



Expanding Opportunities: Interagency Strategies for Building Inclusive Practice

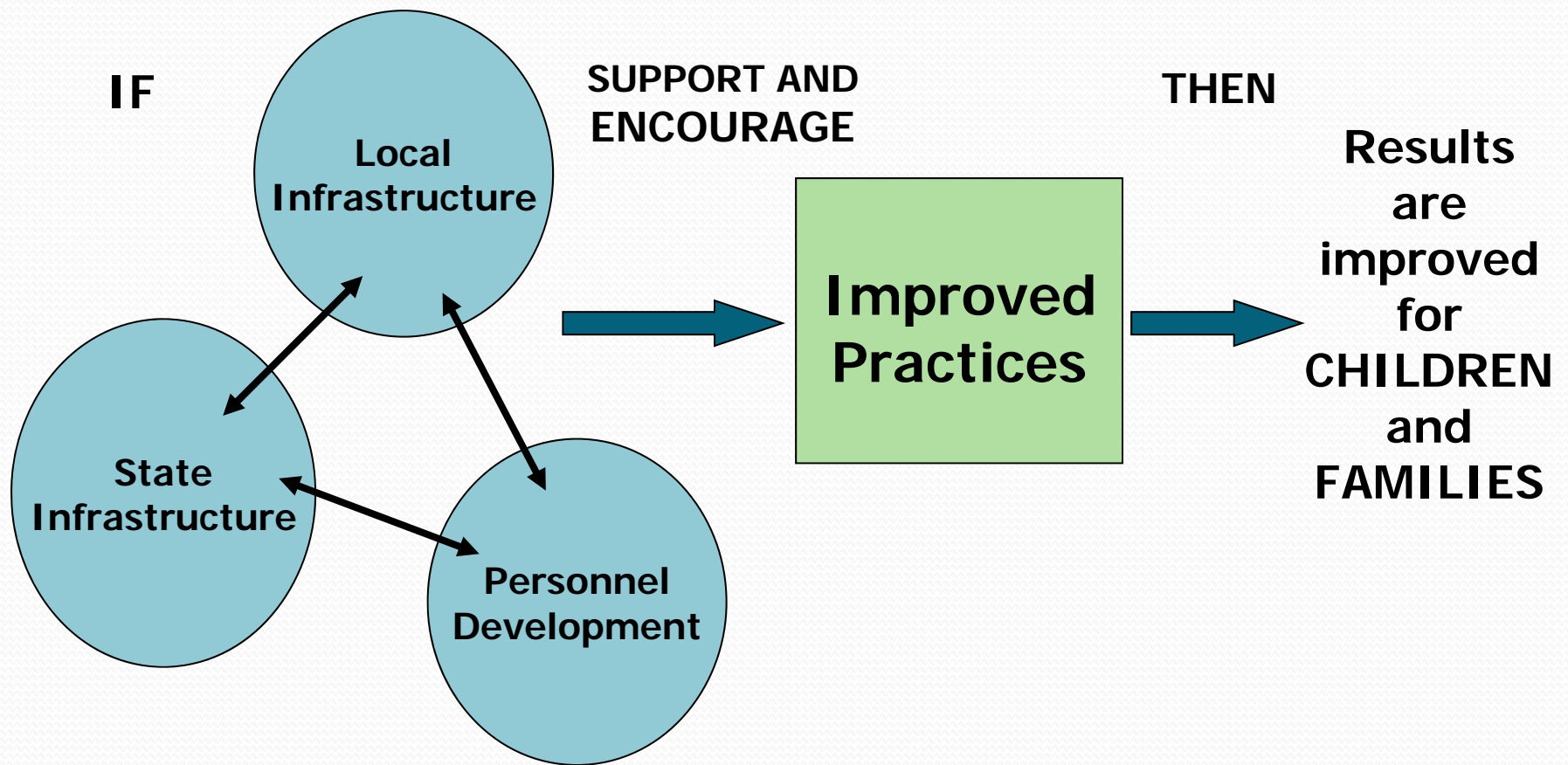
Tenth National
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NECTAC Conceptual Framework for Systems Improvement



If
improved results for
children and families
are to be supported and
enhanced through
technical assistance,



then
a multilevel systems change approach
that can impact all levels of state's
service system is called for.



