

VERIFICATION OVER-ARCHING QUESTIONS – GENERAL SUPERVISION

I. What components constitute the State’s general supervision system, and how does the State use these components in a coordinated manner to ensure effective general supervision?

The mission of Part C in Kansas is to identify all children eligible for services, provide timely, appropriate and effective services for these children and their families, and ensure that families are aware of services, have access to services that are provided by qualified staff and understand their rights in an effective Part C system. Kansas accomplishes this mission through the following general supervision components:

- A definition of “developmentally delayed” used consistently statewide.
- A system that ensures appropriate evaluations are completed in the eligibility determination process.
- A timetable to ensure that eligible children are receiving their services in a timely manner.
- A system that ensures all eligible families have IFSP’s and service coordinators.
- A comprehensive child-find and referral system.
- A public awareness program.
- A central directory of services, resources, expert research, and demonstration projects.
- A comprehensive system of personnel development.
- A single line of authority.
- Contracts with local agencies to provide qualified early intervention services to infants and toddlers within predetermined service areas.
- A procedure for timely reimbursement of funds.
- Procedural safeguards.
- Policies and procedures for personnel standards.
- A data system that compiles local data for performance measures.

As the state Part C lead agency appointed by Governor Hayden in 1986, the Kansas Department of Health and Environment (KDHE), in cooperation with the State Interagency Coordinating Council, has established eligibility criteria that are used by local agencies statewide used to identify eligible children through timely, comprehensive, multidisciplinary evaluations. IFSP’s are developed with the assistance of service coordination to provide early intervention services in a timely manner. Children and families in Kansas are put in contact with local Part C programs from a variety of referral sources, as well as through child-find and public awareness activities at both the state and local levels. A central directory of services, resources, expert research, and demonstration projects has been developed to assist families in finding agencies. Contracts with various training entities ensure that local networks employ qualified staff to provide these services.

KDHE uses 618 data, along with numerous other state and local data sources, and procedural safeguards information to develop a comprehensive picture of the effectiveness of services in each of the state’s 36 local networks. Depending on the performance of each individual network, funding through grant awards is made available annually. Performance is determined by the local networks’ ability to comply with the aforementioned components.

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II. Has the State made recent changes in its general supervision system?

Yes. KDHE implemented a general supervision system that closely resembles OSEP's Continuous Improvement and Focused Monitoring System.

A. What changes did the state make?

The current system utilized by KDHE collects data from more sources than the previous system did. The new system also collects information in a random selection process for numerous data points, whereas the previous data points were primarily pre-selected by local agencies. Finally, the new system operates on a continuous monitoring process, as compared to the cyclical process in the previous system.

Current System

- Semi-Annual Reports
- Semi-Annual Report Data Sheets
- Grants and Budgets
- Network Continuous Improvement Plans (NCIP)
- NCIP Responses
- Entrance/Exit Parent Survey
- Random Parent Survey
- Provider Survey
- LICC Meetings/Presentations
- Parent Interviews
- Random IFSP Reviews
- Children Served by County
- Cost Analysis
- Comparative Analysis
- Site Visits
- File Reviews
- 618 Data Tables

Previous System

- Semi-Annual Reports
- Grants and Budgets
- LICC Meetings/Presentations
- Parent Interviews
- Provider Interviews
- Site Visits
- File Reviews
- IFSP Reviews
- 618 Data Tables

B. Why did the State make those changes?

KDHE believed that the local Part C programs had outgrown the previous monitoring process. Previously, networks were able to hand pick documents and data that indicated their level of performance (e.g. pre-selected file reviews, parent interviews, and provider interviews by local networks). Little data was available for cross-referencing purposes. KDHE relied heavily on the integrity of the data presented by local networks to make monitoring decisions. Neither trend data nor comparative data were available for local agencies and stakeholders to evaluate their programs.

The current system employed by KDHE fills the holes left by the previous system. KDHE recognized the strengths in the old system and expanded their influence. Now, semi-annual reports are tied to a data sheet that provides trend and comparative data for a five-year (10 report) period.

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Two parent surveys are now used to gauge parent perspectives on the performance of local agencies. One is an entrance/exit parent survey that every parent receives when their child's initial IFSP is developed, and received again when the child transitions from Part C. The questions are functional in nature and not based on satisfaction. Results are compiled, analyzed, and compared to network-reported data on a local level and in comparison to the state. The random parent survey is a more detailed version of the entrance/exit survey that serves as a cross-reference and asks more specific questions about service provision.

