



Center on Enhancing Early Learning Outcomes: Year 3 Evaluation Report

October 1, 2014 - September 30, 2015

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Center on Enhancing Early Learning Outcomes (CEELO) is one of 22 comprehensive centers funded by the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Elementary and Secondary Programs. CEELO was designed to increase the capacity of State Education Agencies (SEAs) to implement comprehensive and aligned early learning systems to increase the number of children from birth through third grade that are prepared to succeed in school.

Between October 1, 2014 and September 30, 2015 CEELO provided three types of technical assistance (TA): (1) Responsive TA; (2) Strategic TA; and (3) Information Resources and Technology-Supported TA.

CEELO engaged in a participatory evaluation in which data were collected over the course of Year 3. The evaluation was designed to: a) assess the degree to which CEELO accomplished planned activities; b) evaluate the nature and quality of CEELO activities; and c) assess the degree to which targeted stakeholders used the TA and other Center activities in their work and reported outcomes; and (d) examine the factors that supported or impeded SEAs' efforts to build capacity to implement policy for young children.

Summary of Findings

CEELO exceeded most targets regarding number, type, quality, relevance and usefulness of activities completed during the year. In Year 3, CEELO TA staff:

- Regularly communicated with federal and private TA providers in the RTT-ELC TA Consortium, regional Centers, NAECS-SDE and others as needed
- Provided TA to 8 RTT-ELC states in collaboration with the RTT-TA center
- Presented at 18 national and regional meetings
- Addressed 100% of the 50 information requests received
- Completed 84 TA requests and began addressing an additional 8 TA requests
- Successfully held a National Roundtable Meeting on Improving Teaching Quality Birth through Third Grade
- Facilitated 13 webinars
- Provided Peer Exchange opportunities to early learning specialists
- Engaged in a peer exchange-learning table on Teaching and Learning
- Successfully planned, implemented, and facilitated Peer Learning Communities
- Provided TA that, as reported by recipients, led to changes in knowledge, policy, and practice

The accompanying report provides detailed findings from the Year 3 evaluation.



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INTRODUCTION

The Center on Enhancing Early Learning Outcomes (CEELO) is one of 22 comprehensive centers funded by the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Elementary and Secondary Programs. CEELO's technical assistance (TA) is designed to build the capacity of State Education Agencies (SEAs) to implement comprehensive and aligned early learning systems in order to increase the number of children from birth through third grade that are prepared to succeed in school. CEELO's five objectives are to:

1. Improve states' knowledge about and use of early childhood comprehensive assessment systems
2. Enhance states' use of assessment data and other information to improve program quality
3. Help states increase the knowledge and skills of the early learning workforce
4. Strengthen the alignment of birth through 3rd grade educational policies and systems
5. Increase the coordination of resources and policies across statewide systems

CEELO's Year 3 management plan identifies four major tasks to build SEA internal and organizational capacity to lead sustained improvements in opportunities and outcomes for children birth through third grade. The four tasks represent an intentional approach to delivering highly relevant and useful content in ways that maximize the use of technology and leverage the knowledge and expertise of our federal technical assistance (TA) partners and other national experts. The tasks are: (1) Responsive TA; (2) Strategic TA; (3) Information Resources; and (4) Technology Supported TA. CEELO developed a logic model that illustrates the links between CEELO activities, desired outputs, short-term outcomes, mid-term outcomes and the long-term goal to build SEA capacity. (See **Table 1** on the following page)



Table 1. CEELO Logic Model

Inputs	Activities	Outputs	Short-Term Outcomes	Mid-term Outcomes	Long Term Goal
Grant funding Expertise Organizational Expertise Other comprehensive and regional centers State networks and contacts	Offer Responsive TA Offer Strategic TA Develop products and materials	Number and quality of responsive, strategic and technology-enhanced TA opportunities Number of products Percentage of recipients who report products and TA are high quality	Improve stakeholder knowledge of research, best practice, and effective policies in five priority areas	Improve policies in each of the five priority areas	Build/strengthen SEA capacity to support birth through third grade services that lead to improvements in early learning outcomes

The logic model guided the development of the evaluation questions, analyses and reporting framework which are presented in the next section.

EVALUATION DESIGN

Two CEELO staff members with experience directing research and evaluation projects led the evaluation of CEELO Year 3 activities in collaboration with the project director and co-director. To provide further independent data collection, Rutgers University graduate students conducted interviews with selected TA recipients and provided input regarding the end-of-year survey used to collect data from CEELO stakeholders and collaborators. In addition, members of the CEELO Management Team developed TA vignettes that summarize TA activities and the evaluation authors reviewed the CEELO database, survey data, and data collected from the Rutgers students to align the narrative with the themes in the vignettes.

The evaluation was designed to answer the following questions:

1. Did the project complete planned activities during Year 3 (October 1, 2014 – September 30, 2015)? Did the project meet the identified benchmarks noted in the Year 3 management plan?
2. How did targeted stakeholders perceive the quality, relevance, and usefulness of CEELO activities?



3. What suggestions did stakeholders have for improvements?
4. How did targeted stakeholders use the TA and other CEELO activities in their work and what outcomes did stakeholders report resulting from CEELO?
5. What factors support or impede SEA's efforts to build capacity to implement policy for young children?
6. In what ways can CEELO improve TA to achieve desired changes?

CEELO collected formative data on Year 3 activities, from October 1, 2014 through September 30, 2015; summative data was collected between October 2015 and December 2015. The findings reported here are based on an analysis of: a) data entered into the CEELO TA database, b) point of service TA participant surveys of webinars, annual roundtable, and conference presentations; c) year-end surveys of TA recipients and collaborators, and d) semi-structured interviews with 15 state early education administrators representing 11 states. A snapshot of the key methods is presented in **Table 2**. Further information about the data sources is presented in **Appendix A**.



Table 2: Data Collection Activities

Evaluation Activity	Target Audience	Purpose	Number
Year End Survey	State specialists	Obtain evaluation data regarding quality and impact of TA and assess current needs and issues	22 ¹
	Collaborators	Learn about effectiveness, quality, and impact of collaborations	17 ²
	CEELO E-News recipients	Learn about perceptions of quality and usefulness of information	50 ³
Post Responsive TA Survey	State specialists	Obtain evaluation data regarding quality and impact of TA and assess current needs and issues	53 ⁴
Strategic TA Survey	Recipients of strategic TA	Obtain evaluation data regarding quality and impact of TA and assess current needs and issues	144 ⁵
Interviews	Recipients of strategic and responsive TA as well as recipients of CEELO information and resources	Learn about perceptions of quality and usefulness of TA, information, and resources	15
Database and log reviews	Reviews of TA database, Info line database, and logs produced by CEELO TA providers	Determine the number of requests and the number of states we have provided TA and information in response to requests. Describe the nature and intensity of the TA. Analyze data to create “vignettes” that describe the nature,	

¹ A survey monkey request was sent to 91 individuals who were listed in TA responses in the CEELO database and 24 responded; however, 2 did not complete more than title, so their responses are not included.

² A survey monkey request was sent to 58 individuals who were listed as collaborators in the CEELO database and 18 responded; however, 1 did not complete more than title, so their responses were not included.

³ A survey monkey request was sent to 580 E-news subscribers (those who had received the state or collaborator requests were removed for duplication reasons) and 52 responses were received; 3 respondents only completed their title and were removed.

⁴ A survey monkey was sent to recipients of TA asking about the timeliness, usefulness, and relevance of the TA they received.

⁵ A survey monkey was sent to participants at the CEELO/NAECS-SDE Roundtable Annual Meeting, the Leadership Academy meetings, the Learning Table meetings, and the Peer Learning Exchanges.



Evaluation Activity	Target Audience	Purpose	Number
		intensity and impact of the TA. Analyze quality of the data to improve consistency and usefulness of data.	
Document review	Project communications Web analytics CEELO products (e.g., policy briefs and documents)	Determine number of resources posted on website, number of publications by type, etc. to inform whether met targets in Year 3 Management Plan.	

FINDINGS

This section presents the findings and organizes the information based on the evaluation questions. The first section presents findings regarding whether CEELO accomplished planned activities and the degree to which benchmarks were attained. The next section presents findings related to the quality, relevance, and usefulness of TA to state early education administrators and collaborators and discusses findings on the degree to which CEELO built SEA capacity. The final section concludes with findings regarding what CEELO learned about how state policy contexts support or impede efforts to build capacity.

Evaluation Question 1: Did CEELO implement activities as described in the Year 3 Management Plan? Were planned targets met?

CEELO Met All Responsive TA Benchmarks

Each region of the country, and most states in each region, received responsive TA from CEELO. CEELO provided TA to, and coordinated activities with, early childhood specialists in state education agencies (SEAs), early childhood stakeholders representing other state agencies, regional centers, other comprehensive content centers, and other TA providers. As show in **Table 3**, CEELO staff met or exceeded planned outputs for regular collaborative calls, joint TA requests, presentations, and responses to information and TA requests.



Table 3: Responsive TA

Planned Outputs	Actual Output and Description
Collaborate with RTT-ELC TA Consortium, Regional and Content Centers, NAECS-SDE, and other national and federal TA providers/organizations	During Year 3, CEELO TA staff regularly communicated with federal and private TA providers in the RTT-ELC TA Consortium, regional Centers, NAECS-SDE and others as needed.
Contribute to at least 3 joint TA requests with federal partners to RTT-ELC states	During Year 3, CEELO TA staff provided TA to 6 RTT-ELC states in collaboration with the RTT-TA center.
Attend and/or present at 4 national/regional meetings on topics of relevance to SEA and CEELO priorities	During Year 3, CEELO TA staff presented at 18 national and regional meetings.
Respond to 100% of information requests	During Year 3, CEELO addressed 100% of the 50 information requests received.
Respond to 100% of TA requests.	During Year 3, CEELO completed 84 TA requests and initiated work on an additional 8 TA requests that had not been completed by the end of the year.

CEELO participated in regular calls with federal and private TA providers. The project directors continued to regularly participate in the Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge (RTT-ELC) consortium calls on a monthly basis. In addition, CEELO TA liaisons participated in RTT state calls in which each of the participating TA providers shared updates about the nature of the TA they were providing to the states, and sought opportunities to coordinate work. The coordination led to joint TA in many states, which we describe below. With the start of the Preschool Development Grant (PDG)-Expansion technical assistance to states in January 2014, CEELO began to conduct regular calls with the State TA leads for the Development grantees (under contract with AEM) on a regular basis.

CEELO identified a staff person to be a liaison to each of the regional and content centers. Regular communication (e-mail and calls) was maintained during Year 3, with the schedule (monthly, bi-monthly, etc.) determined by the liaisons. Additionally, CEELO has convened quarterly virtual meetings, CEELO-RCC Quarterly Connections, to which all regional comprehensive centers (RCC) were invited to share developments in early learning technical assistance to states and for peer learning opportunities.

CEELO coordinated activities with the National Association of Early Childhood Specialists in State Departments of Education (NAECS-SDE) through regular communication. CEELO’s project directors met monthly with the Executive Committee and CEELO staff regularly participated on monthly policy committee calls. Each year, CEELO identifies 2 co-chairs of the Annual Roundtable, and these staff and others participate on the program planning committee of the CEELO Roundtable. As in previous years, state specialists provided favorable evaluations regarding the collaboration with CEELO. **For example, one individual who completed the annual evaluation survey reported, “The work that CEELO staff members did for the NAECS-SDE annual meeting is and always has been excellent.”**



CEELO staff regularly participate on the NAECS-SDE listserv, providing and sharing resources to members. Listserv members pose questions around policy on the listserv, and CEELO has taken an active role in compiling these responses and sharing with members. In the past year, CEELO has posted questions of interest to members, analyzed the results, and disseminated the summaries to members. CEELO staff also encouraged state specialists to directly post questions to the listserv to build capacity and confidence rather than relying on CEELO to post questions and compile data.

CEELO conducted joint TA requests to six RTT-ELC states, far exceeding the target of three. CEELO provided information to RTT-ELC states as well as in-depth TA in response to the coordination with the RTT-ELC TA liaisons. **Box 1** provides brief illustrations of the nature and scope of the TA provided to RTT-ELC states and the ways that CEELO coordinated with the RTT-ELC TA and other TA providers in addressing these requests.

Box 1. Selected Examples of Collaborative TA to RTT-ELC states

To support Wisconsin's RTT-ELC sustainability planning, between February and December 2015, CEELO facilitated a process of engaging early care and education stakeholders in developing a strategic plan for continuing the ECE work after the RTT-ELC funding is over. Collaboratively with AEM, CEELO facilitated a series of virtual and in person meetings among a team of stakeholders, oversaw the process of documenting key accomplishments, provided tools to the stakeholder group, and engaged stakeholders in articulating the activities that remain opportunities after the RTT-ELC funds are spent. The final accomplishment of the group was a PowerPoint that will be used to brief decision-makers who are responsible for funding ECE systems.

