

*Technical Assistance in Early  
Childhood Special Education:  
Past, Present and Future*

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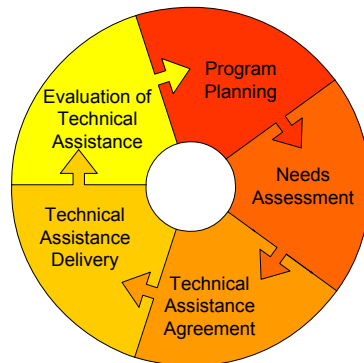
The National Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center

## National TA Projects

- **TADS** 1971-1987
  - Technical Assistance Development System
- **START** 1984-1987
  - State Technical Assistance Resource Team
- **NECTAS** 1987-2001
  - National Early Childhood Technical Assistance System
- **nectac** 2001-2011
  - National Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center



## TADS Era 1971-1987



Annual Cycle of TA to Projects

## TADS' TA to States

- 1973 TA to 30 states for early childhood program development
- 1976 State Improvement Grants
  - program development
  - public awareness campaigns
  - forming interagency task forces and committees
  - documenting child and family service needs
  - personnel issues
- Link Outreach Projects to state efforts

## *TADS as Network Facilitator*

### **Evolution of clients**

- Demonstration Projects (1971)
- Outreach Projects (1973)
- State Implementation Grants (1976)
- Research Institutes (1977)

### **Strategies**

- Products
- National Conferences
- Clients as consultants and resources

## *Hallmarks of TADS*

- TA Coordinator relationship with client
- Internal and external expertise
- Clients as resources for each other
- Evaluation of TA, TA in evaluation



## *Impacts of National TA*

- Documented learning from State Improvement Grants to guide future state-level planning
- Influenced the emergence of (prominence of, direction of) consortia, networks, DEC

## *State Technical Assistance Resource Team 1984-1987*



P.L. 98-199 State Planning Grants

For a comprehensive delivery system (9 components) for special education and related services to children with disabilities from birth through age 5.

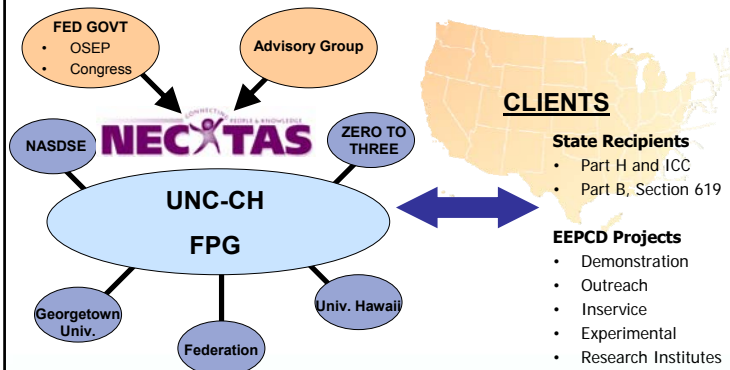
## START TA Services

- Planning visits
  - Conceptual model of Comprehensive Service Delivery System
  - Emphasis on interagency planning and collaboration
- TA Plans
  - Consultations (primary)
- Workshops/Conference
- State Resource Exchange directory

## Findings of START TA

- Individualized TA is critical for success
- On-site consultation is highly valued for extending contact to multiple personnel and agencies.
- Regional and national meetings are a primary vehicle for maintaining momentum in state system development.

## National Early Childhood Technical Assistance System 1987-2001



## TA Focus of NEC\*TAS

### Birth to Five Approach

- Seamless system
- Coordination across agencies

### Part H and Section 619 program requirements

(for example, early identification, service coordination, transition, inclusion, personnel development, finance, interagency coordination)

## *NEC\*TAS TA Services*

- On-site intensive TA to engage multiple stakeholders
- National conference and other linkage activities between states and projects
- Topical TA events and expert teams developed the knowledge base

## *Evolution of TA Center*

- Collaboration with other TA providers
- Shift in focus and sophistication of evaluation plans
- Development of logic model

