The State of Service Coordination Across the Country

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Dana Childress, PhD
Sarah Nichols, BA

DEC Annual Conference
Wednesday October 2, 2019
11:00AM
Dallas, Texas
Presentation Agenda

- Welcome and Introductions
- Service Coordination Overview (Part C IDEA & Research)
- ITCA Service Coordinator Survey Data
- Targeted Service Coordination Part C Survey of 8 States – November 2017 (Dana Childress & Sarah Nichols)
- Transition as a Service Coordination Activity Case Study Data (Annie George-Puskar)
- Next Steps & Resources to Explore
Welcome and Introductions

- Presentation Attendee Demographics
  - Current Service Coordinators
  - State Administrators
  - Early Intervention Provider
  - Personnel Development
  - Higher Education
  - Other?
Part C Service Coordination

- Service Coordination:
  - “the activities carried out by a service coordinator to assist and enable an eligible child and the child’s family to receive the rights, procedural safeguards, and services that are authorized to be provided under the state’s early intervention program” (IDEA, 20, U.S.C. § 303.34, 2004)

- Service Coordinators are identified based on the most relevant needs of the child and family

- Required to meet personnel standards
  - Different across states
Service Coordinators working in a blended-model are more likely to use desired service coordinator practices such as:

- Coordination and facilitation of services
- Family participation and decision making in the IFSP
- Planning for and assistance with the transition out of early intervention

(Bruder & Dunst, 2008; Dunst & Bruder, 2006)

Although legislation and research supports service coordination, states continue to struggle with the implementation of high quality service coordination.
ITCA SERVICE COORDINATOR
SURVEY DATA

Mary Beth Bruder, PhD
ITCA Service Coordinator Survey Data

- December 2018 Data Collection
- Purpose: to assess the current status of service coordination in Part C Systems across the country
- 43 States completed the survey
Demographics

Respondents by Lead Agency
- Other
- Education
- Health

Respondents by Eligibility Criteria
- Category A
- Category B
- Category C
What model of service coordination is used in your state?
Describe the employment status of service coordinators.
What is the average caseload for service coordinators in your state?
What background qualifies an individual to be a service coordinator?
Do you have a job description for a service coordinator?
Do you have a curriculum that all service coordinators must take before working with families?
Do you require ongoing additional training hours related to service coordination?

**Require Ongoing Additional Training**

- **All respondents (40):**
  - Yes: 22
  - No: 18

- **Health (17):**
  - Yes: 9
  - No: 8

- **Education (10):**
  - Yes: 3
  - No: 7

- **Other (13):**
  - Yes: 10
  - No: 3
Is there a need for national standards on the following topics for service coordination?

**Standardized Job Description**

- **Yes**: 17 (All participants 17), 11 (Health 11), 2 (Education 2), 4 (Other 4), 5 (All others 5)
- **No**: 16 (All participants 16), 5 (Health 5), 6 (Education 6), 5 (Other 5)
- **Maybe**: 9 (All participants 9), 3 (Health 3), 3 (Education 3), 3 (Other 3)

**Standardized Qualifications**

- **Yes**: 15 (All participants 15), 8 (Health 8), 3 (Education 3), 4 (Other 4), 5 (All others 5)
- **No**: 15 (All participants 15), 6 (Health 6), 4 (Education 4), 5 (Other 5)
- **Maybe**: 13 (All participants 13), 5 (Health 5), 4 (Education 4), 4 (Other 4)
Is there a need for national standards on the following topics for service coordination?

**Standardized Skills and Knowledge**

- **Yes**: 27, All participants (43), Health (19), Education (11), Other (13)
- **No**: 14, 6, 7
- **Maybe**: 11, 4, 4, 3

**Standardized Curricula**

- **Yes**: 23, 14
- **No**: 5, 4, 7, 1, 3, 3
- **Maybe**: 12, 4, 3, 5

Legend:
- All participants (43)
- Health (19)
- Education (11)
- Other (12)
Is there a need for national standards on the following topics for service coordination?
Service Coordination Activities Across Eight States

What Did We Learn?