CEELO TA staff presented at 18 national and regional meetings sponsored by other organizations on topics of relevance to SEAs and CEELO priorities, far exceeding the benchmark of 4. Throughout Year 3, CEELO maintained an active presence at national and regional meetings, including the National Early Childhood Inclusion Institute, the National Association of Education Young Children – Professional Development Institute, a South Central Comprehensive Center Meeting, the annual Title I Conference, an Ounce of Prevention Early Grade Leadership Summit, the National Head Start Association Annual Conference, the National Association of Elementary School Principals Conference, and the Federal Meeting for the RTT-Early Learning Challenge and Preschool Development Grantees.

Several presentations included state representatives as presenters or facilitators (NC, NJ, VT). CEELO staff frequently co-presented with other federally funded technical assistance centers (Center on Innovations in Learning, Center on School Turnaround, Head Start National Center on Quality Teaching and Learning) as well as national organizations or research institutions (BUILD, UNC-Greensboro, University of Washington).

During Year 3, CEELO Responded to 84 TA Requests from 31 States on Each of the CEELO Priority Issues. During the third year of operation, CEELO staff completed 15 targeted, 65 intensive, and 2



general TA requests⁶ with 31 states.⁷ In addition to the 84 completed TA requests, CEELO began work on an additional 8 requests in the last quarter, with targeted completion dates in the first half of Year 4. Some of the TA was conducted for Preschool Development Grant (PDG) expansion states. TA was provided in collaboration with the following regional centers: Appalachia, Great Lakes, Midwest, Northeast, Pacific, South Central, Southeast, and Texas.

The number of completed TA activities was somewhat lower than in Year 2 (82 completed as opposed to 101 in Year 2), but the TA was deeper and more time-intensive in Year 3. For example, in Year 2, CEELO addressed 16 general TA requests, but only 2 of the requests in Year 3 were general and 60 of the request in Year 2 were intensive, whereas 65 of the requests were intensive in Year 3. The intensity of TA was particularly notable for states receiving the PDG grant that were in the start-up phase of the grant.⁸ Moreover, in Year 3, CEELO focused on reaching states it had not worked with previously. CEELO was successful in connecting with Texas and providing collaborative technical assistance with the Texas Comprehensive Center. **Box 2** provides an illustration of the range of TA CEELO offered during Year 3.

CEELO also provided TA to other technical assistance centers and national organizations.

Box 2. Illustrations of Range of TA Provided by CEELO in Year Three

General: CEELO co-developed a national webinar on NAESP P-3 standards and the role of state education agencies in supporting principal leadership to implement a Birth to Third Grade framework. The webinar was designed as a follow-up to a summer 2014 introduction by NAESP that was requested by NAESCS-SDE members. Follow up evaluations were favorable. For example, one individual reported, [The webinar was] *outstanding in every way! Your experience and expertise in the field comes through loud and clear in the content and delivery of these webinars. Thank you!* Another reported, [The webinar provided] *deep and detailed information.*

Targeted. In May and July 2015, CEELO held meetings of early childhood specialists from Northeast state departments of education for two separate in-person meetings in Waltham, MA. The first meeting focused on PDG start-up activities and provided participants an opportunity to network and learn from one another about promising practices and challenges in early implementation. The second meeting, held in collaboration with the Regional Education Lab - Northeast and Islands (REL-NEI), focused on Kindergarten Entry Assessment design and implementation. Participants had opportunities to hear from researchers' key findings from selected states and engage in conversations about how to address common design and implementation challenges. Participants requested ongoing follow up conversations with one another and since the summer meetings, As a result, CEELO has facilitated monthly peer exchange calls among state specialists in the Northeast. The meetings were favorably evaluated. One respondent reported, "*person to person consultation has been helpful to a very large degree.*" Another stated, "*I loved meeting all the folks*

⁶ Targeted TA is based on a specific, and time-limited need, such as a regional meeting; general TA is defined as broad dissemination of information, such as a conference presentation; intensive TA is a targeted, state-specific request, for example to revise a policy or practice.

⁷ AL, AR, CA, CT, GA, HI, IL, IN, IA, KT, LA, ME, MD, MA, MN, MS, NE, NV, NH, NJ, NY, NC, OH, OK, PA, RI, SC, TN, TX, VT, VA, WI

⁸ In Year 2, 55 percent of TA provided was intensive. In Year 3 77 percent of TA provided was intensive.



from the New England states.”

Intensive: CEELO supported the development of Nevada’s Office of Early Learning strategic plan. Beginning in Year 2 and continuing in Year 3, through a series of intensive meetings, the CEELO co-director facilitated and convened key stakeholders who articulated the vision for the new office, developed a strategic plan, and crafted an operational plan that has guided ongoing operations for the new office. Direct results include improved internal and external communications, and staffing plans and professional development plans for new office staff. One key informant noted: *[CEELO TA provider] was fabulous in helping prepare, organize and facilitate our strategic planning meeting for our new Office of Early Learning and Development in the Nevada Department of Education. It was very helpful to have someone with outside expertise and such great experience working with other states help us think through the planning and organizing of our new office to hopefully help shape and provide guidance to our agency leadership, restructuring and organizing of our office.*

CEELO responded to 100% of the 50 information requests made across the range of CEELO priority topics. Information requests were received from SEAs, TA providers, school districts, nonprofits, and intermediaries, such as a consultant who was supporting a school district in developing an early childhood strategic plan. Information requests related to each of CEELO’s priorities. The number of requests per topic is as follows:⁹ assessment (12), birth through third grade (6), child outcomes (8), data (7), early childhood systems (13), SEA capacity building (3), and workforce (7). The scope and intensity of requests varied, from general resources on a topic to specific tools. Requesters were interested in both research around the topic and information on how other states were addressing it. Examples include:

- Bachelor’s degree requirements for pre-K lead teachers
- Funding (e.g., funding formulas for per-student expenditures, funding formulas for pre-K)
- Child assessment
- Research on high quality pre-K and child outcomes
- Retention
- Teacher evaluation and student growth objectives
- Quality Rating and Improvement Systems

As in previous years, many information requests from State Education Agencies led to TA requests, and some of the information requests led to the development of specific products designed to address a need that was articulated by multiple requesters. For example, a number of states were interested in learning about eligibility criteria for preschool programs. CEELO responded to these requests by developing a policy brief and a *Fast Fact* on state approaches to preschool eligibility policy. In turn, this led to a request for a presentation on the findings by the Virginia Legislature Joint Subcommittee on the Virginia Preschool Initiative and National Conference of State Legislatures for a Webinar to members and staff of state legislatures. Similarly, a number of requesters were interested in the cost of early care

⁹ Note: Some requests fell into multiple areas, hence the sum will be greater than the total 68 requests



and education, and to address this need CEELO is focusing Year 4 resources and activities on providing states tools they can use to address their questions.

CEELO Exceeded Nearly All Strategic TA Benchmarks

In Year 3, CEELO provided Strategic TA to nearly all states and territories, across all CEELO priority topics, and employing a range of strategies. Specifically, CEELO successfully planned and carried out the annual Roundtable meeting, held webinars, and planned and facilitated peer-learning communities. CEELO conducted its first cohort of the Leadership Academy and began selection for the second cohort during the end of Year 3 (meetings began in Fall of 2015). These activities are described in **Table 4** below.

Table 4: Strategic TA

Strategic TA Activity	Description and Number of Participants/Events
1 SEA Leadership Academy	<p>During Year 3, the first cohort of the Leadership Academy was implemented. The Fellows met 4 times, engaged with their coaches, and completed their Job Embedded Projects.</p> <p>During the final months of Year 3, CEELO prepared for the second cohort, offering applications and selecting Fellows who will engage in the Leadership Academy during Year 4.</p>
Think Tank, Paper & Learning Table on Teaching & Learning	<p>CEELO, in collaboration with the BUILD initiative, conducted the first cohort of the Learning Table in CEELO Year 3. A report was also published that documented state policies to promote effective teaching and learning. CEELO will continue to support the Think Tank with a second cohort in CEELO Year 4.</p>
3 Regional Comprehensive Center Connections	<p>CEELO convened regional center staff in quarterly virtual meetings throughout Year 3.</p>
1 50-state National Roundtable on <i>Leading for Excellence: Building Key Competencies to Lead High Performing Early Learning Initiatives</i>	<p>The National Roundtable was successfully held with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 150 attendees• 41 state agencies were represented by 88 attendees with 25 states bringing a team• 17 attendees from Comprehensive Centers and Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge technical assistance• 15 attendees from other technical assistance centers or research institutions• 2 Federal attendees
3 Webinars proposed – EC Best Practices & Successful School Turnaround Efforts	<p>13 webinars were sponsored or co-sponsored by CEELO. Two webinars were conducted as part of Preschool Development Grant Technical Assistance TA. Four of the</p>



Strategic TA Activity	Description and Number of Participants/Events
	webinars were from the Teaching and Learning Project (see section on Strategic Assistance for more information) The number of participants ranged from 25 to 352. ¹⁰
1 New Jersey Early Childhood Academy (EC Academy)	The EC Academy expanded to include new districts in CEELO Year 3 (the Academy's second year). It supported participating districts by engaging in systematic data collection and analyses, providing responsive coaching, and facilitating local Peer Learning Communities. The EC Academy will continue in CEELO Year 4 with a focus on K-3 implementation policies and connections to quality preschool.
Preschool Expansion Grant (PDG) TA <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Responsive Technical Assistance<li>• Peer Exchanges	CEELO provided TA on 23 requests for support on PDG-related topics. These are described in the responsive technical assistance portion of this report. CEELO also convened PDG staff from multiple states in peer exchanges. The first one, focused on Quality Improvement, was held in September 2015. CEELO has continued to facilitate follow-up conversations. It also held two additional Peer Exchanges at the beginning of Year 4.

The first cohort of the CEELO Leadership Academy was planned and applicants were selected to participate in the Academy. The [CEELO Leadership Academy](#) aims to: a) support improvements in the leadership and management skills of early childhood leaders, b) build SEA leadership and management capacity to advance a vision for ECE, and c) build individual leadership and management competencies.

During Year 3, five fellows¹¹ representing AL, MI, MN, NJ, and TN participated in four in-person meetings, engaged with their coaches, and completed a work-embedded project. The meetings were led by outside experts and held over several days each session in order to facilitate deeper learning opportunities that the Fellows could build from and incorporate into their Job Embedded Projects.

¹⁰ CEELO has data from six webinars, which were hosted on CEELO's webinar interface. The other webinars were hosted on another organization's webinar interface and CEELO was unable to obtain the numbers. For the webinars CEELO has information for (from least to highest number of attendees): Tools to Support Principals as Evaluators of Early Childhood Teachers (25), Effectively Engaging Private Partners Virginia Preschool Initiative (VPI) Program (34), Planning for the New Early Learning Model: Harnessing Potential in the Next School Improvement Grant Cycle (62), Evaluating Early Childhood Educators: Prekindergarten Through Third Grade, a Supplement to the Practical Guide to Designing Comprehensive Educator Evaluation Systems (88), Young Immigrants and Dual Language Learners: Participation in Pre-K & Gaps at Kindergarten Entry (167), Supporting Principal Leadership for Pre-K – Third Grade Learning Communities (352).

¹¹ The original cohort consisted of six Fellows. One Fellow left the cohort because of a new position within her agency with new responsibilities that she felt precluded her from participating.



The meetings topics were as follows:

- Leadership Skills and Management Competencies (December 2014)
- Results-Based Accountability (February 2015)
- Systems Thinking (June 2015)
- Stakeholder Engagement; Diversity and Cultural Awareness (August 2015)

Between meetings, Fellows virtually met one-on-one with a coach who guided and supported them in applying the leadership skills they were learning. Additionally, each Fellow completed a job-embedded project in which they self-identified an opportunity to apply the skills learned in the Leadership Academy directly to their work. The following job embedded projects were completed by the Fellows:

- Implementing a Mindful Leadership Professional Learning experience with 10 local leaders and 10 professional development facilitators
- Working with five school districts to develop and pilot a statewide plan for increasing inclusive preschool classrooms for young children with identified special needs
- Developing a cross-agency data-sharing agreement to support the state early childhood longitudinal data system
- Implementing a new results-based accountability format for reporting on use of cross-agency state funds for children and family services
- Supporting the transition to new professional responsibilities

Participants reported the following impacts:

- Increased self-knowledge of individual leadership and management strengths and areas for growth
- Increased knowledge of other programs, resources, and perspectives. Built a network and effective partnerships within the Leadership Academy, within their agency, and with other agencies in their EC system
- Direct application of content learned in the Leadership Academy

For in-depth information on the design and structure, as well as participant feedback, see [State Early Education Leadership Academy: Report on Year 1, 2014-2015](#) as well as the [Leadership Academy Page](#).

