

What Will it Take to Improve Outcomes for Young Children with Disabilities?

*Scaling-up the Use of Evidence
Based Practices*

OSEP Project Director's
Conference

July 2008



Introduction

- States are now measuring and reporting child and family outcomes
- Improving states' outcomes is becoming an increasing focus
- We argue that doing so will require greater use of evidence-based practices



Session Objectives

- Discuss the challenges/issues related to scaling-up the use of evidence-based practices that lead to measurably improved early childhood outcomes
- Propose possible solutions to the challenges
- Highlight opportunities
- Share insights from various panelists perspectives



Panelists

- **Lise Fox**, University of South Florida representing the TA perspective
- **Charlie Greenwood**, University of Kansas representing the HE perspective
- **Beth Rous**, University of Kentucky representing the State perspective
- **Moderator**, Jennifer Tschantz, OSEP representing the Federal perspective



Overview

- Brief background to OSEP early childhood outcomes work
- Each panelist will share (from their perspective):
 - Challenges and Issues
 - Possible solutions and opportunities
- Discussion
- Summary



Outcomes Background

- 1994 Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA)
- 2002 Performance Assessment Rating Tool (PART)
- 2003 OSEP funds the ECO Center
- 2005 OSEP announces the child and family outcomes States must report on
- 2008 Early child outcome data from States are reported



Part C and 619 Child Outcomes

Percent of children who demonstrate improved:

- Positive social emotional skills (including positive social relationships)
- Acquisition and use of knowledge and skills (including early language/communication [and early literacy])
- Use of appropriate behaviors to meet their needs



More on the OSEP Child Outcomes

- Based on input from the field
- Referred to as functional outcomes---
Important behaviors acquired and displayed by young children in everyday settings that cut across domains
- Focus is on how the child carries out meaningful behaviors in a meaningful context

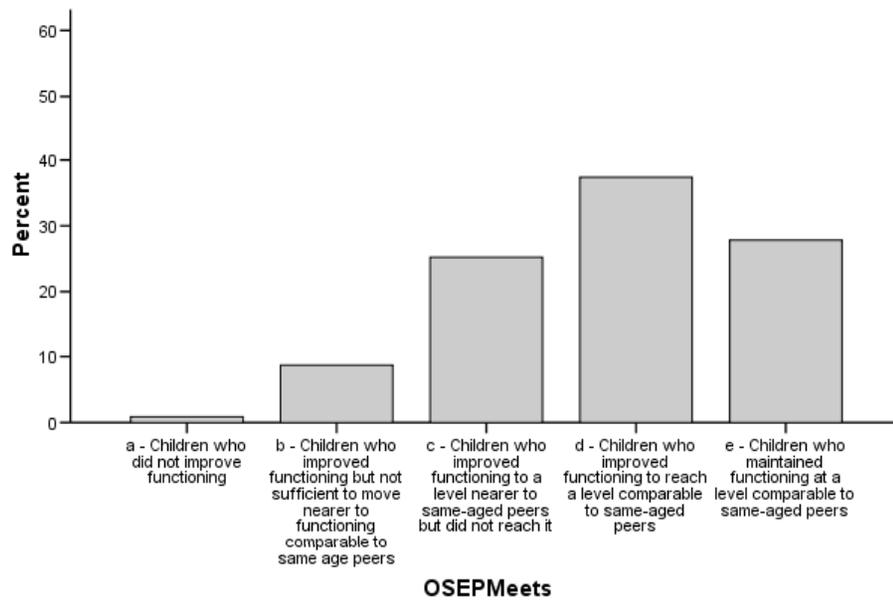


Reporting Categories

- a. % of children who did not improve functioning
- b. % of children who improved functioning but not sufficient to move nearer to functioning comparable to same-aged peers
- c. % of children who improved functioning to a level nearer to same-aged peers but did not reach it
- d. % of children who improved functioning to reach a level comparable to same-aged peers
- e. % of children who maintained functioning at a level comparable to same-aged peers

