

Parent information centers

National activities: Parent information centers

(Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, Part D, Subpart 3, Sections 671-673)

PROGRAM PERFORMANCE INFORMATION

Performance Measures

This section presents selected program performance information, including, for example, GPRA goals, objectives, measures, and performance targets and data; and an assessment of the progress made toward achieving program results. Achievement of program results is based on the cumulative effect of the resources provided in previous years and those requested in fiscal year 2014 and future years, as well as the resources and efforts invested by those served by this program.

Goal: To provide training and information to parents of children with disabilities.

Objective 1: Improve the quality of parent training and information projects.

Objective 2: Parents served by Special Education Parent Information Centers will be knowledgeable about their IDEA rights and responsibilities.

Objective 3: Parents served by Special Education Parent Information Centers will be able to advocate for scientifically- or evidence-based practices for their child.

Six performance measures have been developed for the Parent Information Centers program. There are three annual measures, two long-term measures, and one efficiency measure.

Annual Measures

The three annual measures deal with the quality, relevance, and usefulness of products and services provided by the program. These measures were developed as part of a cross-departmental effort to make measures relating to technical assistance and dissemination activities more consistent Departmentwide. However, the measures have been adapted to reflect the unique purposes of the Parent Information Centers program. Targets for 2011 through 2014 have been established based on performance data from 2007 to 2010. The measures are:

Measure: The percentage of materials used by Parent Information Centers projects that are deemed to be of high quality by an independent review panel of qualified experts or individuals with appropriate expertise to review the substantive content of the products and services.

Year	Target	Actual
2009	60	84
2010	63	76
2011	76	89
2012	78	96

Year	Target	Actual
2013	80	
2014	82	

Additional Information: Data are collected and analyzed by a contractor, using expert panels of reviewers who assess grant implementation by reviewing a randomly selected sample of materials disseminated by centers for the purpose of training and informing parents. In an effort to ensure that the sample materials reviewed in 2012 were representative of all grantees, 1 product and 1 service were drawn from a stratified random sample of community parent resource centers (CPRCs) and parent training and information centers (PTIs), for a total of 34 products and 34 services reviewed.

All products and services are reviewed and scored on the basis of a rubric, developed by the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP), that is designed to yield ratings on the extent to which the content of submitted materials is: evidence-based, valid, complete, and up-to-date. Specifically, the rubric is designed to yield ratings on the basis of the following two quality dimensions: (1) Substance (Does the product reflect the best of current research and theory or policy guidance, as demonstrated by a scientifically- or evidence-based approach, a solid conceptual framework, appropriate citations, and other evidence of conceptual soundness?); and (2) Communication (Does the product have clarity in its presentation, as evidenced by being free of editorial errors, appropriately formatted, and well organized?). The total score for any individual product or service reviewed is the sum of the two quality dimension sub-scores. High quality for any individual product or service is defined as a total score of 6 or higher of 9 possible points.

This measure is calculated by dividing the number of individual products and services that received an average quality rating of 6 or better (65) by the total number of products and services reviewed (68), multiplied by 100 percent. For 2012, this score was 96 percent ($65/68 = .894 \times 100\% = 95.6\%$), which is an increase compared to 2011 and exceeds the target level. The Department is using the feedback from the expert panel to work with grantees to continue to improve their products and services. Data for fiscal year 2013 will be available in October 2013.

Measure: The percentage of Parent Information Centers products and services deemed to be of high relevance to educational and early intervention policy or practice by an independent review panel of qualified members of the Parent Information Centers target audience.

Year	Target	Actual
2009	96	89
2010	96	98
2011	96	99
2012	96	100
2013	96	
2014	97	

Additional Information: Data are collected and analyzed by a contractor, using panels of special education parent stakeholders to review a randomly selected sample of materials disseminated by centers for the purpose of training and informing parents. In an effort to ensure that the sample materials reviewed in 2012 were representative, 1 product and 1 service were

drawn from a stratified random sample of CPRCs and PTIs, for a total of 34 products and 34 services reviewed.

All materials are reviewed and scored on the basis of a rubric, developed by OSEP, that is designed to yield ratings on the materials' responsiveness to priority issues and challenges confronting the target groups. Specifically, the rubric is designed to yield ratings on the basis of the following three dimensions related to relevance: (1) Need (Does the content of the material attempt to solve an important problem or critical issue?); (2) Pertinence (Does the content of the material match the problem or issue facing the target group or groups?); and (3) Reach (To what extent is the content of the material applicable to diverse populations within the target group?). The total score for any individual product or service reviewed is the sum of the three quality dimension sub-scores. High relevance for any individual product or service is defined as a total score of 6 or higher of 9 possible points.

This measure is calculated by dividing the number of individual products and services that received an average relevance rating of 6 or better (68) by the total number of products and services reviewed (68), multiplied by 100 percent. For FY 2012, this score was 100 percent. ($68/68 = 1.00 \times 100\% = 100\%$).

Based on the most recent years of data it appears that program grantees do a good job of ensuring that products and services are of high relevance to education and early intervention policy or practice. The actual percentage of materials judged to be of high relevance exceeded the target. The Department is using the feedback from the expert panel to work with grantees to improve their products and services and maintain the high standard achieved in 2012. Data for fiscal year 2013 will be available in October 2013.

Measure: The percentage of all Parent Information Centers products and services deemed to be useful by target audiences to improve educational or early intervention policy or practice.

Year	Target	Actual
2009	95	86
2010	95	95
2011	95	92
2012	95	100
2013	96	
2014	96	

Additional Information: Data are collected and analyzed by a contractor, using a panel of six to eight parent stakeholders who assess grant implementation by reviewing a randomly selected sample of materials (n = 68) disseminated by the centers. In an effort to ensure that the sample materials reviewed were representative, 1 product and 1 service were drawn from a stratified random sample of 33 CPRCs and PTIs, for a total of 33 products and 33 services reviewed.

