



# Center on Enhancing Early Learning Outcomes: Year 2 Evaluation Report

October 1, 2013 - September 30, 2014

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### Introduction

The Center on Enhancing Early Learning Outcomes (CEELO) is one of 22 comprehensive centers funded by the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Elementary and Secondary Programs. CEELO was designed to increase the capacity of State Education Agencies (SEAs) to implement comprehensive and aligned early learning systems to increase the number of children from birth through third grade that are prepared to succeed in school.

Between October 1, 2013 and September 30, 2014 CEELO engaged in broad categories of activities: The activities are: (1) Responsive TA; (2) Strategic TA; (3) Information Resources and Technology Supported TA.

CEELO engaged in a participatory evaluation in which data collected over the course of Year 2 were analyzed and triangulated with data collected by Rutgers university graduate students under the direction of Dr. W. Steven Barnett and Dr. Sharon Ryan. They collected interview data from 15 state early education administrators to provide an independent source of data. The evaluation was designed to: a) assess the degree to which CEELO accomplished planned activities; b) evaluate the nature and quality of CEELO activities; and c) assess the degree to which target stakeholders used the TA and other CELO activities in their work and reported outcomes; and (d) examine the factors that supported or impeded SEA's efforts to build capacity to implement policy for young children.

### Summary of Findings

CEELO exceeded most targets regarding number, type, quality, relevance and usefulness of activities completed in Year 2.

CEELO Exceeded Year 2 Responsive TA Targets. In Year 2, CEELO TA staff:

- Regularly communicated with federal and private TA providers in the RTT-ELC TA Consortium, regional Centers, NAES-SDE and others as needed
- Provided TA to 8 RTT-ELC states in collaboration with the RTT-TA center
- Presented at 15 national and regional meetings
- Addressed 100% of the 48 information requests received
- Completed 101 TA requests and began addressing an addition 18 TA requests

CEELO Exceeded Most Strategic TA Targets. In Year 2, CEELO

- Successfully held a National Roundtable on Improving Teaching Quality Birth through Third Grade in which 132 individuals attended, representing 48 states and territories
- Facilitated 4 Webinars
- Successfully facilitated Peer Learning Communities



- Co-hosted a *Finance and Governance Expert* meeting in collaboration with the National Governor's Association
- Took steps to launch one SEA Leadership Academy

CEELO exceeded nearly all information resources and technology-supported TA benchmarks:

- CEELO posted resources, new publications and updates to the CEELO website
- CEELO posted more than **200** additional resources to the Resource Library
- CEELO developed **7** new publications to address policy and research questions posed by early childhood specialists in state departments of education
- CEELO developed **11** Fast Facts and as of September 30, had posted 9 to the web with 2 ready to be posted in October 2014
- CEELO developed an interactive online Birth-3<sup>rd</sup> Grade Standards database, viewable by state
- The members' only page of the website has been developed and will be pilot tested and launched in the first half of Year 3

CEELO's Assistance Has Led to Desired Outcomes:

- TA recipients report that responsive TA has been used to build capacity in a variety of ways; most respondents reported that CEELO TA increased their knowledge about a specific topic and that they shared information with colleagues; over half of the respondents noted that TA provided them with authoritative information on early childhood initiatives, helped them strengthen relationships, and informed practice and about half indicated that the TA raised new questions and informed policies.
- Recipients of CEELO technology-enhanced TA reported that the information and resources have had a positive impact on their own knowledge and ability to craft policy.
- Key informants report that CEELO has provided content expertise, assisted with connections among other state early childhood specialists, informed policy and practice and helped build state capacity to support early learning.

## Discussion and Recommendations

CEELO continues to meet and exceed performance benchmarks established in yearly management plans. CEELO TA is highly rated and respondents report that TA is useful and relevant to policy makers and information resources are highly relevant and filling a gap in research-based information. In Year 3, CEELO is considering the following factors as the center engages in ongoing activities:



- In some states early childhood is not a priority issue for senior leaders in the SEA and therefore CEELO should continue to reach out to the comprehensive center to determine if there are indirect ways of informing these state's early childhood agendas.
- Early childhood administrators in some states are new to their positions and need tailored support. It is important that CEELO continue to reach out to state specialists and provide them with information about current national and state trends and serve as a resource regarding history and context of issues facing the states.
- CEELO can continue to leverage existing resources and supports to meet state needs. Specialists reported that they are facing initiative overload and appreciate tools, guidance, and advice about how to best leverage existing resources.
- CEELO's communication and dissemination strategy can continue to build awareness.
- CEELO can continue to design TA to intentionally build and align systems across agencies and at the district and school levels.



## INTRODUCTION

The Center on Enhancing Early Learning Outcomes (CEELO) is one of 22 comprehensive centers funded by the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Elementary and Secondary Programs. CEELO's TA is designed to build the capacity of State Education Agencies (SEAs) to implement comprehensive and aligned early learning systems in order to increase the number of children from birth through third grade that are prepared to succeed in school. CEELO's five objectives are to:

1. Improve states' knowledge about and use of early childhood comprehensive assessment systems
2. Enhance states' use of assessment data and other information to improve program quality
3. Help states increase the knowledge and skills of the early learning workforce
4. Strengthen the alignment of birth through 3rd grade educational policies and systems
5. Increase the coordination of resources and policies across statewide systems

CEELO's Year 2 management plan identifies four major tasks to build SEA internal and organizational capacity to lead sustained improvements in opportunities and outcomes for children birth through third grade. The four tasks represent an intentional approach to delivering highly relevant and useful content in ways that maximize the use of technology and leverage the knowledge and expertise of our federal technical assistance (TA) partners and other national experts. The tasks are: (1) Responsive TA; (2) Strategic TA; (3) Information Resources; and (4) Technology Supported TA. CEELO developed a logic model that illustrates the links between CEELO activities, desired outputs, short-term outcomes, mid-term outcomes and the long-term goal to build SEA capacity. (See **Graphic 1.**)



Graphic 1. CEELO Logic Model

Inputs	Activities	Outputs	Short-Term Outcomes	Mid-term Outcomes	Long Term Goal
Grant funding Expertise Organizational Expertise Other comprehensive and regional centers State networks and contacts	Offer Responsive TA Offer Strategic TA Develop products and materials	Number and quality of responsive, strategic and technology-enhanced TA opportunities Number of products Percentage of recipients who report products and TA are high quality	Improve stakeholder knowledge of research, best practice and effective policies in five priority areas	Improve policies in each of the 5 priority areas	Build/strengthen SEA capacity to support birth through third grade services that lead to improvements in early learning outcomes

The logic model guided the development of the evaluation questions, analyses and reporting framework, which are presented in the next section.

## EVALUATION DESIGN

Two CEELO staff members with experience directing research and evaluation projects led the evaluation of CEELO Year 2 activities, in collaboration with the project director. To provide further independent data collection Rutgers University graduate students conducted interviews with selected TA recipients and provided input regarding the design of the end of year survey used to collect data from CEELO stakeholders and collaborators.

The evaluation was designed to answer the following questions:

1. Did the project complete planned activities during Year 2 (October 1, 2013 – September 30, 2014)? Did the project meet the identified benchmarks noted in the Year 2 management plan?
2. How did target stakeholders perceive the quality, relevance, and usefulness of CEELO activities? What suggestions did stakeholders have for improvements?



3. How did target stakeholders use the TA and other CEELO activities in their work and what outcomes did stakeholders report resulting from CEELO?
4. What factors support or impede SEA’s efforts to build capacity to implement policy for young children? In what ways can CEELO improve TA to achieve desired changes?

CEELO collected formative data on Year 2 activities, from October 1, 2013 through September 30, 2014; summative data was collected between October 2014 and December 2014. The findings reported here are based on an analysis of: a) data entered into the CEELO TA database, b) point of service TA participant surveys of webinars, annual roundtable, and conference presentations; c) year-end surveys of TA recipients and collaborators, and d) semi-structured interviews with 15 state early education administrators representing 10 states. A snapshot of the key methods is presented in **Table 1**. Further information about the data sources are presented in **Appendix A**.

**Table 1: Data Collection Activities**

Evaluation Activity	Description	Purpose	Number Year 1	Number Year 2
<b>Surveys</b>	Year End Surveys			
	State specialists	Obtain evaluation data regarding quality and impact of TA and assess current needs and issues	212	76
	Collaborators	Learn about effectiveness, quality, and impact of collaborations	NA	16
	Post TA/info line response surveys	Learn about perceptions of quality and usefulness of information	16	59
	Post Webinar surveys	Learn about perceptions of quality and usefulness of information	84	130
	Roundtable surveys	Learn about perceptions of quality, usefulness and desired next steps	73	113
	Other surveys	Assess needs of target audience and obtain feedback on targeted activities	43	90
<b>Interviews</b>	CEELO TA recipients -	Learn about the nature, effectiveness,	11	15



Evaluation Activity	Description	Purpose	Number Year 1	Number Year 2
	State early education administrators	and impact of TA Learn about future needs		
	Correspondence with state specialists who have not received TA from CEELO	Learn about reasons for not requesting TA, needs, and ways we might be of assistance in the future	NA	6
<b>Database and log reviews</b>	Reviews of TA database, Info line database, and logs produced by CEELO TA providers	Determine the states we have provided TA and info responses Describe the nature and intensity of the TA Analyze data to create “vignettes” that describe the nature, intensity and impact of the TA Analyze quality of the data to improve consistency and usefulness of data		
<b>Document review</b>	Project communications Web analytics CEELO products (e.g., policy briefs and documents)	Determine number of resources posted on website, number of publications by type, etc. to inform whether met targets in Year 2 Management Plan		

## FINDINGS

Based on the analyses of the data, the findings are presented below for each of the evaluation questions, as follows:

1. Did CEELO implement the activities as described in the Year 2 management plan? Were planned targets met?
2. Was CEELO TA of high quality and relevant and useful to state early education administrators and collaborators?
3. Did CEELO TA assist state administrators in building capacity to implement policy for children birth through third grade? What specific policy outcomes were achieved?
4. What did we learn about how state policy context supports or impedes efforts to build capacity? How can CEELO improve delivery of TA that builds SEA capacity to implement policy for children birth through third grade?