CEELO planned and convened the first year of a Think Tank on Teaching and Learning. This project, co-led with the BUILD Initiative (BUILD), aims to facilitate joint problem solving for stakeholders who are responsible for guiding early childhood policy and practice in their states. During Year 3, CEELO brought together leaders from six states and experts in a six-month-long Learning Table – peer exchange, consisting of one in-person meeting and four webinars. This work led to the commissioning of a report, [State Policy to Promote Effective Teaching that Improves Learning](#). CEELO will continue this work in Year 4 with a second cohort. More information on the Think Tank is available [here](#).



CEELO planned, sponsored, and convened early childhood specialists from state departments of education at an annual Roundtable. A total of 150 individuals registered for the annual meeting with representation from 34¹² states and territories, representing 41 agencies. The topic of the meeting was [*Leading for Excellence*](#). CEELO co-constructed the agenda with NAECs-SDE, the Council of Chief State School Officers, and the Early Learning Technical Assistance Center for RTT-ELC. This collaborative effort supported an integrated meeting designed to address the needs of early childhood specialists in state departments of education. The Roundtable continues to grow in numbers and more states have begun bringing state teams to the meeting.

In Year 3, CEELO planned, sponsored, and convened 13 Webinars on Topics of Interest to Early Childhood Specialists. To leverage expertise tailored toward each webinar’s topic and intended audience, CEELO frequently collaborated or invited presenters from a variety of other entities, including: *comprehensive centers and other federally funded centers* (Great Lakes Comprehensive Center, the Midwest Comprehensive Center, Center on Great Teachers and Leaders, Regional Education Laboratory -Northwest), *state early childhood education specialists* (Georgia, Illinois, Indiana, Nevada, New Jersey, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Tennessee, Virginia) *national organizations and foundations* (BUILD, National Association of Elementary School Principals, Foundation for Child Development, National Association of Early Childhood Specialists in State Departments of Education, NIEER, CCSSO, EDC). The list of Webinars CEELO delivered in Year 3 is provided below:

- *Approaches to State Prekindergarten Eligibility Policy: Considerations for Policymakers*
- *Effectively Engaging Private Partners Virginia Preschool Initiative (VPI) Program (PDG)*
- *Evaluating Early Childhood Educators: Prekindergarten Through Third Grade, a Supplement to the Practical Guide to Designing Comprehensive Educator Evaluation Systems*
- *Planning for the New Early Learning Model: Harnessing Potential in the Next School Improvement Grant Cycle*
- *Preschool Expansion Grant Webinar – Setting the Stage for Success: Quality Improvement and Program Evaluation in State Pre-K Programs (PDG)*
- *Supporting Principal Leadership for Pre-K – Third Grade Learning Communities*
- *Teaching and Learning Project – 4 webinars*
 - *Advancing States’ Professional Development Policies to Focus on Effective Teaching*
 - *Streamlining States’ Teacher Accountability Approaches*
 - *Integrating Teaching Conditions into States’ Professional Development and Accountability Structures*
 - *State Presentations*
- *Tools to Support Principals as Evaluators of Early Childhood Teachers*

¹² AL, AR, AZ, CA, CO, CT, GA, IA, IL, LA, MA, MD, ME, MI, MN, MS, NC, NE, NJ, NV, NM, OH, OK, OR, PA, RI, SC, TN, VA, VT, WA, WI, WV, WY.



- *Using Assessments to Improve Transitions to Kindergarten*
- *Young Immigrants and Dual Language Learners: Participation in Pre-K & Gaps at Kindergarten Entry*

In Year 3, CEELO Convened a New Jersey Leadership Academy. To support the New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE) reach local leaders, CEELO developed a partnership with the SEA and The National Institute for Early Education Research (NIEER) to design and implement a professional learning community (PLC) model, the Early Childhood Academy (EC Academy). The goal of the EC Academy is to build peer learning among New Jersey school districts that provide support in leaders' understanding of critical topics and their application to early childhood. Districts are required to send a district early learning team to participate that includes at least one central administrator, at least one building administrator, and at least one preschool or kindergarten teacher. Inclusion of at least one first, second, or third grade teacher was added this year. Intended to be a long-term PLC, the EC Academy is currently in the third year of implementation.

In year one (2013-2014), the focus of the EC Academy included three key topics: preschool quality and program expansion, teacher evaluation, and Common Core State Standards implementation in the primary years and alignment to early childhood. In year two (2014-2015), the EC Academy included new districts and further supported participating districts by engaging in systematic data collection and analyses, responsive coaching, and facilitating local PLCs. In year three (2015-2016) the EC Academy has a strong emphasis on implementing new policies for early primary education (K-3) and building connections to high quality preschool. The newly developed NJ First through Third Grade Implementation Guidelines, alongside the Preschool and Kindergarten Implementation guidelines, provide the base for a systems look at teaching quality. Districts will be guided to use classroom data to understand the quality in their schools, generate a plan for improvement, and execute and evaluate the intervention with support from the EC Academy team.

In addition to directly implementing the EC Academy, CEELO staff have used the three years to build the SEA capacity for reaching local districts on key early childhood initiatives and practices. There are currently plans in the NJDOE to support this approach going forward and to scale the work throughout the state through the Office of Primary Education and in collaboration with the Division of Early Childhood Education.

CEELO provided TA to Preschool Development Grant expansion states. During Year 3, CEELO provided intensive TA to the Preschool Development (PDG) expansion grant states to support the states' management and implementation of the grant, and created strategic TA opportunities for PDG states through peer exchanges. In Year 3, CEELO staff conducted needs-sensing calls and developed TA plans with PDG states.

CEELO established or sustained strong communication with stakeholders in each of the states through regular communication with project directors or project teams. As noted previously, the Northeast



states have established monthly peer exchange calls, facilitated by CEELO TA staff. In other regions, CEELO TA Staff regularly communicate with state program leads to review TA requests and progress.

The key TA requests and needs that have been identified are in the following areas: (1) program management; (2) ensuring high-quality programs; (3) measuring program and child outcomes; (4) collaboration to ensure strong partnerships among school and private providers; (5) aligning preschool within the Birth-3rd grade learning continuum; (6) creating sustainable programs; (7) reaching high needs children; and (8) improving the quality of the workforce.

- 1. Project management.** Many early TA requests to CEELO from PDG grantees were related to staffing, working with sub-grantees, establishing procedures for project management, and navigating governance issues. Moreover, many PDG states requested responsive TA from CEELO related to navigating different federal and state regulations affecting the administration of the program.
- 2. Ensuring high-quality programs.** PDG grantees have requested TA on the topic of how to best monitor programs to support quality improvement, while at the same time ensuring the monitoring systems are set up to meet federal and state compliance requirements. An analysis of the TA database and peer exchange materials reveals this is a challenge for many PDG states, particularly in attempting to create monitoring systems that support quality enhancements that will be sustainable beyond federal funding.
- 3. Measuring program and child outcomes.** CEELO's TA has supported PDG states' design and implementation of systems for measuring program and child outcome data. CEELO sponsored a webinar with PDG states to review evaluation strategies, developed materials to support decisions about selecting program and child outcome measures, and has provided tailored TA to states to support their selection and use of program and child outcome data.
- 4. Collaboration to ensure strong partnerships among school and private providers with Sub-grantees to ensure strong partnerships among schools and private providers.** PDG states have requested and received TA to build capacity to implement high-quality programs. In addition to providing opportunities for monthly exchange of lessons learned and challenges, CEELO planned a December peer exchange to provide a sample of PDG states with opportunities to learn about state and local models to support strong partnerships.
- 5. Aligning preschool programs within a Birth-3rd Grade Continuum, building systems** across agencies. States have expressed interest in moving beyond the concept of B-3rd grade alignment into practice. CEELO is developing products and materials to support the movement into practice and is offering tailored TA to the PDG states.
- 6. Creating sustainable programs.** A number of PDG states have expressed an interest in obtaining early TA support to identify strategies to sustain programs, but many states have reported that they hope to receive assistance on this topic in Year 4. A number of RTT-ELC states that have also received PDG grants reported that they now know the importance of focusing on sustainability early on. Nonetheless, during Year 3, the most urgent TA need was around



establishing the systems for implementing the PDG program, and therefore the focus on sustainability and longer-term planning was viewed as a topic of focus once systems were established.

7. **Reaching high-needs children.** PDG grantees have reported TA needs around reaching high-needs children. Northeast states have exchanged lessons learned and promising approaches with one another. Strategies for identifying high-needs children included reaching out to existing community-based agencies, working with McKinney Vento coordinators to identify homeless families, and seeking out faith-based organizations that could assist with identifying high-needs families.
8. **Improving the quality of the workforce.** Many PDG states reported challenges addressing issues of compensation and benefits and expressed an interest in learning about other states' strategies. Most PDG states that CEELO has worked with are supporting professional development for existing preschool teachers and are implementing coaching/mentoring approaches as a strategy for improving the quality of the workforce.

CEELO Supported a Peer Exchange for Preschool Development- Expansion Grantees. CEELO convened state teams in September 2015 for a peer exchange on monitoring for continuous quality improvement and conducted peer exchanges in November and December, 2015. The PLC gave participants an opportunity to learn from one another, gain knowledge from national experts, and brainstorm solutions to shared challenges. A majority (78%) of participants at the September meeting reported that the exchange was high quality and highly useful.

Participants elaborated on their perspectives on the Peer Exchange:

I really enjoyed the time talking with other states with a focused topic and having a CEELO rep facilitate the conversation and take notes. I also liked the opportunity to then share what we learned with our own team members.

It was fantastic to work with different states, and collaborate! That helped us a great deal, and we look forward to continuing.

It is very informative to hear from other states and to share strategies. The time for sharing and asking questions of others was rich with info and ideas.

Participants at the September meeting also provided feedback that was helpful in shaping future exchanges. A number of participants suggested allocating additional time for states to work at tables with one another to share ideas and some suggested encouraging participants to work in different teams over the course of the meeting. CEELO TA staff incorporated these suggestions into the November and December meeting planning.



CEELO Exceeded Nearly All Information Resources and Technology-Supported TA Benchmarks

CEELO develops information resources based on key strategic topics of high value to state early education administrators, and resources are presented in a variety of formats to provide timely and relevant information to policy makers. The information resources developed by CEELO are posted to the CEELO website, and technology is used to gather information, analyze trends, and disseminate products.

In Year 3, CEELO went beyond the proposed activities to develop additional resources in response to expressed and identified state needs including 4 policy reports, 13 webinars, 7 annotated bibliographies, 4 quarterly newsletters, and 4 FastFacts.

Table 5: Technology Enhanced TA Planned and Provided in Year 3

Planned Activity	Description and Number of Participants/Events
Update website	CEELO consistently posted resources, new publications, and updates to the CEELO website.
Updated 150 new resources in library	CEELO posted 129 additional resources to the Resource Library.
1 Pertinent state information page for every state and territory online	During Year 3, CEELO populated a dedicated page on its website for each state. The state page includes information on the state’s Early Learning Guidelines, Program Standards, and other information of interest to early childhood stakeholders.
<p>4 Policy reports –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • State Elementary Education Definitions and Implications for Expanding Access to Preschool • Roundtable Meeting Summary • Survey of State Kindergarten Policy • Research Brief on Child Assessment and Policy Implications 	CEELO developed 4 new publications to address policy and research questions posed by early childhood specialists in state departments of education. Due to the change in needs, the topics of the reports were adapted. In the descriptions following this table, the changes are described.
Produce 8 Fast Facts	CEELO developed 4 Fast Facts as of September 30.
1 Webinar proposed (State of Preschool & Kindergarten Policy)	CEELO facilitated 13 Webinars and the slides and recordings (when possible) were made available on the CEELO website after the webinar concluded. These webinars are described in detail in the section on responsive technical assistance.



Planned Activity	Description and Number of Participants/Events
5 Annotated Bibliographies	CEELO developed 7 annotated bibliographies covering a range of topics.
Tools	In response to state needs, CEELO produced 7 documents to be used as Tools. These documents represent tools used in CEELO TA that were successful and deemed useful to a wider audience.
E-News	To share its work and resources to a wider audience, CEELO produced 4 e-newsletters (E-News) during Year 3. The E-News shared new resources produced by CEELO, discussed selected technical assistance provided, and frequently featured interviews with state staff around key issues.