Sample of State's Outcome Distributions

OSEPMeets Needs



OSEP Knowledge & Skills

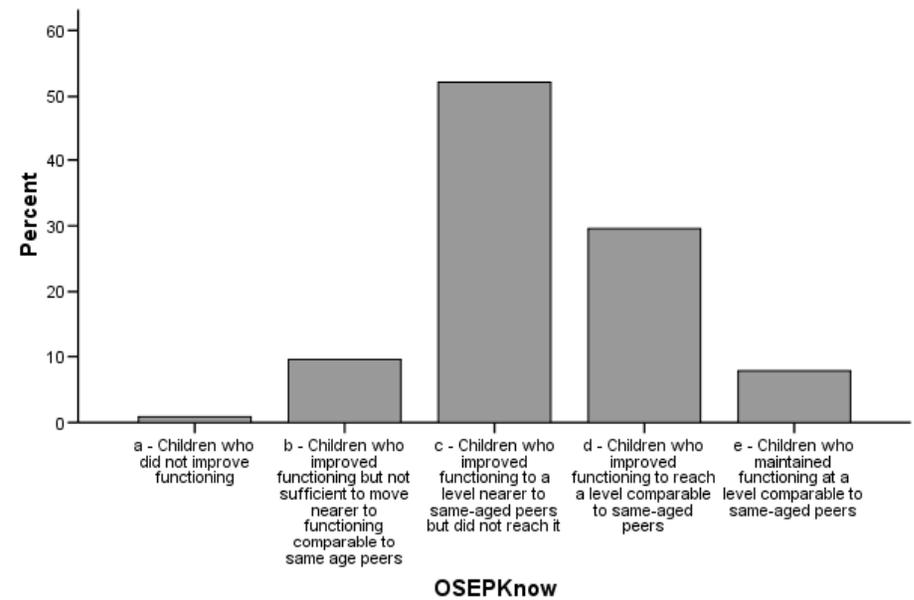
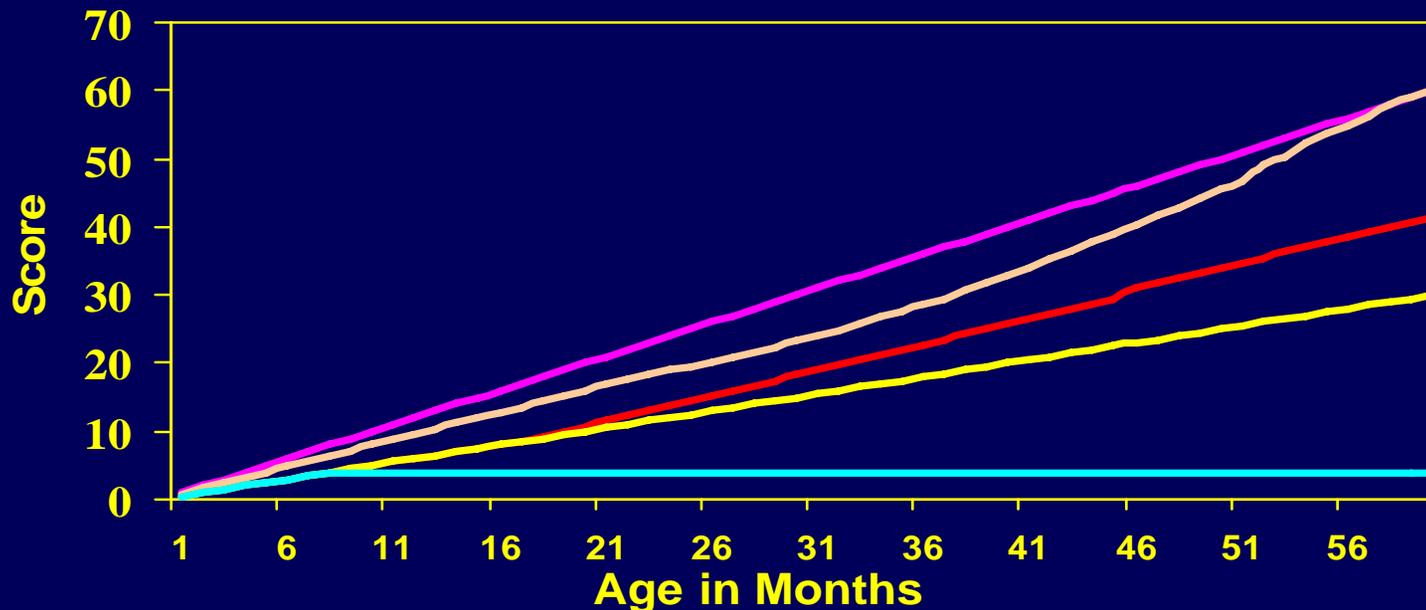


Illustration of 5 OSEP Categories as Developmental Trajectories



- Maintained functioning comparable to age peers**
- Achieved functioning comparable to age peers**
- Moved nearer functioning comparable to age peers**
- Made progress; no change in trajectory**
- Did not make progress**



Where are we now?

