Center on Enhancing Early Learning Outcomes: Year 4 Evaluation Report

October 1, 2015 - September 30, 2016

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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, 2015 and September 30, 2016 CEELO provided three types of technical assistance (TA): (1) Responsive TA; (2) Strategic TA; and (3) Information Resources and Technology Supported TA.

CEELO engaged in a participatory evaluation in which data were collected over the course of Year 4. 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 Center activities in their work and reported outcomes; and (d) examine the factors that supported or impeded SEAs' 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 during the year. In Year 4, CEELO TA staff:

- Regularly communicated with federal and private TA providers in the RTT-ELC TA Consortium, regional Centers, NAECS-SDE and others as needed
- Provided TA to 9 RTT-ELC states in coordination with the RTT-TA center
- Presented at 13 national and regional meetings
- Addressed 97% of the 41 information requests received during Year 4 (one addressed in Year 5)
- Completed 121 TA requests and began addressing an additional 16 TA requests
- Successfully held a National Roundtable Meeting on Improving Teaching Quality Birth through Third Grade
- Planned and facilitated 22 webinars for state early education administrators and other stakeholders
- Co-planned and facilitated a six-month peer exchange on Teaching and Learning with the BUILD Initiative, a privately funded technical assistance center
- Successfully planned, implemented, and facilitated 5 Peer Exchanges for Preschool Development Grant –Expansion states
- Used formative evaluation data to engage in a continuous quality improvement process to enhance the quality, timeliness, relevance and usefulness of CEELO TA and products
- Provided TA that, as reported by recipients, led to changes in knowledge, policy, and practice

The accompanying report provides detailed findings from the Year 4 evaluation.

Contents

Recommended citation:

INTRODUCTION

The Center on Enhancing Early Learning Outcomes (CEELO) is one of 22 comprehensive centers funded by the U.S. Department of Education (USED), Office of Elementary and Secondary Programs. CEELO's technical assistance (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 provides universal, targeted, and intensive TA to build the capacity of Regional Comprehensive Centers and SEAs to achieve desired outcomes. CEELO provides each of the eight types of TA that are supported by USED. Table 1 below illustrates the range of TA that CEELO provides and shows the corresponding alignment with definitions identified by the US Department of Education (USED) for Comprehensive Center Annual Management Plans.

Table 1. Types of TA Based on USED Terms with Description of CEELO TA

USED Term	Corresponding CEELO terms (used in the CEELO proposal and database)
1. Professional Learning	**Professional Learning is delivered through Strategic TA** and **Responsive TA** to states when CEELO staff collaborate with individuals and groups to design, facilitate, or deliver learning sessions that address a problem or issue-specific concern.
2. Relationship Brokering	**Relationship brokering is one element of Strategic TA**, for example, Peer Exchanges, annual meeting (called roundtable), and Leadership Academy in which CEELO staff facilitate collaboration or partnership with another individual or organization who can help address a problem or issue-specific concern.
3. Research Synthesis	**Information resources** developed by CEELO staff synthesize seminal research on specific topics and provide access by SEAs and other stakeholders to research-based approaches and practices.
4. Policy Development	**Responsive TA** and **Information Resources** developed by CEELO staff, designed to assess, develop, and adapt policies, processes, or procedures that incorporate evidence-based practices.

USED Term	Corresponding CEELO terms (used in the CEELO proposal and database)
5. **Tool and Material Development**	**Strategic TA** (e.g. Cost of Preschool Quality Tool), **Information Resources** and **Technology-Supported TA** offered by CEELO staff create and adapt into user-friendly tools and resources.
6. **Facilitation**	**Strategic TA, Responsive TA**, and **Technology-Supported** TA in which CEELO staff convene and facilitate engagement among stakeholders.
7. **Evaluation**	**Responsive TA and Information Resources** staff design and implement formative and/or summative evaluations.
8. **Project Management**	CEELO staff develop processes for tracking and monitoring implementation of programs, projects, or initiatives.

CEELO's Year 4 management plan submitted on September 1, 2015, identifies four major tasks. These are designed to build SEA internal and organizational capacity with the aim of sustained improvements in opportunities and outcomes for children birth through third grade. The four tasks represent an intentional approach to delivering 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 (Research Syntheses and Tool and Material Development); and (4) Technology Supported TA (including Evaluation and Project Management). 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 of building SEA capacity. (See **Table 2 on the following page**)

Table 2. 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 contact	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 and policies 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 4 activities with input from project co-director and director. To provide further independent data collection, Rutgers University graduate students conducted interviews with selected TA recipients. In addition, members of the CEELO Management Team developed summaries of TA activities and the evaluation team reviewed the CEELO database, survey data, and data collected from the Rutgers students to verify the themes in the summaries.

The evaluation was designed to answer the following questions:

1. Did the project complete planned activities during Year 4 (October 1, 2015 – September 30, 2016)? Did the project meet the identified benchmarks noted in the Year 4 management plan?

2. How did target stakeholders perceive the quality, relevance, and usefulness of CEELO activities?

3. What suggestions did stakeholders have for improvements?

4. How did target stakeholders use the TA and other CEELO activities in their work and what outcomes did stakeholders report resulting from CEELO?

5. What factors supported or impeded SEA's efforts to build capacity to implement services and policy for young children?

6. How can CEELO improve TA to achieve desired changes?

We collected formative data on Year 4 activities, from October 1, 2015 through September 30, 2016; summative data was collected between October 2016 and December 2016. 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, d) interviews of 12 state key informants that were conducted independently by Rutgers University graduate students, and 3) surveys administered by TA recipients (for example when CEELO TA providers presented at conferences), emails and other documents provided by TA recipients that provide evidence of perceptions regarding CEELO TA. A snapshot of the key methods is presented in **Table 3.** Further information about the data sources are presented in **Appendix A**.

Table 3: Data Collection Activities

Evaluation Activity	Target Audience	Purpose	Number
Year End Survey	State early education administrators	Obtain evaluation data regarding quality and impact of TA and assess current needs and issues	31[1]
	Collaborators	Learn about effectiveness, quality, and impact of collaborations	12[2]
	CEELO E-News recipients	Learn about perceptions of quality and usefulness of information	48[3]

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[1] A survey request was sent to 100 individuals who were listed in TA responses in the CEELO database and 44 surveys were completed; however, 3 did not complete more than the title and 10 said they didn't receive CEELO TA, so their responses are not included. Hence total responses are 31

[2] A survey request was sent to 24 individuals who were listed as collaborators in the CEELO database and 12 responded.

[3] A survey request was sent to 694 E-news subscribers (those who had received the state or collaborator requests were removed for duplication reasons) and 63 responses were received; 15 respondents only completed their title or said they hadn't accessed materials and were removed in analysis.

Evaluation Activity	Target Audience	Purpose	Number
Post Responsive TA Survey	State early education administrators	Obtain evaluation data regarding quality and reported outcomes of TA and assess current needs and issues	30[4]
Strategic TA Survey	Recipients of strategic TA	Obtain evaluation data regarding quality and outcomes of TA and assess current needs and issues	222[5]
Interviews	State early education admininistrators, Regional Comprehensive Center liaisons and other recipients of CEELO TA	Obtain independent assessment of the quality, relevance, usefulness, and outcomes of CEELO TA and products	11
Document reviews – Surveys and Feedback	Evaluation survey summaries provided by recipients of strategic and responsive TA, emails and other documents	Triangulate findings emerging from analysis of survey and database data	15
Database and log reviews	Reviews of TA database, Info line database, and logs produced by CEELO TA providers	Determine the number of requests and the number of states we have provided TA and information in response to requests. Describe the nature and intensity of the TA. Analyze data to create summaries that describe the nature, intensity and impact of the TA. Analyze quality of the data to improve consistency and usefulness of data.	
Document review- Product Targets	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 4 Management Plan.	

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[4] A survey was sent to recipients of TA asking about the timeliness, usefulness, and relevance of the TA they received.

[5] A survey was sent to participants at the CEELO/NAECS-SDE Roundtable Annual Meeting, the Leadership Academy meetings, the Learning Table meetings, the Webinars, and the Peer Learning Exchanges.

FINDINGS

This section presents the findings of the major evaluation questions. The first section presents findings regarding whether CEELO accomplished planned activities and the degree to which benchmarks were attained. The next section presents findings related to the quality, relevance, and usefulness of TA to state early education administrators and collaborators and discusses findings on the degree to which CEELO built SEA capacity. The final sections concludes with findings regarding what CEELO learned about how the state policy contextsupports or impedes efforts to build capacity within a given state and identifies areas for continuous quality improvement of CEELO TA in Year 5.

Evaluation Question 1: Did CEELO implement activities as described in the Year 4 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 the CELLO staff. CEELO staff provided TA to and coordinated activities with early education administrators in state education agencies (SEAs), early childhood stakeholders representing other state agencies, regional centers, other comprehensive content centers, and other TA providers. Table 4 shows the degree to which CEELO staff met planned outputs for regular collaborative calls, joint TA requests, presentations and responses to information and TA requests.

Table 4: Responsive TA

Planned Outputs	Actual Output and Description – Year 4
Collaborate with RTT-ELC TA Consortium, Regional and Content Centers, NAECS-SDE, and other national and federal TA providers/organizations	CEELO staff regularly communicated with federal and private TA providers in the RTT-ELC TA Consortium, regional Centers, NAECS-SDE and others as needed.
Contribute to at least **3** joint TA requests with federal partners to RTT-ELC states	CEELO staff provided TA to **9** RTT-ELC states and coordinated this work with the RTT-TA center.
Attend and/or present at **4** national/regional meetings on topics of relevance to SEA and CEELO priorities	CEELO staff presented at **13** national and regional meetings.
Respond to 100% of information requests	CEELO staff addressed 97% of the 4**0** information requests received in Year 4. (One request that was received in Year 4 was completed in Year 5).
Respond to 100% of TA requests.	CEELO staff completed **121** TA requests and initiated work on an additional **16** TA requests that had not been completed by the end of the year.

CEELO staff participated in regular calls with federal and private TA providers. The project directors regularly participated in monthly Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge (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 that is describe below. With the start of the Preschool Development Grant (PDG)-Expansion technical assistance to states in January 2014, CEELO began to conduct regular calls with the State TA leads for the Development grantees (under contract with AEM) on a regular basis. These calls continued in Year 4 and will be conducted in Year 5.

CEELO identified a staff person to be a liaison to each of the regional and content centers. Regular communication (e-mail and calls) was maintained during Year 4, with the schedule (monthly, bi-monthly, etc.) determined by the liaisons. Additionally, CEELO convened quarterly virtual meetings, CEELO-RCC Quarterly Connections, to which all regional comprehensive centers (RCC) were invited to share developments in early learning technical assistance to states and to identify opportunities for peer learning and collaboration.

CEELO staff coordinated activities with the National Association of Early Childhood Specialists in State Departments of Education (NAECS-SDE) through regular communication. CEELO's project directors met monthly with the Executive Committee and CEELO staff regularly participated on monthly policy committee calls. Each year, CEELO identifies 2 co-chairs of the Annual Roundtable, and these staff and others participate on the program planning committee of the CEELO Roundtable. As in previous years, state specialists provided favorable evaluations regarding the collaboration with CEELO**. *One survey respondent reported, "Great relationships with the states and events that they have helped sponsor, and fostering great partnerships with NAECS-SDE! Thank you!"***

CEELO staff regularly participate on the NAECS-SDE listserv, providing and sharing resources to members. Listserv members pose questions around policy on the listserv, and CEELO has taken an active role in compiling these responses and sharing with members – one thread informed the workforce report and two threads became listserv summaries (see the Information Resources section for more information). In the past year, CEELO has posted questions of interest to members, analyzed the results, and disseminated the summaries to members. CEELO staff also encouraged state specialists to directly post questions to the listserv to build capacity and confidence rather than relying on CEELO to post questions and compile data.

CEELO staff conducted TA in nine RTT-ELC states and coordinated with the RTT-ELC TA providers, exceeding the target of three. In Year 4, CEELO provided TA to the following RTT-ELC states: California, Ohio, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Rhode Island, Vermont, and Wisconsin. Moreover, CEELO coordinated with the RTT-ELC TA liaisons. **Box 1** briefly describes one example of TA that resulted in greater coordination among all TA providers in one RTT-ELC state.

Box 1. Example of Coordinated TA to Michigan: A RTT-ELC State

> To support Michigan's work to coordinate and align early childhood policies and services, CEELO developed a scan of all of the technical assistance providers to the Michigan Office of Great Start. CEELO reached out to TA providers funded by the U.S. Department of Education, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, and through private funders. The Michigan Office of Great Start houses the Head Start State Collaboration Office, the Child Care Administrator, Special Education services, pre-K, Race to the Top—Early Learning Challenge, After School, and community engagement services. CEELO identified over 35 TA providers who are working to support specific Office of Great Start programs
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> Reaching out to the RTT-ELC TA provider and the Great Lakes Comprehensive Center, CEELO developed a brief listing of each contact and the nature and scope of each activity. In Year 5, the Great Lakes Comprehensive Center plans to work with the Office of Great Start to create policies and structures to coordinate the TA in a way that can lead to greater alignment.

CEELO staff presented at 13 national and regional meetings sponsored by other organizations on topics of relevance to SEAs and CEELO priorities, far exceeding the benchmark of 4. Throughout Year 4, CEELO maintained an active presence at national and regional meetings, including the AERA Knowledge Forum, Education Commission of the States, DaSy Early Childhood Data Conference, QRIS National Learning Network, BUILD, the National Early Childhood Inclusion Institute, the federal Every Student, Every Day National Conference, the National Association for the Education of Young Children – Professional Development Institute, the National Conference of State Legislators, the National Association of Elementary School Principals conference, a New America Institute on Language and Family Engagement, and presentations to targeted audiences in Alabama, New Hampshire, and Pennsylvania.

CEELO staff frequently co-presented with other federally funded technical assistance centers (RTT-ELC TA, PDG TA) as well as national organizations or research institutions (EducationCounsel, Urban Institute, Erikson Institute, BUILD Initiative).

During Year 4, CEELO staff responded to 137 TA Requests from 41 States on each of the CEELO Priority Issues. During the fourth year of operation, CEELO staff completed 121 TA requests.[6] In addition to the 121 completed TA requests, CEELO began work on an additional 16 requests in late 2016 with targeted completion dates in the first half of Year 5. Some of the TA was conducted for Preschool Development Grant (PDG) expansion states. TA was provided in collaboration with the following regional centers: Appalachia, Great Lakes, Mid Atlantic, Midwest, Northeast, North Central, Pacific, South Central, Southeast, and Texas. Although CEELO has reached out to comprehensive centers (as noted later in this

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[6] 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.

report), in Year 4, no collaborative TA was provided with the following Regional TA Centers: California, Central, Florida and Islands, and West.

The number of completed TA activities was higher than previous years. In Year 4, 121 TA requests were completed. In comparison, in Year 3, 82 TA requests were completed. TA requested by states were complex and time intensive. The intensity of TA was particularly notable for states receiving the PDG grants. Moreover, in Year 4, CEELO focused on reaching states it had not worked with previously. CEELO was successful in connecting with Alaska, the District of Columbia and Missouri. **Box 2** provides an illustration of the range of TA CEELO offered during Year 4. CEELO also provided TA to other technical assistance centers and national organizations.