**Evaluation Question 1: Did CEELO implement activities as described in the Year 2 Management Plan? Were planned targets met?**

**CEELO Met All Responsive TA Benchmarks**

Each region of the country, and most states in each region, received responsive TA from CEELO. CEELO provided TA to and coordinated activities with early childhood specialists in state education agencies (SEAs), early childhood stakeholders representing other state agencies, regional centers and other comprehensive content centers, and other TA providers. As illustrated in **Table 2**, CEELO staff met or exceeded planned outputs for regular collaborative calls, joint TA requests, presentations and responses to information and technical assistance requests.

**Table 2: Responsive TA**

Planned Outputs	Actual outputs	Description
Collaborate with RTT-ELC TA Consortium, Regional and Content Centers, NAECs-SDE, and other national and federal TA providers/organizations	202	During Year 2, CEELO TA staff regularly communicated with federal and private TA providers in the RTT-ELC TA Consortium, regional Centers, NAES-SDE and others as needed.
Contribute to at least <b>3</b> joint TA requests with federal partners to RTT-ELC states	8	During Year 2, CEELO TA staff provided TA to 8 RTT-ELC states in collaboration with the RTT-TA center.
Attend and/or present at <b>6</b> national/regional meetings on topics of relevance to SEA and CEELO priorities	15	During Year 2, CEELO TA staff presented at 15 national and regional meetings.
Respond to 100% of information requests	48/48 (100%)	During Year 2, CEELO addressed 100% of the 48 information requests received.
Respond to 100% of TA requests.	101/101 (100%)	During Year 2, CEELO completed 101 TA requests and began addressing an addition 18 TA requests.

**CEELO participated in regular calls with federal and private TA providers.** The project directors regularly participated in the RTT-ELC consortium calls. In addition, CEELO TA liaisons participated in RTT state calls in which each of the participating TA providers, shared updates about the nature of the TA they were providing to the states, and sought opportunities to coordinate work. The coordination led to joint TA in many states, which we describe below.

**CEELO coordinated activities with the National Association of Early Childhood Specialists in State Departments of Education (NAECs-SDE) through regular communication.** CEELO’s project directors meet monthly with the Executive Committee of the NAECs-SDE; and staff regularly participates on monthly policy committee calls. In Year 2, CEELO identified 2 co-chairs of the Annual Roundtable, and these staff and others participate on the program planning committee of the CEELO Roundtable. The partnership between NAECs-SDE and CEELO led the publication of a statement on Kindergarten policies



(“K-Power” statement), with CEELO advising NAECs-SDE on dissemination strategies to lead to support awareness and use of the statement within states.

**CEELO conducted joint TA requests to eight RTT-ELC states, far exceeding the target of three.** CEELO provided information to RTT-ELC states as well as in-depth TA in response to the coordination with the RTT-ELC TA liaisons. **Box 1** provides brief illustrations of the nature and scope of the TA provided to RTT-ELC states and the ways that CEELO coordinated with the RTT-ELC TA and other TA providers in addressing these requests.

### **Box 1. Selected Examples of Collaborative TA to RTT-ELC states**

To support the **Illinois** Governor’s Office of Early Childhood Development in producing an evidence-based approach to prioritizing eligibility, and targeting services, for the state’s Preschool for All program for children 3 to 5 years old, CEELO provided research and recommendations to inform the state’s discussions about how to best increase access to quality early childhood programs and services for the most vulnerable children.

CEELO provided assistance to a contractor developing the logic model for **Colorado’s RTT-ELC grant**. Colorado was interested in learning from CEELO’s work in Minnesota to develop a logic model to guide implementation and evaluation of RTT project activities. The Model is designed to help the **Colorado** Office of Early Childhood implement and track outcomes of their state plan for early childhood, and inform stakeholders and the Colorado Leadership Commission.

CEELO and the **New England Regional Center** consulted with the **RTT-ELC TA** providers to develop materials to support **Massachusetts’** work to support a more seamless and coherent professional development system. As part of this collaboration, CEELO developed an annotated bibliography of key resources, provided the Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care (EEC) names of key contacts in other states working to create more cohesive professional development systems, and co-facilitated a full-day retreat of early childhood stakeholders and professional development providers in collaboration with EEC and the New England Regional Center.

At the National Inclusion Institute, in collaboration with the **RTT-TA** liaison and the ECTA Center, CEELO developed information to support state’s considerations of inclusion of children with disabilities in the conceptualization, development and implementation of Quality Rating and Improvement Systems (QRIS). CEELO developed pre-institute workshop and provided assistance to **Delaware, Georgia, Illinois, and Pennsylvania** early childhood specialists who were seeking ways to assure the QRIS addressed issues of inclusion.

**CEELO TA staff presented at 15 national and regional meetings sponsored by other organizations on topics of relevance to SEAs and CEELO priorities, far exceeding the benchmark of 6.** In addition to far exceeding the initial benchmark, CEELO staff or consultants attended numerous meetings such as the Office of Special Education, Center for IDEA Early Childhood Data Systems (DASY) Annual conference,



the Head Start Research Conference, and the National Early Childhood Inclusion Institute. See **Appendix B** for a list of conference presentations conducted in Year 2.

**During Year 2, CEELO Responded to 101 TA Requests from 41 States and Territories on each of the CEELO priority issues—about double the number completed in Year 1.**<sup>1</sup> CEELO staff also began or continued working on an additional 18 TA activities of different levels of intensity. During the second year of operation, CEELO staff completed **29** targeted, **56** intensive, and **16** general TA requests.<sup>2</sup> TA was provided in collaboration with the following regional centers: Appalachia, Northeast, South Central, West, Pacific, Midwest, Great Lakes, Southeast, and Central. **Box 2** provides an illustration of the range of TA CEELO offered during Year 2.

### **Box 2. Illustrations of Range of TA Provided by CEELO in Year Two**

**General:** The RTT-ELC Annual Grantee Meeting on April 29–30, 2014 brought together grantees and stakeholders from states across the country. CEELO staff helped to plan and facilitated a session on how states can successfully create and implement kindergarten entry assessment (KEA) systems and developing and implementing comprehensive assessment systems for children birth through third grade.

**Intensive:** CEELO assisted **Indiana's** revision of the state's early learning standards to align the standards with the newly adopted K-12 curriculum and to provide examples of approaches other states have used to ensure the standards are developmentally appropriate and evidence-based. CEELO participated in a kick-off Webinar, co-facilitated a series of meetings with the Indiana Department of Education staff, and reviewed the draft standards developed by key stakeholders in the state. The Great Lakes Comprehensive Center TA staff with expertise in language and literacy assisted the language and literacy workgroup with the development of the standards during the meetings

**Intensive:** CEELO supported **Mississippi** in developing a pre-K monitoring process. CEELO explored protocols used by other states; developed materials based on the NIEER Yearbook findings, supported the Mississippi Department of Education in preparing protocols, and supported the use of a Technical Advisory Committee expertise in this process.

**Intensive:** In collaboration with the **Center on Innovations in Learning (CIL)**, CEELO provided TA to **New Hampshire** and other Indistar states by creating a new set of early childhood indicators that can be used by School Improvement Grant (SIG) Turnaround Schools. CEELO TA staff attended the Indistar Summit with the state team in New Mexico, worked with state staff to support the roll out of the new school improvement framework, co-presented the newly created early childhood Indistar indicators at the Indistar Renewal Summit in Lincoln, New Hampshire on July 15, and co-sponsored a Webinar to introduce early childhood

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<sup>1</sup> The number of TA requests reported completed in last year's annual report was 39 but in Year 2 the database was reviewed and an additional 13 TA activities that began in Year 1 had been completed by the end of the fiscal year but had not been coded as completed.

<sup>2</sup> Targeted TA is based on a specific, and time limited need, such as a regional meeting; general TA is defined as broad dissemination of information, such as a conference presentation; intensive TA is a targeted, state-specific request, for example to revise a policy or practice.



specialists in state departments of education to Indistar and SIG Coordinators to the new early childhood indicators.

**Targeted:** CEELO sponsored a regional meeting in New England to convene early childhood specialists to discuss Kindergarten Entry Assessment design and implementation issues. Key stakeholders from **Connecticut, New Hampshire, and Massachusetts** met in Waltham, Massachusetts with CEELO TA liaisons.

