

VIRGINIA PART C FAMILY SURVEY 2015

EXPLANATION OF RESULTS

In accordance with federal reporting requirements mandated by the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP), Part C Early Intervention Lead Agencies under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act must report annually on 11 indicators related to early intervention services for children ages birth to three. This summary explains the results of a family survey conducted by the Commonwealth of Virginia to address Indicator #4, the percent of families participating in early intervention who report that early intervention services have helped the family:

- a) know their rights,
- b) effectively communicate their children's needs, and
- c) help their children develop and learn.

A full analysis of the family survey data is presented in [Analysis of the Virginia Family Survey Data Addressing Part C SPP/APR Indicator #4: Final Report](#) (August 6, 2015), which was prepared by Randall D. Penfield, and is available at www.infantva.org.

The Survey Instrument

The Virginia family survey includes one rating scale developed and validated by the National Center for Special Education Accountability Monitoring (NCSEAM) and four additional questions addressing the family's experience in early intervention. The 22-item Impact on Family Scale (IFS) measures the

extent to which early intervention helped families achieve positive outcomes, including the three outcomes (a, b, c) specified in Indicator #4.

The Sample

Surveys were returned by 2,044 families who were receiving early intervention services on January 1, 2015. From these responses, a random sample of 976 families reflecting the distribution of race/ethnicity in the larger population was selected for data analysis.

Distribution of Child’s Race/Ethnicity in the Representative Sample		
Gender	N	Percentage
White	564	57.8%
Black or African-American	183	18.8%
Hispanic or Latino	107	11.0%
Asian	44	4.5%
American Indian or Alaskan Native	1	0.1%
Pacific Islander or Hawaiian Native	1	0.1%
Two or more races	76	7.8%
Total	976	100.0%
Note. The distribution of race/ethnicity for the children receiving early intervention services in Virginia under Part C are: White = 57.8%, Black/African American = 18.8%, Hispanic or Latino = 11.0%, Asian = 4.5%, American Indian or Alaskan Native = 0.1%, Pacific Islander or Native Hawaiian = 0.1%, Two or More Races = 7.8%.		

The following table displays the distribution of child’s gender in the representative sample.

Distribution of Child’s Gender in the Representative Sample		
Gender	N	Percentage
Male	612	62.7%
Female	360	36.9%
Missing	4	0.4%
Total	976	100%

Based on established survey sample guidelines, a sample of 976 families is large enough to provide a high degree of confidence that the results of the survey accurately reflect the degree to which families have achieved the outcomes in Indicator #4.

Scoring the Survey

Each returned survey in the sample received an overall score (also called a measure) on the Impact on Family Scale based on that family’s responses to all 22 items. The score for each survey can range from 0 to 1000.

In order to report in the Annual Performance Report (APR) the *percent of* families who indicate that early intervention services helped them achieve the specific outcomes (a, b, c) in Indicator #4, it is necessary to establish a standard for each of the outcomes. The standard is set at a score (in that range of 0 – 1000) that provides a high degree of confidence that if a family’s score is at or

above that standard for a given outcome, then the family has achieved the outcome. Virginia chose to apply the Part C standards recommended by a nationally representative stakeholder group convened by NCSEAM. The standards for the three outcomes in Indicator #4 were set at the following scores:

- a) know their rights, at a score of 539;
- b) effectively communicate their children’s needs, at a score of 556: and
- c) help their children develop and learn, at a score of 516.

Major Findings

Statewide Percent on Indicators 4a, 4b, and 4c

The percentage reported is the number of families at or above the standard divided by the total number of families in the sample, multiplied by 100.

Percent of Respondents Meeting or Exceeding Each of the Standards for Indicator #4			
	Indicator 4A Percent of families who report that early intervention services helped them know their rights	Indicator 4B Percent of families who report that early intervention services helped them effectively communicate their children’s needs	Indicator 4C Percent of families who report that early intervention services helped them help their child develop and learn
Percentage	75.6%	72.1%	85.4%

Agreement with Specific Items on the Impact on Family Scale (IFS)

The following table displays the percentage of families in the sample who agreed with the specific items on the IFS. Please note that the standards described above generally require that the family strongly or very strongly agree with items. In the Rasch measurement framework, the statistical method used to analyze the family survey, an “agree” response is taken into account but receives less weight than a “strongly agree” or “very strongly agree” response (see Analysis of the Virginia Family Survey Data Addressing Part C SPP/APR Indicator #4: Final Report (August 6, 2015), available at www.infantva.org, for more information about the Rasch measurement framework). In order to be sure a family has achieved an outcome, more than a simple “agree” is needed in order to have a high degree of confidence that the response is truly an “agree” response and not simply a reflection of not disagreeing. If a family is asked whether early intervention helped them understand their child’s special needs and they respond “Yeah ... I guess so,” this would be considered an “agree” response (since they did not disagree). However, this response does not provide a high degree of confidence that early intervention really did help that family understand their child’s needs.