Box 2. Illustrations of Range of TA Provided by CEELO in Year Four

Universal: CEELO senior TA provider worked closely with the Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center to develop a presentation at the annual national conference on inclusion. In May 2015, CEELO convened a panel consisting of a senior TA provider from CEELO, a state early childhood specialists (who is a 619 coordinator), and a district leader. Presenters discussed research, practices and policies to support, "Building the Next Generation of Inclusion Leaders." At the national conference, the senior CEELO TA provider also co-presented with an ECTA/RTT-ELC TA provider on quality in inclusive early childhood classrooms. Approximately 45 people from across the country attended the session. Participants completed an evaluation of the presentations. On a 5-point scale with 1=low and 5=high, the presentations received average ratings of 4.7. One participant reported, "Enjoyed the small group discussion! It generated ideas for me to take back to my region." Another stated, "Great to hear what other states are doing."

Targeted. CEELO convened an in-person meeting of the PDG state teams from the Northeast and their evaluators to discuss evaluation designs, methods, proposed analyses and reporting timeframes. Teams from Maryland and Virginia also attended the meeting virtually. Participants shared approaches and discussed challenges. After the in-person meeting, two conference calls were convened with Dr. Steven Barnett to discuss the best approaches to solving evaluation challenges the teams were facing. Participants reported that the meeting and follow up activities were quite useful. One evaluation lead reported that she wished she had a chance to talk with Dr. Barnett earlier in the evaluation design. However, she reported his insights were quite valuable. Numerous participants provided feedback on the calls. One participant whose response was typical reported, "I found this incredibly helpful and will support my work as a member of the state evaluation team."

Intensive: CEELO supported staff from from the Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care, the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, and Department of Higher Education, as well as institutions of higher education, and representatives of a private early childhood stakeholder organization called *Strategies for Children* to develop a plan to align workforce qualifications, supports and compensation. With support from the Alliance for Early Success (NIEER has a small grant from this private funder) CEELO in partnership with The BUILD Initiative, helped the team develop a detailed report summarizing research on the relationship between education, compensation and early education quality and describing initiatives being undertaken by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. The report also summarized strategies being employed by other states and communities and concluded with recommendations. The work of the group is being used to inform state policies and funding opportunities. In Year 5, the Massachusetts' Governor's Birth through Grade 3 (B-3) Advisory Group is continuing the work to implement a plan to strengthen the professional development system and address issues of low early educator teacher compensation. One key informant noted: *CEELO's support has helped raise awareness to the issue of the early childhood workforce*

and how they are compensated. We were able to do a presentation to the EEC Board and show how other states are addressing these issues. Along with compensation, we are also trying to build a foundation for a B-8 credential and the CEELO staff, especially [our TA provider], have been an incredible 'resource' to begin and 'continue' this work!

CEELO staff responded to 97% of the 40 information requests made across the range of CEELO priority topics. Information requests were received from SEAs, federal government agencies, 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. In Year 4, CEELO received 40 information requests and responded to all but one during Year 4. One was completed in the first months of Year 5. In Year 3, CEELO received 50 information requests.

Information requests related to each of CEELO's priority areas. The scope and intensity of requests varied, from general resources on a topic to specific tools. Requesters were interested in both research around the topic and information on how other states were addressing it. TA requests topics included those in CEELO priority areas – assessment, birth through third grade, data, systems, and workforce. Examples of TA content areas include:

- Funding (e.g., funding formulas for per-student expenditures, funding formulas for pre-K)
- Classroom and child assessments that are valid and reliable in a range of circumstances
- Research on high quality pre-K and child outcomes
- Suspensions and expulsion trends and policies
- Formative assessment that is appropriate for pre-K teachers
- Blended funding and SEA policies that support collaboration among child care, pre-K and Head Start teachers
- Quality Rating and Improvement Systems

As in previous years, many 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, a number of states were interested in learning about preschool suspension and expulsion trends and state policies for reducing suspensions and expulsions in preschool. CEELO responded to these requests by developing an annotated bibliography, a Powerpoint Presentation, and is currently developing a "Fast Fact" on suspension and expulsion. Similarly, a number of state and communities have asked for tools and resources to support decisions about the cost of high-quality preschool and CEELO created tools, products, and peer learning opportunities during Year 4 to address their questions.

CEELO Exceeded Nearly All Strategic TA Benchmarks

In Year 4, CEELO staff provided Strategic TA to nearly all states and territories, across all CEELO priority topics, utilizing a range of TA strategies. Specifically, CEELO successfully planned and carried out the

annual Roundtable meeting, held webinars, and planned and facilitated peer-learning communities. CEELO conducted its second cohort of the Leadership Academy and began selection for the third cohort during the end of Year 4 (meetings began in Fall of 2016). These activities are described in **Table 5** below.

Table 5: Strategic TA

Strategic TA Activity	Description, Number of Participants/Events, and Status at end of Year 4
1 SEA Leadership Academy	During Year 4, the second cohort of the Leadership Academy was implemented. The 7 Fellows met 4 times, participated in interim webinars, engaged with their coaches, and completed their Job Embedded Projects. During the final months of Year 4, CEELO prepared for the third cohort, offering applications and selecting 7 Fellows who will engage in the Leadership Academy during Year 5.
1 Learning Table on Teaching & Learning with 12states	CEELO, in collaboration with the BUILD initiative, conducted the second cohort of the Learning Table in CEELO Year 4 with 12 state teams. This included one in-person meeting and 8 follow-on webinars. As part of this collaboration, a report was published that examined supports and systems needed to drive teaching quality. A discussion guide and crosswalk were also created as part of this work.
Regional Comprehensive Center Connections Webinars/Meetings	CEELO convened regional center staff in three quarterly virtual meetings throughout Year 4. An in-person breakfast meeting was held at the 2016 Roundtable for comprehensive center technical assistance providers to network and discuss technical assistance needs in states.
1- 50-state National Roundtable on *Leading for Excellence: Building Key Competencies to Lead High Performing Early Learning Initiatives*	The National Roundtable was successfully held with: • 156 attendees • 40 state agencies were represented by 94 attendees with 23 states bringing a team • 13 attendees were from comprehensive or regional centers • 13 attendees were from other technical assistance centers or research institutions • 4 attendees were from institutions of higher education
1 New Jersey Early Childhood Academy (EC Academy)	The EC Academy expanded to include new districts in CEELO Year 4 (the Academy's 3nd year). It supported participating districts by engaging in systematic data collection and analyses, responsive coaching, and facilitating local Peer Learning Communities. The EC Academy will continue in CEELO Year 5.
Preschool Expansion Grant (PDG) TA • Responsive Technical Assistance • Peer Exchanges	CEELO responded to 57 TA requests to support PDG-related topics. These are described in the responsive technical assistance portion of this report.

Strategic TA Activity	Description, Number of Participants/Events, and Status at end of Year 4
• Communities of Practice	CEELO also convened PDG staff from multiple states in 5 peer exchanges that focused on key areas of interest as expressed by states. [Note: In Year 4, CEELO engaged in planning and follow up conversations with the teams who attended the peer exchanges. The planning and follow up activities are counted as 1 responsive TA request.] CEELO staff co-facilitated two of the PDG Communities of Practice – Family Engagement and Dual Language Leaners. In partnership with PDG TA at AEM, staff maintained a community of practice site that features resources and a discussion board. Quarterly webinars focused on specific topics.
1 Cost of Quality Tool	In response to state needs, CEELO produced **1** tool – the Cost of Preschool Quality Tool. A webinar was held to share the tool and individual states are receiving technical assistance to train them on use of the tool
1 Thinkers Meeting on K-3	CEELO is a partner of the Education Commission of the States to develop resources and technical assistance to improve the quality of K-3 instruction. CEELO staff participated in an intensive experts' meeting on the primary grades titled a "Thinkers meeting on K-3."
1 State Action Guide on K-3	CEELO provided expert review on an ECS draft action guide that has informed internal CEELO planning to support SEA capacity building activities.
Self-Assessment Tool: High Effective Office of Early Learning	CEELO has used the State Action Guide to inform the constructs to be included in the tool. The tool development is still in process.

The second cohort of the CEELO Leadership Academy was conducted and applicants for cohort three were selected to participate in the Academy. The CEELO Leadership Academy aimed 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 4, seven fellows[7] representing Alabama, Arizona, Illinois, Maryland, Michigan, Minnesota, Nevada, and New Hampshire participated in four in-person meetings, attended three interim webinars, engaged with their coaches, and completed a work-embedded project. The meetings were led by

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[7] The original cohort consisted of eight Fellows. One Fellow left the cohort halfway through the Academy because of a new position outside a state agency, which she felt precluded her from participating.

outside experts and held over several days each session in order to facilitate deeper learning opportunities that the Fellows could build from and incorporate into their Job Embedded Projects. The topics of the meetings were as follows:

- Results-Based Accountability (December 2015)
- Systems Thinking (February 2016)
- Communication (June 2016)
- Project presentations and an interactive session on leadership with a set of early learning leaders (August 2016)

Between meetings, Fellows held one-on-one calls with a coach who guided and supported them in applying the leadership skills they were learning. In response to feedback from the first cohort, the interim webinars were developed between meetings to reflect and apply what was learned in the in-person meetings to their job-embedded projects. Additionally, each Fellow completed a job embedded project in which they identified an opportunity to apply the skills learned in the Leadership Academy directly to their work. The following job embedded projects were completed by the Fellows:

- Convening a cross department stakeholder group for inclusion to identify barriers to inclusion and identify strategies to address them.
- Creating a collaborative professional development path through a task force consisting of state agencies and eternal partners
- Developing and implementing state guidance document for braiding resources
- Developing parent educator core competencies to support a highly skilled, competent and sustainable early childhood workforce
- Developing state supports for coordinated intake
- Implementing regulation and supports for developmental screening
- Implementing state supports for effective full-day Kindergarten within a pre-K through Grade 3 system

For in-depth information on the design and structure, as well as participant feedback, see State Early Education Leadership Academy: Report on Year 2, 2015-2016 as well as the online Leadership Academy Page.

CEELO staff planned and convened the second year of a Learning Table on Teaching and Learning. This project, co-led with the BUILD Initiative (BUILD), aims to facilitate joint problem solving for stakeholders who are responsible for guiding early childhood policy and practice in their states. CEELO and BUILD created the Learning Table to "facilitate joint problem solving for stakeholders who are responsible for guiding early childhood policy and practice in their states."[8] During Year 4, CEELO brought together experts and teams of leaders from twelve states in a six-month-long Learning Table peer exchange from

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[8] http://buildinitiative.org/Portals/0/Uploads/Documents/TeachingLearningPaperMaster.pdf

March to August 2016. States created action plans to improve the development and implementation of policies that support teaching quality in one of two areas – credentialing or instructional tools. To support the development of these plans, the Learning Table consisted of one in-person meeting and eight webinar meetings. In the meetings, states provided updates on their plans and discussed a problem of practice. Technical assistance was provided to states throughout the time period to support them in applying their learning to state efforts. This work led to the commissioning of a several documents for state use:

- Sharpening the Focus: State Policy to Promote Effective Teaching that Improves Learning
- Enhancing Teaching Conditions to Support Quality Teaching: Discussion Guide and Crosswalk

In Year 4, CEELO Invited the state teams that had participated in Years 1 and 2 to apply for a 2nd year of TA support. Five states- NE, RI, MS, FL and MA have been selected to receive TA in the coming year. More information on the Learning Table is available here.

CEELO staff convened Regional Comprehensive Center Staff in quarterly meetings to discuss leveraging expertise through collaboration. Three of these meetings were virtual and one meeting was in-person at the 2016 Roundtable. Staff from other Centers were invited to co-present. The topics are as follows:

- Connecting CEELO and Regional Comprehensive Centers to the States built from the 2015 National Roundtable discussion between comprehensive center staff to promote enhanced communication and collaboration across CEELO and Regional Comprehensive Centers as they together to support and strengthen early learning leadership across all levels of SEAs. The session was jointly facilitated by Ramona Chauvin (Texas Comprehensive Center [TXCC]), who discussed how CEELO and TXCC collaborated to provide technical assistance to the Texas Education Agency. (October 2015)
- Similarities and Differences between CEELO, RCCs, and RELs; Discussion: Working Together to Support States provided a facilitated discussion on the roles of Regional Education Labs (RELs), Regional Comprehensive Centers (RCCs), and Content Centers (CEELO) to build and support SEA capacity for effective, high-quality early childhood education. Co-facilitators were Fiona Helsel (REL-Northwest) and Donna Richardson (Central Comprehensive Center, South Central Comprehensive Center). (March 2016)
- Networking Breakout at Roundtable - Regional Comprehensive Center staff met at a special session of the 2016 Roundtable to network and discuss state needs. (June 2016)
- ESSA, SEAs, and Us discussed implications of ESSA and opportunities for early learning, SEA roles and responsibilities, state needs, and coordinating communication for technical assistance to states. Chris Dwyer (Mid-Atlantic Regional Comprehensive Center) joined CEELO staff to co-facilitate. (September 2016)

CEELO staff planned and convened early childhood specialists from state departments of education at an annual Roundtable. A total of 156 individuals registered for the annual meeting with representation from 40[9] states and territories. The theme of the meeting was *Mobilizing an Exceptional Early Childhood Workforce.* 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. The Roundtable continues to grow in numbers each year, with many states bringing teams of staff. This year 23 states came in a team of two or more individuals with five states bringing teams of five or more staff.

In Year 4, CEELO staff facilitated the New Jersey (NJ) Leadership Academy for a 3rd year. CEELO developed a partnership with the NJ SEA and The National Institute for Early Education Research (NIEER) to design and implement a professional learning community (PLC) model, the Early Childhood Academy (EC Academy). The goal of the EC Academy is to build peer learning among New Jersey school districts that provide support in leaders' understanding of critical topics and their application to early childhood. Districts are required to send a district early learning team to participate that includes at least one central administrator, at least one building administrator, and at least one preschool or kindergarten teacher. Inclusion of at least one first, second, or third grade teacher was added this year. Intended to be a long-term PLC, the EC Academy is currently in the third year of implementation.

In year one (2013-2014), the focus of the *EC Academy* included three key topics: preschool quality and program expansion, teacher evaluation, and implementing developmental primary grade standards aligned with the Common Core State Standards. In year two (2014-2015), the EC Academy included new districts and further supported participating districts by engaging in systematic data collection and analyses, responsive coaching, and facilitating local PLCs. In year three (2015-2016) the *EC Academy* has a strong emphasis on the implementation of new policies for early primary education (K-3) and building connections to high quality preschool. The newly developed NJ First through Third Grade Implementation Guidelines alongside the Preschool and Kindergarten Implementation guidelines provides the base for a systemic look at teaching quality. Districts will be guided to use classroom data to understand the quality in their schools, generate a plan for improvement, and execute and evaluate the intervention with support from the EC Academy team.

Over the last three years, CEELO has helped to build the SEA capacity for reaching local districts on key early childhood initiatives and practices. The NJDOE plans to continue to implement and scale the work throughout the state.