**Targeted:** CEELO along with CSSSO co-sponsored a series of “Chief’s Forums” in **Indiana, Maine, Oregon, and Mississippi** in which the Chief State School Officer participated in activities designed to improve early learning opportunities for children from birth through third grade. Indiana sponsored three regional meetings to engage early care and education stakeholders in the proposed early learning agenda. Maine sponsored teams of preschool teachers, teachers and administrators from throughout the state to participate in a full-day professional development activity to examine opportunities for aligning practices to support improved early language and literacy outcomes. Mississippi sponsored a Chief’s Forum to support the state-funded pre-K program; and Oregon brought 400 stakeholders together around early learning hubs in the fall of 2014. CEELO staff facilitated 2 peer learning calls among state administrators to share agendas, lessons learned, and plan for follow up to the Summits.

**CEELO responded to 100% of the 48 information requests made across 13 regions on the range of CEELO priority topics.** Information requests were received from SEA’s, TA providers, school districts, non-profits, and intermediaries such as a consultant that was supporting a school district in developing an early childhood strategic plan. Information requests related to each of CEELO’s priority topics and the scope of the response varied. The number of requests per topic is as follows:<sup>3</sup> assessment (9), birth through third grade (10), child outcomes (8), data (5), early childhood systems (10), SEA capacity building (7), and workforce (9). The scope and intensity of requests varied, from general resources on a topic to specific tools. Examples include:

- A project officer at the Office of Policy, Research and Evaluation asked CEELO to speak with staff from the National Research Center on Hispanic Children and Families so the new center could learn about the research interests and needs of early childhood TA providers concerning Hispanic families.
- States requested information about resources to support new teacher evaluation systems in early care and education, how definitions of school readiness have changed over the decades, and a number of requests asked for specific tools, curriculum or approaches to assessment. For example, one to state asked for tools that could offer guidance and evidence for observers of early childhood classrooms/teachers, another asked how to best align observation tools to professional practice rubrics, and another asked about the best approaches for evaluating pre-K programs.

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<sup>3</sup> Note: Some requests fell into multiple areas, hence the sum will be greater than the total 48 requests



Many of the information requests from state education agencies led to TA requests and some of the information requests led to the development of specific products designed to address a need that was articulated by multiple requesters. For example, some states asked about evidence-based curriculum and CEELO used the information response to develop “Fast Facts” posted to the CEELO website. Similarly, a number of requesters were interested in the cost of early care and education and to address this need CEELO is focusing Year 3 resources and activities on providing states tools they can use to address their questions.

### CEELO Exceeded All Strategic TA Benchmarks

CEELO provided Strategic TA to nearly all states and territories, across all CEELO priority topics, and employing a range of strategies. Specifically, CEELO successfully planned and carried out the annual meeting Roundtable, held Webinars, and planned and convened peer learning communities. CEELO made significant progress in the design of the Leadership Academy and developing the process for selecting the first year’s Leadership Fellows, with the first meeting scheduled for the beginning of project Year 3. These activities are described in **Table 3** below.

**Table 3: Strategic TA**

Strategic TA Activity	Description and Number of Participants/Events
1- 50-state National Roundtable on Improving Teaching Quality Birth through Third Grade	The National Roundtable was successfully held with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 132 attendees</li> <li>• 48 states and territories represented in the audience</li> <li>• 42 different state education agencies in attendance</li> <li>• 21 national and regional TA centers</li> <li>• 7 institutions of higher education attending</li> <li>• 6 national organizations present</li> </ul>
2 Webinars proposed	4 Webinars were sponsored or co-sponsored by CEELO. Participants ranged from 54 to 92. <sup>4</sup>
2 Peer Learning Communities	CEELO supported a regular peer learning community (PLC) on formative assessment and a PLC on Birth Through Third Grade to support the 4 states receiving small grants for Chiefs Summits.
1 co-host Finance and Governance Expert Meeting	The meeting was successfully held in collaboration with the National Governor’s Association.

<sup>4</sup> CEELO has data from the three webinar hosted on CEELO’s webinar interface. The fourth Webinar was hosted on another organizations’ webinar interface and CEELO was unable to obtain the number. For the webinars CEELO has information: New Early Childhood Indistar® Indicators (54), Supporting SEAs Implementing a Birth through Third Grade Approach (63), Understanding and Using Data from the 2013 NIEER State of Preschool Yearbook (92)



Strategic TA Activity	Description and Number of Participants/Events
1 SEA Leadership Academy	In 2014: CEELO established the SEA Leadership Academy <a href="#">website</a> and selected applicants for the first cohort.

**CEELO planned, sponsored, and convened early childhood specialists from state departments of education at an annual Roundtable.** A total of 132 individuals registered for the annual meeting with representation from 48<sup>5</sup> states and territories. Each region was represented at the meeting. The topic of the meeting was: ***Improving Teaching Quality Birth through Third Grade***. CEELO co-constructed the agenda with NAECS-SDE, the Council of Chief State School Officers, and the Early Learning Technical Assistance Center for RTT-ELC. This collaborative effort supported an integrated meeting designed to address the needs of early childhood specialists in state departments of education.

**In Year 2, CEELO planned, sponsored, and convened 5 Webinars on Topics of Interest to Early Childhood Specialists.** Some webinars were designed for a national audience, for example the webinar on using data from the Yearbook had 92 participants and a webinar co-sponsored with the Ounce of Prevention to a targeted set of states had about 20 participants attending the Partnership Research Findings Webinar. The list of Webinars CEELO delivered in Year 2 is provided below:

- *Child Care, Head Start and Pre-K Partnerships: Research Findings*
- *Focus on Formative Assessment*
- *New Early Childhood Indistar® Indicators Supporting State Education Agencies*
- *Implementing a Birth through Third Grade Approach*
- *Understanding and Using Data from the 2013 NIEER State of Preschool Yearbook*

**CEELO Supported 2 PLCs Including A Peer Learning Community on Formative Assessment That Met Multiple Times During Year 2.** A Formative Assessment PLC was co-facilitated by the OSEP funded, Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center (ECTA) and CEELO and convened 10 times over the course of the year. The PLC gave participants an opportunity to learn from one another, gain knowledge from national experts, and brainstorm solutions to shared challenges.

Participants elaborated on their perspectives on the PLC:

*It has raised my awareness of tools available that are true formative assessment tools. I have talked with vendors more about the [assessment] tool and I plan to reach out and research more on tools used by other states.*

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<sup>5</sup> Alaska, Alabama, Arkansas, Arizona, California, Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, Georgia, Hawaii, Iowa, Idaho, Illinois, Kentucky, Louisiana, Massachusetts, Maryland, Maine, Michigan, Minnesota, Montana, North Carolina, North Dakota, Nebraska, New Hampshire, New Jersey, Nevada, New York, Ohio, Oklahoma, Oregon, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia, Virgin Islands, Vermont, Washington, West Virginia, and Wyoming.



*Discussions with other states have given us perspective on our own implementation issues and timelines.*

*Just hearing what other states are doing is most helpful.*

*I am more aware of how other states and national experts are tackling some of the same issues we have in my state, and given me some new ideas to consider.*

**The application process and design of the CEELO Leadership Academy was planned and applicants were selected to participate in the Academy.** The CEELO Leadership Academy aims to: a) support improvements in the leadership and management skills of early childhood leaders, b) build SEA leadership and management capacity to advance a vision for ECE, and c) build individual leadership and management competencies.

During year 2, CEELO developed an application process to select early childhood specialists to participate as a cohort in a Leadership Academy. Eleven applicants from eight states submitted applications that demonstrated their personal and professional commitment to the goals of the Academy, as well as a proposal for a job embedded policy-related implementation project encompassing birth through 3rd grade or prek-3rd grade that is aligned with CEELO's mission and at least one of its five policy goals. Six fellows, representing TN, MI, MO, NJ, AL and MN, were selected and paired with three coaches. (The first meeting of the Leadership Academy was held in December 2014, after the timeframe for this report but prior to its submission.)

### **CEELO Exceeded Nearly All Information Resources and Technology-Supported TA Benchmarks**

CEELO develops information resources based on key strategic topics of high value to state early education administrators, and resources are presented in a variety of formats to provide timely and relevant information to policy makers. The information resources developed by CEELO are posted to the CEELO website and technology is used to gather information, analyze trends, and disseminate products.

In Year 2, CEELO exceeded nearly all technology-enhanced TA benchmarks by accomplishing or making substantial progress toward all proposed activities. The only benchmark that was not achieved was the launching of a members-only part of the website although CEELO began work on this activity. See **Table 4** for brief descriptions of planned activities and participants.



**Table 4: Technology Enhanced TA Planned and Provided in Year 2**

Planned Activity	Description and Number of Participants/Events
Update website	CEELO posted resources, new publications and updates to the CEELO website.
Updated <b>150</b> new resources in library	CEELO posted more than <b>200</b> additional resources to the Resource Library.
Produce <b>5</b> policy reports, research briefs and a summary of findings from the Roundtable	CEELO developed <b>7</b> new publications to address policy and research questions posed by early childhood specialists in state departments of education
Produce <b>10</b> Fast Facts	CEELO developed <b>11</b> Fast Facts and as of September 30, had posted 9 to the web with 2 ready to be posted in October 2014
<b>2</b> Webinars proposed	CEELO facilitated 4 Webinars.
Launch Birth to 3 <sup>rd</sup> Grade Standards Database	CEELO developed an interactive online Birth-3 <sup>rd</sup> Grade Standards database, viewable by state.
Members only pages of the website	The members' only page of the website has been developed and will be pilot tested and launched in the first half of Year 3.

