

Ohio Phase III, Year 5 SSIP Summary

Background – About the SSIP

The State Systemic Improvement Plan (SSIP), which is a federally required indicator within each state's Annual Performance Report (APR), is a comprehensive multi-year plan for improving the results for infants and toddlers with disabilities and their families. Ohio has completed and submitted work for Phases I and II, as well as all four years of Phase III. With a one-year extension of the entire APR package, Ohio continued to report on the implementation and evaluation of its SSIP activities in the state's FFY19/SFY20 submission. Components of each of the three phases are summarized below.

- **Phase I (FFY13/FFY14)** consisted of in-depth data and infrastructure analyses; choosing a state-identified measurable result (SIMR); selecting coherent improvement strategies; and establishing a Theory of Action.
- **Phase II (FFY14/SFY15)** consisted of infrastructure development; establishing supports for programs in implementing evidence-based practices; and creating an implementation and evaluation plan.
- **Phase III (FFY15/SFY16 through FFY19/SFY20)** consisted of the implementation of activities and steps needed to achieve outcomes and analysis of data related to outcomes to evaluate progress.

Ohio's SIMR

Substantially increase the rate of growth in the percent of infants and toddlers with IFSPs who demonstrate improved acquisition and use of knowledge and skills

Ohio's Improvement Strategies

Through extensive data and infrastructure analyses in Phase I and significant stakeholder feedback in Phase II, several common themes regarding needed changes within Ohio's EI system emerged. Ohio chose three broad improvement strategy areas for its SSIP work to encompass these themes:

- (I) Increase the quality of child and family assessments to develop meaningful initial and exit COS statements
- (II) Improve the quality of IFSP outcomes to address family priorities related to child's acquisition and use of knowledge and skills
- (III) Increase access to and delivery of needed evidence-based services

Stakeholder Involvement

This reporting year, much of the engagement DODD had with stakeholders centered around completing EI requirements virtually during the pandemic. The state sought feedback from local EI stakeholders, evaluation tool publishers, and national experts in creating guidance documents to assist in determining eligibility, completing functional assessments, and delivering evidence-based EI services virtually. DODD also surveyed local programs regarding their experiences implementing these requirements at the beginning of the pandemic and again several months later. In addition to COVID-specific engagement, DODD continued to hold quarterly meetings with the EI Advisory Council and broader stakeholder group (the state's inter-agency coordinating council (ICC) and larger EI stakeholder group), although these meetings transitioned to a virtual format. The state had extensive conversations with EI stakeholders regarding future targets for performance indicators. DODD also engaged with stakeholders via various pilots, work groups, surveys, trainings, and webinars related to completing functional assessments and the COS, writing functional IFSP outcomes, and delivering evidence-based EI services.

Activities Related to Improvement Strategies

Over the past several reporting years, Ohio completed steps and activities needed to achieve many of the state's short-term and intermediate outcomes. The steps and activities Ohio continued to implement in all three of its improvement strategy areas this reporting year focused on identifying additional technical assistance needs and updating trainings and resources, as needed, to meet these needs. Specifically, DODD:

- Created a module exclusively covering the COS as part of its Principles of Service Coordination (POSC) course and continued to offer trainings on the ECO-MAP, Routines Based Interview (RBI), motivational interviewing, and the Newborn Behavioral Observations (NBO) system.
- Continued to evaluate the quality of IFSP outcomes; tailored TA and trainings plans as needed to address needs related to outcome development; and ensured local programs have easy access to IFSP outcomes via a report in the data system.
- Assisted the EI field in transitioning to virtual service provision via frequent TA contacts and surveys to obtain information and identify where additional supports were needed.
- Continued to encourage the use of evidence-based practices, and learned that the virtual platform actually helped facilitate the use of evidence-based practices in some cases including greater participation of team members in the evaluation and assessment process, increased use of a coaching interaction style with families, more opportunities for the team to observe family routines, and an increased ability for family members to participate as equals in team meetings.

Ongoing Data Related to Intermediate Outcomes

Ohio's primary evaluation activities over the past year were focused on data analyses related to intermediate outcomes, including the following:

- **Functional Assessment data** gathered via ongoing interactions with local programs, using the same items as were included in the functional assessment section of the E&A Process Review
- **IFSP outcomes** added to IFSPs between January and June 2020, which were rated using the ECTA six-step criteria
- **Ohio's annual Family Questionnaire**, which included questions to measure families' understanding of and ability to support their child's strengths, needs, and functioning related to acquisition and use of knowledge and skills

Next Steps

Ohio's SSIP action plan (See Appendix B of Ohio's Phase II submission) included activities to be completed through June 2019. Ohio successfully implemented these activities in all three improvement strategy areas. DODD is actively engaging in conversations internally and with the state's EI stakeholders to begin in-depth data and infrastructure analyses similar to those completed during Phase I of this SSIP cycle to reevaluate the short- and long-term needs and priorities of the state's EI system. Ohio's EI stakeholders have expressed interest in improving children's social and emotional development, and DODD had a formal discussion about changing the state's SIMR at the February 2021 EI Advisory Council and Stakeholder Group meeting. As DODD works with stakeholders to create a new plan, we will consider how the SSIP fits into and ensure it aligns with the plans, projects, and initiatives of Ohio's broader EI system, statewide early childhood priorities, and the governor's priorities.