

TATS eUpdate  
Program Effectiveness and Evaluation

**The *What, Why and How* of  
Program Effectiveness/Quality and Evaluation  
Part 2**

November 2007

As stated in Part One of the update on this topic, research has supported the link between program quality and increased outcomes for prekindergarten children with disabilities (Bowman, Donovan, & Burns, 2000; Shonkoff & Phillips, 2000). This, together with increasing emphasis on accountability, standards, and evidence-based research for use in programs for these children, has resulted in the need to evaluate what is being done and make changes when necessary. Part One discussed what program effectiveness/quality is and stated a rationale for why we do it. Part two will present some suggestions on **how** the systematic self-appraisal process can be supported and implemented. Part 3 will describe a plan of action.

**Best Practice**

**How do we get there?**

One suggested process for program evaluation originates from the Division for Early Childhood (DEC) Recommended Practices. Individual districts may incorporate other components they feel are essential to the quality of their programs. The most important consideration, no matter what the evaluation looks like, is that the process be preceded by careful planning, and all stakeholders are clear about the goal of the program evaluation before beginning.

**Initial Planning**

1. Obtain support from the district administration and other key stakeholders.
2. Create program evaluation teams. The DEC RP recommends two types of teams essential for the development of a quality program effectiveness process. Make sure these teams interact.
  - a. Systems change team – policies, procedures, systems change
  - b. Direct Services team – assessment, child-focused practices, family-based practices, interdisciplinary models, technology applications
3. Defining a Vision/Goal
  - a. Define a vision for the district that addresses program quality
  - b. Include components that are important and meaningful to the district and the teams

4. Decide how to assess the areas of the program and provide for on-going monitoring
  - a. Consider assessing the following:
    - 1) involvement of families
    - 2) quality of child assessment and evaluation
    - 3) quality of curricula
    - 4) provision of programs in inclusive, community-based settings
    - 5) awareness of and respect for cultural diversity and differences
  - b. Use an environmental rating scale such as the Early Childhood Environmental Rating Scale – Revised (ECERS-R)

### **Data Collection**

1. Is there an accurate, valid, reliable system for collecting data?
2. Is the right information being collected from the appropriate sources?
3. Some data sources to consider:
  - a. Record reviews, including:
    - 1) Timely Referrals
    - 2) Timely IEP development
    - 3) Services provided as outlined in the IEP
    - 4) Transition process
  - b. Documentation of staff training and professional development
  - c. Pre- and post-testing of children's progress

### **Areas to Evaluate**

#### ***Indicators of achievement of child outcomes***

1. Decide on the domain areas to assess outcomes
  - a. Cognitive Development
  - b. Physical development
  - c. Communication Development
  - d. Social and/or Emotional Development
  - e. Adaptive Development
2. Environment
  - a. Does the environment encourage child participation, learning/instruction, initiation, and appropriate social interaction?
  - b. Class size
  - c. Child/staff ratio
  - d. Physical layout of the classroom
3. Inclusion
  - a. How are children with disabilities supported in educational settings with their typically developing peers?
  - b. Does the program offer instruction and support to children to encourage social and emotional development and prevent challenging behaviors?

4. Transition
  - a. What is the process for providing smooth transitions from Part C Early Steps into Pre-K ESE and from Pre-K ESE into kindergarten?

***Teacher/Staff Quality/Competence***

- a. Is there a regular review of teacher qualifications/certificates/endorsements?
- b. Is there evidence of teacher/staff training and professional development opportunities?

***Family/community Involvement***

- a. Is there evidence of supports in place to encourage family participation in program activities?
- b. Is there evidence that families are given an opportunity to participate in educational decision-making regarding their children?
- c. Are cultural differences addressed?

***Interagency Agreements/Procedures/ Memoranda Of Understanding (MOU)***

- a. Are the required interagency agreements and MOU's in place?
  - 1) Are they complete?
  - 2) Are they current?
  - 3) Are they being implemented?

**Reflections**

1. Do you know the vision/goals of the Pre-K ESE program in your district?
2. Are there other areas you feel are important for your district to address?