Levels of the Service System

- **State Infrastructure**- policy, funding, support and collaboration at the state level
- **Personnel Development**- higher education and state's capacity for training & TA across the state
- **Community Infrastructure**- policy, funding, support and collaboration at community and local agency level
- **Service Provider/Practice**- provider knowledge and skills
- **Children/family**- what children and families know, feel and are able to do as a result



Technical Assistance to Penetrate All Levels of System

- Provide a national perspective to understand the issue
- Clearly understand unique state context and practices
- Facilitate development of a strategic plan for systems change
- Assist in implementing and tracking the plan



Four Stages of Planning for Systems Change

- 1. CHALLENGES** – Understanding where we are
- 2. DESIRED RESULTS** – Deciding where we want to go
- 3. STRATEGIES** – Planning how to get there
- 4. BENCHMARKS** – Knowing if we are getting there
... or not

Direct Correspondence

Challenges:

- ❖ State infrastructure →
- ❖ Personnel →
- ❖ Local infrastructure →
- ❖ Providers and practices →
- ❖ Child and family →

Desired Impacts:

- ❖ State infrastructure
- ❖ Personnel
- ❖ Local infrastructure
- ❖ Providers and practices
- ❖ Child and family



About Strategies:

- A single strategy can address multiple levels and multiple outcomes.
- The combination of strategies, together, should address all of the multi-level challenge statements.
- The combination of strategies, together, should lead to the desired results for children and families.
- Generally, strategies build on one another, implying a necessary sequence for the strategies.



Benchmarks

... developed for each strategy/activity

- ✓ The event occurred, or product was produced
- ✓ The outcomes associated with the activity were accomplished