Item <i>Stem:</i> Over the past year, Early Intervention services have helped me and/or my family:	% Strongly/ Very strongly agree	% Agree in any category
...participate in typical activities for children and families in my community.	41%	84%
...know about services in my community.	48%	88%
...know where to go for support to meet my family's needs.	51%	86%
...keep up friendships for my child and family.	47%	83%

...know where to go for support to meet my child's needs.	57%	91%
...find information I need.	54%	91%
...improve my family's quality of life.	55%	92%
...feel that I can get the services and supports that my child and family need.	62%	93%
...feel more confident in my skills as a parent.	62%	93%
...feel that my child will be accepted and welcomed in the community.	60%	94%
...know how to make changes in family routines that will benefit my child.	61%	92%
...communicate more effectively with the people who work with my child and family.	60%	94%
...feel more confident in finding ways to meet my child's needs.	63%	94%
...understand how the Early intervention system works.	61%	93%
...feel that I can handle the challenges of parenting my child with his/her needs.	63%	93%
...understand the roles of the people who work with my child and family.	61%	94%
...figure out solutions to problems as they come up.	57%	93%
...know about my child's and family's rights concerning Early Intervention services.	60%	93%
...be able to evaluate how much progress my child is making.	63%	93%
...understand my child's needs.	69%	94%
...feel that my efforts are helping my child.	72%	95%
...do things with and for my child that are good for my child's development.	71%	95%

Note that the percent of families agreeing at any level (agree, strongly, very strongly) with the items generally decreases from the items at the bottom of the list to the items at the top of the list. This is a pattern that is very stable across families and across states and essentially provides a rank-ordered list of the items in the scale in terms of how readily families agree to each item.

The survey analysis indicates that, with a very high level of confidence, one can conclude for each of the three outcomes in Indicator #4, the majority of

the responses were positive and above the stringent standards set and described in the Scoring the Survey section above. Further, the results indicate that the Virginia early intervention system is helping families to achieve many positive outcomes in addition to those specified in Indicator #4.

Setting Measurable and Rigorous Targets

OSEP requires that states set measurable and rigorous targets for improved performance on the SPP indicators. Virginia identified in its original SPP annual target percentages that would result in statistically significant improvement on this Indicator over the course of several years (through June 2013). A gain that is statistically significant is much more likely to represent real change than to be due to random ups and downs in the measure. During FFY 2013, all states developed new SPPs with targets for the next 6 years. Virginia's targets again represent a statistically significant change by the end of the 6-year period. The target percentages for the three outcomes in Indicator 4 for FFY 2014 are as follows:

- a) know their rights = 76.4%;
- b) effectively communicate their children's needs = 74.4%; and
- c) help their children develop and learn = 84.9%.

The following table indicates the actual percentage for FFY 2014 and the target percentage for each of the three outcomes in Indicator #4:

Percent of Respondents Meeting or Exceeding Each of the Standards for Indicator #4			
	Indicator 4A Percent of families who report that early intervention services helped them know their rights	Indicator 4B Percent of families who report that early intervention services helped them effectively communicate their children’s needs	Indicator 4C Percent of families who report that early intervention services helped them help their child develop and learn
Target Percentage for FFY 2014	76.4%	74.4%	84.9%
Actual Percentage For FFY 2014	75.6%	72.1%	85.4%

The actual percentages for 2015 were below the values obtained with the same survey instrument in 2014 and below the State targets for 4a and 4b. The 2015 results for 4c were higher than 2014 and above the State targets. However, these differences are not statistically significant for any of the three family outcomes. In other words, the difference may be attributable to random fluctuation alone and there is no *meaningful* difference in the results compared to last year.

Statewide Results Related to Family Experiences in Early intervention

The table below displays the percentage of families reporting: (a) strongly or very strongly agreeing with each of the four items on the survey that address the family’s experience in early intervention, and (b) any category of agree for each of the four items. Across the four items, the percentage of families strongly or very strongly agreeing exceeded 70%, and the percentage of families agreeing in any category was above 93%.

Percent of Families Expressing Agreement with Items Pertaining to Experiences with Early Interventions		
Item	% Strongly/ Very strongly agree	% Agree in any category
What I say about my child and family is understood and respected.	71%	95%
The people who work with my child and family answer our questions.	74%	95%
I can easily get in touch with my service coordinator.	72%	93%
The services provided to my child and family help reach the outcomes/goals that are important to my family.	71%	93%

Improvement Planning

As explained previously, the items in the IFS are essentially rank-ordered by how readily families agree with them. When looking at the table above that lists the specific items on the IFS, the items that are lower on the list build toward the items that are higher on the list. In other words, a family who strongly agrees with the statement that they “Feel that I can handle the challenges of parenting my child with his/her needs” most likely strongly or very strongly agreed with the 7 items below that on the list of IFS items (i.e., understand roles, figure out

solutions, know rights, able to evaluate progress, understand child's needs, feel my efforts are helping my child, do things that are good for child's development). Therefore, when we are looking to improve on one of the outcomes in Indicator 4, we can look to the items below the one we want to improve in order to identify possible improvement strategies. In particular, it is helpful to understand the following when using the survey results for improvement planning:

- The items lowest on the list are about the relationship between the family and their child.
- As you move up the table, the items are about the relationship between the family and their service provider(s).
- Finally, at the top of the table, the survey items reflect the relationship between the family and their community.

In addition, while performance percentages on the outcomes in Indicator #4 are derived from the IFS, the information from the four questions pertaining to families' experiences in early intervention provides information about where improvements may be needed in order to improve the family outcomes.