Sarah Nichols and Dana Childress
**WHEN** - Fall of 2017

**WHO** - Sent to EI stakeholders in 8 states (service coordinators)

**WHAT** - Solicited input about strengths, challenges, and areas for improvement related to the provision of service coordination
Respondents

SCs (62%)   EI Providers (29%)   Administrators/Supervisors (26%)
SC Activities under Part C of IDEA

1. Assisting parents with accessing services on the IFSP
2. Coordinating EI services
3. Coordinating evaluation and assessment
4. Facilitating the development, review, & evaluation of IFSPs
5. Conducting referrals & identifying EI providers
6. Coordinating, facilitating, & monitoring delivery of EI services in a timely manner
7. Conducting follow-up activities to monitor appropriate services
8. Informing families about their rights/safeguards
9. Coordinating funding
10. Facilitating transition
Strengths

- All areas averaged “strong”
- Strongest: Informing families about rights/safeguards
- Least strong: Coordinating funding sources for services

Areas for Improvement

- Need reduced numbers of families served per SC
- Need higher pay and reimbursement rates
- Challenges with retaining qualified staff
- Need more/better training
If Respondents had a Magic Wand, They Would:

- Balance the workload
- Increase training opportunities
- Increase compensation and funding
- Increase networking opportunities
- Elevate the profession of SC, increase respect and value
- Have adequate time to support families
- Address technology needs
How Are We Using What We Learned?

Hosted webinars specifically targeting service coordinators

Drafted Recommended Knowledge and Skills for Service Coordinators

Partnered with DEC to launch the SC CoP and begin writing a joint position statement with the Infant Toddler Coordinators Association on service coordination
Strengths and Challenges of Service Coordination in Eight States

Dana C. Childress, PhD; Sarah Nickols, BA; Melissa Schnurr, PhD

A survey was distributed in 8 states to learn about perceived strengths and challenges of service coordination from those working in early intervention (EI) programs under Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. Survey responses from 60 service coordinators and other EI personnel in 8 states provide an overview of state systems and the implementation of service coordination activities within these state EI systems. Respondents suggested that service coordinators experience the following needs: (1) balancing the workload by reducing the number of families served per service coordinator and decreasing the amount of paperwork; (2) improved compensation and funding; and (3) better and more frequent training opportunities. Findings from this survey were analyzed and used by representatives from participating states to determine state and national action plans for improving the professional development and identity of service coordinators, with the goal of prioritizing support for this important part of the early childhood intervention workforce.

Key words: early childhood intervention, IDEA, Part C, personnel development, professional development, service coordination, training

SERVICE COORDINATION is required for all infants and toddlers, aged birth to 3 years, who receive early intervention (EI) under Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA, 2004). This service is the only mandated service listed in Part C, and is designed to help families of very young children with developmental delays and disabilities navigate the complex early childhood intervention (ECI) system. According to the federal regulations, each infant or toddler with a disability and the child’s family must be provided with one service coordinator who is responsible for coordinating all services the child and family receive through EI and serves as the “single point of contact” in the system (IDEA, 2004, § 303.34). Service coordinators engage in many coordination and support activities within the EI system, including monitoring services to ensure alignment with family priorities and desired outcomes, building strong collaborative relationships with families and other team members, facilitating family participation and decision making, and linking families to needed resources in the community. The implementation of these important activities must be individualized to the strengths, needs, and preferences of each family and is affected by the knowledge and skills of the service coordinator.

Service coordination is described as an active, ongoing process that encompasses the implementation of activities listed in Part C (IDEA, 2004, § 303.34). These include enrolling children and families into the Part C
National Service Coordination (SC) Initiatives

The National Service Coordination (SC) Training Workgroup formed in 2016. Members from more than 10 states who have a role in preparing SCs for their role in Early Intervention (EI).

National Service Coordination Leadership Institute
Formed in November 2017 with support of the Early Childhood Personnel Center (ECPC). Consists of members from nine states who are also members of National SC Training Workgroup who seek to prepare, empower and support SCs.

National SC Part C Survey
In 2017 a survey went to SC stakeholders in eight SC Leadership Institute states. A summary of the themes identified was developed and an article titled Strengths and Challenges of Service Coordination in Eight States has been published in Infants & Young Children (2019).

