

Spotlight On: Data and Technology – transcript

Presenters: John Hargrove, Data Team Leader, Children's Bureau, Washington, DC; Mark Jazo, Senior Analyst, Division of State Systems, Children's Bureau, Washington, DC

John Hargrove: [00:00:13:23] It certainly seems when you generate data, you provide information to folks and, depending on how folks accept that and what they do with it and what we learn from it, it certainly serves as a catalyst to make changes.

Mark Jazo: [00:00:28:17] With States, for many years now, is that they're starting to find the power of what an information system can bring to the State in terms of approaches—data-driven practices, evidence-based approaches--and in terms of looking at their populations and bringing new ways or seminal concepts to the table of how they can deal with their populations and have better outcomes or outputs from that interaction using the data.

John Hargrove: [00:00:53:22] Technology has certainly been monumental in assisting us in working with the States because it allows us in a much quicker fashion to identify issues in the data, and the perfect example is being able to make comparisons between their data set and our data set and where those differences lie. It can be done much faster and expediently, and we can pass that information along to the State so that they can look in their system and find out what specifically may be the root cause of those differences.

Mark Jazo: [00:01:27:22] To be able to then use that information, mine from that information, come up with new trends, look at different ways that have never been thought of, is something that's new. And States are starting to get very much into data analysis in terms of looking at this data. So they've got these huge pools of data, which information systems are now affording them, and they're starting to come up with different ways to approach their practice--approach age-old problems that they had in terms of intervention with children, coming up with new treatment services. What are appropriate services and placements for these children out there?

John Hargrove: [00:02:03:00] The data gets better, and better, and better. And in getting better, and better, and better, I think we're better able to paint a clearer picture of the state of child welfare as we know it with our data, and it certainly enhances our ability to make decisions about allocating resources. And, you know, the future would hold that we carry it steps further than that, which is generate special analyses and provide that information on a practical level to the State so that they can put it into play.

Mark Jazo: [00:02:41:29] There are some new, always evolving concepts on the IT front, and the area that we're looking at right now are called "interoperable systems." And this is where we're starting to integrate various large systems together, like Medicaid and child welfare with child support, with TANF, and other systems. And then you start hearing these concepts as, "no wrong door," "one-stop shopping," of where one family comes into an office, all services are there for that family. There is a complete history, understanding of what the family's needs are, of what the children's needs are, how they could best serve those children, because you're pulling information from a number of different sources into one common nexus, which then is providing that worker with a very informed history and also understanding of how they can better serve that family and child.

[end audio]