

## **Nebraska's EDN/Part C Results Driven Accountability (RDA) Stakeholder Meeting**

**October 19, 2022**

**1:00 p.m. CT**

**Firespring – 1201 Infinity Ct., Lincoln, NE**

**Present either in-person or virtually:** Courtonie Allbright (parent), Jean Anderson, Jessica Anthony, Sue Bainter, Sue Borchert, Reagan Brown (parent), Amy Bunnell, Barb Esch, Jeanne Fielder, Johanna Higgins, Karen Hoffman, Amber Jara (parent), Cole Johnson, Shaistha Kiran Karipi, Lisa Knoche, Stephanie Knust, Candi Koenig (parent), Janice Lee, Cara Lucas-Richt, Ada Luna, Terri McGill, Kerry Miller, Mary, Phillips, Michelle Rayburn, Amy Rhone, Kathy Scheele, Connie Shockley, Mark Smith, Sarah Swanson, Chris Szydelko (parent), Jessica Tenney (parent), Karen Vontz, Allison Wilson, Annette Wragge. In addition, the following people attended: Sommer Fousek, Ginny Howard, Laura Johnson, Miriam Kuhn, Heather Ottoson, Darsha Pelland, Vera Stroup, Sarah Walters

### **Welcome & Introductions**

Jessica Anthony, EDN Co-Lead, welcomed the group and gave details about the meeting space. Jeanne Fielder, RBEI State Coordinator, reviewed the agenda, including the RBEI mission statement.

### **RDA and State Systemic Improvement Plan (SSIP) Overview and Stakeholder Recommendations**

Jeanne took the group through the three improvement strategies for the RBEI – Routines Based Early Intervention in Nebraska: RBI, Functional IFSP, and Quality Home Visits (HV).

- RBI is a semi-structured interview in which the family describes their day to day life in terms of their child and family's function. RBI Implementation updates were shared, as were RBI Boot Camp Trainings and Trends.
- Functional IFSP Outcomes are based on both child participation within everyday routines (child outcomes) and family-perceived needs, such as housing, education, medical resources, etc. (family outcomes);
- Routines-Based Home Visits - Nebraska is using the Getting Ready Approach which focuses on strengthening both the parent-child and the parent-early intervention professional relationship. Implementation updates were shared detailing past and planned growth between 2016 and 2022-23.

In the area of Professional Development and Technical Assistance Supports, a new training was announced: "Using the RBI and Quality HV to Develop a Quality IFSP." Will help participants utilize information from RBIs, Quality HVs, and ongoing assessment, to collaborate w/families in developing functional, family centered IFSPs.

Jeanne shared details around RBEI refresher trainings that are offered to ensure fidelity within local Planning Region Teams.

Next, RBEI State Co-Coordinator, Sue Bainter, shared about some of the Infrastructure Supports for Planning Region Teams (PRTs) that are occurring and include work by NDE Contractor, Mary Phillips. A map showed Training, Coaching and Technical Assistance supports being provided for the RDA Cohorts and all other PRTs by a cadre of TA Providers and State Coaches. Sue and Jeanne both shared about the ways effectiveness is being evaluated, which included the following:

- Fidelity Checks, conducted annually
- IFSP Outcome Analysis, submitted and reviewed for quality and quantity
- Research Studies
- Child and Family Outcome Data, including baselines and then review data for each of the two Cohorts and the PRTs within them.

Trends from 2022 RDA Cohort IFSP Outcome Analysis were shared that included areas of training that have been focused on, and some goals for improvements.

Stakeholder Feedback questions:

-Should the same outcome data be collected for another five years; what outcome data would Stakeholders like to see collected?

-What outcome data should we look at now?