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[9] States attending with number of individuals representing the state: AL(5), AR(3), AZ(4), CA(1), CO(1), CT(5), DE(1), FL(1), GA(1), HI(2), IA(3), ID(2), IL(4), IN(1), KS(1), KY(1), LA(1), MA(2), MD(5), ME(2), MI(9), MN(3), MO(2), MS(1), MT(1), NC(3), NE(2), NJ(3), NV(2), OH(1), OR(2), PA(1), RI(1), SC(1), TN(1), VA(3), WA(6), WI(2), WV(3), WY(1)

Box 3. Building Local Capacity to Implement State Early Learning Policies Effectively

What CEELO did: TCEELO developed a partnership with the SEA and The National Institute for Early Education Research (NIEER) to design and implement a professional learning community (PLC) model, the *Early Childhood Academy* (EC Academy). The *EC Academy* goal is to build peer learning among New Jersey school districts to support leaders' understanding and application of critical topics relevant to early childhood education. Districts are required to send a district early learning team to participate that includes at least one central administrator, at least one building administrator, and at least one early childhood teacher.

Why CEELO did it: The partnership with NJDOE builds on a long-standing history of support from Rutgers University to NJ school districts. As a state with more than 600 school districts, each exercising local control, the SEA looked for support in implementing a meaningful outreach to LEAs to improve instruction in Preschool through grade 3. CEELO and NIEER worked collaboratively with the SEA to design and implement a professional learning community for leaders to address key topics in early childhood quality.

What has been accomplished: The *EC Acad*emy has provided the state with a model for LEA outreach and partnership. The SEA has built relationships with leaders across the state through the Academy. The Academy has offers a venue for the SEA to communicate new initiatives, policies, and reports. This year the Academy is a component of a larger outreach with a focus on using **data to drive professional learning** for teachers and leaders. As the SEA works to implement a comprehensive birth to third grade approach, CEELO will continue to provide responsive TA. With support from CEELO, the SEA will work to expand the reach of the district-level support and look for connections to the birth to age five community. A New Jersey early childhood leader engaged in the project reported, "I've used information on coordinated pre-K to third grade practices. CEELO is responsive. If the organization doesn't have an answer to an inquiry they'll work to put one together."

CEELO staff provided TA to Preschool Development Grant- Expansion states. During Year 4, CEELO provided intensive TA to the 13 Preschool Development-Expansion (PDG-E) grant states to support the state's management and implementation of the grant and created strategic TA opportunities for PDG-E states through peer exchanges. In Year 3, CEELO staff conducted needs sensing calls and developed TA plans with PDG states. In Year 4, CEELO continued to work on TA plans with states.

CEELO staff established or sustained strong communication with stakeholders in each of the states through regular communication with project directors or project teams. As noted previously, the Northeast states have established regular peer exchange calls and occasional in person meetings that are facilitated by CEELO TA staff. In other regions, CEELO TA Staff regularly communicate with state program leads to review TA requests and progress.

The key TA requests and needs that have been identified are in the following areas: (1) data-drivendecision-making; (2) measuring program and child outcomes; (3) collaboration to ensure strong partnerships among school and private providers; (4) aligning preschool within the Birth-3rd grade learning continuum; (5) creating sustainable programs; (6) reaching high needs children; (7) identification of and supports for program's use of evidence-based curricula; and (8) improving the quality of the workforce.

1. **Data-driven decision-making**. PDG grantees have requested TA on the topic of how to design monitoring systems that support databased decision-making and can be used to support quality improvement, while at the same time ensuring the monitoring systems are set up to meet federal and state compliance requirements. PDG states requested TA on the topic to apply what they learned through a peer exchange that was offered in Year 3. With support from CEELO, several states reported modifying their monitoring systems to support ongoing data-based decision-making.

2. **Measuring program and child outcomes.** CEELO's TA has supported PDG states' design and implementation of systems for measuring program and child outcome data and has facilitated cross-state conversations among evaluators. CEELO sponsored two webinars with PDG states and their evaluation partners to review evaluation strategies, developed materials to support decisions about selection of program and child outcome measures, and has provided tailored TA to states to support their selection and use of program and child outcome data. CEELO Senior TA staff along with the lead evaluator from one PDG state will be facilitating an affinity group at the Child Care and Early Education Policy Research Consortium in early 2017 to continue to support the sharing among PDG evaluators of promising practices, lessons learned, and findings.

3. **Collaboration with Sub-grantees to ensure strong partnerships among schools and private providers**. PDG states have requested and received TA to build capacity to implement high-quality programs. In addition to providing opportunities for monthly exchange of lessons learned and challenges, CEELO developed materials on collaboration and presented research on effective collaboration strategies at a meeting of sub-grantees in New York. New York PDG staff have asked CEELO to present this research at a Webinar planned in early January so the information can be shared more broadly.

4. **Aligning preschool programs within a Birth-3rd Grade Continuum, building systems** across agencies. States expressed interest in moving beyond the concept of B-3rd grade alignment into practice and in Year 4 CEELO offered a number of responsive and strategic TA opportunities to PDG states to receive such supports. CEELO developed products and materials to support the movement into practice, offered tailored TA to selected PDG states, and offered a peer exchange on the topic.

5. **Creating sustainable programs.** A number of PDG states have expressed an interest in obtaining early TA support to identify strategies to sustain programs. A number of RTT-ELC states that have also received PDG grants reported that they now know the importance of focusing on sustainability early on. CEELO TA providers provided states with information and opportunities to share strategies during Year 4. In Year 5, CEELO plans an additional peer exchange to address issues of sustainability.

6. **Reaching high-needs children**. PDG grantees continued to report needs around reaching high-needs children and meeting the targets regarding numbers of children on IEPs being served in inclusive classrooms. In Year 4, Northeast states exchanged lessons learned and promising approaches with one another and CEELO sponsored a Peer Exchange on the topic to share resources. Strategies for identifying high-needs children included reaching out to existing

community-based agencies, working with McKinney Vento coordinators to identify homeless families, seeking out faith-based organizations, engaging community-based organizations that work with that with immigrant communities, and providing transportation as a way of engaging high-needs families.

7. **Identification of and supports for use of evidence-based curricula**. Several PDG grantees reported a need for TA that could assist the SEA in identifying evidence-based curricula. Moreover, a number of states with local district control, requested support in helping districts implement evidence-based curriculum, even if the state was not able to require districts to do so. In Year 4, CEELO offered a peer exchange and follow up TA to states on this topic.

8. **Improving the quality of the workforce**. Many PDG states reported challenges addressing issues of compensation and benefits and expressed an interest in learning about other states' strategies. Most PDG states that CEELO has worked with are supporting professional development for existing preschool teachers and are implementing coaching/mentoring approaches as a strategy for improving the quality of the workforce. In Year 4, CEELO developed products and materials for states to use to inform their state policies and plans to address the issue of the workforce and provided intensive, responsive TA to PDG states on the topic.

CEELO staff supported 5 Peer Exchanges for PDG-EGrantees. CEELO convened state teams throughout Year 4 in peer exchange events that focused on key areas facing PDG-E grantee states. The Peer Exchanges gave participants an opportunity to learn from one another, gain knowledge from national experts, and brainstorm solutions to shared challenges. Recognizing a one-time event would not be sufficient, CEELO staff conducted call with state teams before the peer exchange to identify needs and strengths. These strengths were called on in the meeting as a spark for conversation. In addition, CEELO staff conducted follow up consultation calls to identify goals the state had following what they learned in the peer exchange and how technical assistance could be provided to support these goals. Clicking on the title of the Peer Exchange will open up a webpage that shares attendees, state resources, research resources, and other materials from the Exchange.

- Curriculum (November 2015) - This Peer Exchange examined curriculum from three points of effective implementation: 1) alignment of the curriculum to standards - both program standards and teaching and learning standards, including curriculum selection criteria and implementation; 2) models of professional learning and support for curriculum implementation; and 3) examination of the fidelity of implementation of curriculum was examined through a lens of monitoring for quality. Teams joined to learn from peers about various models of support other states are implementing, and then generated a plan to institute or improve upon supports in their home state. A follow-up webinar was held February 2016. Participating states were Arkansas, Connecticut, Louisiana, Maine, Maryland, New Jersey, New York, and Rhode Island.

- Peer Learning Communities (December 2015) - Participants heard from Vincent Costanza (NJ) and Sally Richardson (KY), along with their colleagues, about two models

of professional learning communities they are implementing in their states to build LEA or other local organizational leadership. Vincent and a district representative discussed the lessons learned from the second year of implementing the New Jersey Early Childhood Academy. Sally and her colleague shared lessons learned from implementing the Kentucky Early Learning Leaders Network. They discussed their rationale for creating their programs, how the programs are funded, who participates, the goals and outcomes of the initiatives, and other key information. Participants had time to ask questions of the presenters and worked as a team to create a plan for implementation of such a program in their state. States participating were Maine, Maryland, Rhode Island, Tennessee, and Virginia.

- Recruitment and Enrollment (April 2016) offered participants opportunity to discuss recruiting and enrolling families with high needs, issues around eligibility requirements and determination, braiding and blending funds, and community-level approaches to recruitment and enrollment. Illinois presented tools and resources they have used successfully. Maryland, Nevada, and Virginia participated in this virtual peer exchange.

- Finance (August 2016) offered participants the chance to: share approaches to determining adequacy of funding, including "true" costs of preschool quality and how states allocate funds; learn about best practices and approaches to ensuring funds are used efficiently, including blending and braiding funds to serve all children; gain a deeper understanding of how to develop a strategic financing plan that results in equitable access to high quality preschool programs; and build stronger relationships and sharing among states to support continuous improvement of state-funded prekindergarten programs. Participating states were Arizona, Arkansas, Connecticut, Louisiana, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Jersey, and Tennessee.

- B-3 Systems (September 2016) focused on the state education agency (SEA) role in building effective birth through third grade systems, including aligning state policy from birth through third grade in areas such as standards, assessment, and workforce development and supporting local Birth through third grade efforts. The peer exchange was aligned with a recently published CEELO case study of three states building P-3 Systems. Arthur Reynolds (University of Minnesota) presented on the Chicago Parent Centers and Brett Walker shared Oregon's approach. Participating states were Illinois, Louisiana, Maine, Nebraska, New Jersey, Virginia. State teams included representatives from districts or schools.

Participants rated the Peer Exchanges highly. Each session received the same evaluation questions on quality, relevance, and usefulness. The responses (n=56) were summed up and findings include:

- 91 percent of participant rated the **quality** as *high* or *very high.*

- 89 percent of participants said the **relevance** of the exchange was *high* or *very high.*

- 90 percent of participants rated the **usefulness** of the exchange as *high* or *very high.*

The opportunity to engage in participatory dialogue with experts <u>and</u> peers were commented on positively in open-ended responses. Additionally, access to tools and time for states to convene and process with their teammates was also highly valued. Participants elaborated on their perspectives on the Peer Exchange:

> *Opportunity to hear what other states are doing in both ongoing P3 initiatives and in planning our initiative.   The diversity in program implementation and the opportunity to ask clarifying questions is invaluable.* [B-3 Exchange]

> *Many interactions were valuable at the meeting such as: - the opportunity to learn how different states are using the funds to implement early education; - the presentation on how K-12 vs preschool is funding - promoting preschool as education, rather than a remedy for communities in need; - Jason Sachs presentation on the Boston Public Schools, I really liked his model of implementation; and - the CPQ! I am looking forward to viewing the modules and learning more about this tool!* [Finance Exchange]

> *I enjoyed the pairing with different states (I think we got to sit with Arizona, Louisiana, and Arkansas). I thought the facilitation was just right - not too heavy-handed and yet not laissez faire.* [Finance Peer Exchange]

> *Peer Exchanges have been a great way to learn how other States implement various aspects of the PDG and how to improve our own practices/policies. [State respondent, Publication survey]*

> *Opportunity to hear from Illinois that had already struggled with some of the issues discussed and provided some solutions (e.g., forms, documents).* [Recruitment Exchange]

> *Hearing from New Jersey and Kentucky Opportunity to reflect on the content of the presentations and its influence/impact on our own state PD plans. Opportunity to network and resources and make connections with other states.* [Peer Learning Community Exchange]

Designing Peer Exchanges has been a formative experience, with participant feedback helping to shape and refine the development of each subsequent Peer Exchange. Participant requests for state planning time led to expanded time for states to map out action plans and to identify how to apply what they learned. Feedback also identified the usefulness of bringing in states who had already tackled the issues

and had tools and resources available for states to consider. This evaluation feedback that was provided from participants in earlier Peer Exchanges was applied to later Peer Exchanges.

CEELO staff co-facilitated 2 Communities of Practice for PDG Grantees. CEELO staff, with TA staff at AEM, co-facilitated Communities of Practice (COP) for all Preschool Development and Expansion grantees and their staff.

- Family Engagement is a COP for professionals interested in and working on the topic to come together to share ideas, strategies, experiences, and resources. The COP features a variety of strategies including webinars, discussions between members and TA partners, and the use of a central workspace. Resources are highlighted in the resource section and COP members may pose questions or respond with recommendations and suggestions in the discussion board.
- Dual Language Learners is devoted to professionals who are interested in and working on issues related to young dual language learners and their families. In this Community, members come together to share ideas, strategies, experiences, and resources. Topics include: early literacy development of dual language learners, immersion language programs, bilingual education, or supporting the inclusion of a dual language learner in a monolingual English setting. In addition to providing a discussion forum for members, this COP site includes "featured resources", a calendar of relevant events, a workspace for members to collaborate, and the capacity to set up workgroups on specific projects. Webinars are held on a quarterly basis.

Evaluations of the Community of Practice Webinars revealed attendees provided mostly favorable reviews. An attendee of the Family Engagement *Communicating with Families* webinar reported, "This was one of the best webinars I have attended. It provided me with information and resources that were new to me. The presenter was very engaging. Thanks."

CEELO created and disseminated 1 Tool for SEAs and LEAs. The Cost of Preschool Quality Tool is an Excel-based model which can be used at the state or district level to estimate the cost of expanding high quality preschool programs. Use of the tool is facilitated by technical assistance from CEELO, and print and media resources on our website.

Box 4. Cost of Preschool Quality Tool Supports Data-Driven Policy Decisions

> **What CEELO did**: Based on a review of other cost tools, CEELO developed the Cost of Preschool Quality (CPQ) to provide state early education administrators with comprehensive technical assistance on the costs of implementing a high quality preschool program at scale. The CPQ is based on the NIEER quality standards, and provides users with flexibility to compare costs of offering high-quality pre-K across settings, dosage and educator qualifications.
>
> **How CEELO Pilot Tested the Tool**. CEELO provided research and consultation to Early Learning Indiana, an interagency group of stakeholders, that was developing a strategic plan to increase access to quality of early childhood services in Indiana. Through the TA Early Learning Indiana, identified a need for detailed data on the cost of quality preschool. CEELO provided the free CPQ tool and associated technical assistance to an

interagency team of early childhood stakeholders. CEELO aimed to engage in these activities to build the capacity of the state to use comprehensive data to inform policy. The supports allowed the state to see the costs of offering high-quality preschool for 3- and 4-year old children in mixed delivery settings, in different geographic locations of the state. CEELO helped the Indiana team prepare data and graphics for a April 2016 presentation to an Indiana Early Learning Advisory Committee's workgroup to inform their legislative request. CEELO also supported the development of an August 2016 presentation to the Superintendent of Public Instruction. Finally, to support the independent use of the tool in ongoing work for the state, CEELO provided a half day of CPQ training to an expanded group of state agency staff and other stakeholders.

