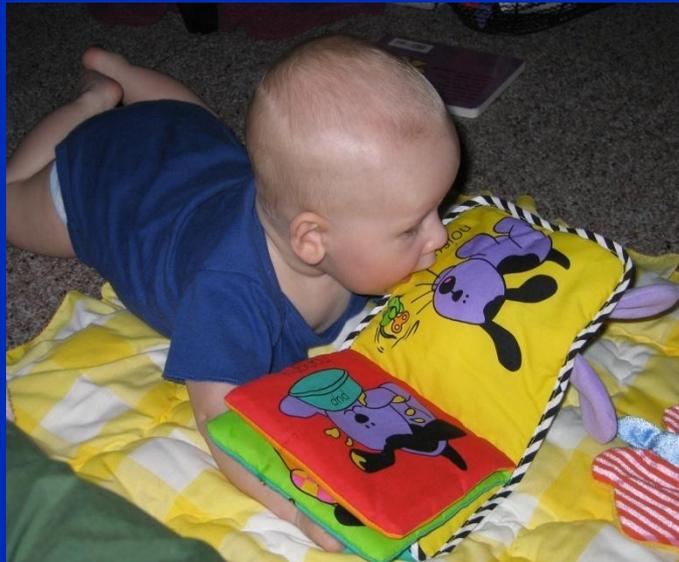


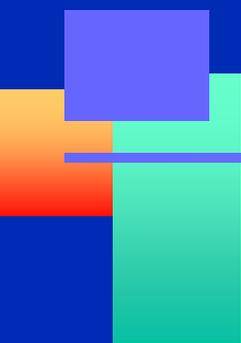
# Extra! Extra! Read All About It!: Communicating About Child Outcomes Data



Donna Spiker  
ECO at SRI International  
and  
Liz Snyder  
PreK Now

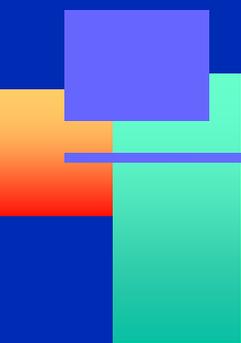
Prepared for:  
**Workshop at the OSEP Measuring  
Child & Family Outcomes Conference  
Bethesda, MD  
June 2009**

# Being prepared.....

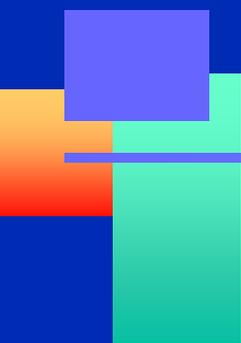


- When the child outcomes data become available, how will we talk about the data with:
  - The media
  - State legislators
  - Families
  - Early intervention and 619 providers
  - Other key stakeholders in your state

# In this workshop, we will....



- Discuss key strategies and approaches for organizing your information for presentation to media and the public.
- Brainstorm possible questions you may be asked and possible responses. (Activity #1).
- Practice preparing a news release. (Activity #2).

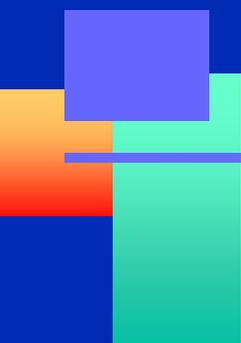


# Being prepared means.....

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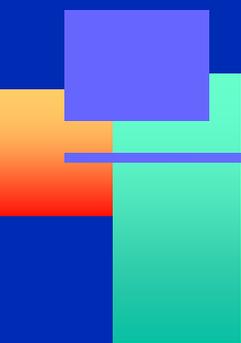
- Think ahead about how to talk with the public about the data.
- Write out the specific messages you want to make (an internal 'talking points' memo).
- Develop a 1-2 page fact sheet that summarizes the findings and your messages.
- Use public dissemination opportunities to get out key messages that will educate the public about your programs, their benefits.

# Being prepared means.....



- Identifying key spokespersons.
- Being thoroughly familiar with your state's data.
- Practicing your talking points with individuals who are not familiar with the program.

# Crafting the messages.....



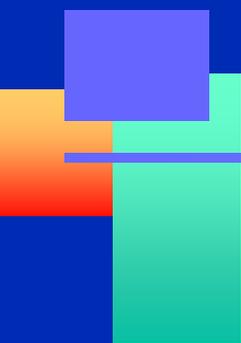
- Provide the context (Federal reporting).
- Use the ECO Center Q&A document\*\* to explain:
  - What are the child outcomes
  - Why we are measuring and reporting outcomes
  - The overarching goal of children being active and successful participants

\*\* Q&A is on Web site under ECO Resources - <http://www.fpg.unc.edu/~eco/pages/faqs.cfm>)

## Crafting the messages (cont)....

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- Point out that this is the second year we have outcomes data:
  - “These are early data, phasing in data collection.....”
  - “We only have data on a some of the children.....”
  - “These are data collected since February of 2007.....”
  - Other statements?