## *NEC\*TAS Evaluation Studies*

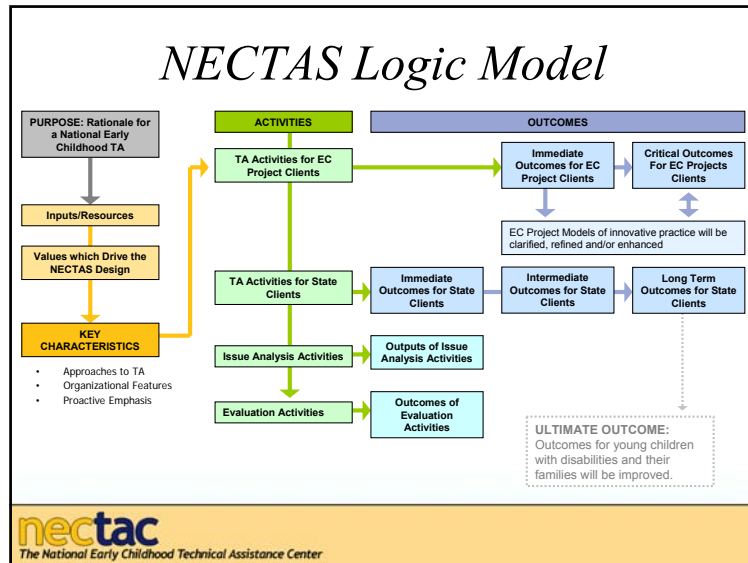
Contribution of NEC\*TAS to the understanding of TA and implementation of P.L. 99-457

- Case studies
- Outcomes Studies
- Documentation, immediate, intermediate, long term outcomes



## *Findings from NEC\*TAS*

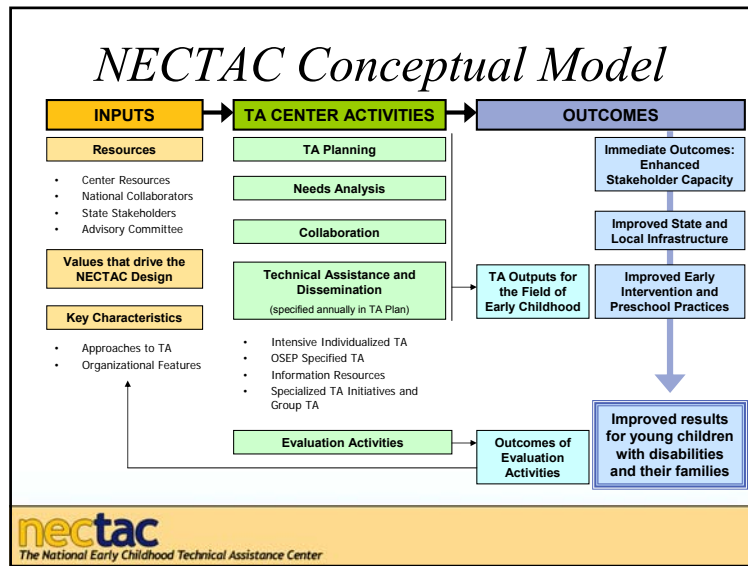
- The difficulty of tracing TA to societal outcomes in complex environments
- The importance of fluid needs assessment
- The power of on-site consultations
- The necessity of knowing state context
- The selection of suitable TA providers
- TA supported by multiple methods
- The necessity of trust



## National Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center 2001-2011

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## *Emphasis on Accountability*

- Assist the states in meeting their requirements to report on indicators in addition to addressing their identified system needs
- Analyze states' Annual Performance Reports for OSEP

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## TA partnerships

The collage features several key resources from the National Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center:

- network**: Office of Special Education Programs, Technical Assistance and Dissemination Center.
- The National Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center**: Main organizational logo and information.
- Early Childhood TA Consortium**: Early Childhood TA Consortium Projects Map showing a map of the United States.
- Expanding Opportunities**: A graphic with a child's face and text about expanding opportunities.
- AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDERS**: A graphic with a map of the United States and text about autism spectrum disorders.
- CONTINUE THE QUEST**: A graphic with text about continuing the quest for better outcomes for young children and their families.

