NCDB ANNUAL SURVEY

2022 findings from the Annual NCDB Survey

NCDB
National Center on Deaf-Blindness

"The support has been invaluable and I could not have accomplished all our program did without NCDB's supportive care, resources, credibility, and time they gave. Thank you for your like-minded attention to our families and children of deafblindness."

Executive Summary

In all, 53 professionals responded to the National Center on Deaf-Blindness evaluation survey about the time period of March 1, 2021 – February 28, 2022. The respondents work in State Deaf-Blind Programs as Educational Specialists, Technical Assistance Specialists, Family Engagement Specialists, Program Coordinators, Project Directors, and other project staff.

- About two-thirds (66%) of the State Deaf-Blind Project respondents used at least one of the Practice Guides *(Building Trusting Relationships, Appropriate Assessment Strategies, Optimizing Availability for Learning, Preparing the Learning Environment, and Hand-Under-Hand Technique)*. Respondents typically used Practice Guides as a resource for child-specific technical assistance, for presentations and trainings, to support families, and to inform child-specific TA.

- Similarly, about half of the respondents (49%) used the *Providing Technical Assistance to Families: A Guide for State Deaf-Blind Projects*, primarily to support families and inform child-specific TA.

- Nearly all State Deaf-Blind Program respondents…
    - …accessed the National Center on Deaf-Blindness website.
    - …agreed with statements about the website that resources were aligned with policy/professional practice, addressed their needs, increased their knowledge, and were useful for their work with families and/or educators.
    - …agreed that the website's "For State Projects" section provided information helpful for their TA projects, kept them informed, and increased their knowledge of high-quality TA practices.
    - …interacted with NCDB staff, primarily through NCDB webinars, peer learning communities, and asking NCDB staff specific questions related to their work. Several respondents commented about how NCDB staff are informative, helpful, supportive, and knowledgeable.

    "NCDB staff are always responsive and supportive."

NCDB Annual Survey Results

In March 2022, an email was sent from the National Center on Deaf-Blindness (NCDB) to State Deaf-Blind Project staff throughout the country, inviting them to participate in an evaluation survey. The email included a link to the online survey. The survey contained 14 questions, of which five questions gave participants an opportunity to answer open-ended questions about their experiences and needs. The goal of the survey was to measure the overall quality, relevance, and usefulness of NCDB products and services during the evaluation time period of March 1, 2021 - February 28, 2022. The following report summarizes the findings.

Respondents

A total of 53 professionals in State Deaf-Blind Projects participated in the survey. The respondents include Project Directors (40%), Educational and Technical Assistance Specialists (21%), Project Coordinators (17%), Family Engagement staff (coordinators and specialists) (17%), and other respondents. Most of the respondents are Project Directors, Educational Specialists, and Technical Assistance Specialists.

Most Respondents are Project Directors or Specialists

- Other 5%
- Project Coordinators 17%
- Project Directors 40%
- Family Engagement Staff 17%
- Specialists 21%
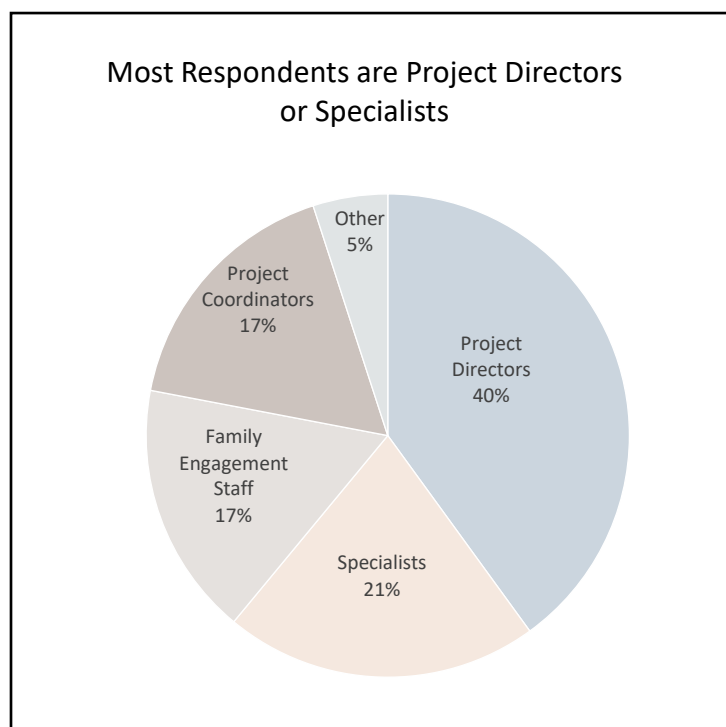
National Center on Deaf-Blindness Website

All but one respondent (98%) accessed the National Center on Deaf-Blindness website https://www.nationaldb.org during March 2021 – February 2022. Similar to the last two years, at least 92% agreed or strongly agreed with the following statements about the website, excluding the "Not applicable" responses.

