



The Center to Inform  
*Personnel Preparation Policy and Practice*  
In Early Intervention & Preschool Education



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**Data Report**

**Study I Data Report: The National Landscape of Early  
Childhood Special Education in Personnel Preparation  
Standards Under 619 of the Individuals with Disabilities  
Education Act (IDEA)**

The Center to Inform Personnel Preparation Policy and Practice in Early Intervention and Early Childhood Special Education (referred to hereafter as the Center) was established in January, 2003 as a five-year project funded by the Office of Special Education Programs. The Center represents the collaborative efforts of the University of Connecticut, Western Kentucky University and the University of Toledo. The purpose of the Center is to collect, synthesize and analyze data on: 1) the certification and licensure requirements for personnel working with infants, toddlers, and preschoolers who have special needs and their families; 2) the quality of training programs that prepare these professionals; and 3) the supply and demand of professionals representing all disciplines who provide both Early Intervention (EI) and Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE) services. Data will be utilized to identify critical gaps in current knowledge of personnel preparation programs. The center will disseminate recommendations for policy and practice related to personnel preparation at regional and national forums.

**Purpose of the Report**

This report focuses on data collected from the 619 Coordinator Survey during Study I: The National Landscape of Early Intervention and Early Childhood Special Education. The study was designed to obtain comprehensive information relating to:

- 1) The 619 system structure, service delivery and staffing in each state and territory.
- 2) Personnel preparation opportunities for ECSE professionals and paraprofessionals.
- 3) Standards and requirements for all service providers in ECSE systems.

## METHODOLOGY

### Survey

The 619 Coordinator Survey consisted of 42 close-ended and open response questions grouped into five sections: 1) introductory questions about the CSPD coordinator and the 619 website; 2) background information about the state's 619 program (i.e. structure, funding, employment, and state requirements); 3) personnel requirements; 4) training information; and 5) the barriers and facilitators in obtaining appropriately qualified personnel (see Appendix A for a copy of the survey). Some of the multiple-choice questions required respondents to select only one response, while others allowed respondents to select all relevant answers. Respondents were offered an opportunity to provide additional comments to elaborate on the multiple-choice questions. The survey also asked open-ended questions which allowed respondents to give detailed responses on a specific topic in a less structured format.

### Respondents

The 619 coordinators ( $n = 53$ ) from each state, District of Columbia, and the territories of Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands comprised the population for this study and were randomly assigned to one of the three collaborating research sites (i.e. University of Connecticut, Western Kentucky University and the University of Toledo) (see Appendix B for site assignment by state). The 619 coordinators or representatives (e.g. consultants, Comprehensive System of Personnel Development members) from 48 states completed the survey for a response rate of 91% (see Table 1). The amount of experience the respondents had in their current position ranged from 2 months to 24 years with a mean of 7 years.

Table 1. *Number of Surveys Completed by Site (n = 48)*

Number of States	CT	KY	OH	Total
No. of States in Sample	19	16	18	53
No. of States Completing Survey	18	14	16	48
Response Rate	95%	88%	89%	91%

When a 619 coordinator was unable to provide information needed, he/she was asked to obtain the necessary information from his/her colleague(s) or to make a referral to the person(s) who could best answer the question. Therefore, survey responses were often collaborative efforts among 619 coordinators, Comprehensive System of Personnel Development (CSPD) coordinators and other system personnel.

### Data Collection

The study used three methods of data collection:

- 1) **Web-Based Searches:** Project staff conducted electronic searches of the 619 program in each of their assigned states to prepare for data collection and as supporting documents for future analysis.

- 2) Telephone Surveys: Slightly under one-half (42%) of the respondents opted to complete the survey via the telephone (see Table 2). The length of time to complete a telephone survey ranged from 60 to 120 minutes. Research staff made audio tapes and written records of all telephone survey responses. To ensure accuracy and reliability of the data collection, responses were verified by respondents before being entered into SPSS data files.
- 3) Electronic Surveys: Slightly over half (58%) of the respondents opted to participate in the study by completing the electronic version of the survey. Research staff e-mailed an electronic version of the survey directly to the respondent along with instructions for completing the survey. Follow-up telephone conversation occurred when clarification of responses was necessary.

Table 2. *Method of Survey Completion (n = 48)*

Method	Frequency	Percent
Electronic survey	28	58
Telephone survey	20	42
Total	48	100

### **Fidelity Procedures**

Prior to data collection, the project coordinator developed written guidelines and organizational materials (i.e. protocols for conducting telephone surveys, recording data, and compiling information) which were distributed and explained to all research assistants.

All staff were instructed on the proper interview protocol. Five interview training sessions were conducted via conference call with available staff. Following each training interview, project staff were given opportunities to clarify the protocol as it related to various scenarios. The training interviews and subsequent discussions were tape recorded to allow any staff member not in attendance the opportunity to benefit from the training.

As part of ongoing reliability procedures project co-directors and coordinators at each site reviewed interview tapes and provided feedback to interviewers. In addition, one-hour weekly conference calls were conducted during the five month data collection process to clarify questions that emerged during interviews. The data collection forms for telephone surveys were returned to respondents allowing them to verify the accuracy of the recorded responses. Staff at each of the three research sites reviewed 20% of all telephone survey tape recordings for accuracy of data interpretation and data entry. An inter-rater reliability of 91% was obtained.