## Make sure to point out....

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- “We expect the quality of the data themselves to get better from year to year.....”
- “With more and better data, we will have better information to understand how to improve our programs across our state....”
- “We think that the real importance in these data is how they can help us to improve our programs across the state....”

# Remind your audience that this is just the beginning.....

- “We will have more data next year.....”
- “We are looking forward to having more and better data as time goes by.”
- “And we are looking forward to seeing how these data can help to increase public support for these programs and to improve them.”



# Crafting the messages (cont).....

- Share the numbers; describe them in simple ways:
  - “Almost all children in these programs made progress and improvements in their development.”
  - (90% - add up categories B + C + D + E)

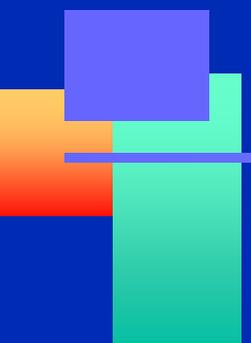


# Describe the numbers in simple ways ....

“Nine in 10 children showed improvements in their development from entry to exit from the programs.

- “Nearly three-fourths (74%) of children made more progress than expected or maintained functioning like same age peers.”





# Describe the numbers in simple ways (cont)....

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- “Six in 10 children are catching up to their same age peers, or are closer to same age peers when they left the program than when they entered.” (e.g., 60%, add categories C + D).
- “Another nearly two in 10 children continued to have age-level skills between entry and exit.” (e.g., 19%, category E).

# Give interpretations about the numbers.....

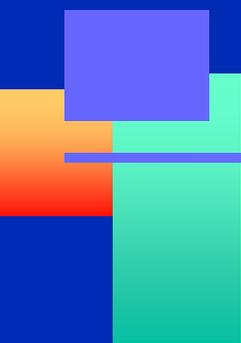


- “We see these data as good news....”
- “We are pleased that the data shows that children in these programs are making progress between the time they enter and leave these programs...”
- “Many children are catching up with peers in the same age group...”

# Link messages to broader EC issues...

- Point out how the program is helping get children ready for school.
- Note that there is lots of policy attention and research about the cost effectiveness of early programs.

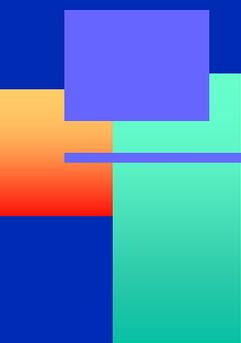




# If the data show possible problems....

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- Get out in front of the data, and note the problem areas:
  - “We see large differences in the data in different regions.....”
- Then, offer interpretations and note that you are trying to understand such differences:
  - “We are trying to understand these variations. They may have to do with differences in the children being served or in ways the data are being collected.....”

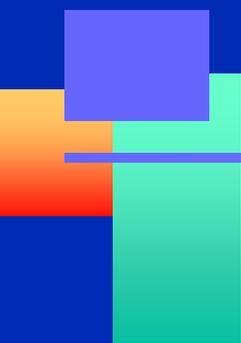


# Be prepared with specific examples.....

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- “For example, if we see differences in outcomes in rural versus urban areas of our state, we want to look at that in more detail”.
  - “Why is this happening?”
  - “Are the services different in these different areas?”
  - “Are the children served different in these different areas?”
  - “What else could explain these differences?”

# Share other key messages to educate your audiences....



- “These programs serve many different children....”
- “Some children have mild delays or problems in one area only. These are children who can ‘catch up’”.
- “Other children have more significant disabilities; some make substantial progress and others make slower progress”.

# Remember to include messages about family outcomes.....

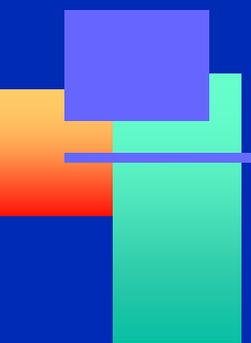
- Make sure to point out that:
  - “This is a program for families too...”
  - “These programs help families to:
    - Help their child develop and learn....
    - Communicate about their child’s needs....



# What are key messages to educate your audiences?

- About the programs
- About the children served
- About the families
- What else?

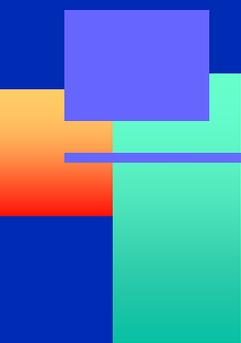




# Messaging

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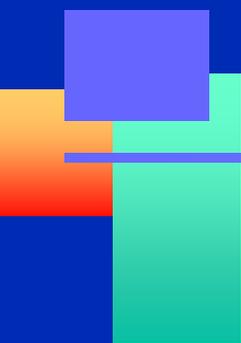
- What are some messages that have worked for you in the past?
- What are some messages that didn't work so well, or were misinterpreted by the media or public?



