

# Research and Training Center on Service Coordination

A.J. Pappanikou Center for Developmental Disabilities

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The Research and Training Center on Service Coordination (RTC) has just begun the fourth year of a five-year project to study early intervention service coordination. To review our complete data reports, as well as previous issues of this newsletter, please visit our website [www.uconned.org/rtc/rtchome.htm](http://www.uconned.org/rtc/rtchome.htm).

## SPOTLIGHT: FAMILY AND SERVICE COORDINATOR INTERVIEWS

The RTC project team is currently reviewing tapes of individual interviews with 100 families and their service coordinators in four states (Connecticut, Indiana, Massachusetts, and North Carolina). During separate interviews, families and service coordinators were asked what outcomes the family was working toward, who helped the family to pursue these outcomes, and what they did to help.

The families participating in this study were posed the question "What would you like to see for your child/family?" The service coordinators, on the other hand, were asked "If you were to ask this family what outcomes are important to them, what do you think they would say?" The data are being compared to

determine the level of agreement between families and service coordinators on key issues related to service coordination outcomes and practices. The responses from these questions were categorized under five main themes:

1. Families are informed about resources and services.
2. Families are involved in decision-making.
3. Children and families receive appropriate supports and services.
4. Children's health and development is enhanced.
5. Children have successful transitions.

In the number of families received, the following is what we have learned so far. Both groups identified the theme of "children's health and development is enhanced" with the greatest frequency (families 46.6%, service coordinators 54.2%), followed by "children and families receive appropriate supports and services" (families 37.9%, service coordinators 32.1%). The outcome that was identified with the least frequency by both families and service coordinators was "families are

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involved in decision-making (families 4.6%, service coordinators 2.4%).

When families were asked to identify who helped them meet the outcomes that were important to them, they identified themselves as playing the primary role in 32% of the outcomes and service coordinators in 25%. Service coordinators were asked the same question and identified themselves as assisting in 39.5% of family outcomes and families in 25.1%. Families and service coordinators ranked service providers with the third highest frequency (families 24.7%, service coordinators 22.8%).

Demographic information collected from the IFSPs of participating families revealed the number of agencies that individual families received services from. Fifty-six (56) families received services from only one agency, 8 families received services from two agencies, 7 families from three agencies, 7 families from four agencies, and 2 families from six agencies. Service delivery locations were also recorded on the IFSPs with homes listed with the greatest frequency (67.6%), followed by early intervention centers (8.4%), daycare centers (7.3%), community sites (3.9%), clinics (2.3%), and other sites (.77%). Slightly fewer than 10% of the IFSPs reviewed by staff were missing information on service delivery locations.

## What's Next?

Further comparative studies using existing data will be conducted.

### Upcoming studies will focus on:

- ❖ Descriptions of underrepresented families.
- ❖ Descriptions of families with multiple service agencies.
- ❖ Measurable indicators for service coordination outcomes.
- ❖ Validation of service coordination practices.
- ❖ Contextual variables that affect service delivery.
- ❖ Training methodologies.

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