



The DaSy Center Supports North Carolina's Journey to Link IDEA Part C and Part B 619 Data

March 29, 2024

The DaSy Center¹ supports all 56 U.S. states and territories and provides individualized and cross-state technical assistance (TA) on data linking and integration. Early intervention (Part C) and early childhood special education (Part B 619) state programs are interested in linking their data to address critical questions about program quality in order to improve outcomes for young children with disabilities and their families. To learn more, visit [What's the Difference Between Data Sharing, Data Linking and Data Integration?](#)

Here is the story of one years-long journey to link state IDEA Part C and Part B 619 data.

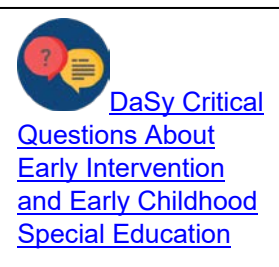
DaSy's efforts were important for more than just facilitating and capacity-building; they also brought in significant content expertise. "[DaSy] consultants really got into the weeds with us about data analysis and critical questions." Barbara D. Simpson, Part C Data Manager.

The Path to Data Linking

Led by DaSy, the Office of Early Learning in the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (Part B 619) and the Early Intervention Branch in the Department of Health and Human Services (Part C) participated in a year-long data linking cohort followed by intensive individualized TA over several years. The two agencies had worked together in the past, but their data and systems were not yet linked. Following their participation in DaSy's multi-state cohort, North Carolina sought intensive, individualized TA to achieve the goal of linking the data from the two state systems.

The primary purpose in linking the IDEA Part C and Part B 619 datasets is to enable analyses that provide a deeper understanding of how children transition from one program to the other. DaSy's TA began with helping the agencies develop three critical questions to gain the insights they needed. These questions could only be answered with linked data:

- How many children who exit Part C in a given time period and are eligible for Part B 619 transition are enrolled?
- How many do not transition?
- How many who enter Part B 619 in a given time period were ever enrolled in Part C?



Establishing Agreements and Addressing Security Concerns

A key step in the data linking process is to establish a data sharing agreement that formally documents the data being shared and how the data can be used. In North Carolina,

- the agencies already had a data sharing agreement that addressed all state and federal requirements around transition.
- DaSy supported the agencies to modify some sections of the existing agreements and formalize the partnership with a charter that set rules for linking data and for what data would be shared.

¹ The [DaSy Center](#) builds relationships and provides high-quality technical assistance to build the capacity of states to collect, report, analyze, and use data in early intervention and early childhood special education program improvement and federal reporting.

- DaSy’s support helped the agencies develop a project charter, collaborate effectively with legal counsel, and allay any concerns around sharing sensitive information about children and families for current and future data requests.

Matching Students Across Programs

As part of the collaboration, Part C gained access to North Carolina’s [Unique Statewide Identifier \(UID\)](#) system programs to match to Part C UID with the existing IDEA Part B 619 UID. The UID framework grants every student in the state’s education system a unique identifier that matches them to their records, even if they temporarily move to another state. This consistent and reliable matching made it possible for the two agencies to combine data from both datasets and begin analysis to answer their critical questions.

Strengthening Relationships

Through ongoing collaboration with DaSy, Barbara Simpson, Part C data manager, said that North Carolina experienced “greatly strengthened relationships between Part C and Part B staff. This led to better coordination overall.” She also noted that “there wasn’t a lot of pushback from leadership in relationship-building between Part C and Part B, and meeting on a monthly basis, we got to know each other a lot better.” This improved the relationship between the teams and ensured that everyone involved was motivated to work together to answer critical questions.

Benefits of Linking North Carolina’s Part C and Part B 619 Data

- Ability to reconcile notification data for children exiting Part C and entering Part B 619 (APR C8 and B12)
- Longitudinal data tracking and program improvement that result in better services for children and families
- Enhanced data analysis plans reflecting ability to answer more nuanced critical questions (e.g., about characteristics of children who do not transition between programs)
- Strengthened relationships and improved coordination between agencies through regular communication and monthly meetings
- New relationships and agreements with research partners to support data analysis and answer critical questions

Benefits of Using DaSy TA

- Content expertise on IDEA data, requirements for data system design and development, and requirements for smooth transitions from IDEA Part C to Part B 619
- Documentation of the years-long data linking process and the teams’ structure
- Deeper cross-agency relationships

“The support of DaSy staff has been central to the success of North Carolina’s data linking efforts. That wouldn’t have happened without DaSy consultants. This would have fizzled and died without DaSy’s support.” —Barbara D. Simpson, Part C data manager

“This wouldn’t have happened without DaSy consultants.”

Barbara emphasized that despite the challenges inherent to data linking with reduced capacity, working with DaSy opened up many new avenues for productive collaborations between the Part C and Part B 619 teams and with researchers and policymakers. She encourages other states to start small but to always keep progressing, and to bring in help as soon as possible. “I encourage people to ask for TA all the time, because our experience with DaSy TA has been so good,” she said.

Suggested Citation

The DaSy Center. (2024). *The DaSy Center Supports North Carolina’s Journey to Link IDEA Part C and Part B 619 Data*. SRI International.

About Us

The contents of this brief were developed under a grant from the U.S. Department of Education, #H373Z190002. However, those contents do not necessarily represent the policy of the U.S. Department of Education, and you should not assume endorsement by the Federal Government. Project Officers, Meredith Miceli and Amy Bae.

The DaSy Center is a national technical assistance center funded by the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs. The DaSy Center works with states to support IDEA early intervention and early childhood special education state programs in the development or enhancement of coordinated early childhood longitudinal data systems.

To learn more about the DaSy Center, visit the DaSy Center website at <https://www.dasycenter.org/>.