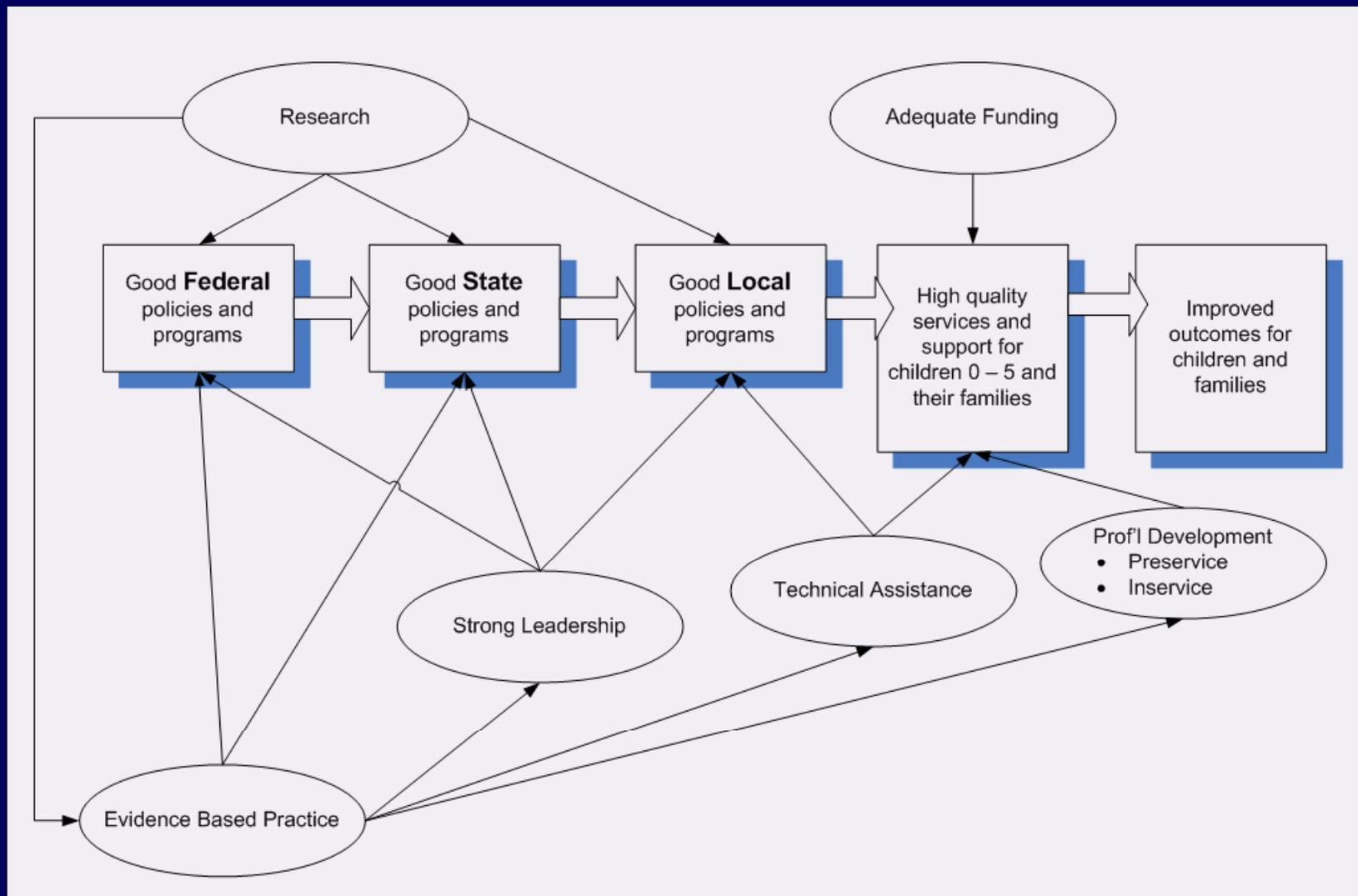
- All states sent in child outcome data in Feb. 2008, some with very low n
- Most states are collecting these data for program improvement purposes as well as for federal reporting
- Focus over the next few years is on the quality of the data



Where are we going?