All data (i.e. responses from telephone surveys, electronic surveys, tape-recordings of telephone surveys and data collection sheets) were sent to the University of Connecticut. Project staff at the University of Connecticut reviewed each survey to ensure accuracy and thoroughness of responses as well as inter-site reliability. All data were entered into an Access data file and quantitative responses then were entered into SPSS. Data entry monitoring was conducted on 100% of the data.

## Data Analysis

Both formats (electronic and telephone) of the survey contained the same questions and the results from the two data collection methods were analyzed in aggregate (see Appendix C for a list of states represented in data analysis). Descriptive statistics (means, frequencies, and percentages) were calculated for the quantitative variables. Research staff analyzed the qualitative responses to identify salient themes. Each response then was coded to consensus based on the themes.

## RESULTS

The findings were grouped into the following topics: 1) introductory questions; 2) organizational structure of states' 619 program; 3) personnel issues; and 4) factors that influence obtaining appropriately qualified personnel.

### Introductory Questions

This study used the states' 619 websites as a resource, therefore the researchers asked respondents if the information on their website was current and accurate. Almost two-thirds (62%) of the respondents reported that their state's website was current and accurate while 10% of the respondents reported that their website might not be current nor accurate. Three of the responding states do not have a 619 web site. The respondents reported that their websites were updated on a frequent (19%) or an as needed basis (27%). The vast majority (90%) of the respondents stated that their state's Department of Education was the entity responsible for implementing the updates.

### Organizational Structure of States

Respondents were asked to describe how stable their organizational structure was within the 619 program. Over three-quarters (81%) of the respondents perceived the 619 organizational structure as being stable, or very stable. An additional 6% of respondents stated that their organizational structure was fairly stable. Only two respondents (4%) perceived their state's 619 organizational structures as being unstable. However, four (8%) respondents mentioned that the stability of their organization was either threatened or uncertain.

When asked if there were any threats to the organization of the 619 program within their state, over half (60%) of the respondents reported that there were no threats. However, 27% of the respondents identified funding issues and another 4% described reorganization within the existing agency as threats.

The 619 respondents in this study reported receiving funding from multiple sources. All of the responding respondents reported receiving federal funds and the vast majority (80%) reported receiving state funds (see Table 3). Almost two-thirds (63%) of those responding reported receiving local funds. The 619 programs also received funds from Medicaid (48%), private insurance (9%), grants (2%), and national organizations or associations (2%).

Forty-four percent of the respondents reported that their funding was stable. Additional respondents tempered their view of having a stable funding source with caveats such as having insufficient funds (15%), having stability only in some areas (15%), and anticipating issues (4%).

A relatively small percent (15%) of the respondents stated that their funding was not stable.

Table 3. *Funding Sources (n = 46)*

Funding	Frequency	Percent
Federal	46	100
State	37	80
Local	29	63
Medicaid	22	48
Private insurance	4	9
Grants	1	2
National organizations/associations	1	2
Other	1	2

Findings from the study indicate that 619 programs are primarily organized through local education agencies (85%). Other organizational structures include regional (13%), or county (8%) based service provision. Nine (19%) of the states reported other organizational affiliations including the Department of Human Services or collaborations among school districts referred to as "special education cooperatives," "interlocals," or "Special Education Local Plan Areas" (see Table 4).

Table 4. *Organizational Structure of 619 Programs (n = 48)*

Organization	Frequency	Percent
Local education agencies	41	85
Regional office	6	13
County	4	8
Other	9	19

### **Personnel Issues**

The survey sought to illuminate the current status of 619 systems' personnel supply, training, and standards. The survey asked a series of questions to address these issues. Below is a description of the findings.

#### *Types of Service Provider Employers*

The respondents stated that the ECSE personnel in their state are most frequently employed by local education agencies (90%) followed by a State Department (71%) (see Table 5). Other employers included regional collaborative units (31%), private not for profit agencies (31%), private individual therapists (23%), private for profit agencies (21%), private preschools (15%), and private not for profit preschools (15%). Some 619 personnel are unionized in about one-half (56%) of the responding states and in one-third (33%) of the states they are not.

*Personnel Supply*

Respondents were asked to indicate whether their state had adequate numbers of personnel across the various disciplines in ECSE. Over one-third of the states reported having an adequate supply of audiologists (38%) and paraprofessionals (36%) (see Table 6). Respondents also identified disciplines with statewide or localized personnel shortages. Speech/language pathologists were the most frequently reported shortage with 85% of the states reporting this finding. Other disciplines with considerable percentages of respondents reporting shortages included special educators (60%), occupational therapists (55%), and physical therapists (49%). A substantial number of respondents were unsure about the adequacy of the personnel supply in their respective states particularly for rehabilitation counselors (64%), recreation therapists (64%), family therapists (60%), and pediatricians and other physicians (52%). Reporting on specific personnel supply numbers is complicated for many 619 coordinators especially when over one-half (56%) of the participating states do not have an updated 619 personnel database and an additional 19% of the respondents are not sure if their state has such a database.