*Developing the plan is actually laying out the sequence of events that have to occur for you to achieve your goal. - George L. Morrissey*

**References and Resources**

Bowman, B.T., Donovan, M.S., & Burns, M.S. (Eds.). (2000). *Educating our preschoolers*. Washington, D.C.: National Academy Press.

Center for Data-Driven Reform in Education

Research center focused on assisting state and local education agencies to organize and use data, provide information on effective programs and evaluate and disseminate

findings. Assists in the development of a Data-Driven District (3-D) strategy using continuous student performance data to drive district and school policies and practices.

<http://www.cddrs.org/>

#### Early Childhood Outcomes (ECO) Center

A 5-year collaborative project funded by OSEP providing research and technical assistance to promote the development and implementation of child and family outcome measures for infants, toddlers, and preschoolers with disabilities for use in local, state, and national accountability systems. <http://www.fpg.unc.edu/~eco/index.cfm>

Florida Rule 6A-6.03026 Florida Administrative Code (FAC) Special Programs for Prekindergarten Children with Disabilities and 6A-6.03027 (FAC) Special Programs for Children Three Through Five Years Old Who are Developmentally Delayed.

<https://www.flrules.org/gateway/readFile.asp?sid=0&tid=1062846&type=1&file=6A-6.03026.doc>

<https://www.flrules.org/gateway/readFile.asp?sid=0&tid=1062943&type=1&file=6A-6.03027.doc>

Harbin, G., Rous, B., & McLean, M. (2005). Issues in designing state accountability systems. *Journal of Early Intervention*, 27(3), 137-164.

National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) & National Association of Early Childhood Specialists in State Departments of Education (NAECS/SDE). (2003). Early childhood curriculum, assessment, and program evaluation: Building an effective, accountable system in programs for children birth through age 8. [www.naeyc.org/resources/position\\_statements/pscape.pdf](http://www.naeyc.org/resources/position_statements/pscape.pdf)

#### National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC)

A national association with a primary focus on the provision of educational and developmental services and resources for all children from birth through age 8. This page provides information about NAEYC and current research and information about early childhood education. <http://www.naeyc.org>

Sandall, S., Hemmeter, M.L., Smith, B.J., & McLean, M.E. (2005). *DEC recommended practices: A comprehensive guide for practical application in early intervention early childhood special education*. Longmont, CO: Sopris West

Shonkoff, J.P., & Phillips, D.A. (Eds.) (2000). *From neurons to neighborhoods: The science of early childhood development*. Washington, D.C.: National Academy Press.

Smith, B. (2000). *Administrator's essentials: Creating policies and procedures that support recommended practices in early intervention/early childhood special education*

(EI/ECSE). DEC Recommended Practices in Early Intervention/Early Childhood Special Education. Retrieved January, 16, 2007 from the DEC website.

<http://www.dec-sped.org/pdf/recommendedpractices/adminessen.pdf>

Technical Assistance & Training System (TATS)

Statewide project providing technical assistance and training to programs in Florida serving prekindergarten children with disabilities. Website provides information and resources on curriculum and instruction, evaluation and assessment, family involvement, inclusion, program effectiveness/quality, and transition, as well as, linking early childhood partners. [www.tats.ucf.edu](http://www.tats.ucf.edu)

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, National Child Care Information Center (NCCIC):

Quality Rating Systems: Definition and Statewide Systems (NCCIC)

<http://nccic.acf.hhs.gov/pubs/qrs-defsystems.pdf>

Quality Rating Systems and the Impact on Quality in Early Care and Education Settings (NCCIC). <http://nccic.acf.hhs.gov/poptopics/qrs-impactqualitycc.pdf>

Other topics, including children with disabilities and early childhood educational systems. <http://nccic.acf.hhs.gov/poptopics/index.html#ecsystems>



*TATS eUpdates are a service of the Technical Assistance & Training System Communities of Practice. The TATS eUpdates are intended to provide current information related to best practices or trends in the education of young children with special needs in the areas of Transition, Program Effectiveness, Inclusion, Curriculum & Instruction, Evaluation & Assessment, and Family Involvement. For more information about the TATS Communities of Practice and the TATS eUpdates, please log on to [www.tats.ucf.edu](http://www.tats.ucf.edu).*