- Focus is moving towards improving outcomes through a system of resources and improved policies and practices
- What can be done to move children in lower Reporting Categories into higher categories (i.e., from a. to b., b. to c., etc.)?

A System for Producing Good Child and Family Outcomes





Where are we going?

- Focus to be guided by trends in annual outcomes (Summative Evaluation)
- Knowing where the system breaks down and what to do about will require Formative Evaluation?
- Measures and interventions will need to inform one another



Lenses Employed for Presenting Perspectives

- Federal
- TA
- State
- University
- With embedded perspective of:
 - Families
 - Local Providers



Federal Perspective Issues & Challenges

- Reaching various professionals and caregivers of young children with disabilities
- Helping build state capacity in early childhood (TA & PD)
- Coordinating federal efforts to bring research to practice
- Definition of evidence-based practice
- Communicating and collaborating with research funding entities
- Connecting work of all IDEA Part D investments
- Facilitating partnerships between States and Universities

Federal Perspective Possible Solutions & Opportunities

- Funding early childhood “content” TA centers with focus on state capacity and scaling up
- Emphasis on Evidence-based Practice (EBP) in the curricula of personnel development grant’s
- Interagency work
 - Good Start Grow Smart (GSGS)
 - Interagency School Readiness Consortium (ISRC)
 - TA coordination
- General Supervision Enhancement Grants (GSEG) and State Personnel Development Grants (SPDG)



Examples of OSEP Early Childhood Content TA Centers

- Center for Early Literacy Learning
(CELL)

www.earlyliteracylearning.org/

- Technical Assistance Center for Social
Emotional Intervention (TACSEI)

www.challengingbehavior.org



TA Perspective Issues and Challenges

- Programs attempt to adopt evidence-based models without adequate attention to or investment in the infrastructure support for implementation fidelity and sustainability
- States lack an infrastructure for providing ongoing training and technical assistance to programs and practitioners that includes components necessary for implementation fidelity (e.g., coaching)
- Programs are limited in their experience with and systems for using data for data-based decision making around intervention practices and models
- Program funding, resources, service allocation and delivery models are insufficient for the implementation of evidence-based practice



TA Perspective Opportunities and Solutions

- Partnerships across agencies, programs, and organizations; consensus about priorities for All children provide critical foundation for systemic change
- Broad conceptual models about intervention practices creates opportunities for coherence in practices
- Accountability to outcomes within multiple systems creates the motivation to use data and a focus on adoption & implementation of EBP
- New technologies for professional development: efficiency and effectiveness

State Systems Perspective Issues & Challenges

- Coordinating state efforts related to training/other PD activities
- Communicating evidence based practice across early childhood entities within the EC system who are at various levels of education & experience.
- Educating state agency staff on link between evidence based and research based practice
- Supporting states in long term planning as opposed to short term compliance
- Implementing high cost systems in a budget reduction environment
- Understanding and addressing linkages between and across other critical indicators (C2, C8, B11, B12, B6) and outcomes

State Systems Perspective

Possible Solutions & Opportunities

- Support at the federal level to enhance coordination and communication across TA & D Centers working in states
- Provide guidance to TA& D centers on need for and how to gather information about state systems regardless of focus of TA.
- Agreement at national level on defining evidence based and research based practice
- Provide information to states on linkages between and across other critical indicators (C2, C8, B11, B12, B6) and outcomes



University Perspective Issues and Challenges

- Partnering with the State to build, improve, and coordinate capacity to serve
- Creating an environment that fosters and values faculty engagement in research and development
- Promoting the understanding that “Best Practice” is “Evidence-based Practice Implemented with Fidelity”
- Empowering every teacher and program to improve their practice through use of measurement tools that inform intervention
- Achieving and maintaining the capacity to conduct technical assistance