Table 5. *Types of 619 Personnel Employers (n = 48)*

Employers	Frequency	Percent
Local education agency	43	90
State department	34	71
Regional collaborative units	15	31
Private not for profit agency	15	31
Private individual therapist	11	23
Private for profit agency	10	21
Private preschools	7	15
Private not for profit preschools	7	15
Other agencies	4	8

Table 6. *Percent of States Reporting Adequacy of 619 Personnel Supply (n = 47)*

Discipline	Percent of Responses Regarding Personnel Supply					
	Adequate	Shortage	Shortage in Some Areas of State	Do Not Employ	Unsure	Follow-up Needed
Special educators	29	56	0	0	13	2
Audiologists	38	17	4	2	35	4
Speech/language pathologists	6	81	2	0	8	2
Occupational therapists	29	48	4	0	17	2
Physical therapists	31	42	4	0	21	2
Orientation/mobility specialists	19	35	0	0	44	2
Pediatricians and other physicians	27	15	0	4	52	2
Nurses	27	25	2	2	42	2
Family therapists	17	15	0	6	58	4
Psychologists	29	35	2	0	31	2
Social workers	31	25	2	0	40	2
Paraprofessionals	31	38	0	0	27	4

### Personnel Training

Respondents were asked if ECSE personnel in their state were appropriately trained to work with young children and their families. The percent of respondents indicating that ECSE professionals in their state were adequately trained varied by discipline (see Table 7). About half of the respondents felt their state had appropriately trained speech/language pathologists (51%), occupational therapists (47%), audiologists (44%), and physical therapists (45%). However, the respondents expressed concern about personnel in each professional discipline being appropriately trained particularly paraprofessionals (42%), special educators (26%), and psychologists (23%). In the section of the question that allowed for additional comments, respondents noted that 619 personnel in their state needed further training to work specifically with young children and their families. The need for additional training in ECSE was mentioned in 11% of the states for speech/language pathologists, occupational therapists, physical therapists, and special educators. A considerable percent of respondents were unsure whether the ECSE personnel in their state were appropriately trained including rehabilitation counselors (57%), recreational therapists (57%), and family therapists (51%). In addition to the categories listed in the survey, respondents also gave information about shortages of other professionals such as interpreters and bilingual special educators.

Table 7. *Percent of States Reporting Adequacy of Training of 619 Personnel (n = 47)*

Discipline	Percent of Responses Regarding Adequacy of Training						
	Adequate Training	Not Adequate Training	Additional Training Needed for Early Childhood	Some trained/Some Not	Do Not Employ	Unsure	Follow-up Needed
Special educators	42	15	4	10	0	23	2
Audiologists	42	4	2	2	2	42	2
Speech/language pathologists	50	17	4	0	0	23	2
Occupational therapists	48	15	4	0	0	27	2
Physical therapists	46	15	4	0	0	29	2
Orientation/mobility Specialists	35	8	2	0	0	48	2
Pediatricians and other physicians	27	15	4	0	4	42	2
Nurses	31	13	2	0	2	44	4
Family therapists	21	10	2	0	6	52	4
Psychologists	31	24	4	0	0	35	2
Social workers	38	13	2	0	0	42	2
Paraprofessionals	27	40	2	0	0	27	2

### Interagency Collaboration

The 619 respondents reported that their state used several avenues to address personnel preparation. The most frequently cited method was through State Improvement Plans (SIPs) which was mentioned in 67% of the cases (see Table 8). In addition, 619 respondents in 44% of the states reported the presence of an interagency agreement that addressed personnel preparation. Over half (56%) of the 619 respondents reported that their state's Interagency Coordinating Council (ICC) had a personnel preparation committee. Based on qualitative responses, state's ICC's personnel preparation initiatives included topics such as staff development training, and the development and revisions of credentials and licenses.

Table 8. *Methods of Addressing ECSE in Personnel Preparation (n = 48)*

Method	Percent of States Responding			
	Yes	No	Unsure	Indirectly
State improvement plan	67	29	0	4
ICC personnel prep committee	56	31	13	NA
Interagency agreement	44	31	4	NA
CSPD document for in-service	29	63	8	NA
CSPD document for pre-service	23	69	8	NA

The 619 respondents stated that their Comprehensive System of Personnel Development (CSPD) addressed ECSE personnel preparation through various activities including providing in-service training, linking with institutions of higher education, offering capacity building grants, and conducting needs assessments. Of the participating 619 representatives, 29% reported that their state's written CSPD document described in-service training opportunities, and 23% reported that their state's written CSPD document described pre-service training.

#### *Changes in Personnel Requirements*

The respondents were asked a series of questions to identify national trends focusing on changes to existing ECSE personnel requirements. The data indicate that over one-half (56%) of the states have or are in the process of making modifications in their personnel requirements (see Table 9). For example, some states have responded to the No Child Left Behind Act by requiring teachers to obtain an additional six hours in reading instruction. Other states have addressed licensure examination with a trend toward competency based assessment and an increase in requirements. Eight (17%) of the respondents reported that their state had added or created new ECSE professional categories with examples being sign language interpreter, and learning consultant.

Table 9. *Percent of States Reporting Changes in Personnel Requirements (n = 48)*

Changes	Yes or In		
	Process	No	Unsure
Modifications to existing requirements	56	33	10
Additional professional categories	17	75	8

According to the respondents, some of the reasons states have made these changes is to prepare ECSE teachers to work in inclusive settings with children who have diverse abilities and needs, to broaden foundational education, and to bring national standards and early childhood standards into alignment. These modifications and categorical additions have been in effect between 6 months and 24 years, with the implementation process taking 6 months to 18 years.

The respondents identified several factors that influenced the implementation of the new personnel requirements and categories. The primary facilitator for these changes was strong support from

all ECSE stakeholder groups. For example, modifications and additions were expedited when there was strong state level lead agency support, collaborative higher education initiatives, and public awareness of needs. Other respondents identified the importance of persistent leadership and a shared common vision.

