education Programs and National Early Childhood Technical Assistance System national meeting in Washington, D.C. on February 24-27, 2001, to obtain a broad, national perspective.



For more information on the Research and Training Center in Service Coordination, please contact:

Kathleen Whitbread, Ph.D.
Division of Child and Family Studies
Pediatrics/UConn Health Center
263 Farmington Ave., MC 6222
Farmington, CT 06030
Tel: (860) 679-1565
Fax: (860) 679-1571
E-mail: whitbread@nso1.uhc.edu