University Perspective Solutions and Opportunities

- Maintaining a priority on developing of new and improving existing Evidence-based Practices (EBP), tiers 2 and 3 in particular
- Maintaining a priority on production of intervention research syntheses, and directing efforts towards research that is needed next
- Helping states use their OSEP outcome data to monitor progress over time and undertake improvement initiatives

Multi-Year Relationships Between and Within OSEP Outcomes

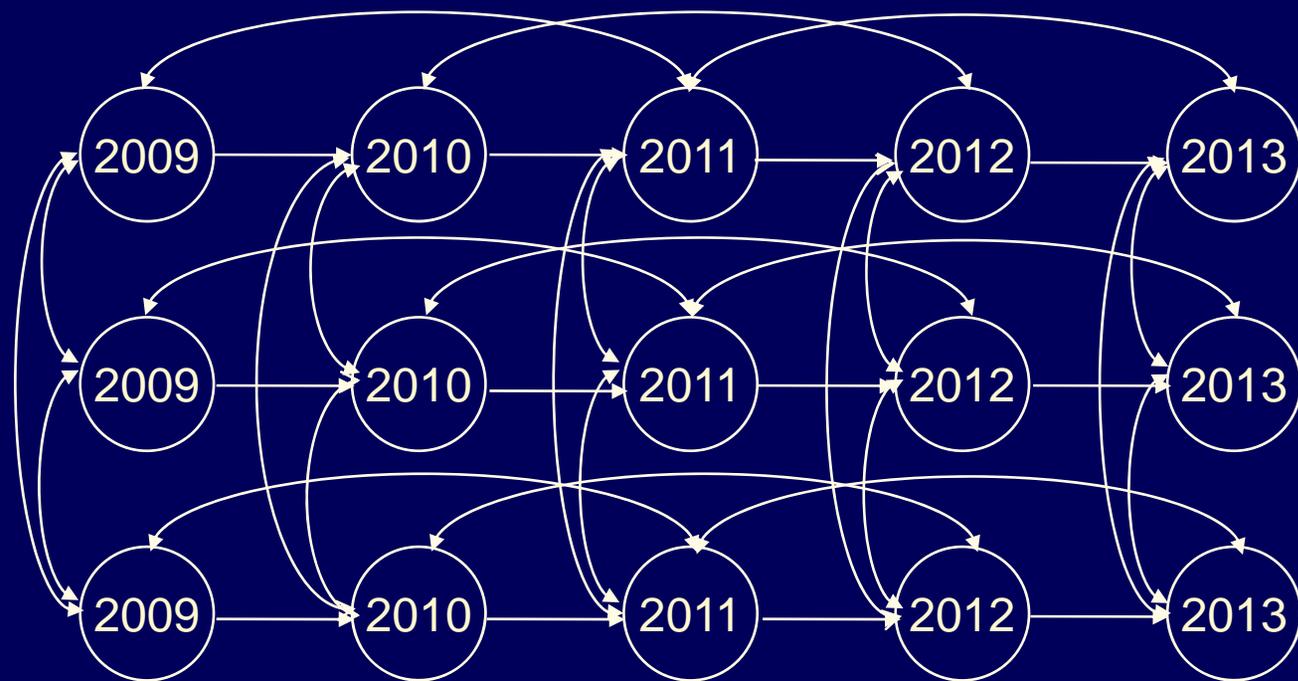
OSEP Outcomes

Annual Reporting

Social

Knowledge

Meets Needs



A Growth Model for Explaining Two OSEP Outcomes

Explanatory Variables

Program Quality

Teacher Quality

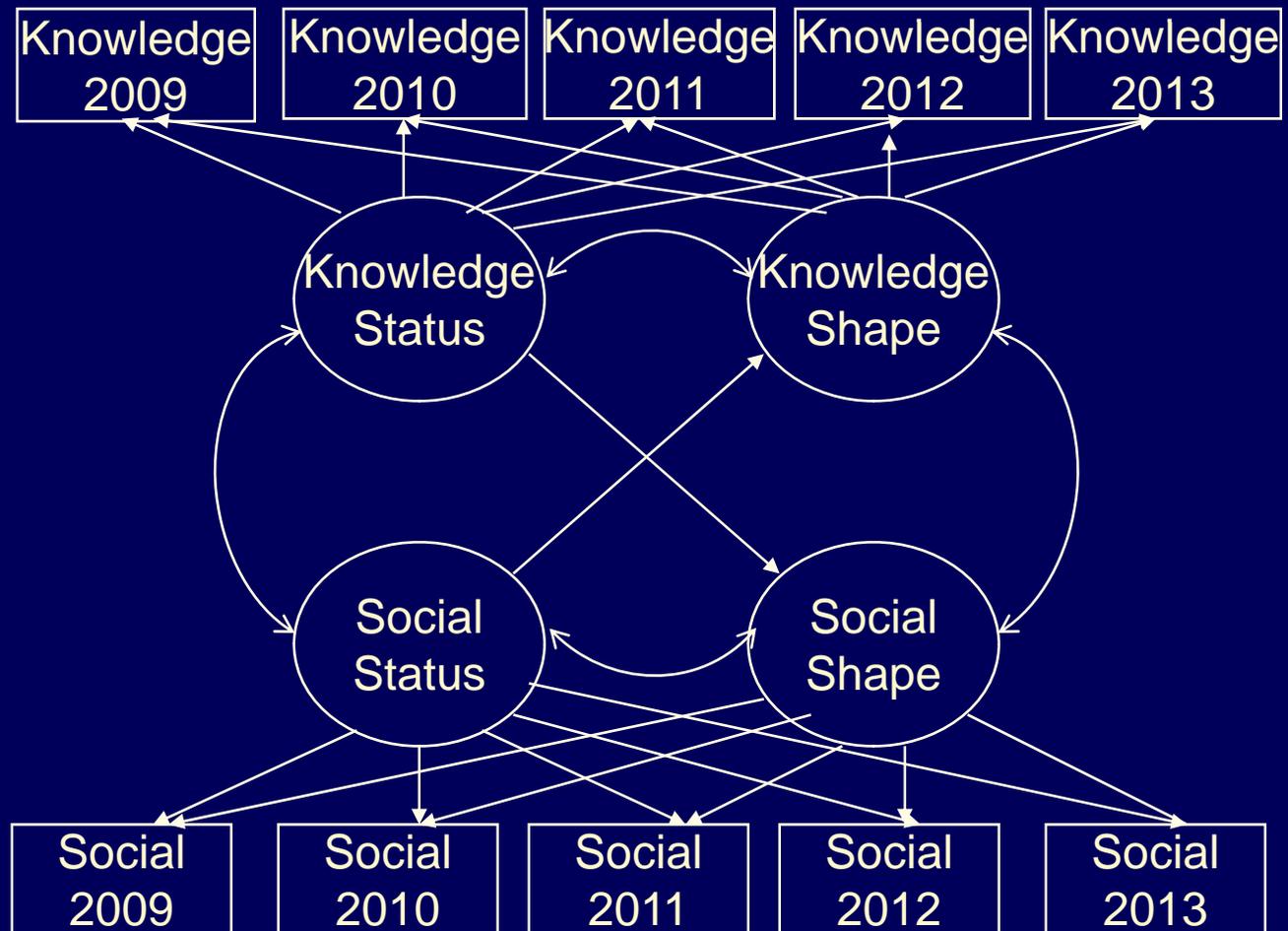
EB Practices

Fidelity

Technical Assistance

Exposure/Intensity

Family Outcomes



University Perspective Solutions and Opportunities

- Producing a workforce that is knowledgeable, skilled in, and understanding of the use of EBP
 - Teachers and Administrators
 - University Faculty and Researchers
- Preparing EC special educators for “blended” work in emerging PreK programs; as well as more established EC programs (e.g., Head Start)
- Developing new, and improving existing measurement practices with implications for intervention decision making.

Limitations and Possibilities for Using the OSEP Outcome Data

CAN THE DATA TELL US...

- What providers/teachers need to know when an individual child is; or is not, making progress?
- When a provider/teacher should do something different or continue business as usual?
- How to individualize and intensify intervention on a weekly and monthly basis?
- What to do differently in homes, centers, and preschools to promote greater progress?