FEEDBACK:

- It is difficult to adjust to turnover on EI teams. Is hard to make sure ongoing training is available and that teams make connections about how goals are written from priorities and addressed routinely during home visits. It can feel like they must start over with each new person.
- Comment asking about job satisfaction among EI professionals, would looking at turnover data from EI providers, such as SCs in the field and job satisfaction within PRTs, be revealing.
- Comment also shared questioning the sustainability of RBI and Getting Ready when there is turnover and staff changes. How are the trainings and high expectations of staff made sustainable over time?
- Response included ensuring that context is built into goals. Also, how important it is to put language into family terms.
- Monitoring is so critical; need to make sure to continue this. Some PRTs are just getting on board with it, so make sure to measure progress to bring them along. Also, important to maintain around the expected 6-10 outcomes per IFSP as usually occurs when using the RBI.
- Importance of monitoring frequency of outcomes.
- RE: data, the intention is to improve outcomes, so is there something to consider regarding length of service for the child in EI? Maybe count length of time in services and the outcomes, when embedded for a longer period with these approaches.
- Is challenging to track big picture over the long term when kids change schools, teams, etc.
- Question asked: do we do anything to track met goals?
- Comments were shared about goals and goal-writing. Do parents feel they are achieved; are they confident in the goals written for their children. Interested in # of goals parents feel are achieved.
- Comment shared about a three-year old son on the spectrum with several therapies throughout the week, and the parent feeling discouraged working with a number of individual programs wanting/having their own respective goals.
- Comment that this parent didn't know what a good goal was until her child started preschool.
- Comment/question shared about EDN vs private therapy goals, when they are different, and how to best assist parents. Many parents think in-home services are supposed to be the same as clinic-based services. Could be better communicated.

- Comment, if parents are taught to how to write a goal, it will benefit them to better advocate for themselves and their family/child.
- Comment shared that a review needs to occur leading up to transitioning (from C to B) and what goals are developed at that time, so families feel prepared for Part B services.
- Having something online to view goals and progress would be helpful. Keeping up with each program is challenging so seeing any progress for/as a parent is helpful.
- Agree to comments about continuing to collect outcome data and using “plain language” that parents speak/understand.

Moving forward, Sue continued by sharing about the 4 questions which were added after Stakeholder approval that specifically measure RDA strategies on the Annual Family Survey. In 2022, the response to these questions yielded a 81.1% response rate. Responses to them were all either “strongly agree” or “very strongly agree.” The questions will be become standard practice for evaluation purposes on the annual family survey.

Additional 2021 Stakeholder input directed offering biennial RBI fidelity for providers and SCs who meet eligible criteria. This practice was piloted last year, and data is continuing to be gathered that will determine whether those who got a “pass” last year will meet criteria this year.

Findings were shared from the 2019 Study “Evaluation of Quality Early Intervention Home Visitation Practices in Nebraska,” conducted by Dr. Miriam Kuhn, Associate Professor of Special Education and Communication Disorders at the University of Nebraska-Omaha, and Consultant, Dr. Johanna Higgins. A resulting TA document is being developed to support the Getting Ready Approach when working with families from diverse backgrounds. The need for additional communication between home visits was also revealed and resulting new practices will help support and guide the family. Dr. Higgins has developed two webinars regarding between visit communication, and information about them may be found at this link:

<https://www.dropbox.com/sh/jni6699yzorp1lh/AAAOE3CGyjXY1dSHIQexMyIPa?dl=0>.

Drs. Kuhn and Higgins partnered to create a mixed methods study entitled “Experiences of Services Coordinators Utilizing the *Getting Ready* Framework.” Input was gathered from SCs about how the GR framework supports their efforts to fulfill their key roles and demonstrate the key skills needed to build family capacity and confidence in supporting their young children with delays or disabilities. Dr. Kuhn shared the research questions and findings that came from a statewide, online survey, of SCs, their supervisors and EI providers who are also trained and approved to work with the GR approach. The response was phenomenal, and smaller focus groups were assembled afterward to gather more detailed information. Findings and themes were shared and included both successes and some barriers to using the GR framework, however, it was agreed that the GR approach training empowers SCs to better support their families.

Next steps will include brief “member check” of participants, and completion of the report(s) in early 2023 to disseminate via the Nebraska EDN website. Dr. Kuhn thanked partners with the EDN and UNO for their part in this project.