Why we provided TA. Indiana received more than $20 million dollars from the Lilly Foundation in 2014 to establish Early Learning Indiana—an initiative to expand early learning opportunities in the state. The Indiana legislature provided limited dollars in 2013 and again in 2015 for the Early Education Matching Grant program to expand access to high-quality preschool for 4-year-old children in low-income families. Indiana early learning leaders were preparing to request additional funds to expand the program. Stakeholders requested assistance from CEELO to build the capacity of state agency leaders and stakeholders to produce data to drive decisions and inform policy.

How the assistance affected the state. CEELO provided Indiana leaders with supports to enhance their structural, human and organizational capacity to independently use a research-based tool to project costs of high-quality preschool to inform policy. State staff, gained experience presenting to a national audience on a CEELO webinar about how Indiana used the tool. One key state leader reported that he felt the tool and supports were valuable. He stated, "We presented [data from the CPQ tool] to the full ELAC [Early Learning Advisory Council] committee last month and it went very well. We will have a full page in the upcoming ELAC annual report that will feature excerpts from an updated funding streams memo and incorporate the CPQ tool data. . . Thanks again for your partnership on this!"

Current status and issues that remain. As a result of the November 2016 election the current Superintendent of Public Instruction who supported expansion of high-quality preschool was unseated by a new superintendent of public instruction. It is not clear if the new superintendent, governor, and legislature will support expansion of high quality preschool. Further, budget shortfalls in the state could have an influence on preschool funding. Yet, the city of Evansville, Indiana is receiving TA on the feasibility of using Pay for Success financing to expand access to preschool in that community and leaders in this community are using the CPQ to model costs.

CEELO continues to provide responsive TA to Indiana to support the state's early learning agenda. Moreover, an early childhood specialist in the Indiana Department of Education is a CEELO leadership fellow. Through this responsive and strategic TA, CEELO is supporting the state's capacity-building during the transition.

Currently more than 12 states have requested the CPQ, and CEELO is providing customized technical assistance to NM, AR, WA, AL, and DC.

CEELO Produced Resources in Response to Information Requests and Offered 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 with the aim of providing 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 4, CEELO staff produced resources tailored to the needs of early childhood specialists. These included policy reports and shorter documents that honed in on key research and application. In Year 4, CEELO produced a number of documents to support Preschool Expansion and Development (described above).

In some instances, CEELO produced more products than proposed in the management plan and in other areas, fewer documents were produced. Given the responsive nature of CEELO TA, the center adapts its efforts in production of documents to the arena of most need expressed. Table 6 provides a description of the planned and actual activities in Year 4.For a

Table 6: Technology Enhanced TA Planned and Provided in Year 4

Planned Activity	Description and Number of Participants/Events
Update website	CEELO regularly posted resources, new publications and updates to the CEELO website. This includes a weekly posting on the related reosurces page of the CEELO website.
Updated **150** new resources in library	CEELO posted 97 additional resources to the Resource Library.
1 directory and 1 state information page for each state and territory online (57 total)	During Year 4, CEELO continued to maintain and update a dedicated page on its website for each state. State page include information on the state's Early Learning Guidelines, Program Standards, and other information of interest to early childhood stakeholders.
4 Policy reports, case studies, or meeting reports– • Qualifications and Conditions of State-Funded Preschool Workforce • SEAs Role in Supporting Infants and Toddlers (replaced with White Paper on Preventing Suspension	CEELO developed **7** new publications to address policy and research questions posed by early childhood specialists in state departments of education. See below for a listing. CEELO had proposed to write a report on infant and toddlers but instead received multiple requests for products on different topics, for example producing a White Paper on Preventing Suspension and Expulsion in Preschool. CEELO exceeded the target number of 4 products but did not produce a paper on infants and toddlers in Year 4.

Planned Activity	Description and Number of Participants/Events
and Expulsion in Preschool, forthcoming) • State funded preschool programs and local funding strategies to support quality (PDG) • Roundtable 2016 Summary	
Quick Reads • **6** Fast Facts • **4** Annotated Bibliographies • Listserv Summaries (not in management plan)	CEELO posted **1** Fast Fact to ceelo.org as of September 30 and had drafted three Fast Facts that were ready for review. CEELO developed **1** annotated bibliography. One annotated bibliography was updated to include new resources. CEELO compiled NAECS-SDE listserv responses for **2** topic strands and created listserv summaries for general public viewing.
1 Webinar proposed – Cost of Quality Tool and TA	CEELO facilitated **22** Webinars and the slides and recordings were made available on the CEELO website after the webinar concluded. These webinars are described in detail in the section on responsive technical assistance.
1 Tool – Cost of Quality Tool	**1** Cost of Preschool Quality Tool (CPQ) designed and developed. CEELO intended to provide TA support to states interested in using the CPQ and a description of those are provided in the previous section on strategic TA.
E-News	To share its work and resources to a wider audience, CEELO produced **1** e-newsletter (E-News) during Year 4. The E-News shared new resources produced by CEELO, discussed selected technical assistance provided, and frequently featured interviews with state staff around key issues.

CEELO successfully updated and populated the center website with relevant resources aimed at addressing target audience needs. During Year 4 CEELO staff regularly updated and populated the center website. During Year 4, the ceelo.org website had 52,832 page views - nearly double the number of views of 24,607 the previous year. Since it was launched www.ceelo.org has had nearly over 147,455 unique page views. The number of unique page views was 38,322 in Year 4. The most frequent pages that were viewed in Year 4 were the state pages (5,818 page views) followed by CEELO Roundtable (2,099 page views), resources on B-3 (1,149 viewers) and information about CEELO (1,074 viewers).

In Year 4, CEELO staff identified 97 new external resources for inclusion in the CEELO database (for a cumulative total of 556 resources identified) and posted 52 to the CEELO website's Selected Resources web page. The number of uploaded resources was lower than the goal of 150 and in Year 5, staff will focus on entering additional resources to get this number in the target range.

The website is a tool for increasing communication and contact between states and with the comprehensive centers. There is a dedicated page with information on the other comprehensive centers that is updated as needed. The ECE Contact Directory – a comprehensive listing of state personnel leading programs serving young children - was updated in March to capture any changes in a state and maintain as current a directory as possible. An update was underway at the end of Year 4 and was released in October (Year 5). This resource serves as a valuable conduit of information to connect states as indicated from verbal and email communication. For instance, CEELO has received feedback thanking the center for "maintain this useful directory" [email from state staff] and noting that "it is so valuable" [email from state staff].

State information for every state and territory online. States express interest in learning about key documents and policies in other states. The state-by-state pages contain information on each state pertaining to their early learning guidelines for infants and toddlers, pre-K, and K-3. It also hosts links to state program standards for early childhood education as well as teacher and family guidance documents that relate to the standards. Each state page is headed up by links to the state's office/s of early learning.

CEELO staff produced multiple reports to address specific topics of interest to early childhood administrators. CEELO proposed four reports in its management plan. Three of the originally proposed reports were produced. While we did begin to research the topic for the 4th policy brief on the SEA Role in Infant/Toddlers, we determined that there was a greater need for a report on preventing suspension and expulsions in preschool. This brief has been drafted and is under final review and will be forthcoming in early 2017. reports . The titles of the publications are listed below.

- 2016 Roundtable Summary
- Building State P-3 Systems: Learning from Leading States
- Early Childhood Teacher Education Policies: Research Review and State Trends
- Leadership Academy Cohort One Report
- Measuring Child Outcomes in the Early Years
- Sharpening the Focus: State Policy to Promote Effective Teaching that Improves Learning
- State Approaches to Family Engagement in Pre-K Programs

CEELO staff produced and disseminated multiple "Quick Reads." As state early childhood specialists find shorter documents more amenable to their needs, CEELO offers a range of "quick reads" that highlight research and provide examples from states. These include Fast Facts, Annotated

Bibliographies, and summaries from queries posed on the NAECS-SDE listserv. In Year 4, CEELO produced the following quick reads:

- Early Childhood Program Licensing Exemptions (Listserv Summary)
- Financing Early Care and Education (Updated Annotated Bibliography)
- Pre-K Attendance – Why it's Important and How to Support It (FastFact)
- Promoting Effective Teaching that Improves Learning (Annotated Bibliography)
- State Pre-K Approved Curricula (Listserv Summary)

In Year 4, CEELO staff planned and facilitated 22 Webinars for State Early Education Administrators. To leverage expertise tailored toward each webinar's topic and intended audience, CEELO collaborated or invited presenters from a variety of other entities, including: *comprehensive centers and other federally funded centers* (Head Start National Center on Parent, Family, and Community Engagement), *state early childhood education specialists or representatives from local education agencies/early learning programs* (CT, DC, IN, MA, PA, OR) *national organizations and foundations* (Council of Chief State School Officers, EducationCounsel, National Association of Early Childhood Specialists in State Departments of Education, NIEER, The Ounce of Prevention Fund, the Urban Institute). The list of Webinars CEELO delivered in Year 4 is provided below:

- Building State P-3 Systems (September 2016)
- Early Childhood Teacher Education Policies: Research Review and State Trends (May 2016)
- ESSA & Early Childhood: Opportunities for States (June 2016)
- Why Understanding the Costs of Preschool Quality is Important: A Webinar for Preschool Development Grantee States (July 2016)
- PDG
  - Family Engagement Community of Practice (CEELO staff Melissa Dahlin is a co-facilitator)
    - Accessing Hard to Reach Families (February 2016)
    - Communicating with Families (April 2016)
    - The Home-School Connection (June 2016)
    - Communicating with Families to Prevent Chronic Absenteeism (August 2016) 109 attendees; 180 registrants representing 27 states
  - Dual Language Learner Community of Practice (CEELO staff Alexandra Figueras-Daniel is a co-facilitator)
    - Tools for Teachers of Young Dual Language Learners (February 2016)
    - Supporting the Early Literacy Development of Young Dual Language Learners (April 2016)
    - Early Childhood Programs That Support Young Dual Language Learners June 2016)

- Early Childhood Programs That Support Young Dual Language Learners - Part 2 (September 2016)
- Learning Table on State Policy and Supports to Promote Effective Teaching and Learning
  - o Two cohorts engaged in a monthly webinar for a total of 10 webinars. Information, including slide deck and resources, are available here. One cohort focused on instructional tools and the other cohort was centered around credentialing. The webinar slides are available to the public.

CEELO disseminated the E-News Quarterly. This resource is designed for the broader early childhood audience and shares information on CEELO's technical assistance and information resources. It frequently features an interview with a state contact around how their state is addressing a key issue in early childhood. During the bulk of Year 4, CEELO redesigned the E-News to be more user-friendly and accessible. This revised E-News is called IMPACT and the first edition went out November 2016. The E-News has a total of 784 subscribers (as of 12/19/2016). [See Winter 2016]

CEELO staff developed materials that summarized expert commentary through other media as well. For example, CEELO Co-Project Director Jana Martella was featured as a "Voice from the Field" in the monthly **Early Learning at ED newsletter**. CEELO staff authored blogs for the NIEER Preschool Matters blog throughout the year. Twelve blogs were posted in Year 4:

- What the State of Preschool can tell us about Dual Language Learners in State Programs (October 2015)
- Lessons learned from Vanderbilt's study of Tennessee Pre-K (October 2015)
- Universal Pre-K: What does it mean and who provides it? (January 2016)
- Creating Conditions for Increased Attendance (February 2016)
- Obstacles to Instilling an Education Ethic (February 2016)
- New Resources for Educators, Policy Makers and Families of Young DLLs (April 2016)
- Transforming the Early Childhood Education Workforce (May 2016)
- In the Education Olympics Politicians Promise Much but Fail the First Hurdle (August 2016)
- Lost in Translation: State PreK Must Meet Needs of Dual Language Learners (September 2016)
- Being There: Absenteeism Undermines Pre-K Benefits (September 2016)
- Grading State Pre-K on the Curve: Is the Best Good Enough? (September 2016)
- Why the Source of Preschool Funding Matters (September 2016)

Finally, CEELO regularly uses twitter to disseminate CEELO products as well as important research and policy updates. CEELO now has 688 twitter followers as well—an increase from approximately 500 followers in Year 3.

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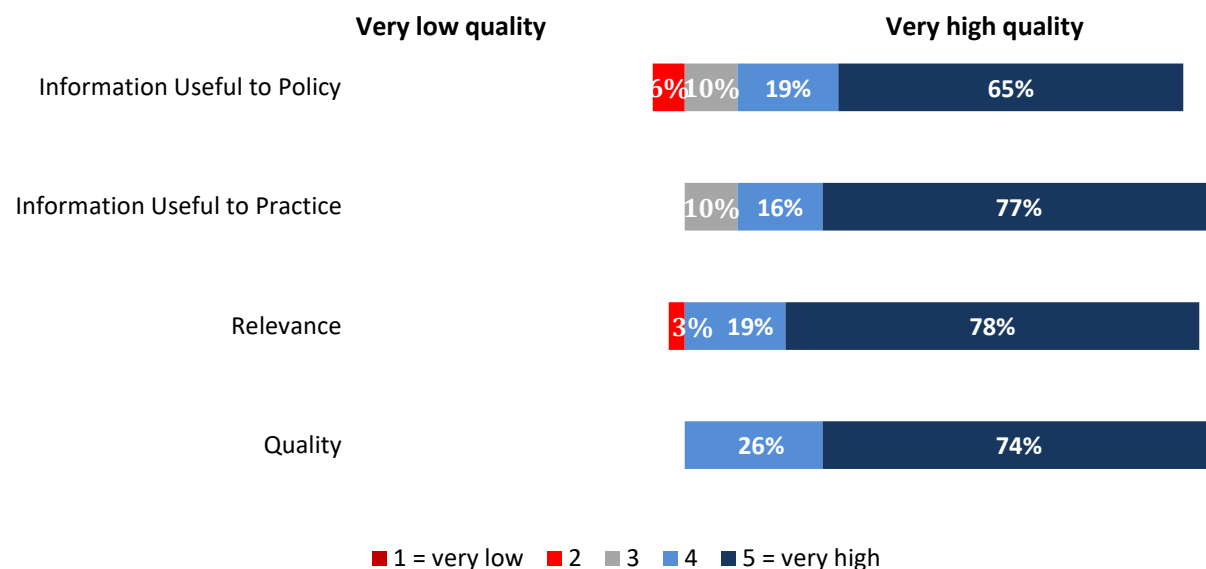
State TA Recipients

Overall, recipients of CEELO TA continue to report CEELO technical assistance as high quality, relevant, and useful to policy and practice. Respondents reported a variety of types of support (presentations, meeting facilitation, partnership building, provision of expertise, briefings, peer learning) across a number of relevant early childhood topics (data, family engagement, birth through third grade work (governance, alignment, local PLCs), kindergarten entry assessments, ECE finance, workforce, alignment, partnerships, family engagement, sustainability etc.). This technical assistance typically involves a process of intake, action, and follow-up.