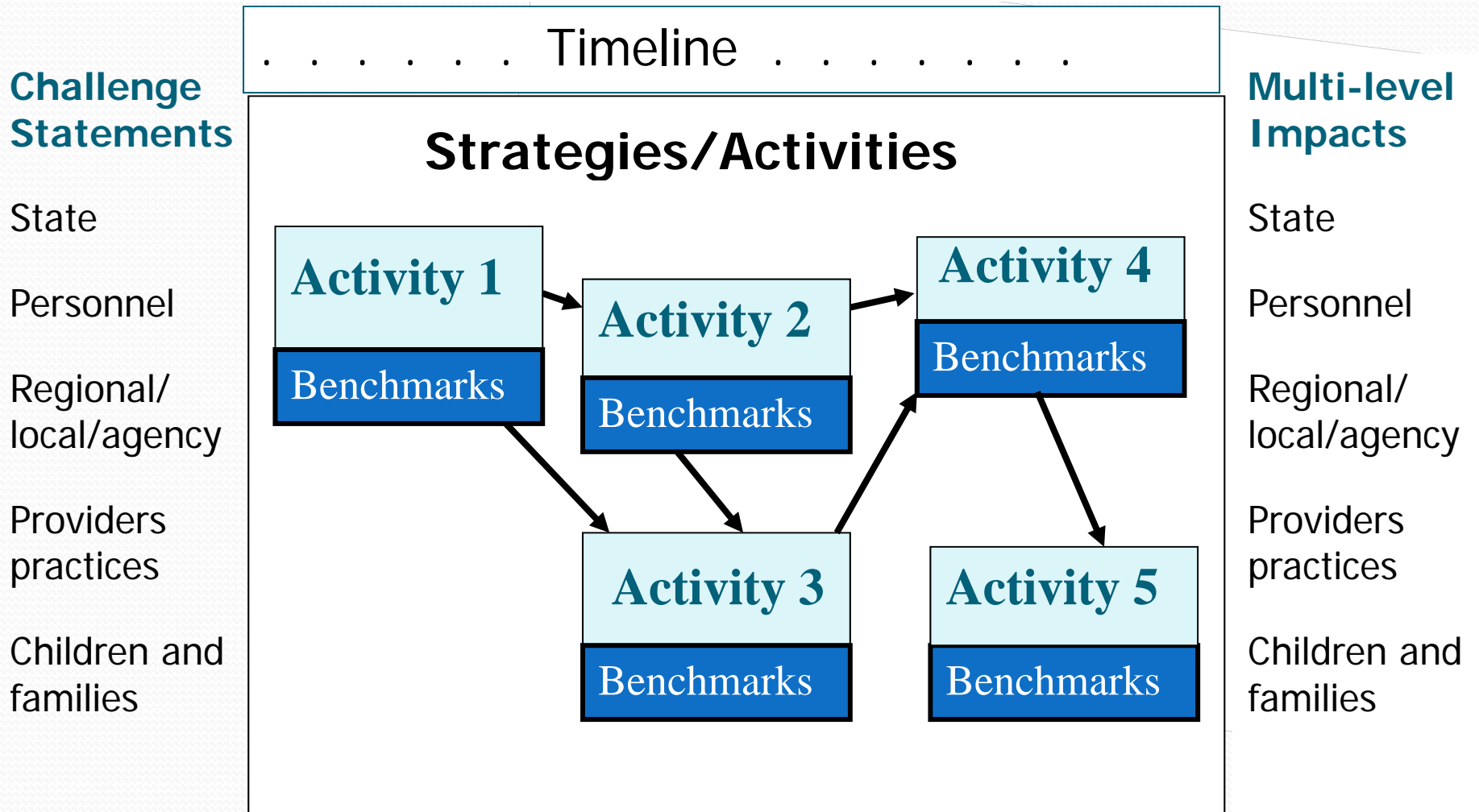
Activity Sheets

- Succinct statement of the activity's purpose
- Relationship to other activities
- Primary state planners or implementer(s)
- Who will provide TA/consultation
- Sequence of key steps
- Responsibilities