The provider survey seeks responses to parent survey questions from a provider perspective. All three surveys serve as checks and balances to determine the consistency in local network reporting.

KDHE also compiles network-by-network data on Children Served by County, Cost Analyses by program, and Comparative Analyses of children served by program. Information gathered from these documents assist local networks in service delivery methods and identification.

C. What impact have those changes had on the effectiveness of the State's general supervision system?

The capstone portion of the NCIP process is the improvement plan. KDHE has taken OSEP's Annual Performance Report template and tailored the indicators to be useful at a local level. The local NCIP is developed by the LICC, in conjunction with the local lead agency. Each network receives a notebook with data collected by the state that reflects local performance over the past year, with trend data and statewide comparative data included. LICC's are expected to utilize the data in their notebooks to describe the current situation within the network, identify strengths and concerns, explain their progress, set goals, and project future activities to achieve their goals.

Two years into the process, KDHE has realized that local networks are increasingly using their local data to direct improvement strategies. Networks are comparing their current performance to historical trend data, as well as to other networks and the state as a whole.

The random selection process for parent interviews, file reviews, and parent surveys has also provided KDHE with more representative data from each local network.

D. What has the State done to ensure that the system does not become ineffective during the phase-in of the changes?

KDHE retained most components from the previous system until the new NCIP process was implemented. Most data sources from the previous system are still being used, however, they now are being analyzed and reported in more effective ways. Changes in the parent interview process, file review process, and site visit process were implemented on a cyclical schedule to ensure a smooth transition.

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E. How does the new system address uncorrected noncompliance identified under the previous system?

Now that KDHE has more meaningful data reporting methods established, improvement strategies are targeted to address shortcomings at the local level for specific indicators. Much of KDHE's monitoring information was anecdotal under the previous system. The current monitoring system provides data points that attach a numeric value to the previous anecdotal findings and compares them to OSEP requirements, other networks, and state averages. This data-driven method targets specific indicators in need of improvement, provides technical assistance, and if necessary, will follow the Protocol for Assurance of Accountability. Therefore, KDHE continues to address uncorrected noncompliance in the same manner as under the previous system. The change is in the methods KDHE now utilizes to uncover noncompliance.

III. How does the State ensure that noncompliance is identified?

A. What are the various ways in which the State determines compliance at the local level (e.g., self-assessment, desk audits, on-site monitoring on a cyclical basis, focused monitoring, etc.)?

KDHE utilizes the following components of the state monitoring system to determine compliance at the local level:

- *Semi-Annual Reports*: Monitor child-find activities, evaluation/eligibility data, services provided, cumulative counts, parental complaints, LICC activities, self-assessments, and trainings on a six-month cycle.
- *Semi-Annual Report Data Sheets*: Track five-year (10 report) trends of performance based on semi-annual report data. Also provide comparative data to state means.
- *Grants and Budgets*: Describes staffing, administrative costs, supplies, equipment, travel, and other expenditures of Part C funds. Also includes assurances, key communicators within the network, and LICC members.
- *Network Continuous Improvement Plans (NCIP)*: Annual report from local networks that mimic the OSEP Annual Performance Report on a local level. Identifies strengths, concerns, goals, and improvement activities. Submitted with annual grant, and grant award dependent upon KDHE approval of the local NCIP.
- *NCIP Responses*: KDHE's comments and directives to local networks regarding their identified concerns, goals, and improvement activities in the NCIP.
- *Entrance/Exit Parent Survey*: Brief (9 questions) survey distributed by local networks to parents of children entering and exiting Part C programs. Completed surveys are returned directly to KDHE for compiling, analyzing, and reporting back to local networks. Results can be tracked to individual families and networks.
- *Random Parent Survey*: Survey distributed through a random selection process by KDHE to parents statewide. Results can be tracked to individual families and networks. This document provides more detailed response options and serves as a cross-reference for the entrance/exit parent survey results.
- *Provider Survey*: Seeks provider responses to questions asked of parents on the random survey. Determines if there are discrepancies in perceptions of services among parents and providers.