The average TA recipient had substantial experience working in early childhood education. The average years of working in early childhood education was 24 years, with over half of recipients having worked in early childhood education for over 20 years. However, most recipients had been in their position for a relatively shorter amount of time (average five years).

Figure 1 below indicates that <u>state early education administrators</u> overwhelmingly identified CEELO's TA as high quality, relevant, and useful to both policy and practice.

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

Analysis of survey data revealed that recipients continue to highly value TA provided by CEELO staff, which was tailored to the unique context in each state and provided significant early childhood expertise to addressing a state policy issue. For information on how the TA was used, see the following section on

outcomes. Recipients of CEELO's TA shared their thoughts on the quality, usefulness and relevance of the support they received:

> *CEELO has been an invaluable resource to me and my state and other colleagues, and all are great to work with!! Thank you so much for all the support and resources CEELO has offered!! [State respondent, CEELO State TA Survey]*

The national scope of CEELO's work enabled CEELO staff to provide examples, insights, and connections from other states that, along with findings from research, were valued by TA recipients and guided them in their planning and implementation of policy:

> *I think for me what CEELO brings that is most helpful, are connections and perspectives working with different states. Knowing what others are doing, seeing samples of their work, and being able to use this in ongoing planning is helpful. [State TA Survey]*

> *CEELO helped connect us to other states that have had similar experiences in adopting and implementing a kindergarten readiness assessment. These connections have strengthened our process in moving toward statewide implementation as well as develop relationships with other states' KRA teams to be able to ask more questions and share experiences. [State TA Survey]*

Detailed examples of how TA was used is available on page 34.

Collaboration with other technical assistance providers or organizations. A survey was administered to individuals (typically other TA providers) who have collaborated with CEELO in Year 4. The TA providers rated the quality of the collaboration positively, with the majority rating it very high (58%) and the remainder as high (42%) quality. Over 90 percent reported that CEELO met the need of the target audience and that CEELO provided important content and/or expertise. Seventy-five percent noted that CEELO filled a gap in early childhood content knowledge.

Collaborators noted a number of different activities they interacted with CEELO in Year 4:

- Guest speaker at a CEELO meeting (or vice versa) (83%)

- Coordinated technical assistance; Provided updates about TA activities in a state (50%)

- Co-sponsored meetings or events (42%)

- Provided joint TA (42%)

- Co-developed products (41%)

Box 5. Collaboration with Texas Regional Center Built SEA and Regional Center Capacity

In Year 3, CEELO and the Texas Comprehensive Center (TXCC) worked together with the Texas Education Agency (TEA) to support family engagement efforts - a collaboration that extended into Year 4 and has led to interest by both centers in continuing to find opportunities to leverage each center's strengths to most effectively support TEA's early childhood efforts.

In May 2015, a bill (HB4) to provide high-quality pre-Kindergarten was passed by the Texas Legislation. TEA decided family engagement would be a priority for the assistance provided by TXCC and any partners. CEELO contributed content expertise on family engagement through a summary of research-based family engagement strategies and best practices from selected states. CEELO participated in an in-person meeting of the Family Engagement Workgroup convened by TEA by facilitating sessions designed to come to a consensus on definitions for family and family engagement. CEELO continued to provide support via group calls to discuss public commentary on the draft. In December 2015, the workgroup came to a consensus on a draft, which was then sent on for a review by TEA. The plan was approved and is in use by districts in Texas [the final plan is available is available in the Texas Education Agency High Quality Prekindergarten Grant Implementation Guide].

This technical assistance is an example of CEELO providing content expertise to enhance regional center support provided to a state agency. Throughout the process, the work was attuned to the needs of the state and the work conducted as a united front across organizations. CEELO and TXCC continue to engage in conversation and are exploring avenues for joint collaboration in Year 5.

Respondents' elaborations on their ratings are presented, demonstrating joint effort that reduced duplication, eased burdens on a state, and led the state to a desired outcome.

> As a regional comprehensive center I partner with [CEELO staff person] often and in a variety of ways. Generally, we check in with each other periodically on states in the [name of region] to stay informed, avoid duplicating contacts/services, and to help each other as needed. In the last year we have worked together to provide technical assistance in [three states]. In [state 1], we worked together to put a workshop together. In [state 2] we each took a role to assist the state to develop an online preschool application process. In [state 3], we are working together to provide technical assistance to an inexperienced SEA staff person as they develop materials for a comprehensive assessment system. Working together as a team, we are better able to serve the SEAs in the region by bringing different strengths to support. We operate as a partnership rather than two separate providers, which is a relief to the states. In addition to the direct partnership work with [CEELO staff person], I also take advantage of webinars and materials on the CEELO website.

> Identifying SEAs early childhood needs, goals, and priorities through needs sensing activities. Built structural and organization capacity: Increased SEAs knowledge of and expertise in evidence-based resources and tools by providing resources, hosting

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webinars, and peer exchanges. Built human capacity: Co-planning and facilitating meetings, providing feedback on revision of documents leading to revised guidelines and new policies. Built human, structural, fiscal and material capacity.

Selected Strategic TA Event Evaluations:

CEELO Annual Roundtable: Participants in the 2016 Roundtable gave high marks to the event. About 94 percent rated the overall event as high (47%) or very high (47%). Similarly, they found the event relevant to their work (high 53%, very high 43%) and useful to their work (high 47%, very high 45%). Respondents reported valuing opportunities to learn from and share with colleagues, especially the resources and tools shared. Attendees reported that they appreciated the use of state specialists in planning, presenting, and facilitating. Survey responses include:

> *The small group discussions within the breakouts were useful - short presentations by current state folks was just right in terms of investment in time and knowledge gained.*

> *Networking opportunities I really liked the set up for the cafe session on day 1. This gave quick information about programs and I was able to make connections after the session. Very valuable to me and helpful info for where our state is in implementation of credentialing.*

> *[I liked the…} panels that provided different perspectives on same topic and were rooted in reality. Mix of plenary and break-outs. Activity-level in break-outs (movement/community care, etc.)*

> *Networking time. Specific information shared by states. I will go home with resources and contacts that I will use immediately.*

Learning Table: State Policy to Promote Effective Teaching and Learning. Together with partners from the BUILD Initiative CEELO supported a Learning Table for 12 states, for a 2nd year, building on the 2014-2015 Learning Table for 6 states. The Learning Table is designed to to support state policymakers to implement high-quality early learning and development policies, programs, and practices with the ultimate aim of improving outcomes for young children.

The Learning Table engaged teams to identify opportunities to implement coherent and aligned professional development and accountability policies for birth-3rd grade teachers. In Year 4, 12 state teams focused efforts on either creating more coherent credentialing pathways or on the development of instructional tools. Through the Learning Table selected state leaders addressed one or more of the following policy recommendations within their state context:

1. States have a professional learning policy that promotes positive teaching conditions for all roles in the birth-3rd grade workforce

2. States have an <u>educator evaluation policy that promotes professional learning</u> for all roles in the birth-3rd grade workforce.
3. States embed expectations for the use of <u>developmentally, culturally, and individually appropriate instructional tools</u> within QRIS, Pre-K, and other program standards.
4. States amend <u>early childhood educator and leader credentialing and licensure</u> policies to assure the birth-3rd grade workforce has demonstrated competence specific to early childhood education and culturally responsive teaching.

This design of the Learning Table and the focus on either credentialing or tool development was based on insights documented in the paper that the Learning Table developed in 2015 entitled **Sharpening the Focus: State Policy to Promote Effective Teaching that Improves Learning**.

Details about the information shared during the learning table can be found below.

- <u>Moderators</u>
- Resource Library:
  - <u>General</u>
  - <u>Credentialing Cohort</u>
  - <u>Instructional Tools Cohort</u>
  - <u>Leading Policy Change</u>
- <u>Session 1: In-Person Meeting March 8-9</u>
- Session 2: <u>Credentialing Cohort</u> | <u>Instructional Tools Cohort</u>
- Session 3: <u>Credentialing Cohort</u> | <u>Instructional Tools Cohort</u>
- Session 4: <u>Credentialing Cohort</u> | <u>Instructional Tools Cohort</u>
- Session 5: <u>Credentialing Cohort</u> | <u>Instructional Tools Cohort</u>

Most participants in the Learning Table rated the in-person meeting highly, however fewer found the in-person meeting useful for policy or practice. For example, 93% of participants who completed an evaluation of the in-person meeting rated the overall quality as high or very high and 73% reported that it was either highly or very highly relevant. Yet only 60% reported that it was useful or very useful. When answering questions about different aspects of the meeting, all (100%) participants reported that the expert presentations were useful and 93% reported that the small group discussions were useful. Example comments are presented below.

The bigger group discussion helped frame larger questions. The small group discussions were great for more problem / solution discussion. [Learning Table Participant, Post Meeting Survey]

Expert presentations were great; opportunities to discuss topics with other state team members was very helpful. [Learning Table Participant, Post Meeting Survey]

Participants provided feedback on their experience in the Learning Table through the Year End Survey and interviews. Example comments are presented below.

The Learning Table has been beneficial [State respondent, CEELO TA Survey]

Webinars have been very helpful - hearing from other states in LT2 cohort [State respondent, CEELO Publication Survey]

There was a Webinar specifically on credentialing, so we were able to talk to other states about what they were doing. That was really powerful. . . What we're doing right now is we're sharing a draft of that policy statement [we developed with support from CEELO and the Learning Table] with our birth to grade three statewide advisory group. Then we're developing a plan to share it with our respective commissioners. [State early childhood specialist, interview conducted in late 2016].

This variability of ratings may be due to the timing of the in-person meeting, which was held early in the Learning Table cycle before the teams had clearly defined their goals. In the upcoming Year 5 Learning Table, we have decided to host the in-person meeting later in the TA cycle towards the conclusion next summer so that teams can use the in-person time to share accomplishments and plan for sustainability of priorities.

CEELO Webinars. Survey data were collected regarding the quality, usefulness, and relevance of the information presented on the 22 webinars CEELO staff hosted in Year 4 and all were highly rated. Over 80 percent of respondents reported that the Webinars were of high quality (85%) and relevant (81%). This was an increase from last year's report of just over 70 percent. Yet, only 66 percent of respondents in Year 4 reported that the information provided during the Webinars was useful to SEAs. A number of Webinars offered by CEELO in Year 4 were targeted to a general audience and were designed to present information to increase knowledge. Given the broader dissemination reach we now have CEELO will more carefully consider the target audience and the webinars goals in our communications about the webinars in Year 5. Stakeholders provided comments about their perceptions of the quality, usefulness and relevance of the information. Participants provided comments on the usefulness of the webinars:

Great information, especially glad the webinar was recorded and posted. Guidance document VERY useful to our efforts. [ESSA Webinar participant]

Very interested in how the legislation was written and how we can utilize the state plan to collaborate with other programs and address other issue areas - i.e. quality child care, grade level reading, etc. [ESSA Webinar participant]

This webinar was wonderful! As an individual who digs deep for ESSA information, your presentation had some new information which is very relevant to our organization, thank for sharing some great resources. [ESSA Webinar participant]

Appreciated hearing from other states on how they approached writing their plan. [B-3 Webinar participant]

Loved the tool. Can't wait to play with it when I am less busy! [Cost of Quality Preschool Tool Webinar]

I am looking forward to learning more about the tool displayed. [Cost of Quality Preschool Tool Webinar]

Well done and thank you. [Workforce Webinar participant]

I appreciated the connection to the IOM report. [Workforce Webinar participant]

CEELO Materials Accessed and Valued by Stakeholders

Recipients of CEELO materials were asked if they had accessed the CEELO website and materials. As **Figure 2** illustrates, a total of 95 respondents[10] reported that they had accessed CEELO materials. Most indicated they had accessed several types of CEELO material.

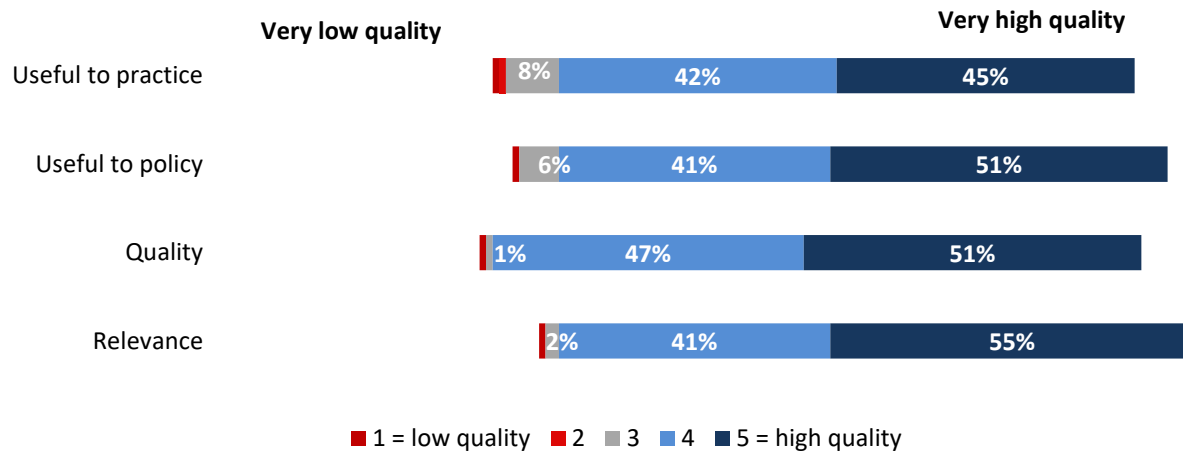**Figure 2: CEELO's Work is Accessed in Multiple Ways (n=95)**
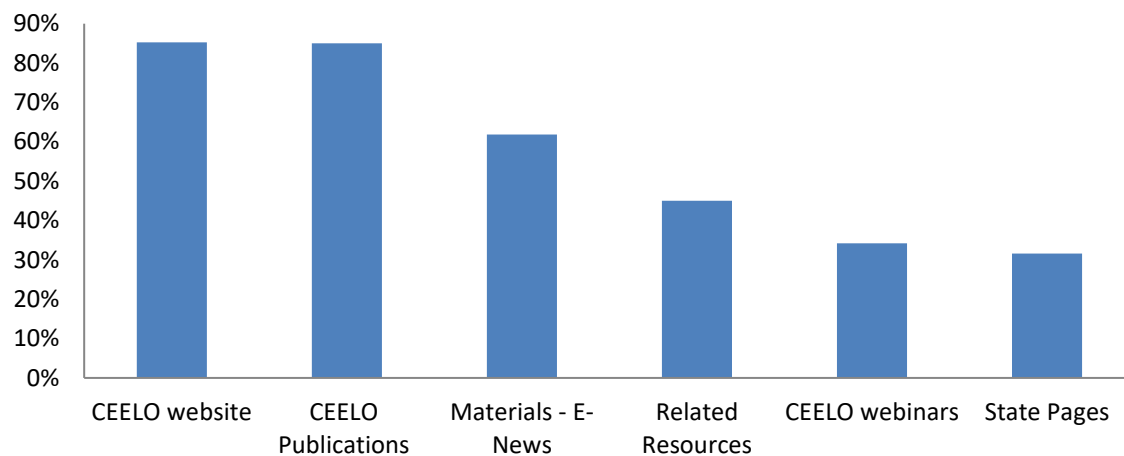
* Respondents in the State TA survey were not provided the option for webinars and presentations. N=64

Figure 3 provides data on respondents' ratings of materials in terms of quality, relevance, usefulness to policy, and usefulness to practice.