CEELO successfully updated and populated the center website with rich resources aimed at addressing target audience needs. During Year 3 CEELO staff successfully updated and populated the center website. During Year 3, the ceelo.org website had 24,607 viewing sessions, an increase of 65% over the number of sessions in Year 2. Since it was launched www.ceelo.org has had nearly 60,000 unique page views. The number of new visitors in Year 3 increased 130% over the number of new users in Year 2. The most frequent pages that were viewed in Year 3 were the state pages (4,596 unique viewers) followed by CEELO products (2,254 unique viewers) and selected resources (1,532 unique viewers).

In Year 3, CEELO staff identified 129 new resources for inclusion in the CEELO database (for a cumulative total of 476 resources identified) and posted 52 to the CEELO website's Selected Resources web page. In addition, the website includes a directory of key early childhood contacts in each state and territory and links to other comprehensive centers, products developed by CEELO (including links to Webinars and presentations and briefs described in the next section). The [ECE Contact Directory](#) – a comprehensive listing of state personnel leading programs serving young children - was updated in January and August to capture any changes in a state and maintain as current a directory as possible.

State information for every state and territory online. States express interest in learning about key documents and policies in other states. The [state-by-state pages](#) contain information on each state pertaining to their early learning guidelines for infants and toddlers, pre-K, and K-3. It also hosts links to state program standards for early childhood education as well as teacher and family guidance documents that relate to the standards. Each state page is headed up by links to the state's office/s of early learning.



CEELO produced multiple publications to address specific topics of interest to early childhood specialists. The titles of the publications are listed below.

- [Approaches to State Pre-K Eligibility Policy: Considerations for Policy Makers in Revising Policy to Increase Access for High Needs Children \(Executive Summary\)](#)
- [Incorporating Early Learning Strategies in the School Improvement Grants \(SIG\) Program](#)
- [Leading for Excellence: 2015 Roundtable Summary](#)
- [State Approaches to Evaluating Preschool Programs](#)

CEELO Successfully Produced and Disseminated 4 *Fast Facts*. CEELO turned responses to information requests and TA resources into a series of Fast Facts to disseminate to other early childhood specialists addressing similar issues. In Year 3, CEELO produced the following *Fast Facts*:

- [Professional Learning Academy: Supporting District Implementation of Early Childhood Policy](#)
- [QRIS and Inclusion: Do State QRIS Standards Support the Learning Needs of All Children?](#)
- [Examples of State Guidance to Determine and Verify Income Eligibility for Prekindergarten Programs](#)
- [Retention in the Early Years: Is Early Retention an Effective, Research-Based Strategy for Improving Student Outcomes?](#)

CEELO Successfully Produced and Disseminated 7 Annotated Bibliographies. TA CEELO staff began to create resources lists for state recipients during TA provision. The positive response to such documents led CEELO to create a new category of product, annotated bibliographies that provide a curated list of key resources on a topic. In Year 3, CEELO produced the following *Annotated Bibliographies*:

- [Early Childhood Suspension and Expulsion](#)
- [Leadership Resources](#)
- [Professional Development Systems](#)
- [Program Quality Improvement Systems](#)
- [Resources for Supporting Teachers and Administrators to Improve Outcomes for Dual Language Learners in Pre-K through Third Grade](#)
- [Tax Policy and Quality](#)
- [Using Technology in Early Childhood Classrooms](#)



CEELO Created and Shared 7 Tools Used in Technical Assistance. These tools were deemed useful to a wider audience, which is why CEELO uploaded and shared the documents via the website's *Tools* section.

- [Evaluating Early Childhood Educators: Prekindergarten through Third Grade, a Supplement to the Practical Guide to Designing Comprehensive Educator Evaluation Systems](#)
- [Peer Learning Community Reflection Form](#)
- [Peer Learning Community Planning Tool](#)
- [The Preschool Program Quality Assurance System Discussion Guide](#)
- [Resources Developed by States and Selected Cities to Support Financing Preschool Programs](#)
- [State Financing Strategies for Early Care and Education Systems](#)
- [State Teacher Evaluation Systems: Fifty State Scan on Resources for Early Childhood Teachers](#)

CEELO disseminated its E-News Quarterly. This resource is designed for the broader early childhood audience and shares information on CEELO's technical assistance and information resources. It frequently features an interview with a state contact around how their state is addressing a key issue in early childhood. The E-News has a total of 721 subscribers (as of 12/21/2015).

- [Winter 2014](#)
- [Spring 2015](#)
- [Summer 2015](#)
- [Fall 2015](#)



Evaluation Question 2: Was CEELO TA of high quality, and relevant and useful to state early education administrators and collaborators?

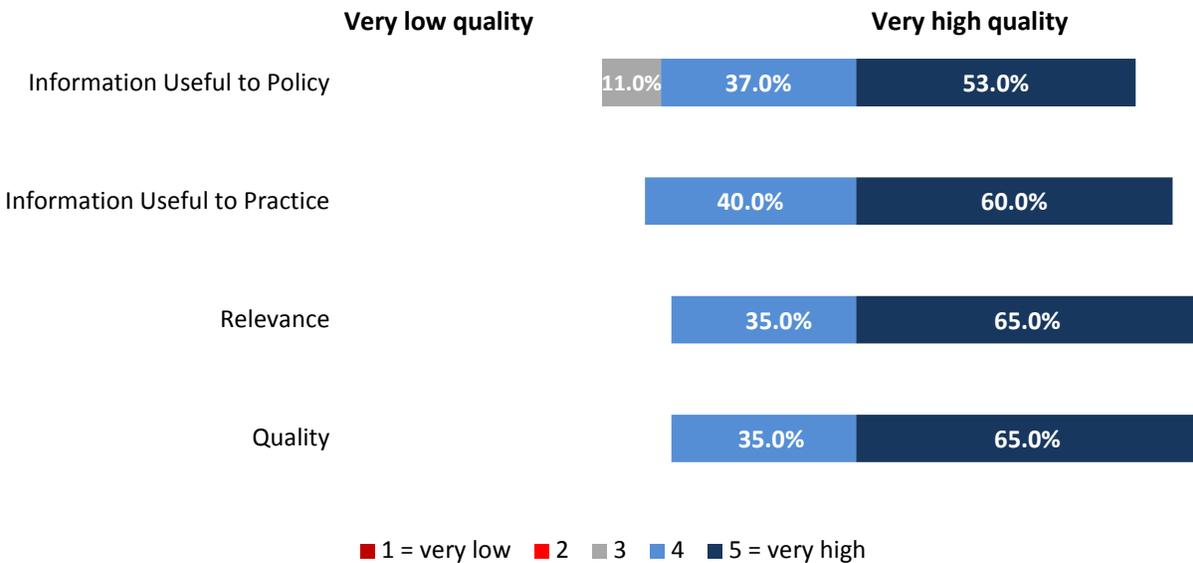
State TA Recipients

Overall, recipients of CEELO TA reported it was of high quality, relevant, and useful to policy and practice. Respondents reported a variety of types of support (presentations, meeting facilitation, partnership building, provision of expertise, briefings, peer learning) across a number of relevant early childhood topics (data, birth through third grade work (governance, alignment, local PLCs, kindergarten entry assessments, ECE finance, workforce, alignment, partnerships, family engagement, sustainability etc.). CEELO’s technical assistance typically involves a process of intake, action, and follow-up, as this recipient noted:

We had two staff members travel to our state to provide briefings to legislators. In both cases, there were advance phone calls and e-mails that led to thoughtful, customized presentations, as well as follow-up afterwards. (State respondent, CEELO TA survey)

Figure 1 below indicates that state early education administrators overwhelmingly identified CEELO’s TA as high quality, relevant, and useful to both policy and practice.

Figure 1: CEELO TA Considered High Quality (n=20)¹³



¹³ There were 21 respondents to the survey CEELO sent out to state early childhood contacts. One respondent did not receive TA, hence 20 responses for quality (the respondent did use CEELO publications and is included in information on quality of publications).



Analysis of survey data revealed that recipients highly valued the TA provided by CEELO staff and that it was tailored to the unique context in each state and provided significant early childhood expertise to addressing a state policy issue. For information on how the TA was used, see the following section on outcomes. Recipients of CEELO's TA shared their thoughts on the quality, usefulness, and relevance of the support they received:

Connections to other state work sped up what may have been a lengthy research and communication project was handled by CEELO sharing relevant information and documentation that was very similar to what we were looking into. [State respondent, CEELO TA Survey]

CEELO provided critical analysis of state data and research, supported survey development and implementation, and provided recommendations around EC workforce issues. [CEELO staff person] was timely, great to brainstorm with, knowledgeable about the topic, and supportive of our work and direction. [State respondent, CEELO TA Survey]

The report on state eligibility policies was very timely for us as well as candid conversation about teacher education requirements. Thank you. [State respondent, CEELO TA Survey]

I feel I can call and make a request at anytime and someone will get back to me or point me in a direction where I can find it.

Collaboration with Other Technical Assistance Providers or Organizations

A survey was administered to individuals (typically other TA providers) who have collaborated with CEELO in Year 3. The TA providers rated the quality of the collaboration positively, with the majority rating it very high (65%) and the remainder as high (35%) quality. Nearly 95 percent reported that CEELO provided important content and/or expertise and over 80% reported that CEELO addressed a gap. Just over 80 percent reported that the needs of the target audience were met.

Collaborators noted a number of different activities they interacted with CEELO in Year 3:

- Co-developed products (76%)
- Coordinated technical assistance (47%)
- Guest speaker at a CEELO meeting (or vice versa) (41%)
- Provided joint TA (29%)
- Provided updates about TA activities in a state (29%)
- Co-sponsored meetings or events (12%)



Respondents' elaborations on their ratings are presented, demonstrating joint effort that eased burdens on a state and led the state to a desired outcome:

The collaborative TA with CEELO has provided us with the opportunity to deliver more specialized TA to our audiences without duplicating the efforts of other TA organizations. The seamless shared delivery has also lessened the burden on participants. They do not need to seek support from multiple organizations since we brought it to them in a single package. Our internal capacity has also been strengthened by the collaboration with CEELO in that we have a deeper understanding of issues and know who to call on when intensive knowledge on a subject is required. [RTT-ELC TA provider, Collaborator Survey]

CEELO staff worked with my early childhood regional comprehensive center to provide TA in states, such as review documents, serve as a thought partner, monthly meetings with SEAs. This has resulted in an increase in networking and support for SEAs in the region. [Regional Center TA provider, Collaborator Survey]

The Department of Education in one of our states requested support for developing a model of student growth for the purposes of educator excellence determinations and support. In collaboration with the GTL Center and CEELO, our Center was able to provide expertise, guidance, and support to the Department of Education as they explored their possibilities as well as the strengths and weaknesses of each option. CEELO provided content expertise specific to early childhood and knowledge of the state's assessment decisions related to early grades. The Department of Education noted that the meeting was of very high quality and met their very specific needs. We anticipate this type of technical assistance continuing into the next TA Year. [Regional Center TA provider, Collaborator Survey]

The learning table we co-developed and sponsored emphasized the importance of focusing state policy on effective teaching practices with special attention to cultural and linguistic diversity. Through this work, we provided tools, experts, and resources to help state policymakers address this critical issue. Our work underscored the importance of teaching conditions and leadership to achieve results. [Consultant, Collaborator Survey]

This collaboration is in its infant stages. We are still determining audience need and interest. It is anticipated that a knowledge gap will be filled. The actual work done with CEELO has been supportive and demonstrated strong knowledge and expertise. [Preschool Development Grant TA Provider, Collaborator Survey]

I would like to mention the staff from CEELO that I have worked with during the past year and how professional and knowledgeable they are as well as good collaborators and co-constructors of learning together [TA provider].