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- *LICC Meetings/Presentations:* KDHE staff presents monitoring documents and local network data to community members and stresses the importance of community involvement in the NCIP process.
- *Parent Interviews:* Utilized in cases of parent complaints, which can be communicated through written correspondence, phone calls, emails, or parent survey responses.
- *Random IFSP Reviews:* KDHE randomly selects four IFSP's from local networks for a review during the spring semi-annual reporting period.
- *Children Served by County:* For networks serving multiple counties, this document identifies areas of strength and concern in child-find and services.
- *Cost Analysis:* Compares the cost of providing services in large versus small networks in geographic area, and also in large versus small networks in population served.
- *Comparative Analysis:* Compares child-find and demographic data across networks statewide.
- *Site Visits:* Provide KDHE with an understanding of unique operational structures within each network.
- *File Reviews:* Typically used in cases of parent complaints regarding services.
- *618 Data Tables:* Determines services, settings, exiting reasons, ethnicity and personnel by network, and is validated through other monitoring data sources.

B. Does the State use different methods to determine compliance with different IDEA requirements? If so, how do the methods differ across requirements?

KDHE has developed a procedure manual that address federal regulations. In addition, state regulations have been developed to mirror federal regulations. KDHE has taken into account the indicators of compliance with IDEA provided in OSEP's Annual Performance Report. KDHE's monitoring system, including the documents listed under section A of this question, has been tailored to address OSEP's indicators of performance.

C. If the State uses focused methods (focusing on selected requirements and/or agencies), how does it select those requirements and/or agencies, and how does it ensure compliance in non-focused agencies with non-focused requirements?

KDHE uses focused monitoring to address requirements that have been identified as concerns on a widespread basis or lacking the data needed to make a compliance determination. Specifically, KDHE has included a focused monitoring process in four indicators statewide:

- 1) Procedural safeguards (parents' rights) are explained to parents in family-friendly language.
- 2) Service providers are adequately trained in the essential functions respective to each discipline.
- 3) Year-round services are continuously provided throughout the summer months.
- 4) Children participating in Part C programs demonstrate improved and sustained functional abilities. (Cognitive development, physical development, including vision and hearing; communication development; social or emotional development; and adaptive development).

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D. What has the State done to determine the effectiveness of the methods it uses to identify noncompliance, what has the State determined, and what has the State done to address any identified weaknesses in its methods?

KDHE uses the monitoring documents listed under section A of this question to identify and cross-reference performance concerns in local networks. The NCIP process is proven to be effective because improvement can be demonstrated in most identified areas of concern from year 1 to year 2. The entrance/exit parent survey has been extremely effective in identifying potential concerns in local networks that result in further exploration by KDHE. Data from the monitoring sources continue to demonstrate improvement in self-assessments, goal setting, planning, and improvement activities.

KDHE has determined that the data collected from local networks is sufficient to fully understand local program performance. However, a portion of the data is collected from network submissions, and its integrity is dependent upon the local data entry personnel. Some data sources, such as parent surveys, provider surveys, interviews, IFSP reviews, and file reviews are obtained independently by KDHE personnel. These documents serve as verification tools for the locally submitted documents.

KDHE has determined that on-site verification visits and reviews of randomly selected documents pertaining to local program performance should serve as the final piece to this monitoring process. Currently, the Kansas State Department of Education (Part B) conducts fiscal audits for Part C. KDHE has no intention of taking on this responsibility as long as KSDE continues to disburse state categorical aid to local networks. KDHE's verification visits will continue to focus on services and fiscal documentation.

IV. How does the State ensure the timely correction of noncompliance?

A. How does the State ensure that correction strategies proposed by agencies are reasonably calculated to correct the identified noncompliance in a timely manner?

Local networks identify areas of concern in their NCIP plans, which are tied to annual grant funding. If a local network has identified an area in need of improvement, KDHE expects the identified indicator to include current goals to achieving the objective, an explanation of why the objective is not being met, goals for the next year that will move toward achieving the objective, and the activities that will be employed to meet those goals. KDHE also selects areas of improvement for local networks based on data collected throughout the year, if they have not been identified locally.

B. How does the State determine whether an agency has effectively corrected noncompliance in a timely manner?

KDHE reviews local NCIP's and the improvement strategies outlined by LICC's during the grant review process. As data is submitted throughout the year, KDHE examines the data with a particular focus on identified areas of improvement within local networks. Progress toward or away from goals can be determined in an ongoing manner through surveys, semi-annual reports, and other cyclical submissions. The next year's NCIP should evaluate the effectiveness of the improvement

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strategies and offer further strategies to maintain the goal's achievement, or continue progressing toward the goal.

