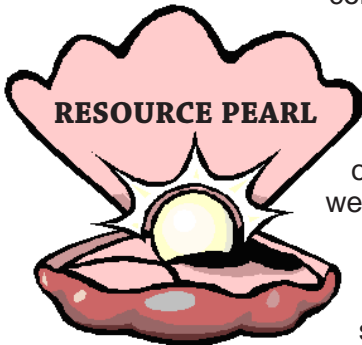


DATA AND STORIES

Data and Stories of Family Journeys in Birth to 3

-Meredith Green, Southern Region RESource Representative

About 18 months ago, the emphasis on data collection took center stage in Wisconsin's Birth to 3 Program. Accountability to our funding sources and to government agencies felt like the driving force, but ultimately it was about the way we provide services to families and children. Forty-five day timelines, though never optional, felt like a heavy mandate. Transition Planning Conferences HAD to be done in a timely way, with adequate time for families to make informed decisions at an important juncture in their child's life. Support services needed to begin promptly, within 30 days of identified need on the IFSP. Our attention seemed to shift from what were we doing to when were we doing it and with whom. Things changed the way we conceptualized our practice. It also changed the way we went about doing it.



When I visit programs these days, data is still part of the equation. An important part. It helps to tell the story of the family journey. It lets us know that this child, this family is receiving the support they need promptly and efficiently, and at their discretion. It helps keep them in the driver's seat and reminds us of our role in guidance and support. It shapes the overall picture of who we are, what we do, and why we do it. For many of us, it's not the most exciting part of our work, not the most fun, but it can be very satisfying when it tells us we really are doing the job we promised in an ethical and compassionate way. That's the story we want it to tell, to the feds, to the county board and to the families and kids we strive to serve. ☹

Telling a Story Using HSRS Data

-Suggestions from State Staff



Often times during on-site reviews, Birth to 3 State staff are presented with a sheet of paper with the following data on it—child's name, date of birth, referral date, referral source, characteristics codes and initial IFSP. State staff use this information to construct a story such as the following:

"Jacob, who was born on April 1, 2008 was referred by his doctor on April 2nd. He was evaluated and an IFSP was developed on May 15, 2008 due to concerns in the following areas: vision and developmental delay."

County staff then verify elements of this story by looking through the file and determining if the story constructed by State staff is accurate. If not, the team works together to find additional data in the file or relevant information not captured in paperwork to fully understand each child and family's experience with the program. Data recorded in HSRS provides the story's framework; staff familiar with the child and family fill in significant details not reflected by the data. ☹

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August 4-7, 2008

Altoona School District

Featuring many sessions relevant to early intervention and early childhood education professionals, including *Itinerant Services: Using a Coaching Model with Families and Colleagues* with Barbara Hanft (August 6-7)

For details: <http://moodle.cesa10.k12.wi.us/cesa/si/>