**CEELO successfully updated and populated the center web-site with rich resources aimed at addressing target audience needs.** During Year 2 CEELO staff successfully updated and populated the center website. Since it was launched [www.ceelo.org](http://www.ceelo.org) has had over 52,000 page views with approximately 9,000 unique visitors. The traffic to the CEELO website has seen a more than 3-fold increase in Year 2 over Year 1 traffic. The most frequent pages that have been viewed are CEELO products (3,326 unique viewers), selected resources (3,263 unique viewers), and state pages (1,314 unique viewers).

In Year 2, CEELO staff identified 214 new resources (for a cumulative total of 385 resources identified) and posted 52 to the website's Selected Resources web page. In addition, the website includes a directory of key early childhood contacts in each state and territory and links to other comprehensive centers, products developed by CEELO (including links to Webinars and presentations and briefs described in the next section).





**CEELO produced multiple publications to address specific topics of interest to early childhood specialists.** CEELO had planned to develop five new products but based on the requests from the target audience, instead developed seven new publications. The titles of the publications are listed below.

- [\*Access to High Quality Early Care and Education: Readiness and Opportunity Gaps in America\*](#)
- [\*Building Capacity Through an Early Education Leadership Academy\*](#)
- [\*Formative Assessment: Guidance for Early Childhood Policymakers\*](#)
- [\*How Are Early Childhood Teachers Faring in State Teacher Evaluation Systems?\*](#)
- [\*The Roundtable 2014 Summary\*](#)
- [\*State of the States Policy Snapshot: State Early Childhood Assessment Policies\*](#)
- [\*What Do We Know About Principal Preparation, Licensure Requirements, and Professional Development for School Leaders?\*](#)

**CEELO Successfully Produced and Disseminated 9 “Fast Facts.”** CEELO turned responses to information requests and TA resources into a series of Fast Facts to disseminate to other early childhood specialists addressing similar issues. In Year 2, CEELO produced the following *Fast Facts*:

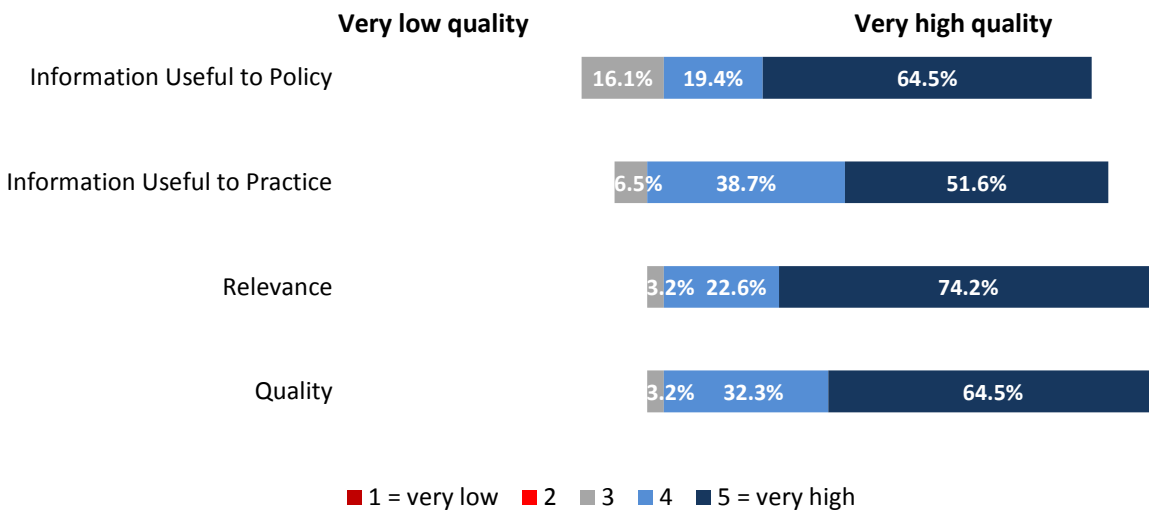
- [\*Considerations for 'Rebranding' Kindergarten Readiness Assessment\*](#)
- [\*Definitions and Approaches to Measuring Reading Proficiency\*](#)
- [\*Evidence of Effective Early Literacy Models\*](#)
- [\*Evidence of Effective Early Numeracy Models\*](#)
- [\*Facts about Fadeout\*](#)
- [\*Inclusion of Pre-Kindergarten and Other Early Childhood Staff in State Teacher Evaluation Systems\*](#)
- [\*Information and Resources on Developing State Policy on Kindergarten Entry Assessment \(KEA\)\*](#)
- [\*Peer Learning Community Guide\*](#)
- [\*Preparing Principals to Support Early Childhood Teachers\*](#)



**Evaluation Question 2: Was CEELO TA of high quality, and relevant and useful to state early education administrators and collaborators?**

Overall, recipients of CEELO TA reported it was high-quality, relevant, and useful to policy and practice. **Figure 1** below indicates that state early education administrators overwhelmingly identified CEELO’s TA as high quality and useful.

**Figure 1: CEELO TA Considered High Quality (n=31)**



Analysis of interview data revealed that recipients highly valued that the TA provided by CEELO staff was tailored to the unique context in each state and provided significant early childhood expertise to addressing a state policy issue. Recipients of CEELO’s TA shared their thoughts on the quality, usefulness and relevance of the support they received:

*[The TA provider] was fabulous in helping prepare, organize and facilitate our strategic planning meeting for our new Office of Early Learning and Development in the [State] Department of Education. It was very helpful to have someone with outside expertise and such great experience working with other states help us think through the planning and organizing of our new office to hopefully help shape and provide guidance to our agency leadership, restructuring and organizing of our office. I hope we can continue this partnership as we hire our new director and the new office becomes more and more developed and aligned with our other initiatives and offices within [SEA]. She was also very helpful in providing support for our very successful Governor's P-3 Symposium and related brainstorming sessions! Thanks [to the TA provider] and thank you CEELO for helping make this possible! :)*



*The opportunity to talk through issues and problems of practice with participating TA providers as well as colleagues from other state was extremely valuable. The time to focus on one topic in depth and to get into some of the "weeds" of implementation was very helpful.*

*We requested assistance from CEELO to help evaluate and review the pre-k standards that were being revised for ELA and Math. They provided really great feedback and detailed reviews.*

A survey was administered to TA providers who have collaborated with CEELO in Year 2. The TA providers were asked to rate the quality of the collaboration with CEELO and over 90% reported that the quality was very high (63%) or high (31%) quality. Similar percentages reported that the collaboration met the target audience's needs and 80% reported that the collaboration addressed a gap.

Respondents who elaborated on ratings are presented below:

*Our work together was timely, focused, and productive.*

*The team at CEELO is easy to work with and provide not only expert content support, but great system building thinking, tools to support the work and is consistent and reliable team members. They have become a go to resource and are exceptional partners.*

*CEELO provides high quality products and contributions to states. One can always count on CEELO for good quality products.*

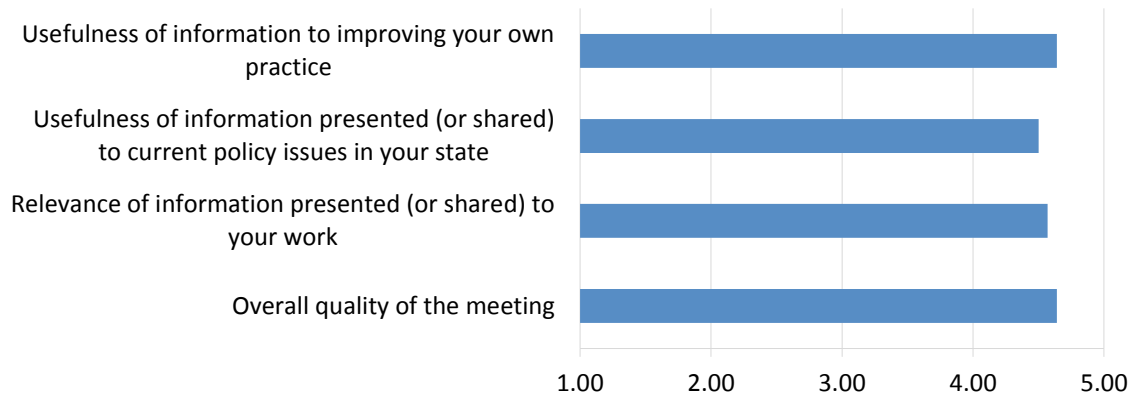
*CEELO is always ready, willing and able to provide great collaboration and partnership on meeting RTT-ELC grantee state TA requests that fit with CEELO's areas of expertise.*



Selected TA Event Evaluations:

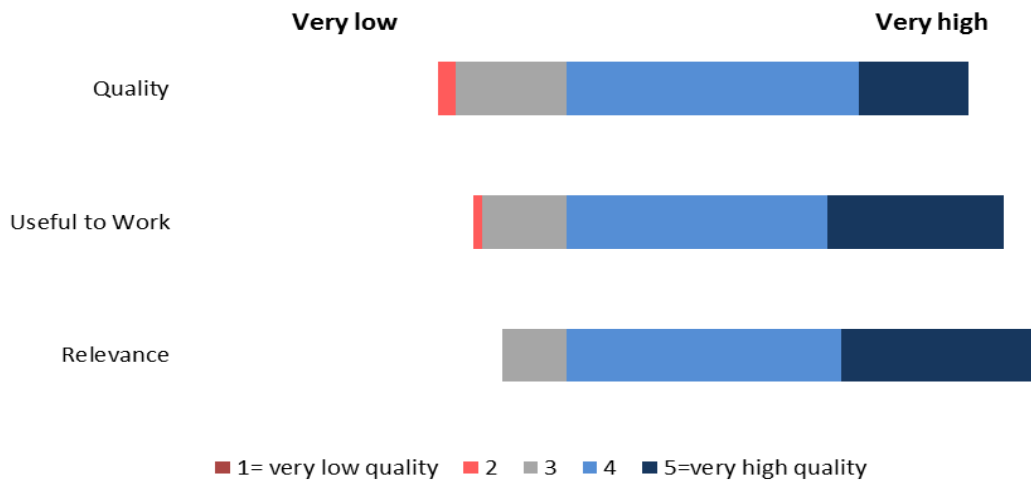
**CEELO Annual Roundtable:** As **Figure 2** illustrates, participants rated the quality of the roundtable very high or high.