What are the implications at:

Federal Level

State Level

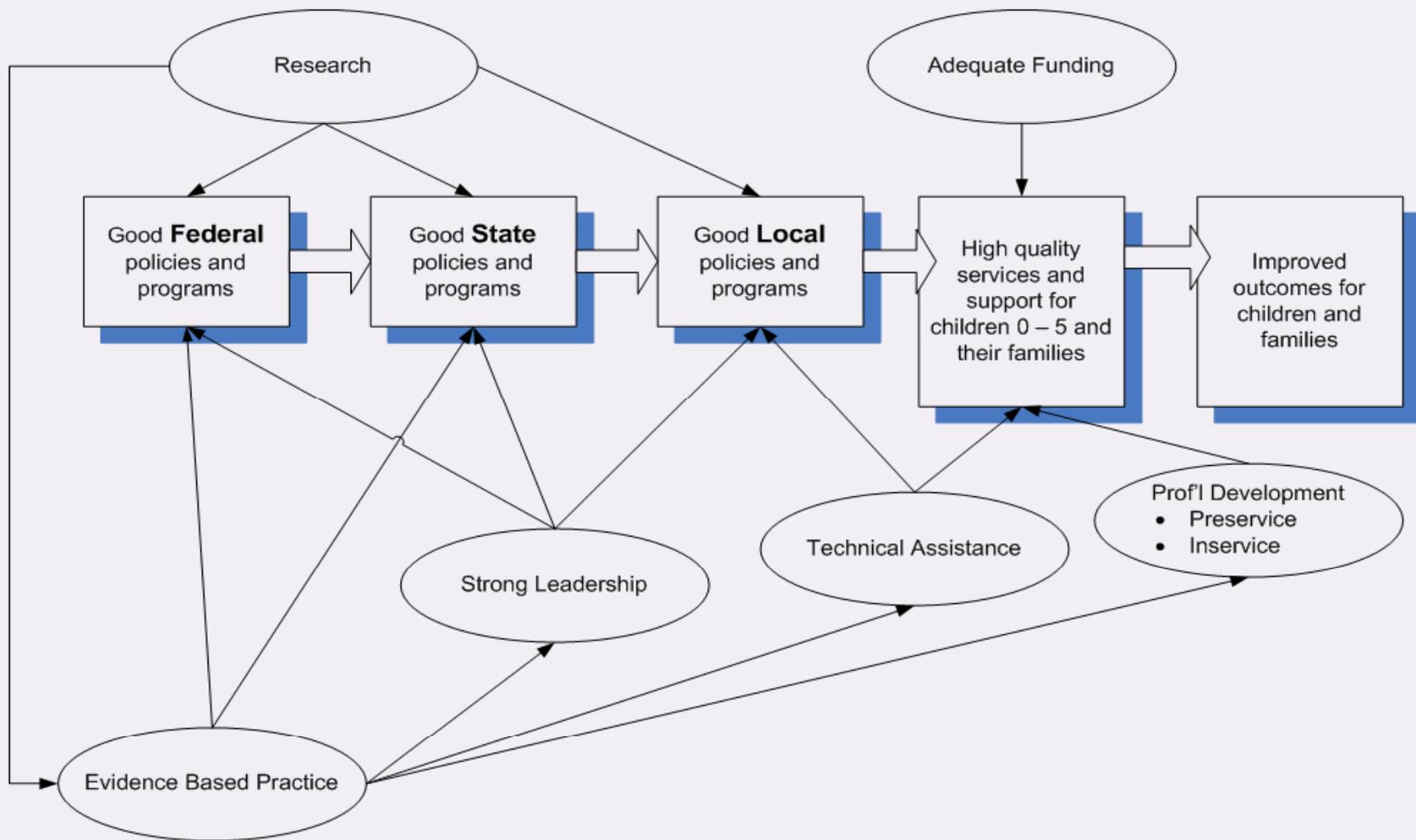
TA&D Level

University

Level

Local Level

A System for Producing Good Child and Family Outcomes





Discussion / Q&A

- Reaction to presentations
- Specific questions
- What other important perspectives are we missing in this discussion?
- Do you see a role for your work?



Summary

- Many Challenges/Issues are similar across various perspectives:
 - Multiple ec programs/systems and different levels of the system
 - Defining and implementing Evidence-based practices
 - Limited resources
 - Using data
- Possible solutions and opportunities themes:
 - Connecting, collaborating, coordinating, and communicating
 - Data-based decision making