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[10] NOTE: Survey questions on the quality and use of CEELO publications was included in three separate surveys (geared toward specific audiences - state, collaborators, CEELO E-News subscribers). The total n comes from the aggregation of responses to these questions from the 3 surveys. Hence the n is much larger than responses for TA or collaboration. Of the 119 respondents across surveys, 24 either said they didn't access the publication or didn't know if they had or did not complete the section on publications.

Figure 3: CEELO Materials Valued as High Quality and Useful (n=95)

Very low quality   **Very high quality**

Useful to practice	8%	42%	45%
Useful to policy	6%	41%	51%
Quality	1%	47%	51%
Relevance	2%	41%	55%

■ 1 = low quality ■ 2 ■ 3 ■ 4 ■ 5 = high quality

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

CELLO[sic] is my first "go to" resource. I have respect and confidence for the leaders and resource persons at CELLO[sic]. The website and webinars keep me up-to-date with what is happening at the policy level and in the research arena. [State respondent, Publication Survey]

Excellent quality, research based, quick responses to questions asked. [State respondent, Publication Survey]

Several state stakeholders reported that they especially value that CEELO serves as broker to help them sift through materials and is responsive in developing products, making products available to them, and helping to distill vast amounts of information into information that they can use. Example comments are:

I feel [CEELO] has been extremely responsive either from a research perspective or from a policy perspective depending upon the questions that were asked of them. Second of all when they did not have the information the research or the state by state survey scan available they were really helpful. . . trying to reach out to states they knew might have information or to make connections with other states on a particular topic. In terms of networking or making connections with states who were like minded or at similar interests they were able to do that with relative ease. That was extremely valuable networking or partnering with states of similar interests or size, struggling with comparable questions. [State specialist, interview participant]

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 Led to Desired Outcomes

All of the 121 TA requests that were completed accomplished the desired goals established by state early education administrators and CEELO TA liaisons. Examples of the range of TA goals are as follow:

- Improve implementation of the Preschool Expansion Grant
- Increase access to research and best practice of SIG and Title 1 districts and schools in addressing issues of suspension and expulsion in the early grades
- Develop a sustainability plan for Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge (RTT-ELC) as well as Preschool Expansion and Development (PDG) activities
- Develop policy and procedures for ensuring preschool is available to the most at-risk students Develop procedures for recruiting most at-risk students for preschool
- Develop systems to improve data-based decision-making (including online preschool application systems, monitoring forms, and reporting systems)
- Provide guidance about SEA activities that can help them support B-3 implementation at the district level
- Provide specific examples of how early learning priorities can be included in ESSA plans
- Develop procedures to ensure target number of children on IEPs are being served in inclusive preschool classrooms
- Develop plans and policies to address the low wages and educational attainment levels of early childhood educators

Analysis of data from the TA database revealed that nearly all of the listed goals in the completed responsive TA activities were accomplished. In two instances state staffing changed and new staff were no longer interested in pursuing the issue so these TA requests were not fulfilled based on changing state needs. Given the range of state needs and varying nature of the TA, the reported outcomes and benefits ranged accordingly. **Box 6** on the following page provides an example of the range of TA that CEELO provided and the impact of the TA on one state.

Box 6. Increased Resources and Supports to Improve Instructional Practice in Kindergarten

What CEELO did. Coordinating closely with the state manager for Minnesota from the Mid-West Regional Center, CEELO provided Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) early childhood staff with research, consultation, and writing to conduct a survey of kindergarten teachers on their instructional practices and professional development needs. CEELO identified other states that had conducted surveys of kindergarten teachers and facilitated peer-peer calls. CEELO identified relevant surveys to inform MDE and reviewed MDE's draft survey. Based on the results indicating the need for increased information and resources to support professional learning communities, CEELO staff assisted MDE's implementation of a peer learning community (PLC) for administrators and kindergarten teachers. Specifically, CEELO staff wrote two short practice briefs on family engagement and early mathematics to be used as a resource in the PLC. CEELO staff provided input and review of a PLC framework for administrators and teachers on how to establish and conduct school-based PLCs.

Why CEELO provided TA. In 2013, the Minnesota legislature passed a law establishing state goals—referred to as World's Best Workforce (WBW)—to increase student performance. WBW goals include a goal that, "all children are ready for school." The legislation and associated state strategic priority increased the focus on kindergarten readiness, and the need to assist districts in implementing high quality early education. In 2014, MDE provided funding to districts to implement full-day kindergarten, and as a result almost all school districts offer full day kindergarten. MDE staff requested TA to support the rapid expansion of full-day kindergarten to ensure that kindergarten was high quality.

MDE staff articulated a need for expertise and insight from other states that had been charged with developing supports for kindergarten teachers. Specifically, MDE needed guidance to construct an effective survey of kindergarten teachers, and to develop resources to implement the PLC that would lead to more effective pedagogical approaches and that would align with elementary school standards.

How the technical assistance has effected the state. CEELO provided MDE with supports designed to improve structural, human and organizational capacity. Specifically, CEELO supported the development of PLCs that include pre-k through grade 3 principals, instructional leaders, and administrators. In addition, CEELO supported MDE early childhood specialist, Debbykay Peterson in the design and implementation of a *Pre-k through Grade 3 Principal Leadership Institute.* As part of her work in the CEELO Leadership Academy, Debbykay applied the principles of results-based leadership as well as content gained through conversations with other state leaders that were facilitated by CEELO. CEELO built the capacity of MDE staff to use research on family engagement, early math, and adult learning to streamline implementation and create greater coordination among internal and external resources. MDE now has research-based highly relevant resources to support kindergarten teachers in the practice briefs and a framework for PLCs that can be utilized state-wide. MDE stakeholders report that the TA received has been of high-quality and has been used to inform policies and practices. One state key informant reported that the CEELO TA has be useful in. .. "Supporting PreK-Grade 3 initiatives (professional learning development for administrators, systems/organizations, leadership development)." The respondent stated, that CEELO is. . . "Highly responsive to state needs/requests!"

Challenges and next steps. MDE staff are eager to continue this work to implement PLCs across the state. A challenge that state staff face is balancing current, sometimes urgent issues with longer term planning. However, MDE staff report using technical assistance resources efficiently to achieve their goals. MDE has built into their *Principal Leadership Institute* a cap stone project for participants to craft an action plan to implement the PLCs in their local communities as follow up in the coming year. MWCC and CEELO have outlined a plan for FY2017 to develop facilitators guides for the PLCs and to design training for instructional leaders.

Building capacity of SEAs is a primary aim of CEELO TA. CEELO surveyed SEA staff to ask about ways in which TA had or had not affected SEA capacity. Survey results reveal that respondents were most likely to report using the TA to share ideas and lessons learned with colleagues, provide authoritative support to advance their SEA work, increase their understanding of a topic, and develop relationships. Across all types of categories, responses were higher in Year 4 than Year 3. Around 70 percent of respondents reported five or more ways the TA provided built capacity.

**Figure 4: TA Used to Build Capacity in A Variety of Ways (n=31)**
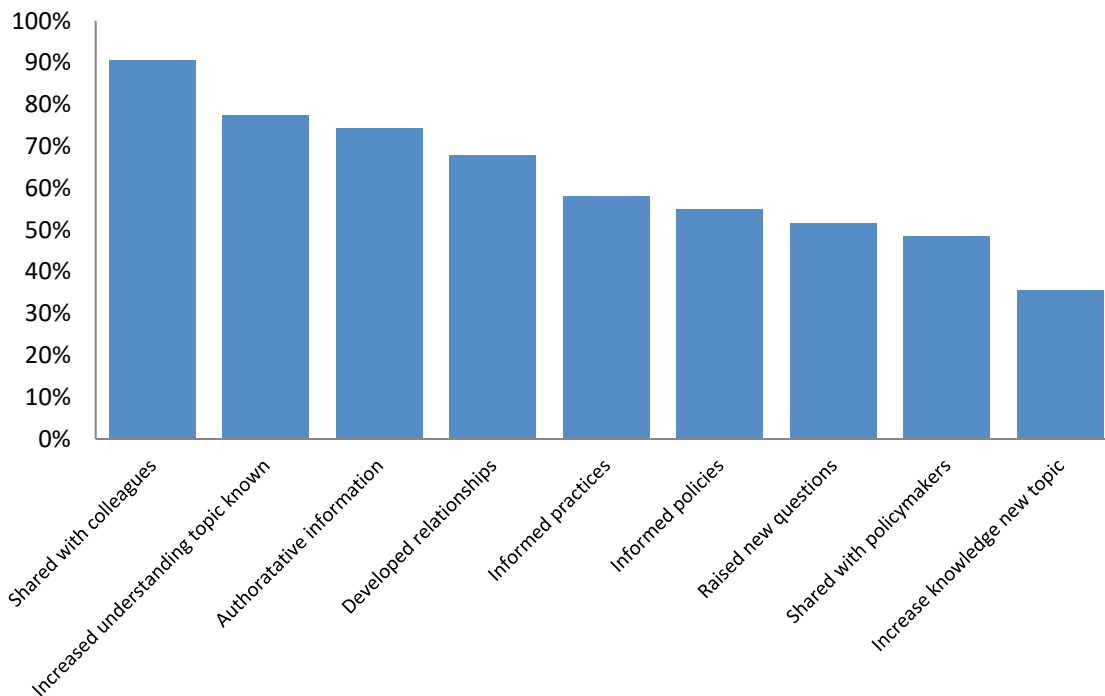
Use of technology-enhanced TA

Similarly, recipients of CEELO technology-based products and services reported that the information and resources have had a positive impact on their own knowledge and ability to craft policy. As illustrated in **Figure 5,** most survey respondents gained knowledge from reading CEELO materials and shared the information with colleagues

Figure 5: CEELO Materials Build Capacity to Develop or Inform Policies (n=95)
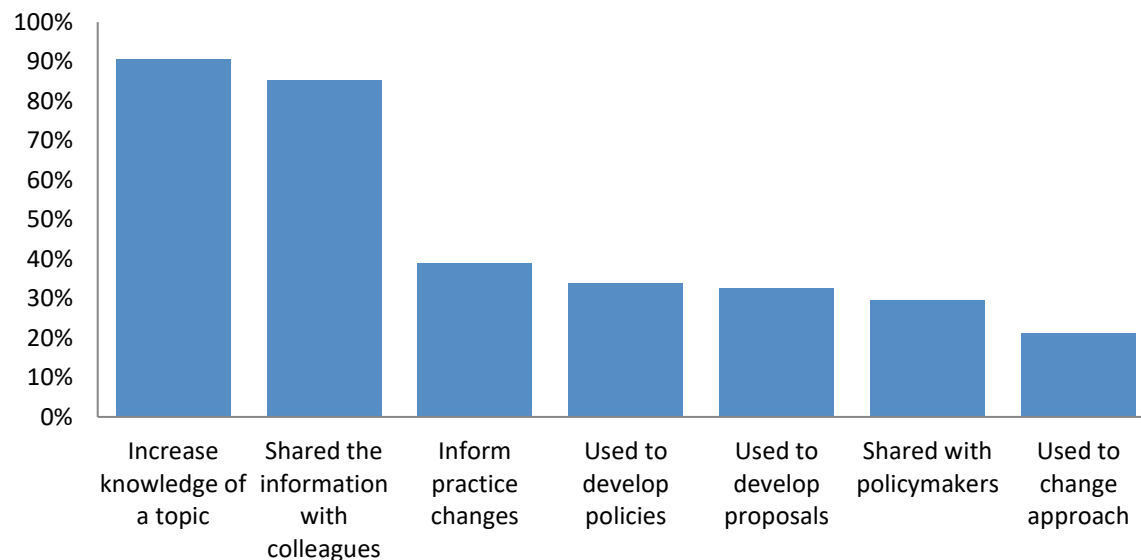
Uses of CEELO TA and Resources

Survey recipients and interviewees reported several ways in which CEELO TA and resources were used.

Informed policy/practice

> *The CPQ tool CEELO piloted with [state] has directly impacted the legislative conversation about funding high quality pre-k programing. The level of detail the tool required gave solid footing and clear understanding to policymakers. The tool provided a framework for policymakers to understand what is needed for pre-k expansion and for adjustment in our quality rating and improvement system. This work is referenced by our Early Learning Advisory Committee, other state agencies, and legislative representatives on a regular basis. [State respondent, CEELO State TA Survey]*

> *I just wanted to let you know how grateful I am for your work with the [state] group on Wednesday. I think it was exactly what groups needed at exactly the right time. I feel like we made huge leaps in our B-3 progress and can't thank you enough for all your work. [State staff, written email communication]*

> *CEELO helped develop a broader-based understanding of early educator workforce issue in multiple states- served to facilitate conversations across state agencies- provided significant technical assistance in finalizing product that we hope will inform state policy. [State respondent, CEELO State TA Survey]*

> *[CEELO staff person's] presentation and facilitation on PLCs was immensely helpful in moving the work forward in our Birth-3rd alignment goals. [State respondent, CEELO State TA Survey]*

CEELO has been instrumental in providing guidance to S.C. as we have worked through the policies for Readiness Assessments. [CELO staff person] provided research and information from other states which were shared with policy makers. It has made a difference in having assessments for 4K which are appropriate. [State respondent, CEELO State TA Survey]

Much of the research available was used to help the Indiana Department of Education formulate a plan for pre-K expansion. The information was used to help us understand the landscape of pre-k in our country and understand the approaches that may resonate in our state. [Publication Survey]

I think that it [CEELO TA} has positively impacted and helped us to strengthen our birth to grade three work. I've only been with state government, this will be my third year. I've been working in the Head Start and Early Childhood field on the ground, running programs for a long time, and so I realize that with government just having people do mind shift, and so instead of just thinking of infant/toddlers separately, preschoolers separately, Head Start, Kindergarten, Kindergarten through twelfth separately, I think CEELO has really supported our work with birth to grade three. People are now saying those words at state agencies. That's huge that they're no longer saying well those preschoolers. People are now saying birth to grade three. Public schools are saying birth to grade three. Higher ed. is saying birth to grade three. This is big. [Interview]

This includes information supplied to a district or community level. For instance, a state staff person wrote CEELO to ask for permission to use the Suspension and Expulsion Annotated Bibliography in a resource guide. Other examples include:

The information shared by [state presenting at a Peer Exchange] was used to develop a plan of professional development and oversight of the pre-K classrooms as part of the PDG funding in one of our school districts. [State respondent, CEELO State TA Survey]

Many of the grantees are using the information presented to build stronger collaborations in their communities. [State respondent, CEELO State TA Survey]