**Figure 2: Overall Ratings of the CEELO Roundtable (n=31), 1= low, 5=high**



**CEELO Webinars:** Survey data were collected regarding the quality, usefulness and relevance of the information presented and Webinars were highly rated. **Figure 3** shows that over 80% of respondents reported that the Webinars were high-quality, useful and relevant. Stakeholders provided comments about their perceptions of the quality, usefulness and relevance of the information.

**Figure 3: Webinars Valued by Participants (n=58)**

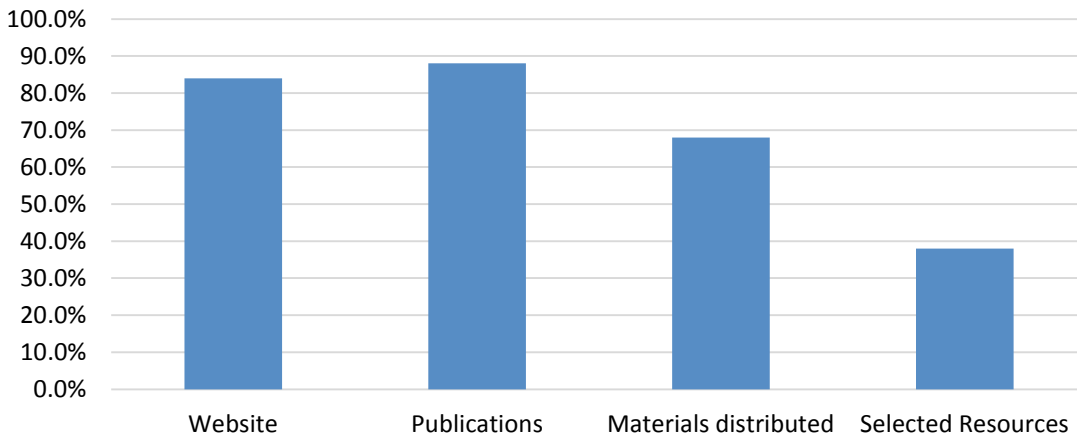




### CEELO Materials Accessed and Valued by Stakeholders

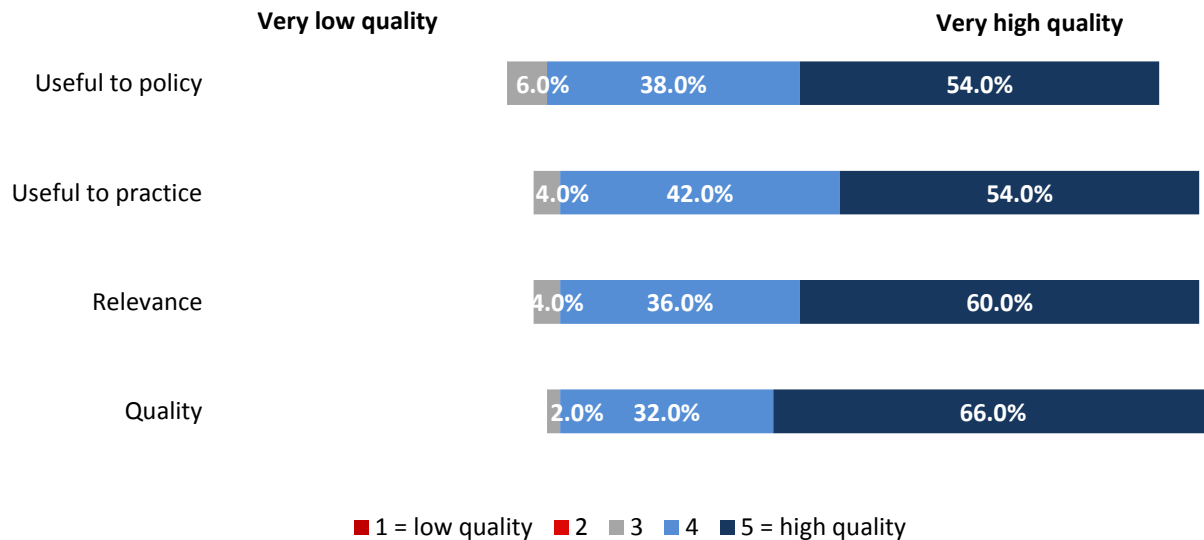
Recipients of CEELO materials were asked if they had accessed the CEELO website and materials. As **Figure 4** illustrates, a total of 50 respondents (out of 76) reported that they had accessed CEELO materials.

**Figure 4: Website and publications accessed by many (n=50)**



**Figure 5** provides data on respondents' ratings of materials in terms of quality, relevance, usefulness to policy, and usefulness to practice.

**Figure 5: CEELO Materials Valued (n=50)**





Respondents commented on the relevance, timeliness, and quality of the information:

*I am providing technical assistance to our State Education Agency on building early childhood education capacity and have had monthly phone calls with key staff at CEELO, have used resources on CEELO website to provide to SEA and other partners. I requested information on formative assessment, on principal leadership training and professional development, on P-3 continuum.*

*CEELO is responsive to the needs that states have for products, reports, current information to be shared quickly and a very extensive and comprehensive website that is easy to use and navigate. The content experts at CEELO are extremely knowledgeable and responsive. They are quick to respond and very comprehensive in their ability to answer questions, provide valuable resources and direct me to others that can help me think through issues and find the best solution.*

*Research and other publications are great. Webinars are too.*

*[CEELO is...] providing high quality information in a timely manner!*

*[CEELO is] putting out high-quality resources that states can use to improve their EC programs.*

*The quality of the resources is outstanding!*



**Evaluation Question 3: Did CEELO TA assist state administrators in building capacity to implement policy for children birth through third grade? What specific policy outcomes were achieved?**

**CEELO's Assistance Has Led to Desired Outcomes**

Analysis of TA database entries reveals that of the 101 TA requests that were completed, *all* accomplished the desired goals established by state early education administrators and CEELO TA liaisons. Examples of the range of TA goals are as follow:

- Provide research to support policy recommendations (on topics ranging from alignment of standards, assessment measures and systems, defining school readiness, principal preparation, more cohesive professional development systems, and evidence-based approaches to meeting the needs of unique populations)
- Identify measures of student learning and growth that are developmentally appropriate, valid and reliable for early childhood educators
- Strengthen teacher evaluation systems to ensure measures are developmentally appropriate for early childhood teachers
- Identify evidence-based curricula or approaches that lead to desired child outcomes
- Provide critique of specific evaluation designs, tools, measures, protocols and processes supported by or used by the state
- Provide assistance in statewide collaborative planning processes including but not limited to establishing a technical advisory committee to assist with planning and implementation of new state pre-K, establishing a process for aligning early learning standards with the Common Core, and alignment of birth through third grade policies

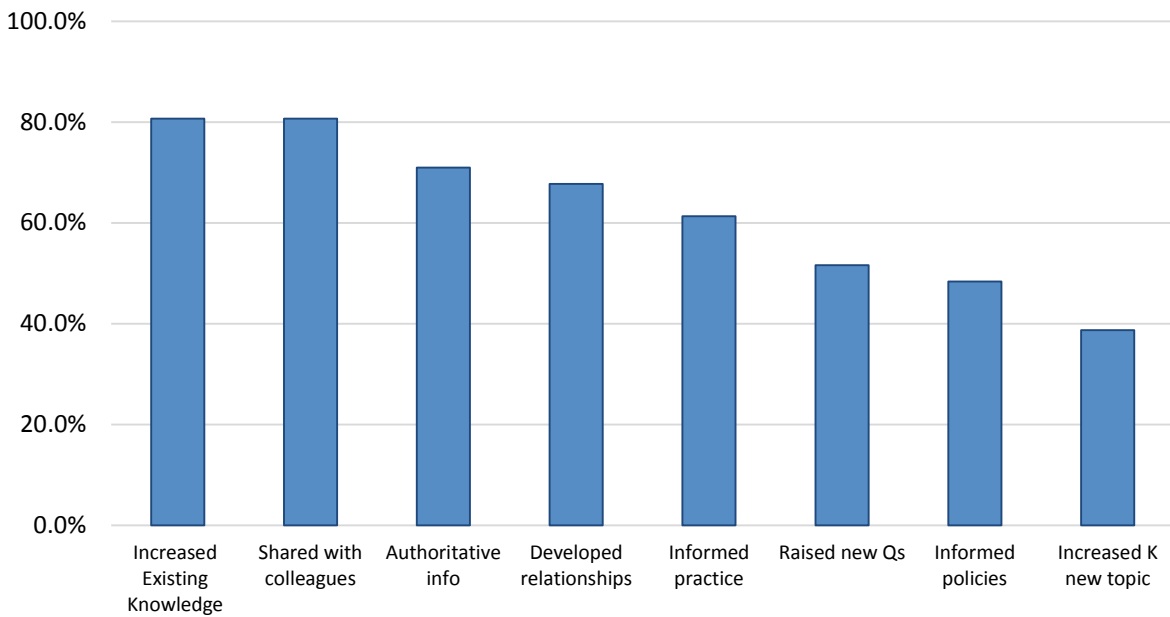
Analysis of data from the TA database revealed that each listed goal in the 101 completed responsive TA activities was accomplished. Given the range of state needs and varying nature of the TA, the reported impact and benefits ranged accordingly.