C. What steps (e.g. enforcement procedures, technical assistance, follow-up, etc.) does the State take if an agency does not correct identified noncompliance in a timely manner?

The protocol for Assurance of Accountability is individualized to circumstances and the nature of the concern, and may or may not be a result of concerns identified due to the site review process.

The first step involves an informal discussion between state staff and network contacts to discuss the issue (or complaint) with possible recommendations by KDHE staff and network contacts of a plan to correct the situation.

Secondly, if no action appears to have been taken, or if state staff remains unconvinced that the problem has been resolved, another discussion will take place followed by documentation. A letter is sent to the network contacts and LICC chair (and possibly others in the community) to reiterate the discussions and confirm mutually agreed upon deadlines.

If no resolution is made, notification is given to the network contacts of the failure of the community to comply with their signed assurances, that technical assistance is required, and that a team of advisors will address the situation. The responsibility of the advisors is to provide technical assistance to the community and to advise state staff in the accountability process. Notification of the appointment of the advisory team is made to the network contacts and LICC chair, as well as the executive committee of the LICC.

KDHE provides the funds to support the technical assistance.

Possible consequences implemented by state staff under advisement by the advisory team may include:

- News releases to the entire community regarding non-compliance
- Opportunity for a public meeting
- Assignment of "interim" providers or network coordinators
- Recoupment of materials
- Withholding of grant funds
- Provisional contract
- Dissolution of contract

D. What has the State done to determine the effectiveness of the methods it uses to ensure correction of noncompliance, what has the state determined, and what has the State done to address any identified weaknesses in its methods?

To date, KDHE has used this process one time. In that case, the local network encountered severe financial difficulties that resulted in its inability to provide services according to their signed assurances. Therefore, this process was modified to include a public meeting, dissolution of the contract, and assignment of a new local lead and fiscal agent.

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V. What are the challenges to the State’s effective implementation of its general supervision systems, what is the impact of those challenges, and how is the state addressing them?

KDHE’s general supervision system is heavily reliant on data collection and reporting. KDHE compiles, analyzes, and reports on all of the data that is submitted by local networks. Local data entry personnel are responsible for imputing raw data only. Since Part C in Kansas is structured in a way that promotes local control, data entry personnel are not KDHE employees. Therefore, consistency in reporting is a challenge.

KDHE contracts with Jim North of JNI Software, Inc. to maintain the state’s web-based database. The system has been extremely effective in collecting and sorting data for reporting purposes. KDHE offers trainings by Mr. North on a periodic basis, and also has an assistance hotline established for local data personnel. In addition, KDHE’s contract with the Kansas Inservice Training System (KITS) addresses interpretations of data that are imputed into the infant-toddler database.

KDHE also provides definitions and instruction sheets that accompany semi-annual reports, federal data tables, and local grant applications. These instruction sheets define the parameters KDHE expects with regards to data entry.

VI. How does the State use its general supervision system to assess and improve outcomes for infants, toddlers, children and youth with disabilities and their families?

The NCIP includes the focused monitoring question as defined by OSEP, “*Children participating in Part C programs demonstrate improved and sustained functional abilities. (Cognitive development, physical development, including vision and hearing; communication development; social or emotional development; and adaptive development).*” In addition, KDHE is working with the Early Childhood Outcomes project in their efforts to identify and measure early childhood outcomes.

VII. What has the State done to determine the effectiveness of its general supervision system in assessing and improving performance, what has the State determined, and how has the State addressed identified weaknesses?

KDHE reviews performance data that is submitted on a cyclical basis, and compares it to local NCIP plans. KDHE tracks trend data from a variety of sources, as listed in section A of question III, above. Improvements are monitored, while negative trends are addressed through KDHE correspondence and technical assistance. KDHE believes that improvements in performance data are an indicator of effective general supervision.

KDHE has determined that the general supervision system currently being utilized effectively identifies concerns before they become compliance issues. Trend data and comparative data allow local networks to compare their performance to that of their peers, as well as to the state as a whole. Performance at the local level has improved as networks have learned how to use state data reports, as well as local data, to guide improvement strategies.

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Consistency in data entry among local data entry personnel has been addressed through ongoing trainings and technical assistance. KDHE's contract with JNI Software, Inc. offers networks the availability of a database specialist anytime a question arises. KDHE staff frequently address data definitions and reporting expectations at regional meetings and coordinator meetings. Local staff turnover remains a concern, as new data entry personnel must be trained in using the infant-toddler database immediately.