…just wanted to tell you that I just read your NIEER Blog on Creating Conditions for Increased Attendance. I love it when I read something that speaks about parents with respect and empathy and draws the comparison to how anyone would feel in response to similar tone in common messaging to parents. The Blog was very timely given I have been asked to write up guidance for PDG sites relative to attendance. Your blog gave me the idea for a different approach in drafting the guidance. So thank you for your consistently thoughtful and substantive work! [State staff, written email communication]

Served as source of authoritative information & content expertise

Just a note of thanks for the thorough and helpful analysis and report on our questions regarding other states' allocation of funds for preschool. We shared it with our

stakeholder and legislative group today and it was much appreciated. [State staff, written email communication]

CEELOs support has allowed us to speak with authority on many relevant topics related to alignment of child care and preschool in [state]. We have referenced their support documents many times in discussion and decision-making forums. [State respondent, CEELO State TA Survey]

CEELO has been providing information to me to help me provide quality technical assistance and support to [State's] Executive Office on Early Learning and state Department of Education in shaping policy and plans, with specific information for our state prekindergarten program which is a partnership between EOEL and [State]l DOE; and to [Territory's]s DOE prekindergarten program. [State respondent (early learning coordinator), CEELO State TA Survey]

Support Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) Planning

Resource documentation is also helpful and includes information on revised initiatives (ESSA). [State respondent, Publication Survey]

The ESSA information and webinars provided have been beneficial in the writing of our state ESSA plan. [State respondent, Publication Survey]

Guided the framing and process of key issues states wanted to address

Additionally, on behalf of the entire ECAC, I want to thank you for the wonderful 2-day session! I have reflected a TON about the two days and am very excited about the course we are on. We are marching toward a plan that will provide us with the framework to build a strong ECE system in [state]! We are very grateful for your facilitation which guided us to make much needed changes to the goals and activities in our plan. I look forward to continuing to work with you in the future. Thank you!!! [State staff, written email communication]

The Workforce report has provided a framework for upcoming conversations about teacher qualifications and compensation. [State respondent, CEELO State TA Survey]

The CEELO study on state PreK eligibility systems is a good resource…you sent that to me a while back and put it on my radar. I presented at a board [meeting] of our Head Start/ECEAP Association last week and suggested it as must reading for them as they consider ways to align ECEAP for future growth and even greater impact on school readiness for kids who need help the most. [State Early Childhood Stakeholder, written email communication]

Raised awareness

CEELO's support has helped raise awareness to the issue of the early childhood workforce and how they are compensated. We were able to do a presentation to the EEC Board and show how other states are addressing these issues. Along with compensation, we are also trying to build a foundation for a B-8 credential and the CEELO staff, especially [CEELO staff person], have been an incredible 'resource' to begin and 'continue' this work! [State respondent, CEELO State TA Survey]

Facilitated Learning between states and within a state

The support of the CEELO team has supported requests of information, strengthened knowledge, provided examples, and has been instrumental in building peer connections. [State respondent, CEELO State TA Survey]

CEELO provided resources and helped to build the capacity of the state EC team in sharing best practices with, state leadership across agencies and organizations and with school divisions. [State respondent, CEELO State TA Survey]

[State] conducted a thorough stake-holder based process, including administrators responsible for implementing and policymaker staff from the legislature, for examining its funding formula for preschool. In response to our request for information on how other states allocate funds for state-funded preschool, [CEELO staff person] conducted research and put together a report "Allocation of Preschool Funds: State Models and Approaches," which was useful to our work. Obtaining the report provided information about how peers distribute resources and credibility to our process. [State respondent, CEELO State TA Survey]

We used the cost of preschool tool to provide quantitative data about the actual cost of high-quality preschool. This data really compliments the self-reported costs from providers, which are much lower and not telling the full story. The information from the study is featured in two Early Learning Advisory Committee (ELAC) reports: 2017 Annual Report and 2016 Early Childhood Funding Analysis. Both reports are shared with the Governor and State Legislature as well as many key stakeholders and partners throughout Indiana and posted on the www.ELACIndiana.org website. [State respondent, CEELO State TA Survey]

Inform and train next generation early childhood professionals through institutes of higher education

I share information with colleagues who are doctoral faculty in Early Childhood at [Name of] University which is an accredited fully on-line university. It serves students from all over the country and has a very robust international student population. [Publication Survey]

I used the information to try and encourage articulation discussions with other faculty across campuses. [Publication Survey]

Box 7. Facilitating Organizational Capacity to Achieve Early Learning Goals

What CEELO did. The CEELO TA specialist has worked closely with the Nevada Early Childhood Advisory Committee and Office of Early Learning to support ongoing capacity building initiatives in the state of NV over the last three years. The objective of the TA has been to strengthen the state staff capacities in P-3 systems development, change management, and strategic planning. These activities have included:

- Facilitating a retreat of the newly forming Office of Early Learning in order to initiate an operational plan aligned with the Chief State School Officer's strategic plan for education (Year 2 and 3); and

- Facilitating the state Early Childhood Advisory Committee (ECAC) retreats as the appointed board develops initiatives to align with the Governor's strategic plan for education and early education (Year 3 and 4)

Why CEELO provided TA. The Office of Early Learning and Development (ELD) in the Nevada Department of Education was created by Governor Sandoval through Executive Order and approved by the interim finance committee in June 2014. The office administers multiple early childhood state and federal funding sources including: NV State Pre-k, Pre-k Development Grant, Head Start State Collaboration Office Grant, Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems Grant, and Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) Quality Dollars. Programs funded through the CCDF Quality Dollars include: Silver State Stars QRIS, NV Registry, Pre-K Standards & Early Learning Guidelines, Early Childhood Substitute Network, and T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood Scholarship program. Early childhood staff from the newly formed Office of Early Learning requested TA to assist with the development of an operational plan to align programs and create a structure that could efficiently and effectively administer high-quality early learning programs, regardless of the funding source.

How the technical assistance impacted the state. State stakeholders report that the TA and facilitation were high-quality and resulted in the development of useful processes. A member of the Early Childhood Advisory Committee reported, "On behalf of the entire ECAC, I want to thank you . . . We are marching toward a plan that will provide us with the framework to build a strong ECE system in Nevada! We are very grateful for your facilitation which guided us to make much needed changes to the goals and activities in our plan. I look forward to continuing to work with you in the future."

Since receiving TA, NV was positioned to successfully compete for the Preschool Development Grant, and a competitive P-3 initiative with the University of Washington. More recently, the ECAC has completed an aligned strategic plan for early learning in the state and has reorganized subgroups around its respective components.

The early childhood specialist from the state reported using CEELO products and TA to share authoritative evidence with others. The specialist also reported that the TA increased understanding and supported stronger relationships that will be useful in advancing the objectives of the office.

Evaluation Question 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?

To date, all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Guam, Commonwealth of Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI) and the Virgin Islands have had the opportunity to participate in CEELO webinars, and annual or regional meetings; they have access to materials on the website and receive CEELO materials in E-News and other electronic means. Many factors effect a state's ability to effectively use TA, and CEELO's ability to build capacity to implement effective policy varies based on the specific needs and capacities of the states. In Year 4, CEELO TA specialists noted substantial staff turnover in SEAs. To address this issue, CEELO provided ongoing, tailored TA to new SEA staff, shared materials and information with the new staff, and set up regular times for consultation calls to support the SEAs ongoing work.

CEELO developed a plan to provide customized TA that is based on the best evidence from research and practice. Analysis of interview and survey data reveal that a very large majority (over 80%) of recipients of responsive TA report that it is high-quality. To illustrate this contextual understanding of the alignment of CEELO TA and state's needs and capacity challenges from three states are presented in **Box 8 below.**

Box 8. CEELO TA to Three States in Transition

Why CEELO provided TA? CEELO staff provided TA to three different states in the Northeast that had received Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge Grants as well as Preschool Development and Expansion Grants. Each of the three states asked for assistance in developing recruitment policies and procedures to ensure preschool services were available to the neediest children in the communities participating in the Preschool Development and Expansion Grant activities.

What CEELO did? CEELO senior TA staff regularly spoke with the lead early learning specialists in each SEA to assist with planning, identify peer states with policies and processes that could be adapted by each state, to support the tailoring of the policies and procedures, and to assist with addressing challenges that arose. CEELO set up peer to peer calls, offered a Peer Exchange on the topic, and provided ongoing follow up consultation to states.

How the SEAs used the TA. In Year 4, two of the states used the TA to develop specific policies and procedures and reported improving the efficiency and effectiveness of recruitment efforts. One state had turnover in staff at the SEA and planned to use the information in Year 5. This state reported delays because of issues with timing associated with the state legislative calendar and staff turnover.

Current status and challenges that remain. Each of the three participating states experienced turnover in early childhood staff at the SEA. One state reported losing the RTT-ELC manager because the project was ending and also reported losing a senior early childhood staff person who took a job outside of the state. A senior leader from this state agency reported that because of those changes, her role has shifted and currently she is "figuring out what my role is. . . I wear more than two hats." Another state reported that during the year a single position of early childhood specialist had two different individuals who served in the role and the position was vacant at the end of CEELO's last fiscal year.   (Key informants from this state reported that pay is

relatively low for the position and a person who was hired to fill a vacant position at the beginning of the year left within months after obtaining employment at a different state agency.) The third state reported losing three senior early childhood specialists during the last fiscal year.

How CEELO is helping states address the challenges. CEELO TA providers have worked with SEA's to create and implement transition plans so that institutional memory is not lost with staff turnover. In addition, CEELO is working with these SEAs to create management plans and to support the use of tools that document ongoing policies and procedures. CEELO has archived materials on the CEELO.org website and has held telephone conversations with new staff to provide an overview of resources that are available and to create regular times for consultation and follow up.

CEELO recognizes that turnover at SEAs is an issue that state agencies will continue to face and is providing tailored and ongoing supportive TA to new staff to support their capacity in implementing policies and procedures to support early learning outcomes.

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 research-based, highly relevant and filling a gap. CEELO 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 four 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.

Although most of the point in time or end of year evaluation surveys were very positive, there were several comments included in the annual evaluation along with ratings that identified areas for improvement in CEELO f TA delivery in Year 5. These are:

- **Continue to offer opportunities for states to learn from one another and tailor experiences to meet participants' needs.** Participants at the Roundtable, the Peer Exchanges, monthly peer exchange calls and in person meetings reported that learning from other states' experiences is valuable and provides specific actionable support. Consistent with findings from the previous evaluations, ratings of these opportunities have consistently been high and those attending these experiences report that the knowledge gained, practical tools and policies and procedures developed by other states are very valuable. In the past year, CEELO offered numerous virtual opportunities for state to learn from one another. In Year 5, CEELO should continue to use conference calls and technology to support state sharing. State representatives offered suggested improvements regarding using limited time in optimal ways, making certain objectives are clear and participants are accountable to goals that they set when negotiating TA

approaches. State representatives also recommended enlisting state specialists as reviewers during planning phases of the peer exchanges and other state-to-state learning opportunities. This has been a very useful component of the Roundtable.

• **Clearly communicate goal and target audience for webinars.** To ensure the information meets the needs of those in attendance, CEELO should consider asking registrants questions about their knowledge and experience and providing information to them prior to the webinar about whether the information presented is more basic, intermediate, or designed for an audience with more in depth knowledge.

• **Seek ways to ensure the CEELO products and materials are more accessible and useful to SEAs.** Evaluations of CEELO Webinars and products are highly rated in terms of quality and relevance. Specialists also encouraged short documents as more accessible, preferring syntheses and analyses to larger policy papers.

• **Enhance dissemination strategies.** CEELO products and materials are highly rated by recipients. In Year 5, CEELO should consider streamlining the number of products and instead focus on dissemination to ensure the materials are used by the intended target audiences. CEELO stakeholder communications should feature new products but also highlight key resources on the website to drive traffic to the repository of useful materials.

• **Ensure TA and materials are designed to address the substantive turnover in SEAs.** Analysis of TA provided by CEELO reveals the ongoing issue of turnover in SEAs and the importance of CEELO's intensive, relationship-based TA. Updating and annotating CEELO documents and bibliographies on pertinent subject will make them accessible to new and long-serving SEA staff alike.

• **Continue to engage state personnel in the design of strategic technical assistance.** The overall ratings of strategic TA are high, and during Year 4 state personnel were engaged in conversations to better tailor the information to meet state needs. A number of survey respondents reported that they appreciated being part of the Roundtable Planning. CEELO's relationship with NAECS-SDE was reported as valuable by state specialists and by CEELO TA providers. To continue to meet the needs of state personnel, CEELO should continue to work with early learning specialists in state departments of education in the planning and implementation of strategic TA.

• **Proactively lead state education agencies in advancing an early learning agenda.** In Year 4, CEELO provided intensive responsive TA to states throughout the country to meet their needs and priorities. Numerous changes are likely to effect early learning priorities in the upcoming years. These include but are not limited to changes in chief state school officers in many states, the charge for SEAs to plan for the Every Student Succeeds Act, the new Child Care and Development Block Grant regulations that require specific professional development of early

learning professionals, the end of the RTT-ELC funding in several states, and new pre-K funding opportunities in several states. In light of these changes, as well as research produced by the National Academies of Science on the importance of early learning, CEELO should plan for both strategic TA to address these issues and be prepared to respond to emerging issues in Year 5.

Appendix A: Objectives, Scope, and Methodology

The objectives of the evaluation were to collect data and report findings to use formatively to improve CEELO activities and to document perceived outcomes of CEELO activities. Three different teams were engaged in collection and analysis of data for this evaluation report. The scope of the data collection and analysis activities and methodology employed by each team is described below.

CEELO Evaluation Team

The CEELO team began collecting data in 2015 and completed data collection, analysis, and reporting in December 2016. Two CEELO staff worked in collaboration with the CEELO leadership team to engage in a participatory evaluation. The primary focus of the 2016 annual report was Year 4 (fiscal year 2016) but the report includes some data that were collected and analyzed in Year 1.

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

- **State Recipient of TA Survey** was sent to state level recipients of CEELO technical assistance in Year 4. 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 100 individuals identified through the CEELO database; 44 individuals responded yielding a response rate of 44 percent. However, 13 did not complete the survey beyond a name and others said they didn't receive TA – total full responses were 31.

- **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 4 to assess the quality and impact of the TA. The survey was sent to a total of 24 individuals; a total of 12 individuals responded, yielding a response rate of 50 percent.

- **A Publication Survey** was sent to all subscribers of the CEELO E-News to capture how readers used CEELO publications. E-News recipients who had already received the TA or Collaborator Survey were removed to avoid duplication (the publication questions appeared in these surveys at the end). 694 E-news subscribers (those who had received the state or collaborator requests were removed for duplication reasons) and 63 responses were received, yielding a response rate of 9 percent.

- **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 30 individuals completed surveys at the

conclusion of a responsive TA activity.

- **Post Webinar Surveys** were administered immediately after Webinars and a total of 52 individuals responded.

- **Roundtable Surveys** were administered to participants in the annual meeting via paper-based survey, 49 returned a survey.

- **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 15 surveys were administered and the total number of respondents was 170.

Interviews. The CEELO evaluation team performed secondary analysis of interview findings reported by the Rutgers University graduate students. The methods employed by the graduate students are described below in the Rutgers University Graduate Student Methodology Section.

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 and assess the quality of the materials.