There were several barriers that the respondents reportedly faced while implementing the modifications and additions. Time seemed to be the primary obstacle both in terms of the length of time it took to implement the changes as well as the increased demand on staff hours. The intrinsic competition of priorities and funding were mentioned as barriers. Lack of collaboration among stakeholder groups and “territorial claims” impeded the modification process. Failure to reach consensus on strategies also led to delays. Other reported difficulties related to higher education issues such as the lack of programs, and the shortage of faculty with the necessary expertise. Nearly three-quarters (74%) of the participating respondents stated that the changes have improved or have the potential to improve the quality of ECSE personnel but only 12% felt it would increase the number of ECSE personnel available.

### State Credential for ECSE Professionals

In reviewing responses from respondents and verifying the information with state boards, thirty (63%) states have or are in the process of developing a credential specifically for ECSE personnel with an emphasis on teacher certification. The credentialing process is primarily overseen by the state’s Department of Education. Of those states reporting ECSE credentials, twenty-three states provided additional information regarding qualifying procedures. Over two-thirds reported that ECSE personnel may qualify for a state certificate with pre-service preparation (70%), or course work (65%) (see Table 10). In addition, almost half of the states responding award the credential based on competencies (44%), and exams (44%).

Table 10. *Procedures for Qualifying for a Credential (n = 23)*

Procedures	Frequency	Percent
Pre-service preparation	16	70
Course work	15	65
Competencies	10	44
Exams	10	44
Experience	1	4
Recommendations	1	4
Follow-up mentoring	1	4

Over half (54%) of the respondents reported that their state also offers alternative methods to obtaining a certification, license, or credential (see Table 11). A small percent (13%) of the states have additional requirements or specific qualifications beyond the licensure/certification of ECSE personnel.

Table 11. *Percent of States Using Alternative Methods and Additional Requirements for ECSE Certification (n = 48)*

Additional Requirement	Yes	No	In Process	Unsure
Alternative Methods to Certification, Licensure, and Credential	54	33	2	10
Additional Requirements or Specific Qualifications	13	75	4	8

The vast majority of the respondents stated that the motivation for implementing the ECSE state certification was to improve the training and skill level of current and potential teachers who work with young children with disabilities. State credentials were also implemented as a response to needs identified by the field, including the demand for educators who have a broad educational foundation and are prepared to teach children in inclusive environments. Another motivating factor was the need to align state standards with national standards.

The amount of time the states' ECSE credentials have been in effect ranges from being newly implemented to 25 years (mean = 12.6) with the development process taking 2 to 15 years (mean = 6.4). When asked what helped to facilitate the implementation of the new ECSE certification, the respondents offered several explanations. For example, several respondents reported that state board prioritization and support was extremely important in promoting the credentialing process. In addition, institutions of higher education played a critical role in moving the ECSE credential forward. Strong leadership and interagency collaboration also assisted the credentialing process.

Respondents identified factors that acted as barriers to developing and implementing the ECSE credential. When there was lack of collaborative efforts and consensus, the process was hindered. Many respondents identified the lengthy time line as having a negative effect. For example, one respondent noted that it takes several years to develop university programs, obtain approval, and graduate students through the revised programs.

Half of the respondents reported that the state certification has or will improve the quality of ECSE personnel. About one-third (30%), of the respondents reported that the state certification would not contribute to personnel quality, and the remaining 20% of respondents were unsure of the effect. One-third (33%) of the respondents felt the state certification has or will increase the number of qualified personnel. Slightly more than one-third (38%) of those responding were unsure of the effect of the state certification on ECSE personnel supply. Of the remaining respondents, equal numbers indicated that the certification would have no effect, or a detrimental effect.

#### *State Training Requirements and Information for ECSE Professionals*

According to the participating 619 representatives, some states have implemented training requirements to prepare professionals in ECSE as a condition of employment (see Table 12). Over one-half (56%) of the states require training for ECSE professionals during employment, and almost a quarter (23%) of the states require employees to obtain Continuing Educational Units

(CEU's) related to the ECSE field. However, only one-tenth (10%) of the participating states require specific training for ECSE professionals before they begin employment.

These personnel requirements have contributed to the development of training opportunities. Almost all (98%) of the participating states report having higher education programs that are designed specifically to prepare educators and related service providers to work in the field of ECSE and almost two-thirds (65%) of the participating states have agencies other than higher education and lead agencies that provide ECSE training. Almost two-thirds (63%) of the participating states have a higher education consortium.

Table 12. *Percent of States Reporting Training and Career Requirements, Information, and Opportunities for ECSE Professionals (n = 48)*

Element of Training	Yes	No	Unsure
<i>Training as Part of Personnel Requirements</i>			
Training required for ECSE professionals before employment	10	77	13
Training required for ECSE professionals during employment	56	31	13
Required CEU's specific to ECSE	23	71	6
<i>Training Information</i>			
Directory of in-service training opportunities	63	38	0
Directory of ECSE higher education programs	56	35	8
<i>Training Opportunities</i>			
ECSE higher education programs	98	2	0
Higher education consortium	63	10	27
Other agencies that provide ECSE training	65	35	0
<i>Career Ladder within ECSE Structure</i>			
Career ladder for ECSE providers	33	60	6

Personnel interested in in-service training opportunities are able to refer to a directory in 63% of the states. However, accessing information on ECSE higher education programs appears to be difficult in many states since only about one-half (56%) have a directory on the topic even though almost all of the states report having such programs.

The data suggest that states have made progress in developing training requirements and opportunities. However, only one-third (33%) of the 619 respondents reported the existence of a career ladder within the ECSE system. Many respondents stated that their ECSE career ladder was unique to local school districts and typically based on teacher union contracts.