- Resources were aligned with policy or accepted professional practice.

- Resources addressed my needs.

- Resources were useful in my work with families, including those from culturally diverse backgrounds.

- Resources were useful in my work with educators.

- Resources were used to meet my needs.

- Resources on the NCDB Website increased my knowledge of high-quality instruction practices.

- The "For State Projects" section was well organized.

- The "For State Projects" section provided information to help me with my TA activities.

- The "For State Projects" section helps me stay informed about Deaf-Blind TA Network news.

- The "For State Projects" section increased my knowledge of high-quality TA practices.

Further, over two-thirds of the respondents strongly agreed that resources were useful to educators and that resources were aligned with policy or accepted professional practice. Rates did not differ significantly by type of role, with the exception of project coordinators and educational specialists finding resources more useful than other project staff in their work with educators.

The following chart demonstrates that over half of the respondents strongly agreed that the NCDB resources were useful, of high quality, well-aligned with professional practice, and well-organized.

Strongly Agree

Category	Percentage
Resources were aligned with policy or accepted professional practice	76%
Resources were useful in my work with educators	67%
Resources on the NCDB Website increased my knowledge of high-quality instruction practices	62%
Resources were used to meet my needs	59%
Resources addressed my needs	57%
Resources were well organized	51%

About half of the comments about the NCDB website reflected that the site is useful and offers extensive resources.

"Appreciate access to so much information."

"Continually updated and great support from the team when we need to find something."

"Excited to see more and more resources added to the new topics discussed."

"I have found the NCDB website to be very useful in providing me with information to share with families and educational teams."

"I think the website continues to improve in terms of organization and quality of products. The resources shared there are useful and relevant to my work as a TA provider. I use resources from the site often. I do not know how families view ease of using the website or its resources. I appreciate that more materials are being produced in Spanish language."

"The website is helpful."

"If I cannot find something I am looking for, the search functions usually work, and a human always helps me get what I need."

"Please leave it the way it is now. I just have become really familiar with it."

"The video selection is so fantastic, I use it often to support recommendations to teams and give families an example of possibilities with their child's communication, education, etc."

On the other hand, of the 23 comments written, 10 were complaints about the difficulty in finding resources on the website. Still, only six respondents (12%) disagreed with the statement, "*Resources were well organized*" on the NCDB website and only 10% disagreed that "*The For State Projects section was well organized.*"

"Easy to get lost."

"Sometimes search does not allow entry from home page."

"I find searching for some information and items/assessments still challenging."

"I think that the website has been vastly improved, though sometimes I do not find things as quickly as I would like. Once I do find the location, I think that materials are well-organized."

"I like the re-organization that occurred; however, when I click on search links, I frequently get a 'this page otter be here' message. I also find it

challenging to find topics I input into the NCDB SEARCH. Not sure why. May just need to use different keywords or get more familiar with the new website."

"Sometimes I find the search tool of the website not helpful, when looking for information and google will find better."

"The website is jam-packed with information, but I haven't had adequate time yet to fully explore it so still find it overwhelming when I am looking for a specific piece of information. I usually find it easier to just ask one of the super helpful NCDB staff. :)"

"Sometimes I have difficulty finding things."

"Locating some materials can be a 'hard find'."

"The latest design of the website is difficult to navigate. Everyone screams 'being the map back!!!'."

Four respondents offered the following recommendations about the website.

"I was delighted to learn about the directory during an NCDB meeting. To me, it is much easier to find information on the site using the directory than navigating via the tabs. There is so much information on the site that I can't always find it quickly or easily using the tabs."

"It would be helpful if the Monthly Updates linked opened a new page. I always have a hard time navigating to the NCDB products page."

"I wish there were more instruments for assessing students with complex learning needs."