State & National Action Plans
Themes across state specific SC action plans include a need for Professional Development and Knowledge and Skills for Service Coordinators. Two subgroups are addressing national action plans for the Service Coordination Identity and Recommended Knowledge & Skills for Service Coordinators (RKSSC).

National Service Coordination Leadership Institute Subgroups in partnership with the Division for Early Childhood (DEC)

Service Coordination Identity Subgroup
Seeking to professionalize the SC role in EI by cultivating a professional home for SCs within DEC, forming a National SC Community of Practice (CoP) and developing a Joint SC Position Statement with DEC and the Infant Toddler Coordinator Association (ITCA). For more information view this infographic.

Recommended Knowledge & Skills for Service Coordinators (RKSSC) Subgroup
Once developed, states may use them to augment existing SC training and competencies. RKSSC will be cross-walked with Part C of IDEA, the DEC Early Intervention/Early Childhood Personnel Preparation Standards and Cross-Disciplinary Competencies. To learn more about how RKSSC are being developed visit this infographic.

Want to get involved?
Join the national SC CoP: https://www.dec-seed.org/servicecoordinationcop

Part C of IDEA Subgroup
Reviewing potential recommendations for edits to SC under Part C of IDEA if the law is opened up for reauthorization in the future.

Developed by the National SC Leadership Institute Group in Partnership with the Division for Early Childhood (DEC) — July 2019
Transition as a Service Coordinator Activity: Case Study Data

Annie George-Puskar, PhD
Transition as a Service Coordinator Activity: Case Study Data

- Study Purpose: to investigate service coordinator reported transition outcomes and transition practices for children and families transitioning out of Part C
- Exploratory Study
- Case Study Research Methodology
  - Semi-structured interviews with 11 Part C Service Coordinators
  - Describe a transition that went well and a transition that did not go well
Interview Protocol

1. Service Coordinator Demographic information
2. Program, Family, and Child descriptors
3. The planning of transition
4. The implementation of the transition plan
5. The outcomes for the child and family in the transition
Methods: Data Preparation and Analyses

Qualitative Categorization and Theming Process (Bruder et al., 2005; Li, Marquart, & Zercher, 2000)

Practice and Outcome Statements extracted from interview data

Statements sorted into similar themes

Groups of statements are labeled into unifying themes

Themed groups of statements are further refined and collapsed into similar categories

Grouped categories are labeled into overall outcome/practice statements
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Associated Characteristics</th>
<th>Practice: Communication</th>
<th>Practice: Collaboration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SCs are aware of, and follow, methods in place to support communication within and across programs</td>
<td>SCs help facilitate visits to the school program options as part of transition planning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SCs are the primary contact person in the Part C program and help parents to identify the primary contact person in receiving program options</td>
<td>SCs help facilitate a transition conference with the family and school (receiving program) personnel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SCs share birth-3 team information with the receiving program including the transfer of documents (e.g., IFSP, assessments, etc.)</td>
<td>Transition-related activities occur with both Part C and receiving program personnel (such as having an overlap in services, providing birth-3 services in the classroom, or school personnel coming to the home).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# Transition Outcomes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Transition Outcomes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The child had a continuity of service or programming</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Families were prepared for the transition process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Families reported being happy with the program planned for when the child turns 3-years old</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Results: Transition Outcomes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Successful Transitions</th>
<th>Unsuccessful Transitions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The child had a continuity of services between Part C and Part B 619</td>
<td>There was not a program planned for when the child turned 3 years old</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The family reported [to the service coordinator] being happy with the preschool program offered</td>
<td>Lapse in service delivery between Part C and Part B 619 (for those eligible)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Program/service expectations [from the parents] matched what was received</td>
<td>Family unhappy with the difference in what they expected for programs and what was offered</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child had positive responses to transition-related activities</td>
<td>Lack of communication between the preschool program and parents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The family was prepared for the transition process (i.e., meetings at the school)</td>
<td>Parents reluctantly accepted program offered so their child could have some level of service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Successful Transitions</td>
<td>Unsuccessful Transitions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service coordinators prepared families using discussion and</td>
<td>Communication did not occur between the 3 stakeholders together</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>practice dialog</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service coordinators provided resources about program</td>
<td>Service coordinator did not prepare families</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>options</td>
<td>Multiple options were not provided</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service coordinators facilitated visits to programs</td>
<td>Service coordinator referred parents to outside/legal resource</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service coordinator followed up after transition occurred</td>
<td>Visits to programs were not facilitated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>System Level Practices</td>
<td>Family barriers to access resources not addressed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service coordinator facilitated system to system communication</td>
<td>School did not follow through on timelines or provide information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service coordinators conducted Birth-3 session in classroom</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Patterns of Responses for Successful Transitions Out of Part C