All materials are reviewed and scored on the basis of a rubric, developed by OSEP, that is designed to yield ratings on the extent to which the content can be easily and quickly adopted or adapted by the target group, and the likelihood that the product or service, if adopted, will produce the desired result. Specifically, the rubric is designed to yield ratings on the basis of the following three dimensions related to usefulness: (1) Ease (Does the content of the product or service description address a problem or issue in an easily understood way, with directions or

guidance regarding how a problem or issue can be addressed?); (2) Replicability (Is it likely that the information derived from the product or service will eventually be used by the target group in multiple settings to achieve the intended benefit?); and (3) Pertinence (Does the content of the material match the problem or issue facing the target group or groups?). The total score for any individual product or service reviewed is the sum of the three quality dimension sub-scores. High usefulness for any individual product or service is defined as a total score of 6 or higher of 9 possible points.

This measure is calculated by dividing the number of individual products and services that received an average usefulness rating of 6 or better (68) by the total number of products and services reviewed (68), multiplied by 100 percent. For FY 2012, this score was 100 percent. ($68/68 = 1.00 \times 100\% = 100\%$).

Based on the most recent years of data it appears that the program’s grantees generally produce products and services that are useful to target audiences. The actual percentage of materials judged to be of high relevance increased from the prior year and exceeded the target. The Department is using the feedback from the expert panel to work with grantees to improve their products and services and maintain the high standard achieved in 2012. Data for fiscal year 2013 will be available in October 2013.

Long-Term Measures

Two long-term measures have been developed for the program. Data are collected every 2 years through an OSEP-supported survey of parents who had received services from the parent centers. In 2009, OSEP conducted an independent survey of the same population to test the validity of these measures. The survey found parents’ answers to questions were not significantly different from the original data and confirmed the accuracy of the data collection methods used for the following long-term measures:

Measure: The percentage of parents receiving Special Education Parent Information Centers services who promote scientifically- or evidence-based practices for their infants, toddlers, children and youth.

Year	Target	Actual
2009	74	79
2011	75	77
2013	76	

Additional Information: Data are collected by the parent centers every 2 years using telephone interviews with 25 randomly selected parent stakeholders per center (n = 3,394). The National PTI Technical Assistance Center developed the survey. To calculate the measure, a weighted sum of the number of parents whose answers displayed an enhanced knowledge of evidence-based practices is divided by the total number of parents who responded to four relevant survey questions. Baseline data for this relatively new measure were first collected in 2007 and used to establish targets for later years.

Based on the most recent years of data it appears that program grantees do a reasonably good job of ensuring that parents receiving parent information centers services promote sound practices for their children. The Department uses the results of this measure and the annual quality measure to provide the centers with feedback on how they can better align their products

and services with evidence-based practices. Data for fiscal year 2013 will be available in October 2013.

Measure: The percentage of parents receiving Special Education Parent Information Centers services who report enhanced knowledge of IDEA rights and responsibilities.

Year	Target	Actual
2009	85	91
2011	87	85
2013	89	

Additional Information: Data are collected for this measure by the parent centers every 2 years using telephone interviews with 25 randomly selected parent stakeholders per center (n = 3,294). The National PTI Technical Assistance Center developed the survey. To calculate the measure, a weighted sum of the number of parents whose answers displayed an enhanced knowledge of IDEA rights and responsibilities is divided by the total number of parents who responded to three relevant survey questions. The targets were established based on results from the survey in prior years.

Data for this measure suggest that most of the parents receiving services from the grantees believe they enhanced their understanding of their rights and responsibilities under IDEA. However, the actual percentage of parents who reported enhanced knowledge declined from last year and fell below the target level. Data for fiscal year 2013 will be available in October 2013.

Efficiency Measure

Measure: The Federal cost per unit of output provided by the Special Education Parent Training and Information Centers, by category.

Year	Target	Actual
2009	\$2.24	\$1.06
2010	2.24	1.13
2011	1.14	1.13
2012	1.12	1.26
2013	1.10	
2014	1.08	

Additional Information: The efficiency measure for the Parent Information Centers program is “the cost per output, by category, weighted by an intensity rating.” In 2012, the cost per unit of services for the program was \$1.26, which exceeded the target level. The increase in cost per unit from 2011 to 2012 may have been caused by a drop in the number of visitors to the websites of parent centers or recipients of newsletters, which together count as one component of this measure. A small percentage drop in web traffic or newsletter recipients can cause a relatively large shift in efficiency because the absolute number of these activities is so large (greater than 19 million). Starting in 2011, targets were adjusted downward based on the consistent low level of the cost per unit from 2008 to 2010. Data for fiscal year 2013 will be available in October 2013.

The data for this measure are collected by a survey developed by the National PTI Technical Assistance Center. The measure is calculated by dividing the total value of all Federal funds in the Parent Information Centers program by the number of parents reported to be served under the program weighted by an index reflecting the intensity of the services provided ($\$27,971,944/22,166,981 = \1.26). The intensity weights represent the amount of interaction and support required to render each type of service. High intensity services such as IEP facilitation meetings receive a weight of 4; medium intensity services such as group trainings and counseling phone calls receive a weight of 3 and 2, respectively; and low intensity services such as visits to parent center websites receive a weight of 1. However, these whole number intensity weights do not reflect precise estimates of the relative amounts of time and resources associated with different types of services. The Department has examined revising these weights, but an analysis of data and input from performance measures specialists and parent center directors found that the weights could have a wide range of possible values, depending on the mix of services and costs at each parent center. In light of these findings, the Department has kept the weights unchanged to preserve the simplicity and transparency of this measure.