Selected TA Event Evaluations:

CEELO Annual Roundtable: Participants in the 2015 Roundtable gave high marks to the event. About 85 percent rated the overall event as high (56%) or very high (31%) quality. Similarly they found the event relevant to their work (high – 48%, very high 37%) and useful to their work (high – 54%, very high – 31%). Respondents shared how they would apply what they learned in the meeting to their work, for instance:

1. The needs of leadership--what I can do to lead in my state while not necessarily having authority to make high level decisions. 2. The overarching topic of 'professionalism' for early childhood--and my own work at the state level. 3. The realization (from networking and from the various sessions) that my state is not the only one in some level of crisis or 'worry'. And that together we can brainstorm or be 'thinking partners' with each other to promote better outcomes for our programs, children, families. [Respondent, CEELO 2015 Roundtable survey]

CEELO Webinars: Survey data were collected regarding the quality, usefulness, and relevance of the information presented and Webinars were highly rated. Over 70% of respondents reported that the Webinars were of high quality, useful, and relevant. Stakeholders provided comments about their perceptions of the quality, usefulness, and relevance of the information. Participants provided comments on the usefulness of the webinars:

I thought this was a great webinar that provided lots of food for thought. [Participant at Teaching and Learning Table Webinar]

Your availability to ensure that all questions from participants have been answered is very useful. Ensuring that we understand the resources contained in the website accomplished. [Participant at Teaching and Learning Table Webinar]

I wish we could do this again! [Participant at Family Engagement Webinar]

I work with administrators and will imbed some of the information in my conversations and presentations. [Participant at Principal Webinar]

We will use this information to assist us in evaluating applications from our LEAs. [Participant at School Turnaround Webinar]

In terms of policy related to dual language learners there are many implications. It was useful for me to hear about what other states are doing. We need so much more research in this area. [Participant at Equity Webinar]



CEELO Materials Accessed and Valued by Stakeholders

Recipients of CEELO materials were asked if they had accessed the CEELO website and materials. As **Figure 2** illustrates, a total of 76 respondents¹⁴ reported that they had accessed CEELO materials. Most indicated they had accessed several types of CEELO material.

Figure 2: CEELO’s Work is Accessed in Multiple Ways (n=76)¹⁵

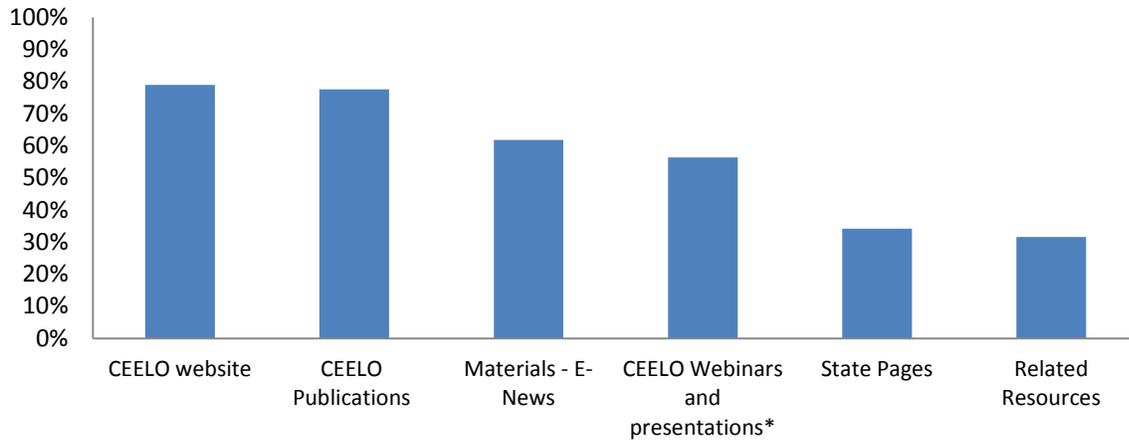
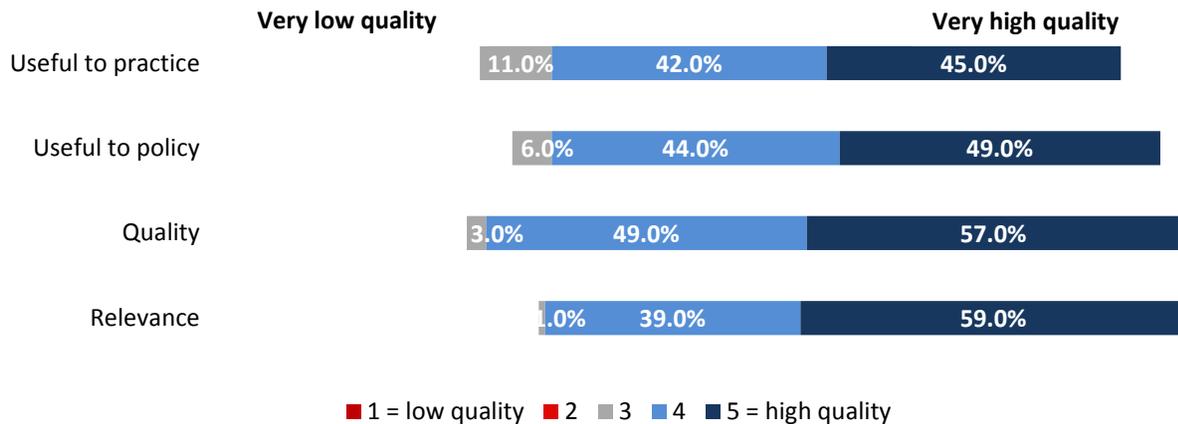


Figure 3 provides data on respondents’ ratings of materials in terms of quality, relevance, usefulness to policy, and usefulness to practice.

Figure 3: CEELO Materials Valued as High Quality and Useful (n=76)



¹⁴ NOTE: Survey questions on the quality and use of CEELO publications was included in three separate surveys (state, collaborators, CEELO E-News subscribers). The total n comes from the aggregation of responses from the 3 surveys. Hence the n is much larger than responses for TA or collaboration. Of the 89 respondents across surveys (22 state, 17 collaborator, 50 e-news), 13 either said they didn’t access the publication or didn’t know if they had or did not complete the section on publications.

¹⁵ Respondents in the State TA survey were not provided the option for webinars and presentations. N=56



Respondents commented on the relevance, timeliness, and quality of the information:

I always know that I can depend on the products from CEELO to be high quality, current, research, and best-practice based.

The CEELO e-news serves up digestible bits of information that seem to show up at very opportune moments. I appreciate how concise and relevant the information has been.

Your website is well organized and occasionally I visit the 'about u's section and explore your partner's websites for additional resources. I appreciate CEELO's twitter stream.



Evaluation Question 3: Did CEELO TA assist state administrators in building capacity to implement policy for children birth through third grade? What specific policy outcomes were achieved?

CEELO's Assistance Has Led to Desired Outcomes

Analysis of TA database entries reveals that of the 84 TA requests that were completed, *all* accomplished the desired goals established by state early education administrators and CEELO TA liaisons. Examples of the range of TA goals are as follow:

- Engage in peer exchange to share lessons learned regarding early implementation of the Preschool Expansion Grant
- Support development of strategic plan to guide operations of the new Office of Early Learning
- Support development of operational plan to guide reorganized early learning professional development office
- Provide recommendations on characteristics of a valid and reliable Kindergarten Entry Assessment for the General Assembly's consideration
- Support state's effort to support districts use of SIG and Title 1 funds to support early childhood
- Develop a sustainability plan for Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge (RTT-ELC) activities
- Develop policy and procedures for targeting preschool to most at-risk students
- Develop procedures for recruiting most at-risk students for preschool

Analysis of data from the TA database revealed that each listed goal in the completed responsive TA activities was accomplished. Given the range of state needs and varying nature of the TA, the reported impact and benefits ranged accordingly. Box 3 below provides an example of the range of TA that CEELO provided and the impact of the TA on one state.

Box 3. CEELO TA to Mississippi

What CEELO Did: Coordinating closely with a team from the Southeast Regional Comprehensive Center (SE CC), CEELO provided technical assistance and support to the Mississippi Department of Education. CEELO assisted with developing a program monitoring instrument and protocol; reviewing criteria for program quality based on child assessment results; communicating early education data and information to legislators and the public; forming an advisory Early Childhood Stakeholder Group; and, crafting a proposed state definition of school readiness for the state board of education approval.



Over the course of the year, CEELO provided interactive learning opportunities at the Mississippi Early Learning Conference on *Making informed decisions: An administrator's guide to understand early education research and school-community partnerships for early learning success*. Finally, CEELO supported networking with other state early childhood education specialists in state departments of education and related departments, including participation at the CEELO National Roundtable focusing on leadership.

Why CEELO Provided Assistance: As a result of the Early Learning Collaborative enactment in April 2013, the Mississippi Department of Education (MDE) was charged with developing and implementing a state-funded prekindergarten program by January 2014. Though new Superintendent Carey Wright was highly supportive of pre-K, the department previously had not been resourced to address education before kindergarten, with the exception of early childhood special education. Within its first year, the program had selected its third early education program coordinator, Dr. Jill Dent.

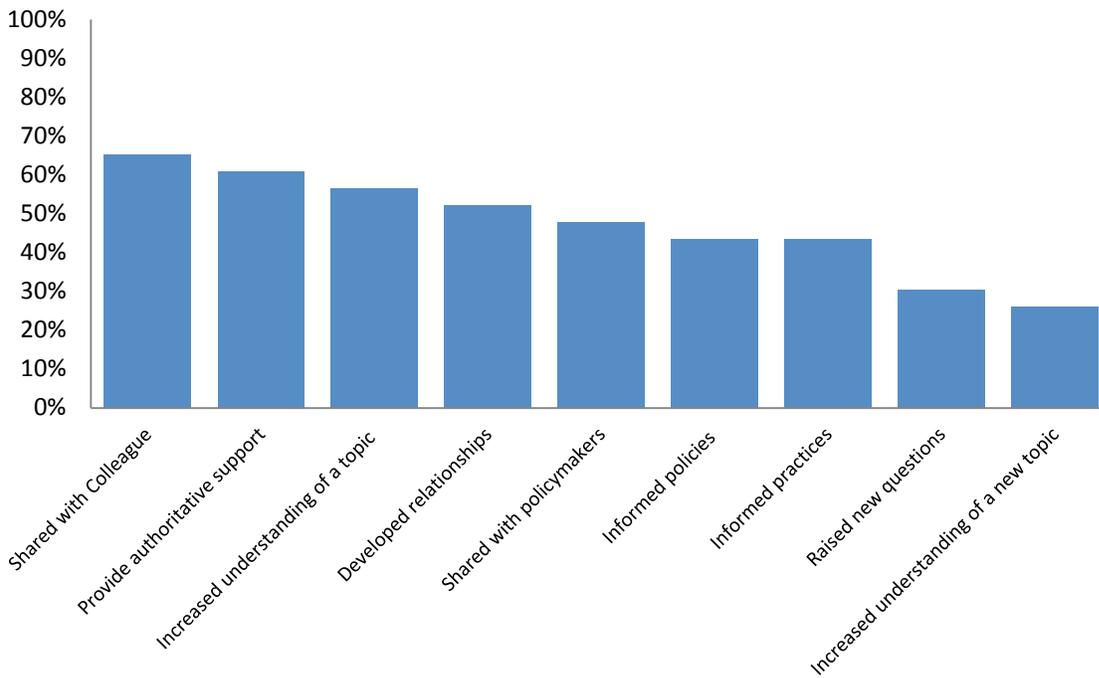
How the Assistance Impacted the State: Independent evaluations reveal that stakeholders reported the assistance was high quality and was highly useful. One recipient reported, “[The CEELO TA provider] has been an outstanding resource for our state. In several instances, I have reached out for his assistance when there are urgent time-sensitive issues being discussed that impact EC policy decisions. [The TA provider] recently very quickly responded to our needs by sending the latest research on retention, and this was instrumental to guide the thinking of our state leaders. [The TA provider] helps me think through next steps as we strive to build more capacity within our EC division.”

What Challenges and Issues Exist for the State: As MDE enters its second year of state-funded pre-K with heightened expectations from the legislature, CEELO will continue to provide responsive technical assistance to the Mississippi Department of Education and encourage their participation in strategic learning opportunities provided by the Center. CEELO's efforts will be done in collaboration with the SE CC so as to maximize federal resources and minimize the need for MDE to coordinate with multiple technical assistance providers.

Building capacity in SEAs is a primary and important aim of the TA CEELO provides. CEELO surveyed SEA staff and asked about the ways in which the TA has affected SEA capacity. Survey results reveal that respondents were most likely to report using the TA to share ideas and lessons learned with colleagues, provide authoritative support to advance their SEA work, increase an understanding of a topic, and develop relationships. Many used the TA provided in multiple ways (see **Figure 4** on the following page).