# Messaging for the media

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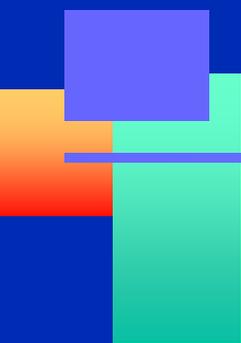
- Framing the message to fit into the news cycle
  - Read today's headlines
  - Pay attention to both local and national news
  - Try to find a “news hook” that makes your data relevant to the media



# Messaging

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- How do you make the message easily understandable for the public?
  - “Plain Speak”
  - Don’t be repetitive
  - Explain how your data relates to the average person in your state



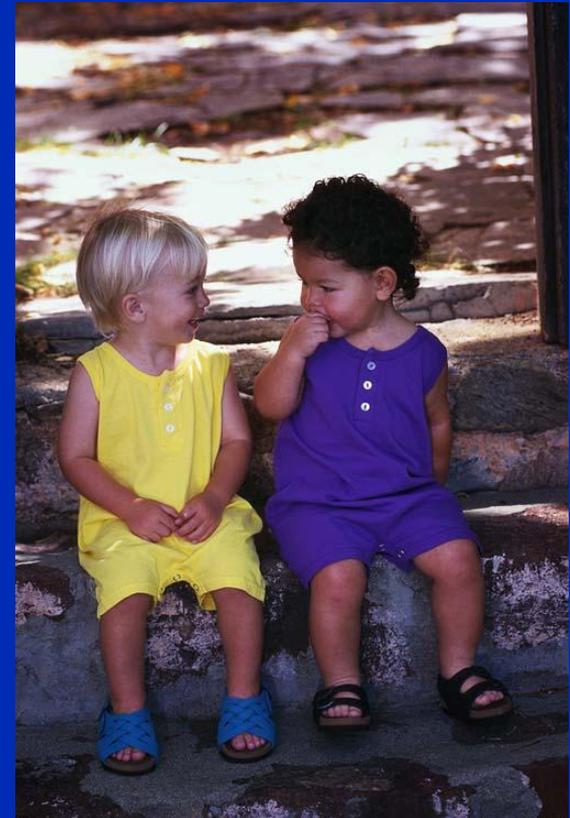
# Messaging

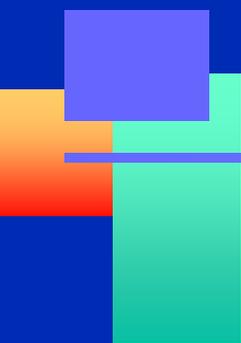
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- Spokespersons
  - Identify spokespersons in your community who you trust to “stay on message”
- Examples of spokespersons:
  - Teacher
  - Data collector/researcher
  - Parent
  - Administrator

What are the possible questions that you might be asked?

## ACTIVITY #1

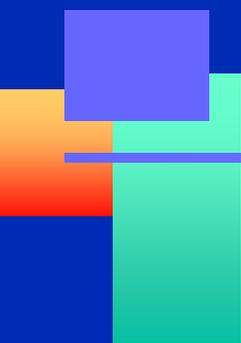




# Preparing a news release.....

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- Find the main message you want to communicate
- Translate the main message into a simple statement about the data
- Use the quotes to explain the meaning of the data; give an interpretation
  - Include quote by state official.
  - Include quote by program or provider.
  - Include quote(s) from parent(s).



# Preparing a news release.....

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- Create headline, subhead & lead
- Add information about why data are being collected.
- Add comments about the programs to give context.
- End with comments about using data to:
  - Inform public about benefits of programs
  - Improve programs
  - Support funding
- Include information about how data was collected

# ACTIVITY #2

- Try to prepare a news release with hypothetical data.



# Hypothetical State Data: OSEP Categories

Progress Categories	Outcome		
	#1	#2	#3
	Percent		
a. Flat Trajectory – No Progress	2	4	3
b. Same Trajectory – Made Progress	18	16	14
c. Changed Trajectory – Closer to Age Appropriate	20	29	19
d. Changed Trajectory – Now Age Appropriate	22	26	28
e. Maintained Age Appropriate Trajectory	38	25	36

# End by returning to the big picture.....

“The goal of these programs is for children to be active and successful participants now and in the future”.



# QUESTIONS?

Resources about  
communicating and  
messaging by Zero to  
Three's The Baby  
Monitor (4/6/09):

[http://www.zerotothree.org/  
site/PageServer?pagena  
me=BM\\_04\\_06\\_09](http://www.zerotothree.org/site/PageServer?pagename=BM_04_06_09)



Find more resources at:  
[www. the-eco-center-org](http://www.the-eco-center-org)