## **Obtaining Qualified Personnel in ECSE**

At the close of the survey, respondents were given the opportunity to reflect on their experiences in the field and to describe aspects they believed facilitated and/or hindered obtaining personnel who are appropriately qualified to provide ECSE services. Their responses were coded into salient themes and are discussed below.

### **Facilitators**

The researchers identified 13 themes based on the responses regarding facilitators in obtaining qualified personnel (see Table 13). The respondents most frequently cited training (21%) as a facilitator and described it as on-going professional development offered by local school systems, continuing education, internships, practicum experiences, and clinical fellowship year opportunities. In addition, respondents mentioned ways counties endorsed training with release time.

Similar to training, respondents stated that higher education programs (16%) were an effective way to obtain qualified personnel. For example, respondents advocated for community college articulation agreements, joint certification, and university degree programs.

In addition, a few respondents reported implementing certification, credentialing, and state standards (16%) as effective methods in obtaining qualified personnel. One respondent anticipated that more qualified teachers should be available with a new performance-based credentialing system that required content standards in mild disabilities and developmental standards in early childhood. Another respondent found his/her state's rural certification programs particularly effective for meeting local needs.

Respondents identified recruitment efforts (16%) as promoting the acquisition of adequate numbers of personnel, including "growing your own." They also acknowledged the importance of "word of mouth." In addition, some respondents endorsed actively recruiting from other states. One respondent reported that his/her state's website helped to recruit professionals on an international level.

Offering adequate salaries and benefits also appear to attract qualified personnel to the field according to 16% of the respondents.

Table 13. *Facilitators to Obtaining Qualified Personnel in ECSE (n = 43)*

Facilitators	Frequency	Percent
Training	9	21
Higher education programs	7	16
Certification/credential/state standards	7	16
Salary/benefits	7	16
Recruitment	7	16
Interagency initiatives	6	14
Geographic issues	4	9
Characteristics of ECSE	4	9
Positive perceptions of ECSE	3	7
Family-oriented philosophy	3	7
Grants/funding programs	2	5
Supervision/mentorship	2	5
Other	2	5

### Barriers

Respondents were asked to identify elements that acted as barriers to acquiring qualified ECSE personnel (see Table 14). Fifteen (33%) of the respondents identified issues concerning salary and benefits as a considerable barrier to recruiting and retaining qualified personnel. Several respondents stated that the recognized wage limitations of the field are exacerbated when prospective employers are “sandwiched” between districts or states that can offer more attractive salaries and benefits.

Table 14. *Barriers to Obtaining Qualified Personnel in ECSE (n = 46)*

Barriers	Frequency	Percent
Salary/benefits	15	33
Higher education program issues	14	30
Lack of personnel pool	12	26
Geographic issues (rural)	12	26
State standards/certification/credential	8	17
Lack of knowledge about ECSE	5	11
Negative perceptions of ECSE	5	11
Characteristics of ECSE tasks	5	11
Training issues	4	9
Competition with other states	4	9
State issues/policies/support	2	4
Lack of interagency collaboration	1	2

Another barrier, reported by 30% of the respondents, focused on higher education programs. Several respondents noted that there is an inadequate number of universities offering ECSE programs and the programs that do exist offer limited hands-on experience.

Geographic issues functioned as a barrier for 26% of the respondents. Many of the respondents viewed the rural nature of their states as contributing to the difficulty of recruiting and retaining qualified ECSE personnel. According to the respondents, geographic issues further deter prospective personnel simply because they are not interested in re-locating to less desirable areas. In addition to being less desirable, rural areas cannot compete with salaries, benefits, etc. like more populated areas. Accessing higher education ECSE programs is also difficult for prospective personnel who live in rural areas since they must travel long distances to get to campus.

One-quarter (26%) of the respondents stated that a primary barrier was simply the lack of a qualified pool of prospective personnel.

## **DISCUSSION**

There has been a longstanding national concern on how best to meet the educational needs of young children with disabilities. Personnel shortages have posed one of the greatest challenges to meeting this need. Across the country, 619 systems face the dual challenge of meeting personnel demands while promoting high standards. This study identified characteristics of the 619 system that impact personnel. The following is a discussion of the major findings based on the responses of the participating 619 representatives.

Local education agencies act as the primary 619 organizational unit in the majority of states while other organizational structures come into play in a few cases. The majority of states reported

stability in their 619 organizational structures although they acknowledged potential threats including funding issues and reorganization that may present challenges. Federal and state funds were consistently reported as primary sources of payment for ECSE services. In addition, Medicaid and local monies were reported with some regularity. Over two-fifths of the respondents viewed their funding as stable while others tempered their view with a caveat of having insufficient funds.

Obtaining specific personnel supply numbers is complicated by the multiplicity of sources that employ personnel within the 619 system, such as private not for profit agencies, state departments, private for profit agencies, and private therapists. Only one-quarter of responding states reported having a centralized personnel database for ECSE service providers. The 619 representatives highlighted specific disciplines with the greatest need for personnel being identified as speech/language pathologists, special educators, occupational therapists, and physical therapists. In some cases, respondents specifically mentioned the challenge of obtaining adequate numbers of trained individuals in rural areas.

While the 619 respondents indicated that professionals were adequately trained specific to their discipline, relatively large numbers expressed uncertainty about the adequacy of training particularly for paraprofessionals (41.7%). In addition, respondents reported concern about personnel being appropriately trained to work specifically with young children with disabilities and their families.