- Timelines
- Benchmarks and data sources to measure accomplishments

Visual Depiction of Plan

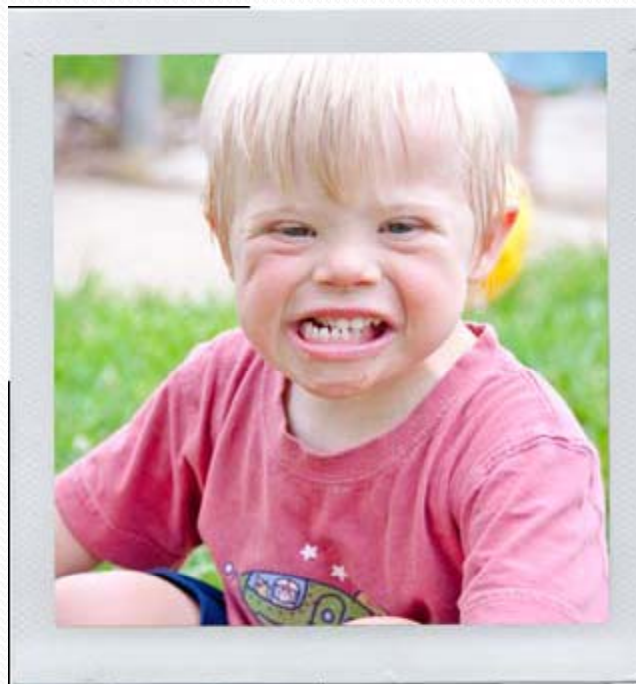


Sample Plan

Issue Area: <i>Evaluation and Assessment</i>										
Challenge: Practices regarding evaluation and assessment and determination of eligibility of children birth through five are inconsistent across regions and do not necessarily reflect research and evidence-based practices or meet compliance with provisions of IDEA.						Desired Result: Children, birth to five, and their families across the State will benefit from consistent and timely evaluation and assessment practices which support appropriate eligibility decisions and selection of needed supports, services and community resources.				
MULTI-LEVEL TARGETS	Year 1	Fall	Winter	Spring	Year 2	Fall	Winter	Spring	Year 3	MULTI-LEVEL IMPACTS
	Summer				Summer				Summer	
<i>Planned Strategies/Activities</i>										
State Infrastructure	1. Department of Education and Lead Agency review current practices and procedures being used in the state to evaluate & assess young children and determine their eligibility for services.		4. State agencies develop an interagency agreement regarding data collection and monitoring related to this issue.			11. State agencies monitor regions to ensure consistent implementation of evidence-based practices and accurate data collection.				
Personnel Development	2. Both State agencies review research findings on best practices related to evaluation, assessment and eligibility.		5. Workgroup representing multiple perspectives and system levels develops guidance document .			7. Evaluation data informs final revisions to the document; training needs are ascertained, training/TA plan is developed, and evaluation plan for training/TA is designed.		9. Regional administrators refine procedures to fit their circumstances and oversee implementation of evaluation/assessment methods and data collection procedures.		
Community Infrastructure	3. State agencies jointly determine policies and procedures for selection and use of evaluation and assessment tools, implementing best practices, and using results for eligibility determination, program planning and outcome measurement.			6. Regional administrators and local providers from selected sites field test the procedures.			8. Final guidance document is disseminated and training and TA is provided for administrators and providers in all regions.		10. Local providers evaluate and assess children using new policies and procedures, and accurately collect and report data .	
Service Provider/ Practice	 <p>... Meaningful stakeholder involvement and strategic communication throughout all activities ...</p> <p>... Evaluation embedded in each activity ...</p>									
Family Level	<p>State provides consistent guidance and uses data about evaluation/assessment and eligibility to inform state decisions.</p> <p>State TA system uses the new guide to inform the field on quality evaluation/assessment/eligibility practices and for ongoing training and TA.</p> <p>Regional administrators support service providers to implement state guidelines for consistent and timely use of evaluation/assessment and eligibility methods.</p> <p>All service providers conduct quality evaluation and assessment to determine eligibility for children (B-5) according to state guidelines to ensure consistency and equity.</p> <p>Families understand the reasons for and implications of having their child evaluated and assessed, and take an active part in the process.</p>									

Expanding Opportunities

An Interagency Inclusion Initiative





“The goal is to support state efforts to increase inclusive opportunities for young children with disabilities.”



Background and Status

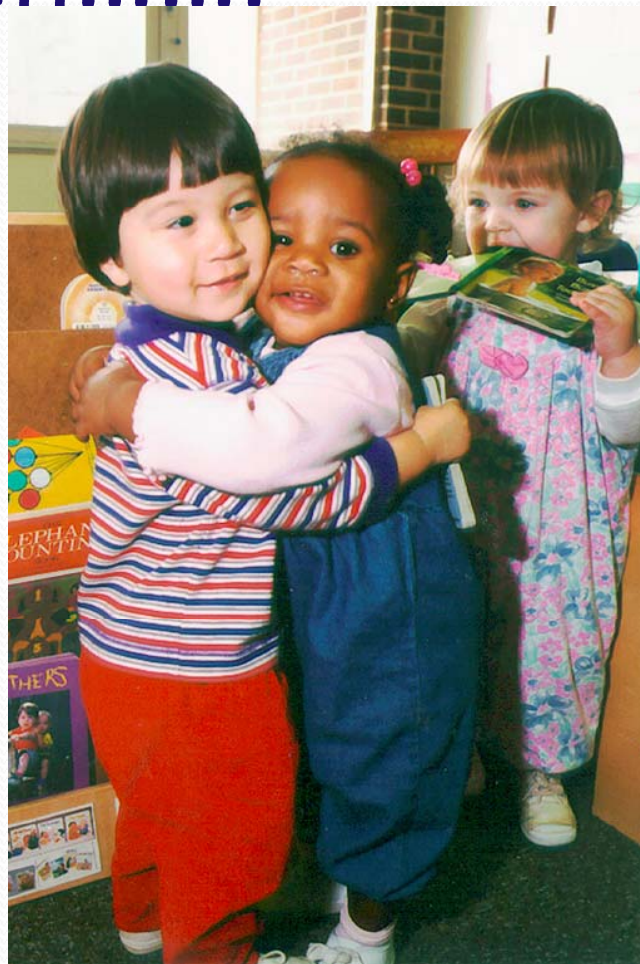
2004

- The Child Care Bureau, the Administration on Developmental Disabilities, and the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) held two policy forums in Washington, D.C.
- Discussed strategies for including young children with disabilities in community-based settings and activities

Improving Inclusive Opportunities for Families.....



Improving Inclusive Opportunities for Children.....