Rutgers University Graduate Student Methodology

Rutgers University graduate students taking a course taught by the Dr. Steve Barnett independently collected and analyzed data in the fall 2016.

Interviews. 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 11 individuals from 8 different states that had received responsive TA were interviewed.

Table A1: Data Collection Activities[11]

Evaluation Activity	Description	Purpose	Number Year 1	Number Year 2	Number Year 3	Number Year 4
Surveys	Year End Surveys[12]	Obtain evaluation data regarding quality and impact of TA and assess current needs and issues	212	92	89	163
	State specialists	Obtain evaluation data regarding quality and impact of TA and assess current needs and issues	NA	76	22	44
	Collaborators	Learn about effectiveness, quality, and impact of collaborations	NA	16	17	12
	Publications (CEELO E-News recipients, State specialist, and collaborators)	Learn about the quality and usefulness of CEELO's resources	NA	NA	50	95
	Post TA/info line response surveys	Learn about perceptions of quality and usefulness of information	16	59	53	30
	Post Webinar surveys	Learn about perceptions of quality and usefulness of information	84	130	144	52

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[11] These numbers include incomplete responses and responses in which respondents said they did not receive or access services. These were excluded from the data set and are not reflected in selections in the narrative or charts in the report; hence, the difference in numbers.

[12] In Years 3-4, the survey was sent to state specialists, collaborators and recipients of publications through separate survey monkey links. In Year 1 a single survey was sent and in Year 2 separate surveys were sent to state specialist and collaborators.

Evaluation Activity	Description	Purpose	Number Year 1	Number Year 2	Number Year 3	Number Year 4
	Roundtable surveys	Determine quality, usefulness and desired next steps	73	113	36	49
	Other surveys	Assess needs of target audience and obtain feedback on targeted activities	43	90	74	170
Interviews	CEELO TA recipients - State early education administrators	Learn about the nature, effectiveness, and impact of TA Learn about future needs	11	15	15	11
Database and log reviews	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	NA	NA
Document review	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 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 4 Management Plan					

Appendix B. CEELO Presentations Conducted in Year 4

Listed below are the titles of the 13 presentations, by month, by CEELO staff in Year 4.

February 2016

High Quality Pre-K: Taking the Road Less Travelled discusses how public dollars invested in high-quality pre-K can prevent achievement gaps. It discusses what is required for a pre-K program to be high quality. This video features CEELO's Steve Barnett, who gave this talk at the AERA Knowledge Forum on February 18, 2016 in Washington, DC.

Making Informed Decisions: A Guide to Understanding Early Education Research guides QRIS administrators to identify good research, understand what research says about selected issues, and turn research into practice. It also provides important resources. Jim Squires presented this information to the QRIS National Learning Network

March 2016

Leadership and Systems Change: What Will it Take for Your Team to Reach Its Goals? shares functions of a comprehensive early childhood system and explores how an adaptive leadership approach can support systems change work . CEELO's Rebecca Gomez and Jim Squires presented March 8-9, 2016 to states participating in the BUILD|CEELO Learning Table. Slides also include a discussion on culturally and linguistically competent systems by Aisha Ray of the Erikson Institute.

May 2016

Alternatives to Early Childhood Suspensions is a series of three presentations Diane Schilder gave to leaders from New Hampshire Title I schools from November 2015 to May 2016.

- Part 1 shares current trends, policy issues, and research around early childhood expulsions and the role of high-quality settings.
- Part 2 provides a video for reflection on how challenging behaviors are address and discusses policies, procedures, practices, and supports to have in place to prevent challenging behavior form occurring.
- Part 3 discusses practices that support young children's socio-emotional development, provides strategies to address issues that arise, and offers resources and supports for leaders, teachers, and teaching teams.

Quality Matters: National Initiatives to Support Inclusion shares initiatives, resources, and lessons learned to support state and local efforts in developing quality systems of inclusive services; reviews the recommendations from the federal Position Statement on Inclusion and how these recommendations can work for them. Jim Squires (CEELO) presented with Beth Caron (RTT-ELC TA) and Shelley deFosset (ELC TA and PDG TA) at the National Inclusion Institute on May 11, 2016 at Chapel Hill, NC.

June 2016

Building the Next Generation of ECE Leaders discusses the characteristics of great leaders and leadership, along with the pathways and pitfalls to leadership. Jim Squires presented to the Early Childhood Leadership Seminar for the Alabama Department of Early Childhood Education on June 22-23, 2016.

Equity Starts Early: Strategies to Consider in Promoting High-Quality Early Education offers an overview of how young children are doing in early learning and development and provides five action steps for states to prevent achievement gaps in the early learning years. CEELO staff Tom Schultz presented as part of a virtual meeting to the National Conference of State Legislators Early Learning Fellows on June 30, 2016.

Pre-K: The Starting Line for Positive Attendance Patterns was a session at the Every Student, Every Day National Conference on June 10, 2016. CEELO's Melissa Dahlin discussed root causes for absenteeism in pre-K and strategies to address them from a cross-sector state and local perspective. Danielle Ewen (EducationCounsel) and Michael Katz (Urban Institute) shared findings and insights from a study that examined pre-K absenteeism in DC. Sharpening the Focus: Helping Fine-Tune Policies and Practices to Promote Effective Teaching and Learning in the Early Years

Sharpening the Focus: Helping Fine-Tune Policies and Practices to Promote Effective Teaching and Learning in the Early Years explores what supports and systems are needed to drive teaching quality that will result in improved outcomes for children and the "powerful and few" core policies are needed to improve teaching quality and result in significant outcomes for children. CEELO's Jana Martella and Kate Tarrant (BUILD Initiative) presented on June 7th, 2016 at the 2016 NAEYC PDI Conference in Baltimore, MD.

July 2016

A P-3 Approach and its Effectiveness in Closing Achievement Gaps: Hawaii's P-3 Initiative describes implementation of the Hawaii P-3 Initiative, along with findings from a five-year RAND evaluation of the Initiative which showed a statistically significant improvement in third grade reading scores in the five communities, narrowing the achievement gap. CEELO's GG Weisenfeld presented with Karen Lee and Kim Guieb from Hawaii P-20 at the National Association of Elementary School Principals on July 7 2016 in National Harbor, MD.

August 2016

Implications of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) explores opportunities to support family engagement in ESSA. CEELO's Melissa Dahlin was a panelist at this session in the Language Development and Family Engagement in the Digital Age Institute hosted by New America on August 2nd 2016 in Washington, DC. [See video for Day 1, panel starts at 2 h, 30 min mark]

Appendix C – CEELO Publications Year 4

Annotated Bibliographies

Promoting Effective Teaching that Improves Learning lists resources from the CEELO|BUILD paper Sharpening the Focus: State Policies that Promote Effective Teaching that Improves Learning which encourages state policymakers and their partners to critically review professional development and accountability policies, offers guidance on policy implementation, and makes recommendations for the "powerful and few" core state policies that can improve teaching and learning for all young children. (December 2015)

Updated - Financing Early Care and Education provides resources on financing policy, calculating costs, and financing strategies for early care and education. (June 2014 | updated August 2016)

Fast Facts

Pre-K Attendance – Why it's Important and How to Support It originates from a state request for information on chronic absenteeism with regard to early childhood. It provides information on potential causes of absenteeism, examples from cities and states to address it, and available resources. (February 2016)

Policy Reports and Briefs

Building State P-3 Systems: Learning from Leading States focuses on the state education agency (SEA) role in supporting P-3 system building at the state and local levels. Included in the report are case studies of three states that have devoted significant attention and resources to P-3 efforts: Oregon, Pennsylvania, and Massachusetts. Each of these states has developed statewide P-3 policy initiatives regarding standards, assessments, and instruction as well as targeted programs to support local P-3 community partnerships. The paper presents a number of themes and patterns that emerged from the comparison of the three states and concludes with 9 recommendations to help guide P-3 system-building. (August 2016)

Early Childhood Teacher Education Policies: Research Review and State Trends provides policymakers with a review of published research on ECE workforce education and credentials as well as research on the current status of ECE wages, recruitment and retention challenges, and promising practices. It summarizes trends in state requirements regarding ECE teachers with bachelor's degrees and specialized certification, licensure, or endorsements of pre-K teachers. The paper includes recommended actions and strategies, based on research and state suggestions, regarding approaches that states can use to recruit and retain teachers with bachelor's degrees and ECE credentials. (April 2016)

State Approaches to Family Engagement in Pre-K Programs focuses on approaches to family engagement in state funded pre-K programs. It discusses why family engagement is important, describes approaches to developing program guidance, and offers strategies to support effective implementation. (March 2016)

Sharpening the Focus: State Policy to Promote Effective Teaching that Improves Learning comes from work the BUILD Initiative and the Center for Enhancing Early Learning Outcomes (CEELO) have been conducting with state leaders and national experts to strengthen policy that promotes effective early childhood teaching, birth through 3rd grade. A result of our ongoing collaboration, "Sharpening the Focus: State Policy to Promote Effective Teaching that Improves Learning" encourages state policymakers and their partners to critically review professional development and accountability policies, offers guidance on policy implementation, and makes recommendations for the "powerful and few" core state policies that can improve teaching and learning for *all* young children. (November 2015)

Measuring Child Outcomes in the Early Years provides information to inform decision-making regarding the assessment of young children's learning, development, and wellbeing (LDWB) for state and national assessments designed to influence early childhood education (ECE) policy and practice. This report draws from a scholarly discussion paper The National Institute for Early Education Research (NIEER) produced for the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) that presented the pros and cons of various instruments used for reporting on international data of children's cognitive and social outcomes. (November 2015)

Tools

The Cost of Preschool Quality (CPQ) Tool is an Excel-based model which can be used at the state or district level to estimate the cost of expanding high quality preschool programs. On the CPQ page, readers will find a description of the CPQ, a CPQ Quick Start Guide, a User Guide, and a companion glossary/codebook.

Listserv Summaries

Early Childhood Program Licensing Exemptions offers responses from state contacts on the NAECS-SDE listserv, who were asked about exemptions from licensing requirements for early childhood programs in their state. Responses indicate that licensing exemptions may apply to any center that provides preschool education. All states have certain legal exemptions from licensing and–depending on the type of early childhood program–these licensing exemptions may vary. (January 2016)

State Pre-K Approved Curricula provides responses from state contacts on the NAECS-SDE listserv about state-approved curriculum models for pre-K programs in their state. The majority of respondents said the state did not provide an approved curricula list, though many provided some level of guidance around selection. Links to state resources are provided.

E-News

Winter 2016

Other

ECE Contact Directory (updated in March)

2016 Roundtable Summary presents national and state resources shared during the 2016 Roundtable *Mobilizing an Exceptional Early Childhood Workforce*. Resources include policy briefs, tools, guides, and websites. (August 2016)

Leadership Academy Cohort One Report provides background information on the CEELO Leadership Academy and describes the sessions, coaching, and job-embedded projects the Fellows engaged in. (November 2015)

Appendix D Webinars Held in Year 4

Building State P-3 Systems focuses on the SEA role in supporting P-3 system building at the state and local levels, drawing on a recent study of three states that have devoted significant attention and resources to P-3 efforts: Oregon, Pennsylvania, and Massachusetts. Each of these states has developed state-wide P-3 policy initiatives regarding standards, assessments, and instruction as well as targeted programs to support local P-3 community partnerships. After providing an overview of each state's P-3 work, the webinar discusses nine recommendations that emerged from the case studies. (September 2016)

Early Childhood Teacher Education Policies: Research Review and State Trends reviews key findings from a recent policy report by the Center on Enhancing Early Learning Outcomes which reviews published research on early childhood (ECE) workforce education and credentials as well as on the current status of ECE wages, recruitment and retention challenges, and promising practices. (May 2016)

ESSA & Early Childhood: Opportunities for States discusses how states and communities can and need to make the most of ESSA funding together with early childhood program funding. CEELO's Tom Schultz presented along with Danielle Ewen (EducationCounsel) and Elliot Regenstein (Ounce of Prevention). (June 2016)

Why Understanding the Costs of Preschool Quality is Important: A Webinar for Preschool Development Grantee States presents and demonstrates the use of the Cost of Preschool Quality Tool (CPQ) by the Center on Enhancing Early Learning Outcomes, an Excel based model that can be used at the state or district level to estimate the cost of expanding high quality preschool for 3 and 4 year olds. (July 2016)

PDG
- Family Engagement Community of Practice (CEELO staff Melissa Dahlin is a co-facilitator)
  - Accessing Hard to Reach Families features Deb Watson from Connecticut's Office of Early Childhood discusses her state's strategies to access hard to reach families. (February 2016)
  - Communicating with Families features Brandi Black Thacker from the National Center on Parent, Family, and Community Engagement discusses strategies for communicating with families. Brandi uses the Head Start Parent, Family, and Community Engagement Framework as a springboard to discuss Strengths-based Attitudes and Relationship-based Practices that can build and grow relationships with families, a key to successful communication. (April 2016)
  - The Home-School Connection discusses Pennsylvania's unique GPS (Guiding Parents Smoothly) for families and other creative and exciting initiatives that build the

home-school connection. The material was presented by Mary P. Hall, Communication and Outreach Specialist for the Pennsylvania Key.

- o Communicating with Families to Prevent Chronic Absenteeism features Michael Katz, Research Associate at the Center on Labor, Human Services and Population at the Urban Institute, who presents his findings and successful strategies from a study on absenteeism in pre-k, commissioned by DC's public schools. Sedria Wilson provides examples from her work as a Case Management Specialist in the Early Childhood Education Division at DCPS.

- Dual Language Learner Community of Practice (CEELO staff Alexandra Figueras-Daniel is a co-facilitator)

  - o Tools for Teachers of Young Dual Language Learners features Alex Figueras-Daniel, one of the authors of the Self-Evaluation of Supports for Emergent Bilingual Acquisition (SESEBA). She demonstrates how this self-assessment tool can be used in early childhood settings that include Dual Language Learners, to increase awareness and ultimately enhance practices. (February 2016)

  - o Supporting the Early Literacy Development of Young Dual Language Learners is led by Dr. Linda Espinosa, who discusses the research on the language and literacy development of young dual language learners and its implications for practice, state policies that reflect the science, and evidence-based strategies that support the early literacy development of infants, toddlers, and preschoolers who are dual language learners. (April 2016)

  - o Early Childhood Programs That Support Young Dual Language Learners features the Oregon Child Development Coalition (OCDC) which has been recognized as a leader in supporting young dual language learners. Xin Gao, Early Childhood Specialist at OCDC, and Ada Echevarria, Infant Toddler Education Specialist, share the OCDC programs they use to support young dual language learners. (June 2016)

  - o Early Childhood Programs That Support Young Dual Language Learners - Part 2 features Lisa Luceno, Director of Early Childhood Education at the Briya Public Charter School in Washington D.C., who shares how her program supports young dual language learners, by emphasizing the importance of engaging and educating the whole family. (September 2016)

Learning Table on State Policy and Supports to Promote Effective Teaching and Learning (8)
- Two cohorts engaged in a monthly webinar from April through July for a total of 8 webinars. Information, including slide deck and resources, are available here. One cohort focused on instructional tools and the other cohort was centered around credentialing