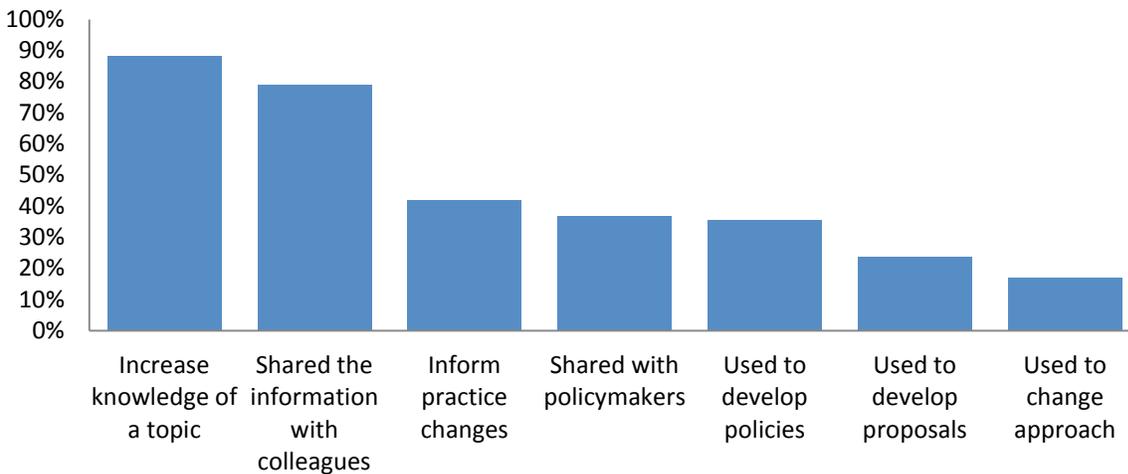
Figure 4: TA Used To Build Capacity in A Variety of Ways (n=20)



Use of technology-enhanced TA

Similarly, recipients of CEELO technology-based products and services reported that the information and resources have had a positive impact on their own knowledge and ability to craft policy. As illustrated in **Figure 5**, about half of survey respondents reported they used materials to inform practice and about 30 percent used the information to develop policies or proposals.

Figure 5: CEELO Materials Build Capacity To Develop or Inform Policies (n=76)





Examples of the how CEELO TA and resources have been used to benefit SEAs are presented below. Many respondents noted CEELO continued to build on the themes identified in Year 3.

Served as source of authoritative information & content expertise

Information has been extremely helpful in shaping a dialogue with policy leaders in the state

I have used your materials and publications to strengthen research on certain topics (screenings, assessments, professional development).

I have used all of CEELO's resources to increase my own knowledge, and I have shared resources with colleagues.

I always know that I can depend on the products from CEELO to be high quality, current, research- and best-practice based. I frequently use them when providing technical assistance or presentations and share them via a newsletter that our organization puts out 2x a month.

Cited KEA and comprehensive systems resources in an article published in the state ASCD journal; used many CEELO references in the development of a position paper on KEAs submitted to the DPI

Facilitated Learning between states and within a state

I have used your webinars (especially the meeting minutes / PowerPoint presentations) to learn about best practices from other(s) in the field and other states.

I have shared information with the statewide birth-to-grade 3 leadership group as an FYI and also as a foundation for group discussions. I have also shared with programs that receive state funding to keep them informed about best practice and relevant/recent ECE topics. Complications of state-by-state information on particular topics have informed colleagues as we develop in-state materials, programs and policies.

The FastFacts are helpful when other states want to know about the work we are engaged in.

References to comprehensive assessment systems in multiple presentations delivered at state conferences

I have shared information on assessment (kindergarten entry, preschool, birth-3rd) practices with colleagues at work and other topics such as early literacy, systems work with members of the State Agencies Early Childhood Leadership Team.



Informed policy/practice

CEELO has presented before policy makers in our state resulting in thoughtful questions from them and requests for follow-up information. CEELO has provided information that has been shared across many school divisions in the state, resulting in improved practices. [State respondent, CEELO State TA Survey]

TA from CEELO informed recommendations for the Governor's Education Reform Commission that will include changes in the state budget and potential legislation. [State respondent, CEELO State TA Survey]

I write the CCDBG State Plan related to Child Care and some CEELO information has been helpful to the documentation of data and best practices in early care and education.

We have used information specific to screening and assessment in our work to build a comprehensive system of screening and assessment for children from birth to 3rd grade, as we have explored KEA, and as we develop resource materials for the stakeholders.

Used the resources to develop early learning standards for the state.

Used information in the development of job-embedded professional development for principals and prekindergarten teachers

CEELO developed a reference document on KEAs at the request of the DPI. That document was foundational in the development of the KEA position paper submitted.

CEELO staff reviewed drafts of new ELA and math PK-2 standards; CEELO experts did a very thorough and helpful job! Writing teams acted upon many suggestions for revision. [Regional Center TA provider, Collaborator Survey]

I have shared information on assessment (kindergarten entry, preschool, - 3rd) practices with colleagues at work and other topics such as early literacy, systems work with members of the State Agencies Early Childhood Leadership Team.

Identify connections between ECE and other priority education issues

The information gained from the CEELO website has provided me with information I shared with colleagues and leadership. The Employability work is just beginning, but has been shared in its draft form with the Education Commissioner as he begins his tenure. The hope is that the connection between school readiness skills and employability skills will highlight the importance of early learning experiences to later learning and success. The work CEELO is doing will show that connection. [State respondent, CEELO State TA Survey]



Inform and train next generation early childhood professionals

I use it in my lectures training early childhood teachers.

I train pre-service early education and elementary teachers at a university and I stay up to date with your resources to incorporate new information into my lectures. My students most often conceptualize early education as birth through 5. Sharing and referencing resources from your website allows them to become more immersed in early education as birth through 8 and recognize how that conception has implications for their later work as teachers. I'm also using some of your state resources for my dissertation sampling.

I have shared the information with graduate students and have used it to inform committee work.

In addition, a respondent from a leading national foundation noted that CEELO information resources were “*Very important information to help us develop our investment strategy.*”

Evaluation Question 4: What did we learn about how state policy context supports or impedes efforts to build capacity? How can CEELO improve delivery of TA that builds SEA capacity to implement policy for children birth through third grade?

To date, all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Guam, Commonwealth of Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI), and the Virgin Islands have had the opportunity to participate in CEELO webinars, and annual or regional meetings; they have access to materials on the website and receive CEELO materials in E-News and via other electronic means. Many factors impact a state’s ability to effectively utilize TA, and CEELO’s ability to build capacity to implement effective policy varies based on the specific needs and capacities of the states. However, in all cases our TA is customized and based on the best evidence from research and practice. To illustrate this contextual understanding of the alignment of CEELO TA and state’s needs and capacity, **Box 4** presents a brief vignette of CEELO’s TA provision in one state.

Box 4. CEELO TA to State in Transition

What CEELO Did: Coordinating closely with the liaison from the Northeast Comprehensive Center, CEELO provided technical assistance to support the development of a strategic plan to implement a system of professional development for early childhood educators. CEELO facilitated a full-day meeting comprising stakeholders from state agencies, regional offices within the state, and professional development providers.



Shortly after the meeting, the newly elected governor placed restrictions on state spending, offered early retirement options for state employees, and changed strategic direction for early education in the state. To respond to these changes, the state education agency asked CEELO to meet with a team of state staff to translate the strategic plan into an operational plan that could provide a useful guide for state work for the upcoming year.

Why CEELO Provided Assistance: The state education agency sought assistance from CEELO and the Northeast Comprehensive Center to develop a strategic plan to support a professional development system for early childhood educators. The state, faced with budget restrictions then asked for assistance to develop an operational plan to ensure the state could meet the needs of educators. Faced with reductions in state education agency personnel and increased demands, the state sought opportunities to create efficiencies in offering supports to educators.

How the Assistance Impacted the State: Independent evaluations reveal that stakeholders reported the assistance helped with longer-term planning and provided state employees with needed support during a time of staffing challenges. One individual who participated in the longer-term strategic planning process as well as the process of developing an operational plan reported that CEELO, “Facilitated discussion of relevant issues and resulted in concrete action.” Another comment was, “I really appreciated the paper on research of best practices -- this is something I have been wanting since we cannot use our grant funds to travel out of state to conferences. The session seemed responsive to the needs we verbalized at our meetings.”

What Challenges and Issues Exist for the State: As the state seeks to implement the strategic plan to support the creation of a system of tiered professional development supports for early education teachers, the state education agency will continue to work with CEELO to implement the existing plan. The state education agency has asked CEELO to provide TA in Year 4 to ensure courses offered are aligned with the state’s broader education goals. Specifically, the state is seeking to support the effective implementation of formative and summative assessments and is in the process of implementing a B-3rd Grade framework of supports. The SEA is eager to align the professional development strategic plan with ongoing work on assessment and the state’s B-3rd Grade framework so that educators can easily see how these activities are aligned, rather than viewing each separately.

Conclusion and Recommendations

CEELO continues to meet and exceed performance benchmarks established in yearly management plans. CEELO TA is highly rated and respondents report that TA is useful and relevant to policy makers, and information resources are highly relevant and filling a gap in research-based information. CEELO TA liaisons have successfully provided TA to most states and many territories/jurisdictions, and established strong relationships with the Comprehensive Center Network and other early childhood TA and research organizations. Upon completion of three years of operation, CEELO has achieved significant milestones toward our goal to build the capacity of State Education Agencies (SEAs) to implement comprehensive



and aligned early learning systems in order to increase the number of children from birth through third grade that are prepared to succeed in school.

As designed, the annual evaluation has identified a few areas for improvement and continued focus of TA delivery and relationship building between CEELO TA liaisons, State administrators, and Comprehensive Center staff in Year 4. These are:

- ***Expand opportunities for states to learn from one another and tailor experiences to meet participants' needs.*** Individuals who have attended the Roundtable, the Peer Exchanges, monthly peer exchange calls and in-person meetings report that they value hearing about other states' experiences implementing early learning initiatives and taking actions to expand early learning opportunities. Ratings of the opportunities have consistently been high and those attending these experiences report that the knowledge gained, practical tools, and policies and procedures developed by other states are very valuable. Yet opportunities remain to tailor the opportunities to meet the needs of participants. For example, the Northeast states attending regular monthly peer exchange calls are similar in some respects, but four states report particular challenges supporting early learning opportunities in rural areas (Connecticut, Maine, New York, Vermont). In the upcoming year, CEELO should support opportunities for states to share lessons learned that are directly applicable to the participating states' contexts.
- ***Provide information in formats that can be directly used to inform policy and procedure.*** Evaluations of CEELO materials and resources are highly rated, but opportunities exist for CEELO to create resources that can be directly used by recipients. For example, materials CEELO produced on preschool eligibility were very highly rated and a number of state personnel reported using the information to inform state policy and procedure. In contrast, policy briefs that provide an overview without concrete examples of how the information can be used by states were given high ratings in terms of quality but recipients gave lower ratings for usefulness.
- ***Engage state personnel in designing strategic technical assistance.*** The overall ratings of strategic TA are high, but a number of recipients provided suggestions to better tailor the information to meet individual needs. For example, a number of attendees at in-person meetings and webinars requested more interaction, but some preferred more direct lecture. By engaging state personnel in designing the strategic TA, CEELO has an opportunity to meet the needs of early learning specialists in state departments of education.
- ***Proactively lead state education agencies in advancing an early learning agenda.*** In Year 3, CEELO provided intensive responsive TA to states throughout the country to meet their needs and priorities. With the authorization of the Every Student Succeeds Act, opportunities exist to use existing funding streams and initiatives to advance early learning. In light of federal policy changes as well as research on the importance of early learning, CEELO is in a position to offer strategic support to states.



Appendix A: Objectives, Scope, and Methodology

The objectives of the evaluation were to collect data and report findings to use formatively to improve CEELO activities and to document perceived outcomes of CEELO activities. Three different teams were engaged in collecting and analyzing data for this evaluation report. The scope of the data collection and analysis activities and methodology employed by each team is described below.

CEELO Evaluation Team

The CEELO team began collecting data in 2014 and completed data collection, analysis, and reporting in December 2015. Two CEELO staff worked in collaboration with the CEELO leadership team to engage in a participatory evaluation. The primary focus of the 2015 annual report was Year 3 (fiscal year 2015) but the report includes some data that were collected and analyzed in Year 1 and 2.

Surveys. The CEELO evaluation team drafted different types of surveys that were used to capture data about the quality and outcomes of CEELO activities.