With respect to pre-service personnel preparation, almost all of the participating states report having higher education programs specifically designed to prepare professionals to work in the field of ECSE. However, only one-half of the states reported having a directory of ECSE higher education programs, thus limiting awareness and access to these educational opportunities. Respondents specifically cited the lack of higher education programs as a barrier to obtaining qualified personnel.

As part of training within the system, only a small number of responding states require training specific to ECSE prior to the service provider beginning employment, and approximately one-half of the states require training for ECSE providers during employment. About one-quarter of the states require CEU's relating to the ECSE field. In-service training directories are available in approximately two-thirds of the states. One-third of the states have a career ladder in place that offers recognition for advancement within the field.

Almost two-thirds of the states have or are in the process of developing a certification or credential specific to ECSE with emphasis on teachers. Approximately one-half of participating states offer alternative methods to certification, licensure and credential.

A large percentage of the states address issues of personnel preparation through mechanisms that include State Improvement Plans, Interagency Coordinating Councils, and Interagency Agreements with 619. In approximately one-quarter of the participating states, the CSPD document addresses in-service training for ECSE providers and about one-quarter of the states have a CSPD document describing pre-service opportunities for ECSE providers.

**CONCLUSION**

As a way to improve service delivery for young children with disabilities, it was essential that we examined the personnel preparation systems for ECSE across the country. Results from this study will contribute to a better understanding of 619 system organizations, personnel preparation opportunities, and effective ways to obtain qualified personnel that will lead to improved policies and practices.

## 619 Coordinator Web Survey

### GREETING

Thank you for agreeing to complete a survey for the Center for Personnel Preparation in Early Intervention/ Early Childhood Special Education. This center is a federally funded OSEP project under the direction of 3 co-directors, Mary Beth Bruder at the University of CT, Laurie Dinnebeil at the University of Toledo, and Vicki Stayton at Western KY University.

This is a 5-year program that will study Early Intervention personnel preparation. We will be doing a series of studies that look at states' personnel standards and credentialing along with higher education personnel preparation opportunities.

We appreciate you taking the time to complete this survey. Please complete as much of the survey as possible. If you feel that any of the questions should be answered by one of your colleagues, please indicate that person's name and contact information in the response space.

We have gone through our Institutional Review Board (IRB) for approval of this survey. The information that we are gathering will be available for public information. You may omit any answers that you do not feel comfortable responding to.

Please feel free to call us at anytime if you have any questions while completing this survey. We will also be following up with you by phone to briefly review your responses.

**Contact Information:**

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**Survey Outline:**

Introductory Questions

CSPD Coordinator

Web Site Reliability

Background on the 619 Program

619 Structure

Funding

Employment

State Requirements

Personnel Requirements

Personnel Standards

Changes in Personnel Requirements

Credential

Training Requirements

Training Information

Inservice Training

Preservice Training

Sharing your Knowledge & Experience

Barriers & facilitators in obtaining appropriately qualified personnel

How our center can assist you

**Documents needed for completing survey:**

- Dec. 1 OSEP Counts
- Interagency Agreement
- State Improvement Plan
- Personnel Standards
- CSPD Document Describing Inservice and Preservice Training
- Training Directory
- Directory or List of Higher Ed. Programs

We will also be requesting hard copies of these documents or website URL's where information can be downloaded.

## 619 Survey

### INTRODUCTORY QUESTIONS

#### COMPREHENSIVE SYSTEM OF PERSONNEL DEVELOPMENT (CSPD) COORDINATOR INFORMATION

1. Who is your 619 CSPD coordinator?
2. In case we have any questions that come up in the course of our project, how could we contact him/her?

#### WEB SITE RELIABILITY

3. Because we are using your web site as a resource, we'd like to know if that information is current and accurate.
  - Yes
  - No
  - Unsure

Additional Comments:

4. How often is your 619 web site updated?
5. What agency or department is responsible for updating your web site?
  - ☼ If there are any unanswered Introductory Questions, who can we contact for that information?

Name:

Contact Information:

### BACKGROUND ON 619 PROGRAM

#### 619 STRUCTURE

- 6a. How stable is the organizational structure within the 619 program?
- 6b. Are there any threats to the 619 program in your state?

7. How is the 619 system organized in your state? How are services provided?

- On a county basis
- Through Local Education Agencies
- Regional offices
- Other *Please provide brief description:*

Additional Comments:

8. How many children does your state's 619 program serve?

**FUNDING**

9. What is your total 619 budget?

10a. How do the 619 federal funds get allocated at the local level?

10b. What other money is used to fund 619 programs?

10c. What are the specific percentages?

Source	<input type="checkbox"/> Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> State	<input type="checkbox"/> Local	<input type="checkbox"/> Medicaid	<input type="checkbox"/> Private Insurance	<input type="checkbox"/> Other _____
Percent	____%	____%	____%	____%	____%	____%

11. Do you think that the funding is stable?

**PERSONNEL**

12. Who employs 619 personnel? (check all that apply)

- State Department (which one?)
- Local Education Agencies
- Regional Collaborative Units (ex. Regional Education Service Centers, BOCES)
- Private For Profit Agencies
- Private Not For Profit Agencies
- Private Preschools
- Private Not for Profit Preschools
- Private Individual Therapists
- Other *Please provide brief description:*

13. Are any of these employees unionized?

- Yes            Which ones?  
                         How does unionization affect EI services?

- No  
 Unsure

Additional Comments:

14a. How many FTE's (Full Time Equivalents) did you report in your December 1 count to OSEP?

14b. How many 619 providers is that?

14c. Can you send us your December 1 count information?

