

2009 OSEP Verification Visit

Arizona Parent Survey: Parts B and C

Raising Special Kids constructed a self-administered electronic survey with Constant Contact survey tools to collect quantitative information about parents' understanding of how Arizona is meeting the state's general supervision requirements for Parts B and C of IDEA.

Part B and C survey questions were reviewed for family-friendly language and translated into Spanish. The surveys were accessible for a period of two weeks (September 30 – October 15th) in two languages: English and Spanish. Every respondent was presented with the same questions and in the same order, except where skip logic was triggered by specific responses to bring the respondent to an appropriate follow-up question. Control functions were applied which allowed a respondent to complete only one survey from a single computer.

The invitation to participate in a web-based survey was distributed to 2,459 recipients (2737 with 278 bounces) via email. Initial recipients comprised a broad statewide sample including parents and professionals, nonprofits and advocacy organizations, parent support groups, early intervention providers, school administrators, and parents who have had contact with Raising Special Kids and agreed to receive email messages. A Forward feature with an embedded hotlink was included in the initial message to recipients. Follow-up was conducted twice with recipients receiving subsequent email messages containing links to the surveys and a request for wide distribution.

Recognizing that some parents lack access to technology or for other reasons would not participate in the survey, facilitated discussions were conducted with parents in Spanish. Using existing parent support groups in Phoenix and Tucson, survey facilitators presented the questions in the same order and tallied verbal responses. 34 parents participated in this format and these responses are included in the report.

N= 379. Response rate of 15%. Data from English and Spanish versions for each survey were combined. 107 surveys were received for Part C, or 28% of total respondents. 268 respondents completed the Part B survey, 72% of total responses. Participation in the Spanish electronic survey was 3% of total electronic surveys. 50% of total respondents identified as Caucasian on Part C, and 74% on Part B questions.

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Data Outcomes Part C

- 68% I have been informed of my rights under the Early Intervention Program for Infants and Toddlers (Part C)
- 53% Don't know if Arizona corrected non-compliance issues
- 2 % Requested Mediation, and 6% Due Process Hearing
- 54% I know how to get information and data about EI services
- 20% I get early intervention information and data from a state or local agency
- 48% The early intervention system provides the services and supports my child and family needs
- 52% Do not know how Arizona collects information on early childhood programs and outcomes
- 55% Agree Strongly: My child receives services at home, at child care, or in another familiar place
- 19% I know how well Arizona met federal requirements for early intervention
- 38% I think Arizona implementation of the 45 day timeline was in compliance with IDEA requirements

Data Outcomes Part B

- 77% I was informed of my rights under federal law, the IDEA
- Area reported most in need of improvement: Teacher Quality
- 55% I don't know if Arizona corrected noncompliance in the past year
- Requested Mediation 8.6%; State Complaint 5.7%; Due Process 4%
- Issues raised were addressed in the complaint: 1.2%

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- 42.5% I know how to get information and statistics about special education services and the local school district
- 14% I obtained information from State's website (ADE); 11.4% from PTI
- 23.3% The educational system in Arizona is doing a good job of educating students with disabilities (55% responded No)
- 30.3% Arizona is making progress and improving outcomes for children with disabilities (37.7 % responded No)
- 9.8% The IEP team placed my child with a disability in a private school
- 3.2 % Disagree Strongly that private school services are comparable to the services in public school (2.8% Agree Strongly)
- 70.4% I do not know how well Arizona complied with federal requirements for special education law and regulations

Conclusion

Parent comment in response to the question about what is the most important thing Arizona can do to improve its ability to meet requirements under the IDEA, generated evidence of what parents consider the most pressing concerns. Parents reported on their satisfaction, or lack of satisfaction with special education services, and registered concern about Arizona's current budget crisis.

Parent comments centered on three broad themes: Improving teacher quality and performance, additional state funding, and working effectively with parents. The state's dire financial condition was clearly the backdrop and context for many comments, and reveals considerable anxiety about the continued reduction of services as the state attempts to address multi-billion dollar deficits this year and in the next several years.

We appreciate the opportunity to provide direct parent feedback to OSEP's Monitoring and State Improvement Planning Division. We hope the information generated by this effort is useful.

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