**Figure 6** below shows the range of ways that TA built SEA capacity as reported by TA recipients in the annual survey. Most (80%) respondents reported that CEELO TA increased their knowledge about a specific topic and that they shared information with colleagues; about 60% or more of respondents noted that TA provided them with authoritative information on early childhood initiatives, helped them



strengthen relationships, and informed practice; about 40-50% of respondents indicated that the TA raised new questions and informed policies.

**Figure 6: TA Used To Build Capacity in A Variety of Ways (n=31)**

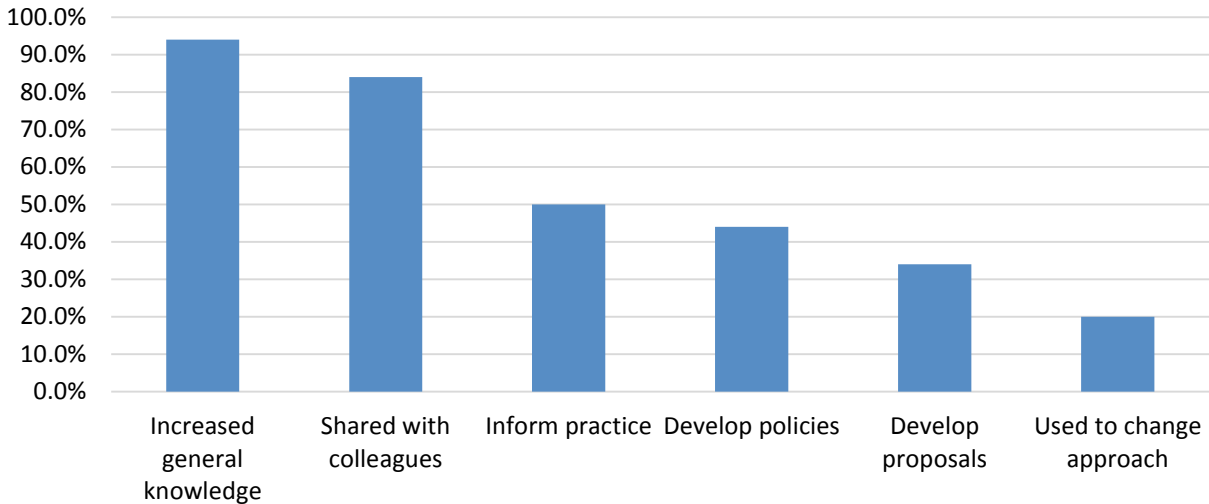


Similarly, recipients of CEELO technology-enhanced TA reported that the information and resources have had a positive impact on their own knowledge and ability to craft policy. As illustrated in **Figure 7**, about half of survey respondents reported they used materials to inform practice and only about 30 percent used the information to develop policies or proposals. While less than 20 percent said they used it to change their approach, the open-ended responses may provide insight into why. Many respondents indicated that CEELO material was used as “expert” or “outside” information when presenting or supporting their work or recommendations.





**Figure 7: CEELO Materials Build Capacity To Develop or Inform Policies**



Examples of the how CEELO TA and resources have been used to benefit SEAs are presented below.

***Served as source of authoritative information***

*We have received technical assistance for our Kindergarten Entry Assessment project (KEA), have participated in numerous webinars, and participated in SCASS Roundtables. I have shared information received with our Early Learning Supervisors across the state as well as with other staff in our Division of Early Childhood. The assistance received on our KEA project has helped shape decisions we have made.*

*We are at the very beginning exploratory stages of a KEA process. Our goal is to develop a paper offering a continuum of options around KEAs and early childhood assessment in general, and be able to highlight what our work group believes to be the best options for Wisconsin. (This paper's audience is the Governor's ECAC.). CEELO's resources have been extremely helpful.*

*They provided really great feedback and detailed reviews. The impact has been on the early childhood programs. The teachers in [our state] are able to use the standards even though they never made it out of draft form due to some legislation in [our state] with standards. The Pre-K standards that we worked on were put on hold.*

*I have reviewed NIEER Yearbook information and other sources of education data for sharing with the SEA staff about program status and improvement.*



***Facilitated Learning from other states and receiving guidance and consultation***

*[CEELO has helped us with] SLOs and interaction with early childhood assessment tools' best practices in inclusion of children with disabilities; and development of a workforce competency standards framework. On the several requests, the degree to which we needed TA varied. Use of SLOs was high on our agenda and extremely relevant. CEELO did a great job in fleshing out the issues and [helping us connect with] a number of states. The workforce competency standards framework required the identification of a competent consultant, which turned out to be a very good experience. Inclusion issues had to be reviewed and checked with other state activities in that area. CEELO helped in bringing our team together with other state teams.*

***Informed policy/practice***

*I have requested assistance with developing monitoring tools and collecting evidence to evaluate the effectiveness of early childhood programs, adopting policies for early childhood teacher qualifications, policy recommendations, research based curricula, developing RFPs, selecting Quality Classroom Measures, transitions from Pre-K to K, hosting early childhood conferences, establishing an early childhood infrastructure at the state level, and parent engagement.” “We impacted the development of processes and guidelines we established for teacher qualifications, updating early childhood state guidelines, monitoring and continuing to fund programs, developing a statewide definition of kindergarten readiness and determining the data we need to collect and how to provide support, and PD to our teachers. We truly believe that [our state] has made the progress we have because of the relationship that was developed with CEELO.*

*[The information and support from CEELO has.] Informed the legislature on national trends and the impact [of high-quality early care and education. In addition, CEELO] guided our decision on the naming of our early learning assessment, and guided the work on the revision of our early learning standards*

*We received assistance for an Early Years to Early Grades Forum ... The assistance helped us launch our Early Years to Early Grades work with an emphasis on early literacy. This is a major accomplishment.*

***Provided content expertise***

*[CEELO reviewed our] Social Studies and Social-Emotional Domains. . . [and helped us identify] teaching strategies aligned with early learning standards. CEELO provided*



*content expertise for document review with feedback provided to by our TA Center, SCC which will then submit documents to the SEA and arrange follow-up requested.*

***Built state capacity to support early learning professionals***

*[Our CEELo TA liaison] spent time with our new Office of Early Learning and Development to help get us off the ground and organized. It was very helpful. She came to [our state] and worked with the new Department of Early Learning and Development.*

*[CEELo has. . .] supported Early Childhood educators across the state by providing sample Student Learning Objectives, professional development materials and developing a document of Frequently Asked Questions and answers.*

*[CEELo has been] very helpful in providing guidance and a birth to third grade vision to the field.*

*Information on formative assessment has helped [our state] develop a set of guidelines to craft policies about early childhood assessment. Information on principal leadership has been shared with the State Education Agency for the development of professional learning opportunities for principals with new preschool classrooms. Information on P-3 continuum is informing principals and community-based early childhood providers about how to work together to foster smoother transitions for young children.*



**Evaluation Question 4: *What did we learn about how the state policy context supports or impedes efforts to build capacity? How can CEELO improve delivery of TA that build SEA capacity to implement policy for children birth through third grade?***

To date, all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Guam, CNMI and the Virgin Islands have had the opportunity to participate in CEELO webinars, annual and regional meetings; they have access to materials on the website and receive CEELO materials in E-News and other electronic means. More than 40 have requested individual technical assistance since 2012, many with multiple requests spanning more than one year.

Many factors impact a state's ability to effectively utilize TA, and our ability to build capacity to implement effective policy varies based on the specific needs and capacities of the states. However, in all cases our TA is customized and based on the best evidence from research and practice. To illustrate this contextual understanding of the synchronicity of CEELO TA and state's needs and capacity, **Box 3** presents a brief vignette of CEELO's TA experience in one state.

