Conducting Evaluations of Statewide EHDI Programs

All states and territories with MCHB grants or CDC Cooperative Agreements are required to do systematic annual evaluations of their projects to implement, expand, and/or improve their EHDI program.

The following components of a successful EHDI program described by MCHB, CDC, and JCIH provide one possible set of standards around which evaluations could be organized:

- All newborns will be screened for hearing loss before 1 month of age.
- All infants referred from screening will have diagnostic evaluations before 3 months of age.
- All infants identified with hearing loss will receive appropriate medical, audiologic, and educational intervention services before 6 months of age.
- All infants with hearing loss will have a medical home.
- Every state will have a complete EHDI Tracking and Surveillance System to minimize loss to followup.
- All families will receive culturally-competent family support.
- Every state will do regular systematic monitoring and evaluation to improve the effectiveness of the EHDI program.

CDC has an excellent publication entitled "Framework for Program Evaluation in Public Health" which could be used to design, conduct, and report results of such evaluations (available at www.cdc.gov/eval/framework.htm). Among much other valuable information, it gives detailed suggestions about 6 iterative steps and 4 standards that govern effective program evaluation as depicted below.
An instructional video and workbook to assist in implementing a successful program evaluation is available at no cost at the above website.

Examples of evaluations already conducted by states, including downloadable copies of instruments are available.

Other Resources:

- Internet Resources for Nonprofits: Outcome Measurement and Program Evaluation »
- Program Evaluation Took Kit: A Blueprint for Public Health Management »
- User-Friendly Handbook for Mixed Method Evaluations: National Science Foundation Directorate for Education and Human Resources »
- Analytic Methods in Maternal and Child Health »

Issues to Consider:

- Should the statewide EHDI evaluation be contracted to an independent external evaluator or an internal evaluation done by someone within the department of health?
- Should the evaluation focus on outcomes or processes?
- How much should a good evaluation of a statewide EHDI program cost?
- We're not evaluation experts. Is there any place we can get help at a reasonable price?
- Doesn't a comprehensive evaluation spend money that could be better used serving babies and families?