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# Research and Evaluation at the Center of Excellence for Children's Behavioral Health

The Center of Excellence for Children's Behavioral Health's research and evaluation team provides monitoring and assessment services for behavioral health providers and state agencies. Through our work with multiple child serving organizations, the center is evolving into a central data hub that supports outcomes evaluations for youth and emerging adults served by these agencies, with the ability to look across agencies and over time.

## Purpose

The Center of Excellence relies on a three-pronged approach integrating research, policy, and practice. These related components represent a continuous cycle with research informing policy; policy directing the design and implementation of programs; and evaluation of these programs refining implementation and further informing research and policy.

The Center of Excellence conducts evaluations to:

- Inform policy and practice
- Assess impact
- Stimulate program and process improvement
- Contribute to the existing research knowledge base

## Types of Research and Evaluation Services

Monitoring fidelity to practice models

Quality improvement

Cross-agency longitudinal analysis

Behavioral health and physical health outcomes

Assessing collective impact and collaboration across agencies involved in Systems of Care

Survey design, administration, and analysis

Implementation and operations research

Technical assistance in using data for decision making



**CENTER OF EXCELLENCE FOR  
CHILDREN'S BEHAVIORAL HEALTH**  
integrating research, policy, and practice

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## Research and Evaluation Framework

Our methods are built upon the U.S. Centers for Disease Controls and Prevention's evaluation framework. We incorporate qualitative and quantitative components to yield findings that can be translated and support informed decision-making that aligns practice and policy.

The Center of Excellence's research and evaluation team brings a breadth of experience to assist partners with program impact analysis, rapid cycle evaluation, performance improvement, strategic planning, systems integration, and cost-savings assessments using both programmatic and administrative claims/encounter data.

### Evaluation Framework\*

Engage Stakeholders	Creation of an advisory committee that will oversee the evaluation
Describe the Program	Development of a comprehensive program description used to clarify all the components and intended outcomes of the program
Focus on Evaluation Design	Assists with prioritizing evaluation questions and identifying the appropriate design to provide answers
Gather Credible Evidence	The collected evidence includes literature reviews; environmental scans; stakeholder interviews and focus groups; and relevant programmatic, cost, and utilization data
Justify Conclusions	The collective evidence and analytical findings are translated to support informed decision making around identified evaluation objectives
Ensure Use and Shared Lessons Learned	Evaluation findings can be presented in multiple mediums to ensure use and applicability for stakeholders (ie. briefs, reports, online learning, presentations, toolkits, infographics, blueprints, and peer-reviewed publications)

\*Adapted from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (<http://www.cdc.gov/eval/framework/index.htm>).

### Project Examples

#### EVALUATION OF BEHAVIORAL HEALTH PROGRAMS AND SERVICES FOR YOUTH

The Center of Excellence works with the Georgia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities to evaluate community-based mental health programs and services for youth with severe emotional disturbances.

The team conducts research and evaluation of provider trainings, monitors fidelity to practice models, and synthesizes data for measuring program outcomes in the areas of:

- Behavioral health functioning
- Youth and family functioning and satisfaction
- Out-of-home placements to restrictive settings and higher levels of care
- Education attendance and performance
- Child welfare and juvenile justice involvement



#### INTERAGENCY WRAPAROUND PILOT

The Center of Excellence is facilitating and evaluating a pilot project with the Georgia Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ), Lookout Mountain and Viewpoint Health care management entities (CMEs), and the Georgia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities to examine access to and the impact of High Fidelity Wraparound services on DJJ recidivism, youth health outcomes, and state cost-savings for youth with severe emotional disturbances transitioning from DJJ secure facilities to the community.

Early accomplishments of the pilot include:

- Developing a common data sharing agreement among five child serving agencies and providers to enable sharing of youth-specific data across agencies (with appropriate youth and caregiver/legal guardian consent)
- Expanding knowledge about CME services
- Increasing awareness about the Wraparound model
- Understanding the challenges of engaging families of severely emotionally disturbed youth with DJJ involvement