***Box 3. CEELO TA to the Ohio Department of Education on Implementing the State's Teacher Evaluation System with Preschool Teachers***

**What CEELO Did:** CEELO has engaged in a series of seamless, intensive TA activities to support the **Ohio Department of Education (ODE)**'s development of materials to support preschool teachers engaged in the new state teacher evaluation system. The CEELO TA liaison to Ohio has: a) engaged in regular telephone calls with the ODE liaison, b) participated and convened conference calls among TA providers, c) convened key stakeholders at an in person meeting, d) provided expert content review of materials developed by ODE, e) developed sample materials for ODE to use as examples to guide development of additional resources, f) developed a survey of state TA provider to determine questions and issues, g) developed a Frequently Asked Questions and Answers document, h) engaged in follow up conversations with contacts to support ongoing efforts. Through intensive, relationship-based TA, CEELO TA specialists have applied in depth knowledge of teacher evaluation issues, assessments that are appropriate for preschool, psychometric issues, and knowledge of federal and state requirements to the task.

**Why CEELO Provided Assistance:** In 2014, CEELO continued to assist the **ODE** implement activities to support preschool teachers in their effective participation in the teacher evaluation system. In the past two years, CEELO has supported the development of Student Learning Objectives (SLOs) that are appropriate for preschoolers, drafted guidance ODE to use to assist preschool teachers affected by the new Teacher Evaluation requirements, convened key stakeholders across the Teacher Evaluation and Early Learning offices, surveyed those responsible for providing assistance to preschool teachers in the development of SLOs, and drafted a frequently asked questions and answers document



Ohio, like many states, is in the process of supporting teachers in the development and use of student growth measures that will be used to assess teacher performance. Early learning leaders in the Ohio Department of Education requested that CEELO assist the state in developing materials and supports that are appropriate for preschool teachers as they select and use student growth measures.

Ohio has received both Race to the Top—Early Learning Challenge and a Race to the Top (for K-12) funds. Both programs require states to support greater teacher accountability and, consistent with this federal push, the Ohio General Assembly enacted a law that requires evaluation of teachers using student growth measures. The Teacher Evaluation unit within the Ohio Department of Education has received support both from the Center on Great Teachers and Leaders and the contractor American Institutes for Research to develop materials and provide training on student growth measures to K-12 teachers. The Early Childhood unit recognized that to effectively provide TA required convening stakeholders across the ODE,

**How the Assistance Impacted the State:** CEELO has helped the Office of Early Learning and School Readiness to coordinate work with the Office of Teacher Evaluation, has provided guidance to ODE that has been distributed throughout the state, and has supported the state’s ongoing work. The assistance has resulted in greater coordination and alignment and has informed ODE materials. In addition, the state has used tools that were presented during a fall Webinar to principals throughout the state. According to a key stakeholder, “CEELO anticipates our needs before we are aware they are needs.”

**What Challenges and Issues Exist for the State:** ODE has seen a large turn-over in state staff support. Some positive actions have occurred in the past year with the promotion of the former Director of the Office of Early Learning and School Readiness to a new position of Assistant Superintendent. In the fall 2014 the new Director of the Office of Early Learning and School Readiness was appointed. CEELO will continue to engage with the ODE contractor who has worked closely with CEELO in the past year and will reach out to the new director to provide assistance to the state as it continues work to support preschool teachers affected by the new teacher evaluation system.

Further analysis of the states that have not engaged CEELO reveals that some have very limited staff capacity or have experienced repeated turnover (as is the case in Wyoming). In other states, early childhood issues are not an explicit priority of the SEA and so early childhood administrators are focused specifically on program implementation; in other cases SEAs are accessing TA from other federal partners, including RTT-ELC or OSEP funded early childhood TA centers. Based on a review of data we have identified the following lessons learned and implications for CEELO’s ability to provide TA that builds SEA capacity to implement policy for children, birth through third grade.



### Some States have Limited Capacity to Effectively Utilize TA

The following states have not yet accessed CEELO Responsive TA (meaning the state has not requested customized, state-specific TA): Alaska, California, DC, Idaho, Missouri, Montana, Texas, Virginia, and Wyoming. To meet the goal of providing responsive TA to build capacity in all 50 states and the District of Columbia, CEELO staff interviewed state early education administrators to understand more fully the state context and implications for accessing CEELO TA. Responses from three states are described below:

**California** early childhood specialists have actively engaged in the Roundtable in Year 1 and 2 and they have presented and participated in the Formative Assessment PLC. Yet to date, California has not engaged in responsive TA from CEELO. The state is interested receiving CEELO TA in the upcoming year in collaboration with the RTT-ELC State Support lead. Specifically, as the state supports QRIS in the 17 regions, they are eager to learn how to best imbed resources for all programs in the state to access the state's early childhood guidelines and assessment that have an intentional development process.

The **Texas Education Agency (TEA)** sent personnel to CEELO's 2013 Annual Roundtable and received information about formative assessment that was appropriate for K-3 settings. In addition, CEELO has responded to numerous information requests from large urban school districts in Texas to inform the design of an early childhood assessment process, to determine how to assess school readiness, and to identify principal preparation programs that address early childhood issues. The CEELO TA liaison has regular calls with the Texas Comprehensive Center liaison to discuss how to be most supportive of the state. There has been turn-over in the Texas Comprehensive Center staff and in the TEA staff contact. In Year 3, CEELO in conjunction with the Council of Chief State School Officers is convening a meeting on early literacy and has invited TEA representatives to attend.

**Virginia** has not requested direct TA because of state restrictions on attending out of states professional development however the early education administrators actively utilize CEELO resources, noting that they frequently send materials from CEELO to local early childhood coordinators. In Year 3, the state expects to access CEELO TA to support expansion of preschool, as they are a recipient of federal Preschool Development Grant funding.

### Customized TA is Most Effective to Build SEA Capacity

Customized TA that reflects an understanding of the time, scheduling, constitutional and organizational constraints of the key target audience—early childhood administrators in state departments of education is most effective in building capacity. In some states, the early learning unit consists of one person (who might have additional responsibilities) whereas other states have



larger units within the state department of education and other state agencies overseeing early childhood programming. Moreover, some SEAs focus only on early childhood education for children with disabilities.

Early childhood administrators also reported that the specific approaches to TA that CEELo has employed that are most helpful are:

- Is responsive, flexible, willing to schedule calls and meetings late in day or early morning based on limited time of state staff.
- Distill information into manageable tools and resources. For example, one early childhood specialist reported that while peer learning communities can be helpful, she appreciated when the TA liaison digested information about other state's approaches first and shared key insights and she would follow up with other states later if she had time.
- Is available directly to answer questions and respond to both quick questions as well as more in depth answer if need be.
- Understands that not all SEAs can address issues of children before the age of school entry and can provide supports for the younger grades as well.
- Coordinates and collaborates with other TA providers to be most efficient and effective in working with SEA staff
- Coordinate with others within SEA and across state agencies and relays messages so that all key stakeholders are informed and engaged. If TA provider is working with one individual but could work with many, it could be helpful to all in the agency to know what is happening and available. Thus, TA on communication within agency

Finally, early childhood administrators reported that the content expertise that CEELo TA liaisons have that is most helpful is:

- Understanding of federal and state policies across states and ability to provide 'bird's eye view' to bring a broader perspective to issues. It is helpful to think about the overall system—across Title 1, Title 2, OSEP programs, CCDBG, Head Start, and MIECH-V.
- Knowledge of the latest research and policy—both the latest findings and the gaps in the research.
- Ability to address the gaps the knowledge base as CEELo did with the publication of the Teacher Evaluation report and the tools for development of a comprehensive assessment system.
- Knowledge of existing systems (such as Indistar) that can be leveraged to support early childhood programming.



## Conclusion and Recommendations

CEELO continues to meet and exceed performance benchmarks established in yearly management plans. CEELO TA is highly rated and respondents report that TA is useful and relevant to policy makers and information resources are highly relevant and filling a gap in research-based information. CEELO TA liaisons have successfully provided TA to most states and many territories/jurisdictions and established strong relationships with the Comprehensive Center Network and other early childhood TA and research organizations. Upon completion of two years of operation, CEELO has achieved significant milestones toward our goal to build the capacity of State Education Agencies (SEAs) to implement comprehensive and aligned early learning systems in order to increase the number of children from birth through third grade that are prepared to succeed in school.

However, the annual evaluation has identified a few areas for improvement and/or continued focus of TA delivery and relationship building between CEELO TA liaisons, State administrators, and Comprehensive Center staff in Year 3. These are:

- ***In some states early childhood is not a priority issue for senior leaders in the SEA***, and therefore early childhood policy topics are less likely to be embedded in Regional Centers' TA plans. CEELO TA liaisons and Regional Center liaisons to CEELO have to continue to find ways to elevate early childhood policy. For example, one respondent reported, "Other staff from our Comp Center (beside myself) are not involved (or even interested) in early childhood which means that they are not building their capacity. Unless, their state brings it up as a TA need, the comp center staff do not see it as their own PD need." Nonetheless, respondents reported that, "regular calls help us keep in touch with CEELO activities; also has fostered collaboration in our TA center's activities (e.g., participation in our national conference)."
- ***Early childhood administrators in some states are new to their positions and need tailored support***. Although some early childhood specialists have been in their positions for a long period of time, analysis of CEELO evaluation data reveal that many individuals are new to their positions. Ten of the individuals who were interviewed reported that they were relatively new to their positions or had recently left (Hawaii, two from Indiana, Massachusetts, Maine, Minnesota, Mississippi, two from New Hampshire, and Ohio). Only specialists in New Jersey and West Virginia had been in their positions for longer than three years. Moreover, some early education administrators are in part-time positions and while they had a deep understanding of the issues they were responsible for, they were not familiar with the broader context affecting the SEA. It is important that CEELO continue to reach out to state specialists and provide them with information about current national and state trends and serve as a resource regarding history and context of issues facing the states.