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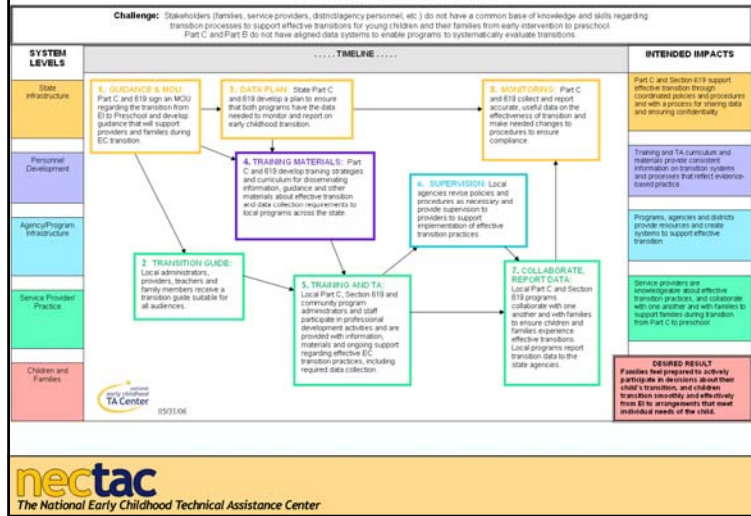
## Communities of Practice

The screenshot shows the TAcommunities website interface:

- Navigation**: Home, Communities, People, Discussions, Documents, Suggest a New Community, Links, Help.
- Community: Part C Settings - Services in Natural Environments**
- Documents & Files**: OSEP TA Community of Practice - Part C Settings: Services in Natural Environments Documents.
- Text**: A national workgroup has reached consensus on principles and practices validated through several research, model demonstration and outreach projects designed to enhance services in natural environments. The documents are final drafts and were shared at the December 2007 OSEP National Early Childhood Conference during a session entitled [Key Principles and Practices for Providing Early Intervention Services in Natural Environments: Reaching Consensus](#).
- Documents**:
  - Document 1 - [Mission and Key Principles for Providing Early Intervention Services in Natural Environments](#)
  - Document 2 - [Seven Key Principles: Looks Like/ Doesn't Look Like](#)
  - Document 3 - [Agreed upon Practices for Providing Early Intervention Services in Natural Environments](#)
- Login**: Username, Password, Login, Forgot your password?, Join Our Community.

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### State Work Plan Template: Transition



## Long-term Impacts

- **91%** Reported Changes at the State System Level
- **92%** Reported Changes at the Local System Level
- **90%** Reported Changes at the Practice Level

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## *Outcomes for Children and Families*

- Data from the 2001- 2006 NECTAC contract found that **64%** of state long-term system change projects which had completed all activities showed improved results for children and families, e.g.
  - Improved/more timely access to services
  - Increased numbers of children identified and served
  - Improved access to services in natural environments
  - Improvements in children's language development

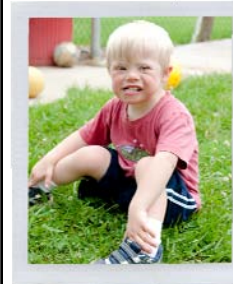
## *Evolution of TA in NECTAC*

- Focus of TA on systems change for results for children and families
- Multi-level approach to TA
- Leveraging resources through partnering
- Knowledge mobilization
- Broadening focus to all early childhood
- Evaluation plan based on accountability

## *Future of TA: An infrastructure for early childhood*



- EC TA Consortium
- Early Childhood Systems Federal Partners Workgroup, TA Subcommittee
- Federal Inter-departmental Liaison for Early Childhood Development



- View a recording of this presentation at [www.nectac.org/TA/TA.asp](http://www.nectac.org/TA/TA.asp)
- Download NECTAC Technical Assistance resources at [www.nectac.org/pubs/subject.asp#techassist](http://www.nectac.org/pubs/subject.asp#techassist)
- Print a list of NECTAC TA resources at [www.nectac.org/pdfs/pubs/techassist.pdf](http://www.nectac.org/pdfs/pubs/techassist.pdf)