Miriam asked for feedback from the group about services coordination in NE. Feedback is as follows:

- Parent comment that their SC who served them the longest became a friend and was good at coordinating for them. There is, however, reluctance from SCs to share about private practice provider information when asked.
- Parent comment that her family adores their SC, who does wonderful meeting her where she is and with what she needs.
- Parent comment that they have had a great relationship with their SC, who always goes above and beyond to make sure they have resources and are feeling good about their progress and appointments. Very helpful!

#### Coaching in Early Intervention (CEI) Project

Lisa Knoche, UNL Research Professor with the Nebraska Academy for Early Childhood Research, and Getting Ready Project Director, was introduced. She first shared a consent form for the group to be made aware of their role as stakeholders for the study. Lisa shared team member names and talked about the goings on in the state related to supporting the RDA evidence-based practices. Coaching in Early Intervention (CEI) builds on the strength of the statewide network and is in year three of this federally funded project that includes peer-to-peer coaching and six evidence-based coaching practices. The CEI project has assisted in bringing the many pieces together for early intervention. Lessons have included modifying the timing of the supports to coincide with the academic year to make it more useful.

Lisa asked the group for input and offered some thought-starters coaching needs related to PRTs.

- Comment was shared that staff want leadership opportunities, but don't want an advanced degree. ESU 10 has presented the coaching of peers as a way to enhance skill levels, and are learning that, as an unintended consequence, it is becoming an employee retention strategy. When asked if this results in additional pay, Jean replied that it was if it meant working outside of regular work hours, that some PRT grant dollars are used.

Next steps were shared with related timelines. They are continuing to recruit and will bring back more information at next year's RDA meeting.

Before moving on, Cole Johnson, Part C Data Manager, noted how fortunate Nebraska is to have great partnerships between NDE, DHHS, UNL, UNMC, UNK, and the Munroe-Meyer Institute. He thanked these partners for their work.

#### **Annual Performance Report Baseline and Target Updates**

Cole shared an update about Part C Child Outcomes data, recapping some information from last year and baselines that are being used. OSEP requires growth to be shown over time and third year data is currently being gathered. With Stakeholder input, Nebraska chose a "slow and steady," .5 yearly increase approach. Slides were shared that showed target vs. performance data for Child and Family Outcomes in a number of disciplines.

A question was asked about the background of Nebraska using Teaching Strategies GOLD as its measure for ages 3-5. Amy Bunnell shared some background and history to provide clarification, stating that Nebraska has worked with a number of partners and statisticians to ensure the tool is accurate and that partners are satisfied with GOLD.

## **Co-Lead Updates**

Cole also noted that the EDN Logo has been updated and refreshed following stakeholder and focus group input. Materials are being updated to incorporate it and will continue over time.

## **OSEP Monitoring**

Amy Bunnell shared that the Federal Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) will be monitoring Nebraska and the document review will be the first step. Onsite or virtual visits will follow, and Stakeholders will be tapped to take part, and include ECICC members, parents, and Early Intervention and Services Coordinators in the field. Parents who were present were asked to let Karen know if they are willing to be contacted. There is confidence that good things are happening in Nebraska due in large part to the partnerships and collaborations that have been built.

## **American Rescue Plan (ARP) Funds Update**

Jessica Anthony, Co-Lead partner with DHHS, shared that Nebraska received just over \$1.3 million dollars of additional funding under ARP to address challenges from the pandemic. These funds must be spent before Summer of 2023, and she shared some goals for its use and some programs and partners that are taking part.

## **Wrap-Up & Next Steps**

The group was encouraged to share any ideas for agenda items for the next Stakeholder meeting with Amy, Jessica, or Cole, as well as thoughts about the day's meeting format. Would participants like to have both in-person and virtual option in the future. Please reach out using these email addresses:

[Amy.bunnell@nebraska.gov](mailto:Amy.bunnell@nebraska.gov)

[Jessica.anthony@nebraska.gov](mailto:Jessica.anthony@nebraska.gov)

[Cole.johnson@nebraska.gov](mailto:Cole.johnson@nebraska.gov)

*The meeting adjourned at 3:48pm CT.*