- ***CEELO can continue to leverage existing resources and supports to meet state needs.*** Specialists reported that they are facing initiative overload and appreciate tools, guidance, and advice about how to best leverage existing resources. For example, the New Hampshire Department of Education has recently reorganized and has created an interagency team to leverage federal funds to best support early grades and worked with CEELO to identify opportunities to support high-quality early childhood education.
- ***CEELO can continue to work collaboratively with other TA providers and national organizations.*** Regional comprehensive center staff, content center staff, and representatives from national organizations commented that CEELO has been working collaboratively to meet the needs of early childhood stakeholders. Recognizing that collaboration can take more time than working individually, it is nonetheless important for CEELO to continue to work collaboratively with other TA organizations.
- ***CEELO’s communication and dissemination strategy can continue to build awareness.*** Although CEELO’s web traffic has increased three fold and CEELO has engaged with other TA centers to disseminate information, there are still opportunities for greater communication and dissemination. In response to Rutgers University students’ questions about how they became familiar with CEELO, a number of respondents stated, “I work with [name of TA liaison]” and then reported that they had received the contact from someone in the office. While this personal TA approach is viewed quite favorably by early childhood specialists, in the upcoming year, CEELO could continue to point out the broader scope of TA that the center providers. Similarly, CEELO can build on the dissemination of information through its own networks and those of the broader TA community. For example, CEELO has disseminated information including the new Indistar indicators through its own distribution networks and through work with CIL.
- ***CEELO can continue to design TA to intentionally build and align systems across agencies and at the district and school levels.*** State stakeholders reported that they have benefitted from TA that builds their capacity but are also seeking supports to help with their work to support quality at the district and classroom levels. To date, CEELO TA providers have worked with state stakeholders to assist with systems-level strategies and have provided information that state leaders can use but have not directly worked on district or classroom issues. The Year 2 Roundtable focused on how state leaders can support improvements in teaching quality at the classroom level and follow up activities in regions and states assisted states in supporting quality teaching at the school and classroom levels.



## Appendix A: Data Sources

**Surveys.** The CEELO evaluation team utilized four different types of surveys that were used to capture data about the quality and outcomes of CEELO activities.

- **The Year End Survey** was drafted with input from the Rutgers University Graduate Students, Dr. Sharon Ryan and Dr. W. Steven Barnett. The survey asked about responsive TA, specific strategic TA activities, technology-enhanced TA and CEELO materials. Respondents were asked to complete five-point Likert scale questions about the quality, relevance, and usefulness of TA and materials and were also asked to respond to open-ended questions. The survey was sent to a total of 203 individuals who were on the CEELO mailing list who had contact with CEELO in the previous year through active collaborations or receipt of TA; 76 individuals responded yielding a response rate of 37 percent.
- **A Collaborator Survey** was sent to regional center, comprehensive center, ELC-TA center, and other TA centers that engaged in an active collaboration with CEELO in Year 2 to assess the quality and impact of the TA. A total of 16 individuals responded
- **Post TA and InfoLine Surveys** were administered after CEELO provided TA or information line responses. Surveys were only administered at the conclusion of a TA activity and as noted, in many instances the TA was seamless and in such cases recipients were not asked to complete surveys each time a new TA request began. A total of 59 individuals completed surveys at the conclusion of a responsive TA activity.
- **Post Webinar Surveys** were administered immediately after Webinars and a total of 130 individuals responded.
- **Roundtable Surveys** were administered to participants in the annual meeting after the first and second day of the Roundtable. A total of 113 individuals completed surveys.
- **Other Surveys** such as surveys of participants in regional center quarterly calls, surveys of participants in the peer learning community, and a needs sensing survey of stakeholders in selected states were administered. A total of 7 surveys were administered and the total number of respondents was 90.

**Interviews.** The CEELO evaluation team performed secondary analysis of interview findings reported by the Rutgers University graduate students. A team of graduate students developed a semi-structured interview protocol to capture qualitative data from CEELO stakeholders and a separate protocol to capture data from the CEELO leadership team. The team employed a purposeful sampling strategy to collect data from three CEELO TA recipients and four members of the CEELO leadership team. The 30 minute phone interviews were conducted using the using a semi-structured interview protocols. A total



of 15 individuals from 10 different states that had received responsive TA were interviewed.

**Database and log reviews.** During the first quarter of Year 1, CEELO contracted with an independent firm to develop an online TA database and Information line database. The database includes variables to capture the following aspects of the TA: the requester, provider and any possible collaborators, the intensity, the priority topic, the goals, the tasks necessary to achieve the goal, target dates, and follow up steps. The Information Line database included the following fields: requester, provider and possible collaborator, priority topic, and details about the information provided. Separately, CEELO staff collected data regarding ongoing collaborations with other TA providers.

CEELO TA providers and staff populated the databases and logs over the course of the year. The CEELO evaluation team analyzed the data to determine the number of requests, the intensity of the TA, the priority topics covered, the number of states that had requested and received TA and information, and the number of collaborative activities CEELO engaged in.

**Document reviews.** The CEELO evaluation team reviewed project agendas, emails, and ongoing communication among the Leadership Team to obtain contextual information. The team used Google analytics to determine the number of Web hits over the year, the number of states that had accessed the site, and the most popular pages. Finally, the CEELO evaluation team reviewed materials developed by CEELO and also reviewed comments by peer reviewers to determine the assess the quality of the materials.

**Informal interviews.** CEELO TA liaisons reached out to early childhood specialists in state departments of education who had not yet participated in responsive TA to determine how CEELO might best provide TA in the future. The outreach was designed primarily to build a relationship with the early childhood specialists and secondarily to provide data for the annual report. The CEELO evaluation team analyzed a sample of data to determine themes and trends.



## Appendix B. CEELO Presentations Conducted in Year 2

Listed below are the titles of the 15 presentations, by month, conducted by CEELO staff in Year 2.

### October 2013

*1- If Birth-3rd Policy and Practice is the Answer, What is the Question?* Tom Schultz presented at the at the Nevada Birth-3rd Grade Policy & Practice Implementation Summit, NV, October 2013.

### May 2014

*2- Understanding Pre-K Inclusion Data: Making the Most of the NIEER State of Preschool Yearbook.* Jim Squires presented at the National Inclusion Institute, Chapel Hill, NC.

*3- Issues and Actions: Achieving Full Inclusion from Birth – Third Grade.* Jim Squires presented with Sharon Ritchie and Beth Rous at the National Inclusion Institute Chapel Hill, NC.

*4- Don't Just Do the Assessment, Look at It.* Tom Schultz presented to the New Jersey Early Childhood Academy in New Brunswick, NJ.

*5- Is New Jersey on the Right Track to Improving ECE Teacher Practice?* Lori-Connors-Tadros and Michelle Horowitz presented to the New Jersey Early Childhood Academy in New Brunswick, NJ.

*6- Every Day, Every Year of a Hoosier Child's Life is Important!* Lori Connors-Tadros presented at the Indiana Department of Education's Early Learning Summit in Fort Wayne, IN.

### June 2014

*7-Where Vermont Stands: Understanding the NIEER State of Preschool Yearbook.* Jim Squires presented to the Vermont Building Bright Futures State Advisory Council, in Williston, VT.

*8-Kindergarten Entry Assessments: Helping Teachers and State Policy Leaders Improve Learning Opportunities and Outcomes for Young Children.* Tom Schultz was a co-presenter at 2014 NAEYC Professional Development Institute in Minneapolis, MN.

*9-Early Learning Chiropractory: Can we Make Standards Alignment a Little Less Painful?* Jana Martella, Tom Schultz, Jim Lesko (ELC-TA) and Albert Wat (NGA) presenter at 2014 NAEYC Professional Development Institute in Minneapolis, MN.

### July 2014

*10-From a Crawl to a Run: Enhancing and Sustaining Children's Learning Birth through Third Grade.* Jim Squires presented at the Mississippi Early Childhood Conference in Natchez, MS.



*11- Markers of Structural and Process Quality and Child Outcomes in Multiple Preschool Settings.* Tom Schultz presented at the National Head Start 12th Research Conference in Washington, DC.

*12- New Early Childhood Indicators.* Diane Schilder presented at the Indistar Renewal Summit in Lincoln, NH.

*13- Early Childhood Education and Care: What Can We Learn From the Past?* Steve Barnett presented at the The Transatlantic Forum on Inclusive Early Years in Amsterdam.

September 2014

*14- Tapping Teacher Evaluation: Using Child-Level Data to Improve Teaching for All.* Lori Connors-Tadros and Jana Martella presented at the IDEA Early Childhood Data Systems, (DaSy)conference in New Orleans, LA.

*15- Tools States Can Use for Building Effective Early Intervention and Preschool Special Education Systems.* Lori Connors-Tadros, Jana Martella, Ann Raele (ELCTA), and Christina Kaspszrak (ECTA) presented at the IDEA Early Childhood Data Systems, DASY, conference in New Orleans, LA.