15. Do you have a statewide personnel database that you update more regularly than the annual report to OSEP?

- Yes  
 No  
 Unsure

Additional Comments:

16a. Are there adequate numbers of personnel across the various disciplines in ECSE? (*Record responses in Personnel Chart.*)

Additional Comments:

16b. Do you feel that ECSE personnel are appropriately trained? (*Record responses in Personnel Chart.*)

Additional Comments:



**PART C & B INTERAGENCY AGREEMENT****(ANSWER QUESTION 17 ONLY IF PART C HAS A NON-EDUCATIONAL LEAD AGENCY.)**

17. Does your interagency agreement with Part C address personnel preparation at all?

- Yes                    Can you tell us about that?  
   Can we get a copy?
- No
- Unsure

Additional Comments:

**OSEP (OFFICE OF SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS) STATE IMPROVEMENT PLAN**

18. Is ECSE and related service personnel preparation addressed in your state improvement plan?

- Yes                    Can you tell us about that?  
   Can we get a copy?
- No
- Unsure

Additional Comments:

**COMPREHENSIVE SYSTEM OF PERSONNEL DEVELOPMENT (CSPD)**

19. How is your CSPD addressing personnel preparation for ECSE and related service personnel?

20a. Does your state's CSPD have a written document that describes inservice training opportunities for personnel working in early childhood special education?

- Yes                    How can we get a copy of that document?
- No
- Unsure

Additional Comments:

20b. How about for preservice?

- Yes                    How can we get a copy?
- No
- Unsure

Additional Comments:

**INTERAGENCY COORDINATING COUNCIL (ICC)**

21a. Does your ICC have a Personnel Preparation committee?

- Yes
- No
- Unsure

Additional Comments:

21b. Who is the personnel preparation representative on the ICC?

21c. How can we contact that person?

22. What early childhood special education personnel preparation initiatives is the ICC currently working on?

- ☼ If there are any unanswered Background Questions who can we contact for that information?

Name:

Contact Information:

**STANDARDS, CERTIFICATION, LICENSING AND CREDENTIAL****STANDARDS**

23a. What is the best way for us to obtain a copy of your state's personnel standards?

23b. Please review the Personnel Requirement Chart that we have provided for accuracy. Please add any information that we were unable to find about your state's personnel requirements.



Service Providers/ Disciplines	Meets Highest Inimum Requirements	Initial License/Certification				Renewal		Reciprocity	What related tasks are they permitted to do & who can they work with	What related tasks are they not permitted to do & who can they not work with
		Degree	Exam	Practicum	Other	CEU's (Discipline/ EI Specific)	Other			
	X							X	(e.g. service coordination, evaluations, supervision restrictions, IFSP/IEP development, children in certain age groups, children with certain special needs)	
Other:	<input type="checkbox"/>							<input type="checkbox"/>		
Other:	<input type="checkbox"/>							<input type="checkbox"/>		
Other:	<input type="checkbox"/>							<input type="checkbox"/>		
Other:	<input type="checkbox"/>							<input type="checkbox"/>		

**CHANGES IN PERSONNEL REQUIREMENTS**

24. In regards to your personnel standards, have there been modifications to existing requirements for any of the specific disciplines? (See Personnel Chart for a list of disciplines.)

- Yes
  - In process
  - No
  - Unsure
- } *If 'Yes' answer questions A. – H.*  
 } *If 'In process' use modified questions A. – H.*

Additional Comments:

25. Have you added or created any professional categories that are not part of the federal requirements?

- Yes
  - In proces
  - No
  - Unsure
- } *If 'Yes' answer questions A. – H.*  
 } *If 'In process' use modified questions A. – H.*  
 } *If 'No' skip to question 26.*

Additional Comments:

*(Questions A. - H. should be answered for each change, addition or created professional role mentioned.)*

A. How long has this change been in effect?

*(In process: How long have you been working on this change?)*

B. What was the motivation for this change?

*(In process: What is the motivation for this change?)*

C. What was the length of time it took to implement this change?

*(In process: Skip.)*

D. Can you tell me about the process your state went through to implement this change?

*(In process: Can you tell me about the process you are going through to make this change?)*

E. Were there barriers to the process? What were they?

*(In process: Are there any barriers to the change you're making? What are they?)*

F. What helped move the process along?

*(In process: What is helping to move the process along?)*

G. What impact has this change had on the quality of EI personnel?

*(In process: Do you think this change will have any impact on the quality of EI personnel?)*

H. How has this change affected the numbers of EI personnel?

*(In process: Do you think this change will affect the numbers of EI personnel?)*

#### CREDENTIAL

26. Does your state have or are you in the process of developing a certification or credential specific to personnel who work in early childhood special education?

Yes

In process of developing credential

No

} If 'Yes' answer questions A. – K.  
If 'In process' use modified questions A. – K.  
If 'No' skip to question 27.

Additional Comments:

A. Can you tell us about the credential?

*(In process: Can you tell us about the credential that you're developing?)*

B. How does one qualify for the credential?

*(In process: How will one qualify for the credential?)*

- Competencies
- Exam
- Preservice preparation
- Coursework
- Other: *Explain*

C. Who is required to obtain this credential?

*(In process: Who will be required to obtain this credential?)*

D. Who oversees the credentialing process?

*(In process: Who will oversee the credentialing process?)*

E. How long has the credential been in effect?

*(In process: Skip.)*

F. What was the motivation for this credential?

*(In process: What is the motivation for this credential?)*

G. How long did it take your state to implement the credential?

*(In process: How long have you been working on developing this credential?)*

H. Were there barriers to the process? What are they?

*(In process: Have there been any barriers to the process? What are they?)*

I. What helped move the process along?

*(In process: What is helping to move the process along?)*

J. What impact has the credential had on the quality of ECSE and related service personnel?

*(In process: Do you think this credential will have any impact on the quality of ECSE and related service personnel?)*

K. How has this credential affected the number of ECSE and related service personnel?

*(In process: Do you think this credential will affect the numbers of ECSE and related service personnel?)*

27. Does your state have any other requirements that are special or different? Are there any additional requirements or specific qualifications beyond the licensure/certification of each professional discipline?