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Practice Rating</th>
<th>Outcome Rating</th>
<th>Successful/Positive</th>
<th>Neither successful nor unsuccessful</th>
<th>Unsuccessful/Negative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Consistent</td>
<td></td>
<td>54</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neither Inconsistent nor consistent</td>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inconsistent</td>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Patterns of Responses for Unsuccessful Transitions Out of Part C

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Practice Rating</th>
<th>Outcome Rating</th>
<th>Successful/Positive</th>
<th>Neither successful nor unsuccessful</th>
<th>Unsuccessful/Negative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Consistent</td>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neither Inconsistent nor consistent</td>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inconsistent</td>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Results: Program, Family, & Child Descriptors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Disability</th>
<th>n</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Global Delays</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Autism Spectrum Disorder</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50/50 Mix of Global Delay and ASD</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Numbers of Families Across Socioeconomic Status in Successful and Unsuccessful Transitions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Socioeconomic Status</th>
<th>Successful Transition&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</th>
<th>Unsuccessful Transition&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Low SES</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle SES</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High SES</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<sup>a</sup> \(N = 11\)

## Numbers of Children Across Severity of Developmental Delays in Successful and Unsuccessful Transitions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Severity of Delay</th>
<th>Successful Transition&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</th>
<th>Unsuccessful Transition&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mild Delay</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderate Delay</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Severe Delay</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<sup>a</sup> \(N = 11\)
Transition Case Study Conclusions

- Matches previous literature and research
- Families continue to experience unsuccessful transitions
- Variance in practices implemented with children and families
- Eligibility as an additional variable in future research
Your Next Steps

1. Join the SC CoP (listserv, resource sharing & web-conversations)
2. Provide input on the Joint Position Statement – Member review Spring 2020
3. Learn more about the *Recommended Knowledge & Skills for Service Coordinators* - Stay tuned!
5. AUCD Webinar- December 17 (3:00-4:00 PM)
The State of Service Coordination Across the Country
Division for Early Childhood (DEC) International Conference - Dallas, TX 2019
Annie George-Puskar, PhD, Mary Beth Bruder, PhD,
Dana Childress, PhD, & Sarah Nichols

National Service Coordination Resources:
- Service Coordination Activities Under Part C of IDEA: https://www.governinfo.gov/content/site/FR-2011-09-28/pdf/2031-22783.pdf#page=112
- Research and Training Center on Service Coordination Publications & Resources: https://ucnurse.dei.org/projects/service-coordination/
- DEC Service Coordination Community of Practice (SC CoP): https://www.dec-azed.org/servicecoordination/cop
- Early Childhood Personnel Center (ECPC) Service Coordination Institute 2017: https://ecpcota.org/leadership/

Resources Developed by the National Service Coordination Training Workgroup and members of the 2017 Service Coordination Leadership Institute Group:
- National Service Coordination Leadership Institute Updates 2018 (written summary): https://drive.google.com/file/d/17By5nC6d3zUpVHS45SuSaly1MFPRqZ2/view
- National Service Coordination Archived Webinars: http://go.illinois.edu/NationalSCWebinars
- Strengths and Challenges of Service Coordination in Eight States (journal article): https://journals.haw.com/vcjournal/Abstract/2019/04000/Strengths_and_Challenges_of_Service_Coordination.6.aspx

Transition as a Service Coordination Activity:

Review the Resource Handout for more information

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Discussion and Questions