- **A Year-End Survey** was sent to state level recipients of CEELO technical assistance in Year 3. The survey asked about responsive TA, specific strategic TA activities, technology-enhanced TA, and CEELO materials. Respondents were asked to complete five-point Likert scale questions about the quality, relevance, and usefulness of TA and materials and were also asked to respond to open-ended questions. The survey was sent to a total of 89 individuals identified through the CEELO database; 24 individuals responded, yielding a response rate of 27 percent.
- **A Collaborator Survey** was sent to regional centers, comprehensive centers, ELC-TA centers, and other TA centers that engaged in an active collaboration with CEELO in Year 3 to assess the quality and impact of the TA. The survey was sent to a total of 57 individuals; a total of 17 individuals responded, yielding a response rate of 29 percent.
- **A Publication Survey** was sent to all subscribers of the CEELO E-News to capture how readers used CEELO publications. The survey was sent to a total of 573 individuals; a total of 53 individuals responded, yielding a response rate of 9 percent.
- **Post TA and InfoLine Surveys** were administered after CEELO provided TA or information line responses. Surveys were only administered at the conclusion of a TA activity and, as noted, in many instances the TA was seamless and in such cases recipients were not asked to complete surveys each time a new TA request began. A total of 60 individuals completed surveys at the conclusion of a responsive TA activity.
- **Post Webinar Surveys** were administered immediately after Webinars and a total of 266 individuals responded.



- **Roundtable Surveys** were administered to participants in the annual meeting. A total of 136 individuals were sent the survey and 36 responded.
- **Other Surveys** such as surveys of participants in regional center quarterly calls, surveys of participants in the peer learning community, and a needs-sensing survey of stakeholders in selected states were administered. A total of 11 different surveys were administered to a total of 74 respondents.

Interviews. The CEELO evaluation team performed secondary analysis of interview findings reported by the Rutgers University graduate students. The methods employed by the graduate students are described below in the Rutgers University Graduate Student Methodology section3.

Database and log reviews. During the first quarter of Year 1, CEELO contracted with an independent firm to develop an online TA database and Information line database. The database includes variables to capture the following aspects of the TA: the requester, provider and any possible collaborators, the intensity, the priority topic, the goals, the tasks necessary to achieve the goal, target dates, and follow up steps. The Information Line database included the following fields: requester, provider and possible collaborator, priority topic, and details about the information provided. Separately, CEELO staff collected data regarding ongoing collaborations with other TA providers.

CEELO TA providers and staff populated the databases and logs over the course of the year. The CEELO evaluation team analyzed the data to determine the number of requests, the intensity of the TA, the priority topics covered, the number of states that had requested and received TA and information, and the number of collaborative activities CEELO engaged in.

Document reviews. The CEELO evaluation team reviewed project agendas, emails, and ongoing communication among the Leadership Team to obtain contextual information. The team used Google analytics to determine the number of Web hits over the year, the number of states that had accessed the site, and the most popular pages. Finally, the CEELO evaluation team reviewed materials developed by CEELO and comments by peer reviewers to determine and assess the quality of the materials.

Rutgers University Graduate Student Methodology

Rutgers University graduate students taking a course taught by Dr. Sharon Ryan and Dr. Drew Gitomer independently collected and analyzed data in the fall 2015.

Interviews. A team of graduate students developed a semi-structured interview protocol to capture qualitative data from CEELO stakeholders and a separate protocol to capture data from the CEELO leadership team. The team employed a purposeful sampling strategy to collect data from three CEELO TA recipients and four members of the CEELO leadership team. The 30-minute phone interviews were conducted using the using a semi-structured interview protocol. A total of 15 individuals from 11 different states that had received responsive TA were interviewed.



Table A1: Data Collection Activities

Evaluation Activity	Description	Purpose	Number Year 1	Number Year 2	Number Year 3
Surveys	Year End Surveys ¹⁶	Obtain evaluation data regarding quality and impact of TA and assess current needs and issues	212	92	89
	State specialists	Obtain evaluation data regarding quality and impact of TA and assess current needs and issues	NA	76	22 ¹⁷
	Collaborators	Learn about effectiveness, quality, and impact of collaborations	NA	16	17 ¹⁸
	CEELO E-News recipients	Learn about the quality and usefulness of CEELO's resources	NA	NA	50 ¹⁹
	Post TA/info line response surveys	Learn about perceptions of quality and usefulness of information	16	59	53
	Post Webinar surveys	Learn about perceptions of quality and usefulness of information	84	130	144
	Roundtable surveys	Determine quality, usefulness,	73	113	36

¹⁶ In Year 3, the survey was sent to state specialists, collaborators and recipients of publications through separate survey monkey links. In Year 1 a single survey was sent and in Year 2 separate surveys were sent to state specialists and collaborators.

¹⁷ A survey monkey request was sent to 91 individuals who were listed in TA responses in the CEELO database. The initial request went out on 12/2/15 and a reminder on 12/8/15. Twenty-four responded; however 2 did not complete more than title, so their responses were not included.

¹⁸ A survey monkey request was sent to 58 individuals who were listed as collaborators in the CEELO database. The initial request went out on 12/2/15 and a reminder on 12/8/15. Eighteen responded; however 1 did not complete more than title, so their responses were not included.

¹⁹ A survey monkey request was sent to 580 E-news subscribers (those who had received the state or collaborator requests were removed for duplication reasons) on 12/2/15 and a reminder was sent 12/8/15. Fifty-two responses were received, 3 respondents only completed their title and were removed.



Evaluation Activity	Description	Purpose	Number Year 1	Number Year 2	Number Year 3
		and desired next steps			
Interviews	Other surveys	Assess needs of target audience and obtain feedback on targeted activities	43	90	74
	CEELO TA recipients - State early education administrators	Learn about the nature, effectiveness, and impact of TA Learn about future needs	11	15	15
Interviews Database and log reviews	Correspondence with state specialists who have not received TA from CEELO	Learn about reasons for not requesting TA, needs, and ways we might be of assistance in the future	NA	6	NA
Document review	Reviews of TA database, Info line database, and logs produced by CEELO TA providers	Determine the states we have provided TA and info responses Describe the nature and intensity of the TA Analyze data to create “vignettes” that describe the nature, intensity and impact of the TA Analyze quality of the data to improve consistency and usefulness of data			
	Project communications Web analytics CEELO products (e.g., policy briefs and documents)	Determine number of resources posted on website, number of publications by type, etc. to inform whether met targets in Year 2 Management Plan			



Appendix B. CEELO Presentations Conducted in Year 3

Listed below are the titles of the 14 presentations, by month, by CEELO staff in Year 3.

November 2014

[The Impact of Policy on the Class of 2027: Early Care and Education in South Carolina](#) details policy mechanisms that lead to improved child outcomes. The presentation discusses young children's brain development, dimensions of readiness, elements and measurements of quality, the P-20 approach, and other areas policy can impact. It also includes information on return on investments in early childhood for South Carolina. Jim Squires presented at the Early Childhood Common Agenda Forum South Carolina Children's Trust.

January 2015

[Peer Learning Communities](#). Kirsty Clarke Brown, Senior Communications Policy Specialist, gave this presentation to the New Jersey Early Learning Academy in January 2015. The presentation identifies purposes of peer learning communities (PLC), principles for success, stages of a PLC, and key steps, activities, and considerations. Links to resources are available on the final three slides

February 2015

[Best Practices for Supporting Teachers and Administrators to Improve Outcomes for Dual Language Learners in PK-Grade 3](#) highlights research on training DLL teachers, describes best practices for teachers and administrators to support development of English and children's home language, shares a tool for coaching and professional development of teachers, and discusses policy trends and recommendations for improving outcomes of dual language learner children. Lori Connors-Tadros (CEELO) and Alexandra Figueras-Daniel (NIEER) presented at the [CCSSO ELL-SCASS](#) Meeting in Austin, Texas.

[Early Learning as a School Improvement Intervention](#) provides an overview on how early learning strategies can advance achievement as a school improvement intervention, along with key research on the impact of high quality early learning programs. CEELO's Jana Martella presented with Libby Doggett (USED), Lenay Dunn and Carlos McCauley (Center on School Turnaround), and Jana Martella (CEELO) at the 2015 Title I Conference.

March 2015

[Early Education Indicators and School Improvement Grant \(SIG\) Implications](#) introduces new [Indistar® Early Childhood Indicators](#), which provide an opportunity for stakeholders to use indicators and the associated research to align early childhood education with school improvement efforts. The presentation includes information on how the indicators were selected and how they can be used. Diane Schilder and Melissa Dahlin gave this presentation at the [Fifth Annual Indistar Summit](#),



sponsored by the [Center on Innovations in Learning](#), and hosted by the [Arkansas State Department of Education](#) and the [South Central Comprehensive Center](#).

[Kindergarten as a Critical Link](#) focuses on ways that school districts can develop kindergarten policies to both support alignment across the early grades and ensure effective transitions for children and families into elementary school. The session highlights [10 policies](#) that support, promote, and enhance the learning and joy of learning for all kindergarten children, leading to positive child outcomes for all. Panelists share how districts and school are enacting and implementing these policies, with a discussion of strategies, approaches, and outcomes. Melissa Dahlin and Shannon Riley-Ayers gave this presentation at the Ounce of Prevention's [Excellence in the Early Grades District Leadership Summit](#) with Vincent Costanza (New Jersey Department of Education), Anne Arnold (Highline Public Schools, WA), and Rick Falkenstein (Kingwood Township School District, NJ).

April 2015

[Is Retention in the Early Years an Effective Research-Based Approach for Improving Student Outcomes?](#) presents what research had to say about the practice of retention, and shares state and local approaches, including early identification and intervention strategies. Jim Squires supported the Southeast Regional Comprehensive Center's online Community of Practice for SEA early education leaders during this interactive session.

May 2015

[Building a Comprehensive and Aligned Assessment System for all Children: Birth to Kindergarten](#) reviews program requirements related to assessment, a comprehensive framework for aligned assessment, and recommended practices. Jim Squires presented with Mary McLean (Head Start National Center on Quality Teaching and Learning/University of Florida) and Catherine Scott-Little (UNC-Greensboro) at the 2015 National Early Childhood Inclusion Institute.

[Life After Pre-K: Looking at Kindergarten Assessment](#) presented material for attendees to understand the components of a statewide comprehensive assessment system for all children birth to kindergarten, identify the current status of kindergarten assessments as well as commonalities/variations across states and challenges in developing kindergarten entrance assessments, identify challenges and opportunities for including children with disabilities in statewide assessments, and understand the experiences of the State of North Carolina in implementing a kindergarten assessment. Jim Squires presented with Cindy Bagwell (NC Department of Public Instruction), Mary McLean (Head Start National Center on Quality Teaching and Learning/University of Florida) and Catherine Scott-Little (UNC-Greensboro) at the 2015 National Early Childhood Inclusion Institute.

[Linking Head Start Data with State Early Childhood Systems](#) provides an overview of the Early Childhood Data Collaborate [issue brief](#) and offers perspectives from two states (GA, PA) on their data



linkage efforts. Tom Schultz gave this presentation at the [National Head Start Association Annual Conference](#).

[Strategic Financing for Early Care and Education Systems](#) discusses a strategic approach to financing quality early care and education programs, including five key steps to strategic financing and examples of funding strategies used by states to support sustainability. Lori Connors-Tadros presented this information to CA, GA, RI, and NC, Race to the Top- Early Learning Challenge grantees, at the Sustainability Peer Learning Exchange hosted by the [Early Learning Challenge TA Center](#) in Atlanta.

June 2015

[Approaches to State Pre-K Eligibility Policy: Considerations for Virginia Policy Makers](#) provided an overview to the Joint Legislative Committee on Virginia's Preschool Initiative of national data on state pre-K eligibility policy and considerations for policy makers in ensuring that high-need children have equitable access to quality preschool programs. Lori Connors-Tadros conducted this presentation at the first meeting of the committee charged with providing recommendations to the Governor by November 2015 for reforming the Virginia Preschool Initiative to increase accountability, flexibility, and innovation, in partnership with schools and private providers

[Can We Stop the Insanity? Recommendations to Create Coherent Policy that Truly Supports Great Teaching and Learning for all Young Children from Birth through Kindergarten](#) provided an opportunity for [NAEYC-PDI](#) participants to review draft recommendations for policy to promote effective teaching and learning for children birth through kindergarten in family and community settings, and the early years of elementary school. Participants provided input on the [working paper](#), reviewed a [guide](#) on a policy problem around streamlining accountability structures, and heard from Vincent Costanza on the goals of New Jersey in participating in a [Learning Table](#) co-hosted by BUILD and CEELo. Lori Connors-Tadros and Jana Martella from CEELo, with Debi Mathias, BUILD Initiative and Vincent Costanza, NJ Department of Education, presented.

[Making PreK-3rd Grade Assessments Matter](#) was presented by Tom Schultz at the National Association of Elementary School Principals Conference in Long Beach, CA, on June 30th, with co-panelists Kristie Kauerz from the University of Washington and Cindy Bagwell from the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction. The presentation was part of a strand of sessions to highlight NAESP's initiative to build the leadership capacity of their members in early childhood education, based on their recent publication [Leading Pre-K-3 Learning Communities: Competencies for Effective Principal Practice](#).