**TRAINING AS PART OF PERSONNEL REQUIREMENTS**

28a. Does your state require any specific training for personnel working in early childhood special education before they begin employment? For example, an orientation to the system.

Yes            What type of training?

No

Unsure

Additional Comments:

28b. Is any specific training required during employment? For example, yearly refresher inservices.

Yes            What type of training?

No

Unsure

Additional Comments:

29. Do you require personnel to get continuing education units (C.E.U's) specific to working with preschool age children?

Yes            Explain:

No

Unsure

Additional Comments:

30. Is there a career ladder in place to deal with issues related to supply and demand?

For example, is there a way for teachers to advance based on training and performance within the preschool system.

Yes            Explain:

What supports does 619 provide to advance through the system?

No

Unsure

Additional Comments:

31. Are there any alternative methods to obtain certification, licensure or credential?

☼ If there are any unanswered Standards, Certification, Licensing and Credential Questions, who can we contact for that information?

Name:

Contact Information:

## TRAINING INFORMATION

32. Do you have a training directory for inservice training opportunities?

Yes                    Can we get a copy of this?

No

Unsure

Additional Comments:

33. Do you have a directory or list of higher education programs that prepare ECSE and related service providers in your state?

Yes                    How can we obtain this list?

No

Unsure

Additional Comments:

34a. Are there any higher education programs that specifically prepare educators and related service providers to work in early childhood special education?

34b. What disciplines do the programs prepare?

35. Does your state have a higher education consortium?

Yes                    Are they addressing ECSE issues?

Who should we contact about the higher ed. consortium?

No

Unsure

Additional Comments:

36. Are there any other agencies in your state that provide training that we haven't talked about yet?

☀ If there are any unanswered Training Information Questions who can we contact for that information?

Name:

Contact Information:

#### 619 COORDINATOR INFORMATION

37. How long have you been a 619 coordinator?

38. Can you tell us about your background?

#### ENDING QUESTIONS

39. What have you found to be the biggest barriers in obtaining personnel who are appropriately qualified to deliver services to preschool children with special needs?

40. What have you found most helpful in obtaining qualified personnel?

41. How could our center best assist you and your state in addressing personnel challenges?

42. Is there any other information about your state or 619 program that you think would contribute to our knowledge of personnel requirements and personnel preparation?

**CLOSING**

Thank you for your time and your contribution to our study. The information that you'll share will be very helpful in understanding 619 personnel issues so that we can better prepare personnel and ultimately assist families and children. We will take your input into consideration when we develop future plans for our study.

If you have any questions please contact us:

**Contact information:**

Deb Bubela	bubela@uchc.edu	(860) 679-1562
Amy Novotny	novotny@uchc.edu	(860) 679-158

If you have copies of the following documents, we would like to have a copy for our research data.

- Dec. 1 Counts
- Interagency Agreement
- State Improvement Plan
- Personnel Standards
- CSPD Document Describing Inservice and Preservice Training
- Training Directory
- Directory or List of Higher Ed. Programs

Thanks again.

Western KY University	University of Toledo	University of CT
Alabama	Alaska	Arizona
Arkansas	California	Colorado
Florida	Delaware	Connecticut
Idaho	Georgia	District of Columbia
Iowa	Illinois	Hawaii
Kentucky	Maine	Indiana
Louisiana	Michigan	Kansas
Mississippi	Missouri	Maryland
Nebraska	Nevada	Massachusetts
New Jersey	New Mexico	Minnesota
North Carolina	North Dakota	Montana
Oklahoma	Ohio	New Hampshire
South Carolina	Oregon	New York
Tennessee	South Dakota	Pennsylvania
Virgin Islands	Utah	Puerto Rico
Wisconsin	Virginia	Rhode Island
	Washington	Texas
	Wyoming	Vermont
		West Virginia

State Represented	619 Coordinator	State Represented	619 Coordinator
Alabama	X	New York	X
Alaska	X	North Carolina	X
Arizona	X	North Dakota	X
Arkansas	X	Ohio	X
California	X	Oklahoma	X
Colorado	X	Oregon	X
Connecticut	X	Pennsylvania	X
Delaware	X	Puerto Rico	
District of Columbia	X	Rhode Island	X
Florida	X	South Carolina	X
Georgia	X	South Dakota	X
Hawaii	X	Tennessee	
Idaho	X	Texas	X
Illinois	X	Utah	X
Indiana	X	Vermont	X
Iowa	X	Virginia	X
Kansas	X	Virgin Islands	
Kentucky	X	Washington	X
Louisiana	X	West Virginia	X
Maine	X	Wisconsin	X
Maryland	X	Wyoming	
Massachusetts	X	Total	48
Michigan			
Minnesota	X		
Mississippi	X		
Missouri	X		
Montana	X		
Nebraska	X		
Nevada	X		
New Hampshire	X		
New Jersey	X		
New Mexico	X		