Background and Status

Creation of a Federal Interagency Team

- Office of Special Education
- Child Care Bureau
- Office of Head Start
- Administration on Developmental Disabilities



Background and Status

2005

Federal Interagency Team initiated cross-agency strategic planning with:

- NECTAC (National Early Childhood TA Center)
- Mountain Plains Regional Resource Center (MPRRC)
- Affiliation with Preschool LRE Community



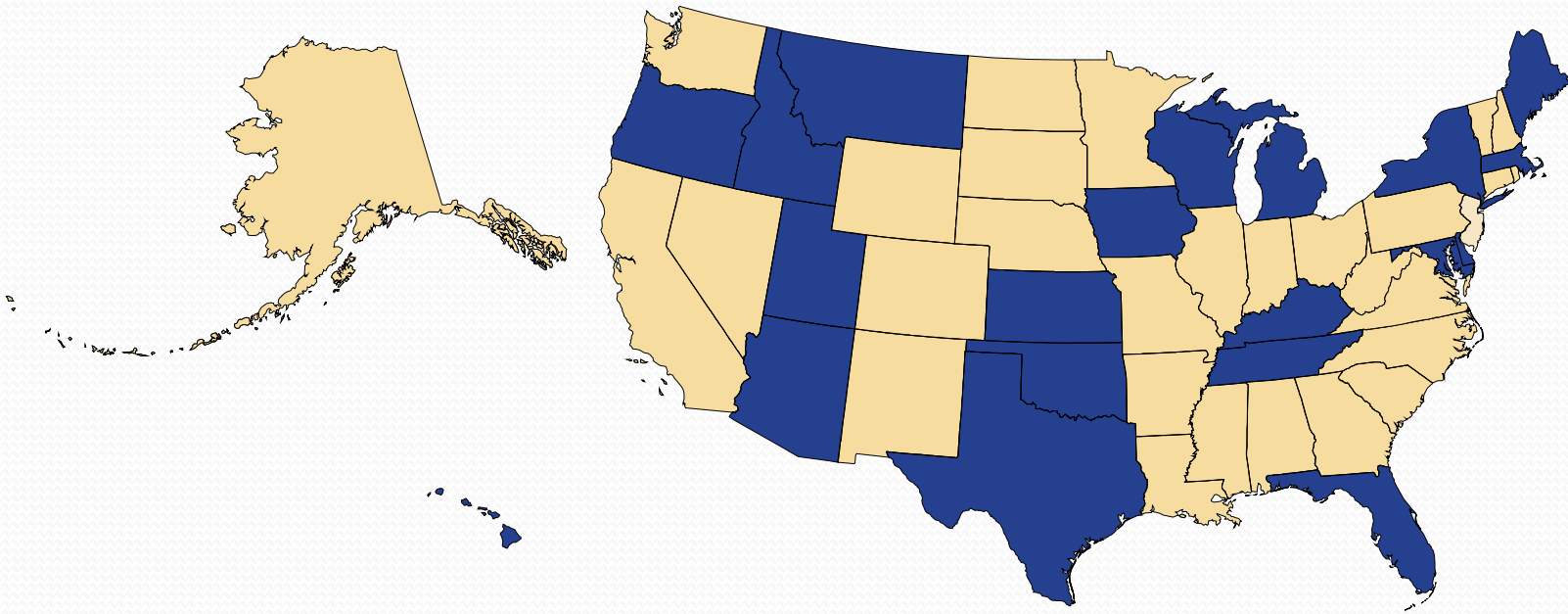
State Selection Process

- The first four cohorts of states were selected and invited to participate by the federal partners.
- Evolved into a state self-nomination process by states not engaged with the National Professional Development Center on Inclusion or SpecialQuest Birth to Five

Background and Status

20 States since 2004

Arizona, Delaware, Florida, Hawaii, Idaho, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Montana, New York, Oklahoma, Oregon, Tennessee, Texas, Utah and Wisconsin





Interagency TA Support

- Facilitate on-site meetings and conference calls
- Support participation in the Inclusion Institute for the IDEA, Child Care, Head Start, and University Centers for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities (UCEDD) designees
- Ongoing assistance over one to three years with development/implementation of systems change plan
- Resources and information to support implementation of the plan
- Plan evaluation