July 2015

[The Common Thread: Crafting a Coherent Accountability System Focused on Great Teaching](#) addresses key questions and shared innovations and key resources from states in a learning table focused on teacher quality. What are the consistent supports needed to focus QRIS and public school accountability approaches on great teaching? How can we bring coherence to early childhood quality improvement



policies? This presentation was given at the 2015 National QRIS meeting by CEELo's Lori Connors-Tadros and Jana Martella, with Build partners Debi Mathias and Kate Tarrant.

[Making Informed Decisions: An Administrator's Guide to Understanding Early Education](#)

[Research](#) unpacks what research tells us around selected issues in early childhood education such as what makes an effective early learning program, essential elements of high quality pre-K, retention, teacher qualifications, and administrator qualifications. It also provides suggestions on how to turn research in action and includes resources for administrators. Jim Squires presented this material at the Mississippi Early Childhood Conference in Natchez, MS.

[School-Community Partnerships for Early Learning Success](#) chronicles the benefits and challenges of school-community partnerships, offers ingredients for success, and identifies responsibilities of principals and administrators. Jim Squires presented this material at the Mississippi Early Childhood Conference in Natchez, MS.



Appendix C – CEELO Publications Year 3

Annotated Bibliographies

[Early Childhood Suspension and Expulsion](#) identifies selected research studies and federal and state policy resources on early childhood suspension, expulsion, and discipline and what can be done to prevent these practices. (August 2015)

[Leadership Resources](#) shares resources used in CEELO's [Leadership Academy](#), which is designed to strengthen leadership and management competencies of individuals with responsibility for early childhood education programs in state departments of education, early learning agencies, and other state early childhood education agencies. (September 2015)

[Professional Development Systems](#) provides resources across three areas: professional development and planning, coaching and mentoring, and competency development. (October 2014)

[Program Quality Improvement Systems](#) identifies selected resources to assist states in assessing their current continuous quality improvement process for preschool programs as they expand services to increase access to high quality programs. (September 2015)

[Resources for Supporting Teachers and Administrators to Improve Outcomes for Dual Language Learners in Pre-K through Third Grade](#) identifies selected resources on best practices and policy to support effective teaching and learning for dual language learners (DLL) in early childhood programs and early elementary school. (March 2015)

[Tax Policy and Quality](#) identifies selected resources on using tax policy, especially refundable tax credits, as a financing strategy for early childhood programs. (August 2015)

[Using Technology in Early Childhood Classrooms](#) provides some resources and information about using technology in early education classrooms; and issues to consider when introducing new tools, media, and devices, so that educators and policymakers can make informed decisions about using such resources, and preparing teachers and care providers to do so. (July 2015)

Fast Facts

[Professional Learning Academy: Supporting District Implementation of Early Childhood Policy](#) presents information on a Professional Learning Academy model of professional development for district teams and some of the initial impacts of this work on participants.

[QRIS and Inclusion: Do State QRIS Standards Support the Learning Needs of All Children?](#) reviews which states accommodate children with special needs in their quality rating and improvement system (QRIS), and highlights states with exceptional inclusionary practices. (November 2014)



[Examples of State Guidance to Determine and Verify Income Eligibility for Prekindergarten Programs](#)

shares income eligibility guidance, tools, and resources states have developed for preschool programs to use to determine and verify income eligibility for programs and illustrates different approaches states can consider. (May 2015)

[Retention in the Early Years: Is Early Retention an Effective, Research-Based Strategy for Improving Student Outcomes?](#) reviews literature on research and practice about the effects of early retention, and highlights considerations that make retention a nuanced, rather than definitive, research-based approach to enhancing student outcomes. (August 2015)

Policy Reports and Briefs

[Approaches to State Pre-K Eligibility Policy: Considerations for Policy Makers in Revising Policy to Increase Access for High Needs Children](#) provides policy makers with information on state-funded pre-K programs' eligibility policies and the common risk factors used to prioritize enrollment. The report on the risk factors with the strongest impact on children's school readiness is summarized. The report concludes with considerations for policy makers as they review or revise eligibility to serve more children, effectively and efficiently, in high quality early education programs. (May 2016) [Full Report](#) | [Executive Summary](#)

Incorporating Early Learning Strategies in the School Improvement Grants (SIG) Program (December 2014)

Short Takes

Systems (1)

[State Approaches to Evaluating Preschool Programs](#) presents guidance for state policy makers for evaluating the quality and effects of a preschool program. The information here will be valuable as states consider monitoring for program quality and continuous improvement, as well as conducting a program evaluation for effectiveness. (June 2015, Short Take)

Tools

Data (1); Systems (6); Workforce (2)

[Evaluating Early Childhood Educators: Prekindergarten through Third Grade, a Supplement to the Practical Guide to Designing Comprehensive Educator Evaluation Systems](#) helps state and district teams to problem-solve and make design decisions to differentiate evaluation systems for early childhood teachers. Jana Martella and Lori Connors-Tadros, CEELo co-directors, designed this supplemental guide as an extension to the Great Teacher and Leader Center's resource, Practical Guide to Designing Comprehensive Teacher Evaluation Systems. (March 2015)



[The Preschool Program Quality Assurance System Discussion Guide](#) is designed to facilitate policymakers' review of their state's Preschool Program Quality Assurance Systems (PPQAS). The discussion guide includes two frameworks to inform the critical analysis of the state's current system. The first framework addresses common components of the system and the second framework considers the governance and functionality of the PPQAS. (September 2015)

[Peer Learning Community Reflection Form](#) is for Peer Learning Community members to reflect on the value of activities they have initiated, or engaged in. Results of the reflection and discussion can inform next steps; content, timing, and format of future meetings; and activities for action. ([Word Version](#))

[Peer Learning Community Planning Tool](#) can assist Peer Learning Community members to plan future short-term and long-term activities and goals. This information can be used by the PLC facilitator to identify meeting goals and resources needed to support PLC actions. ([Word Version](#))

[State Financing Strategies for Early Care and Education Systems](#) (Discussion Guide) is intended to help state policymakers make decisions about which financing strategies are needed to support early care and education (ECE) programs in their state. State and local investments are increasing in many states for early care and education programs, but in others, states are not investing sufficient dollars to ensure all children have access to high quality programs. A deep understanding of financing strategies and a willingness to engage in finance reform is necessary to ensure all children have access to high quality early care and education. (May 2015)

[State Teacher Evaluation Systems: Fifty State Scan on Resources for Early Childhood Teachers](#) provides a national view of how states include early childhood teachers in state educator evaluation systems. This scan was developed to follow up on the findings reported in CEELo's policy report, [How are Early Childhood Teachers Faring in State Teacher Evaluation Systems?](#), which analyzed 11 states' early childhood teacher evaluation policy and practice in depth. (May 2015)

[Resources Developed by States and Selected Cities to Support Financing Preschool Programs](#) identifies the tools, reports, and guidance developed by 32 states and 4 cities (Denver, San Antonio, Seattle, and New York City) to support financing of high quality preschool programs in local communities and districts. (June 2015)

E-News

[Winter 2014](#)

[Spring 2015](#)

[Summer 2015](#)

[Fall 2015](#)



Other

[ECE Contact Directory](#) (updated in January and August)

[2015 Roundtable Summary](#) provides a high level overview of the 2015 Roundtable (Leading for Excellence), a list of resources shared by presenters and attendees, and summaries of the sessions in the meeting. (August 2015, Presentations)



Appendix D Webinars

[Approaches to State Prekindergarten Eligibility Policy: Considerations for Policymakers](#) reviews key findings from a CEELO policy report that provides information on state-funded pre-K program eligibility policies and considerations for policymakers as they review or revise eligibility to balance accountability and increase access for high-needs children. Susan Hogge, Legislative Fiscal Analyst for Public Education, Virginia House Appropriations Committee offers remarks regarding Virginia's recently revised eligibility policy for the Virginia Preschool Initiative. (July 2015)

[Effectively Engaging Private Partners Virginia Preschool Initiative \(VPI\) Program](#), hosted with the Virginia Department of Education with assistance from CEELO, shares successful strategies and lessons learned to strengthen the effectiveness of partnerships across sectors. This webinar was given as part of CEELO's Preschool Development Grant technical assistance. (March 2015)

[Evaluating Early Childhood Educators: Prekindergarten Through Third Grade, a Supplement to the Practical Guide to Designing Comprehensive Educator Evaluation Systems](#) highlights the development, recommended uses, and expected tools from the Evaluating Early Childhood Educators (Prekindergarten through Third Grade) supplement to the Center on Great Teachers and Leaders's resource, Practical Guide to Designing Comprehensive Teacher Evaluation Systems. This webinar was co-sponsored by CEELO and the Center on Great Teachers and Leaders. Presenters included Libby Doggett (U.S. Department of Education), Lori Connors-Tadros (CEELO), Lynn Holdheide (Center on Great Teachers and Leaders), Jana Martella (CEELO), and Reyna Hernandez (Illinois State Board of Education). (January 2015)

[Planning for the New Early Learning Model: Harnessing Potential in the Next School Improvement Grant Cycle](#), hosted by CEELO and the [Center on School Turnaround](#) (CST), reviews the eight components of the new model and discusses key requirements, including school leadership and expanding high quality prekindergarten and full-day kindergarten. Charlie Geier, Director of Early Learning and Intervention in the Office of Early Learning and Intervention, Indiana Department of Education, shares what the new early learning model means for the state of Indiana and examples of how Indiana is working to support the key components of the SIG. (April 2015)

[Preschool Expansion Grant Webinar – Setting the Stage for Success: Quality Improvement and Program Evaluation in State Pre-K Programs](#) features a discussion with Dr. Steve Barnett, (CEELO/NIEER), along with senior management colleagues from CEELO. The experts share insights on the implementation or expansion of a continuous improvement cycle in state-funded pre-K programs. They also discuss how state leaders can ensure they have sufficient data on the short- and long-term outcomes of the program. This webinar was conducted as part of CEELO's Preschool Development Grant technical assistance. (March 2015)

[Supporting Principal Leadership for Pre-K – Third Grade Learning Communities](#) addresses ways to enhance SEA and LEA leadership capacity for building P-3 communities, cultivate standards of effective



practice for P-3 principals and related leaders, develop practical implementation strategies as described by an elementary school principal and state education leaders, and consider implications for state and local policymakers, technical assistance and professional developmental providers, and higher education. The webinar was co-sponsored by the National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP), and the National Association of Early Childhood Specialists in State Departments of Education (NAECS-SDE). (March 2015)

[Teaching and Learning Project](#) (BUILD|CEELO) brings together selected state leaders and national experts to strengthen policy that promotes effective early childhood teaching and learning for each and every child from birth through third grade. During 2015, the project convened state leaders and experts to provide ideas, best practices, and resources to inform “what” policies most effectively advance teaching quality and “how” those policies and programs can be implemented to support great teaching and learning. The following webinars were conducted as part of the effort:

- [Advancing States’ Professional Development Policies to Focus on Effective Teaching](#) (May 2015)
- [Streamlining States’ Teacher Accountability Approaches](#) (June 2015)
- [Integrating Teaching Conditions into States’ Professional Development and Accountability Structures](#) (July 2015)
- [State Presentations](#) (August 2015)

[Tools to Support Principals as Evaluators of Early Childhood Teachers](#) features speakers and respondents from school districts, who share information and resources to support principals as effective evaluators of early childhood teachers (PK-Grade 3). CEELO, in collaboration with the Great Lakes and Midwest Comprehensive Centers, sponsored this webinar for state and local leaders in Indiana, Michigan, Ohio, Illinois, Iowa, Minnesota, and Wisconsin. (November 2014)

[Using Assessments to Improve Transitions to Kindergarten](#) features nationally known experts in discussion on how to integrate KEAs into a comprehensive assessment system and how to use the data to inform teaching practices. State department of education presenters also highlight practical strategies they are using to assess a child’s school readiness and adjust instruction to help bridge any gaps. This webinar was co-sponsored by the Regional Education Laboratory (REL) Northwest. Presenters include CEELO’s Jana Martella and Tom Schultz, along with Jacqueline Jones (Foundation for Child Development), John Pruette (Office of Early Learning, North Carolina Department of Public Instruction), and Fiona Helsel (REL Northwest). (November 2014)

[Young Immigrants and Dual Language Learners: Participation in Pre-K & Gaps at Kindergarten Entry](#) presents data that looks at how children from various language and immigrant backgrounds participate in pre-K programs and at how these children perform relative to their White peers at Kindergarten entry. (November 2014)