"I appreciate the quick reference guides (they are REALLY useful), but I would also like to see more advanced ideas and newer topics getting attention."
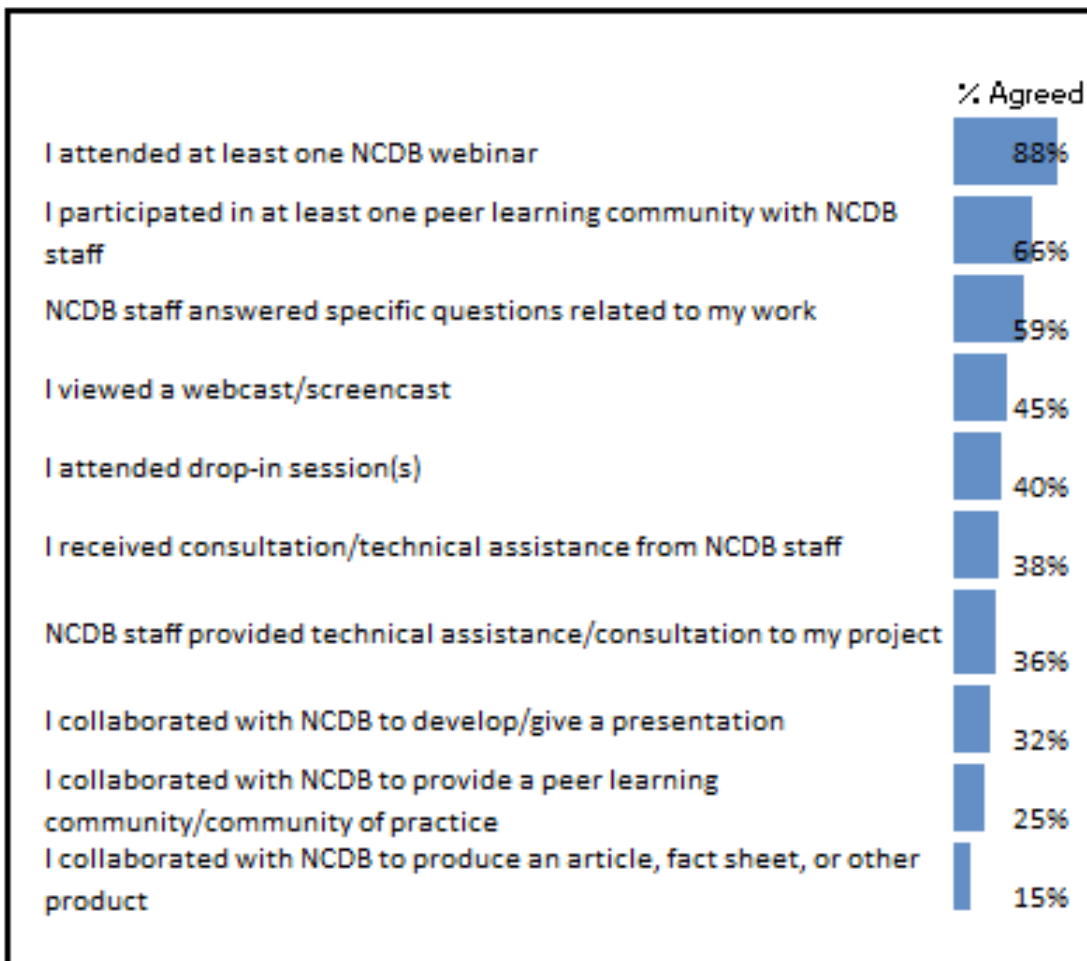
NCDB Staff

Nearly all the respondents (96%) interacted with NCDB staff during March 2021 - February 2022. The two respondents who did not interact with NCDB staff are new. As shown in the chart below, most respondents asked NCDB staff specific questions related to their work and participated in webinars and peer learning communities. Nearly half (45%) were involved in all three NCDB staff interactions.

	% Agreed
I attended at least one NCDB webinar	88%
I participated in at least one peer learning community with NCDB staff	66%
NCDB staff answered specific questions related to my work	59%
I viewed a webcast/screencast	45%
I attended drop-in session(s)	40%
I received consultation/technical assistance from NCDB staff	38%
NCDB staff provided technical assistance/consultation to my project	36%
I collaborated with NCDB to develop/give a presentation	32%
I collaborated with NCDB to provide a peer learning community/community of practice	25%
I collaborated with NCDB to produce an article, fact sheet, or other product	15%

Nearly all agreed, and most strongly agreed, with the following statements:

- Overall, the responses from NCDB staff were timely.

- NCDB staff addressed problems or issues critical to my work.

- Interactions with NCDB staff proved useful in my work to support educators.