Initiative Impacts



Data Sources

- Outcome achievement for events
- Impact data of change over time (N=6)
- Accomplishments of activities on plans
- Third party evaluation (N=3)



Evaluation, State Plans and Caveats

- Almost all states developed a plan
- Variation in plan format and approach
- Expectations changed for length and breadth of support
- State selection process changes



Impact Data

Changes in State Infrastructure

- Increased awareness among state agencies about inclusion
- Improved communication, coordination
- Improved knowledge about state programs and systems
- Identification of resources within agencies for serving children and families
- Designing activities to address identified barriers



Impact Data

Changes in State Infrastructure, continued

- Development of plans
- Improved coordination of existing initiatives and activities
- Influencing other existing state plans to address inclusion
- Stronger connections and relationships between ECSE programs and other through joint training
- Embedding inclusion in policy, regulation reform and MOA updates



Focus of State Plans

- Public Awareness Across Agencies and with Public
- Professional Development
- Policy, Regulations and Guidance
- Access to Resources
- Resource Development
- Family Support
- Alignment of Competencies and Standards
- Funding strategies
- Interagency Coordination



Accomplishments

- Stimulated successful applications to SpecialQuest Birth to Five and NPDCI
- Development of web sites with resources for personnel and family members
- Developed training materials
- Provided cross agency training opportunities
- Provided information during legislative sessions to increase child care assistance reimbursement rate for children with disabilities



More Accomplishments

- Developed stronger partnerships with state institutes of higher education to embed content into curricula for producing a larger pool of practitioners with background knowledge in inclusive early childhood practices
- Created positions for inclusion specialists and supported them to work in local programs



And Some More Accomplishments

- Developed a Web-based training calendar supported by all early care and education agencies to coordinate training opportunities
- Developed a Community Toolkit of program assessment resources to assist consultants, program administrators and program staff in examining practices
- Influenced existing state plans and initiatives to consider inclusion



Lessons Learned and Insights

- Interagency coordination is considered critical but is extremely challenging to implement
- Teams and plans need leadership and shepherds
- TA support is valued and takes attention over time
- Developing plans may be easier than implementing them

Maine Expanding Inclusive Opportunities Initiative





Maine Systems Change Goals

Goal 1

Develop a tool kit that provides a self-assessment framework for community programs to use for examining inclusive practices.

To Support Achievement of Outcomes:

- Maine early childhood agencies demonstrate a commitment to inclusion by using policies and procedures that support inclusive practices.
- An increased number of Maine's children have access to and receive services in high quality inclusive settings.

(Leads for Goal 1: Linda Labas (CCIDS) & Cindy Brown (CDS))



Maine Systems Change Goals

Goal 2

To access an accurate, cross state agency data system.

To Support Achievement of Outcomes:

- Maine early childhood agencies have useful, quality outcome and process data to support informed decision-making and accountability.

(Leads for Goal 2: Debra Hannigan (MDOE/ CDS) & Patti Woolley (MDHHS/ DEC))



Maine Systems Change Goals

Goal 3

Develop strategies and approaches for increased child behavioral health services to early childhood programs.

To Support Achievement of Outcomes:

- Maine early childhood agencies demonstrate a commitment to inclusion by using policies and procedures that support inclusive practices.

(Leads for Goal 3: Debra Hannigan (MDOE/ CDS), Ann O'Brien (MDHHS CBH), Patti Woolley (MDHHS/ DEC))



Maine Systems Change Goals

Goal 4

Develop a coordinated cross sector personnel development and TA system.

To Support Achievement of Outcomes:

- Early childhood agencies support and use a regionally accessible, comprehensive, statewide professional development and technical assistance system.

(Leads for Goal 4: Janna Gregory (MDOE/ CDS), Allyson Dean (MRTQ), Jenn Wiles (MRTQ))



Maine Expanding Inclusive Opportunities Initiative

<http://www.umaine.edu/ExpandInclusiveOpp/default.htm>

- **Early Childhood Settings Inclusion Toolkit**
- **Maine Early Care and Education Training Calendar**
- **National Online Training Resources**
- **Glossary**
- **AND MORE!**