- Interactions with NCDB staff proved useful in my work to support families, including those from culturally diverse backgrounds.

- Interactions (including information) with NCDB staff proved useful in my work in systems change.

- Information I received from NCDB was delivered in a way that was easily understood.

- Information I received from NCDB staff was aligned with policy or accepted professional practice.

As shown in the chart below, at least half of the respondents strongly agreed with these statements, and 8% or fewer disagreed. Ratings did not differ significantly based on role. Areas that could be improved were help from NCDB staff in creating system changes and addressing cultural differences in families.

"I have found that the resources available on the NCDB website are not as useful for non-English speaking families. I can see that there is more for families of diverse cultural backgrounds than in the past, but I feel as though this is an area where more work needs to be done by both NCDB and the state projects."

	Disagree/ Strongly Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Information I received from NCDB staff was aligned with policy or accepted professional practice	4%	18%	78%
Overall, the responses from NCDB staff were timely	2%	27%	71%
NCDB staff addressed problems or issues critical to my work	3%	31%	67%
Interactions with NCDB staff proved useful in my work to support educators	7%	27%	66%
Information I received from NCDB was delivered in a way that was easily understood	4%	32%	64%
Interactions (including information) with NCDB staff proved useful in my work in systems change	8%	35%	58%
Interactions with NCDB staff proved useful in my work to support families, including those from culturally diverse backgrounds	7%	38%	55%

Comments about NCDB Staff

Survey respondents were also asked to share any additional comments about NCDB staff. The comments frequently identified specific staff, including:

"[NCDB staff member] is kind, respectful, and humble. These qualities are exceptional for someone who is as intelligent, highly educated, and articulate as [she is]. She is priceless. She is a powerful leader and motivator."

"TA with [NCDB staff member] and the PLC with [him] and [NCDB staff members] have provided me with an enormous about of information regarding Transition that I didn't know."

"NCDB staff members are helpful, organized, prepared, invested. [Multiple NCDB staff members]--all fantastic."

"I couldn't do without the OHOA Modules and the support of [NCDB staff member] for my efforts of using the Modules for professional learning for both families and all kinds of service providers."

Others complimented NCDB staff as a whole:

"I feel very supported by the NCDB staff. They are always available for questions and answer in a timely manner. I appreciate all the support they have given our project."

"Appreciate the expertise of the staff."

"NCDB staff are AMAZING - responsive, friendly, professional, highly knowledgeable and skilled."

"The support has been invaluable and I could not have accomplished all our program did without NCDB's supportive care, resources, credibility, and time they gave. Thank you for your like-minded attention to our families and children of deafblindness."

"NCDB Staff are very supportive of my efforts in my state and ready to do what they can to help me achieve the Project goals."

"Love the staff!!"

"I have always found the NCDB staff to be more than willing to support and give guidance when needed which is greatly appreciated."

"I value the support, feedback and resources shared by all the NCDB staff whom I've contacted in the past year."

"Love you guys!"

"Knowledgeable caring people."

"In general, staff are knowledgeable, supportive, curious about our state project, and have the technical skills and tools to help us with questions and TA. They model collaboration, mentoring and relationship building."

Two respondents expressed concerns--that NCDB resources need to be more accessible and that the TA process is confusing. Their comments are:

"It's very important that a national organization is a model for accessibility, especially when recording webinars or meetings - there should be accurate captions generated and included instead of only a transcript. When I need to go back and watch a recording, I have to make a special request for CC. This should not be the case anymore."

"NCDB staff are always responsive and supportive. The TA process has been a little confusing. We are receiving intensive TA and I don't feel like our plan was fully flushed out and I never received a copy of it."

Words most commonly used to describe the information services provided by NCDB staff are:

- Supportive
- Resources
- Support
- Help
- Highly knowledgeable
- Responsive
- Available
- Intelligent
- Love
- Accurate
- Collaboration
- Invaluable

- Invested
- Kind
- Leader

Practice Guides

"One of NCDB's current product development projects is the creation of practice guides that outline essential components of instructional practices commonly used with children who are deaf-blind. They are primarily intended as a tool for state deaf-blind project personnel and practitioners to inform training and coaching needs.

"A key purpose is to let technical assistance providers or coaches and practitioners know **what** a practice involves when implemented correctly. The more clearly the components of an intervention are known and defined, the better it can be successfully implemented (Fixsen et al., 2013). *NCDB Practice Guides* also serve as quick reminders of the purpose and key elements of a practice. The guides are not intended to provide instruction on **how** to implement a practice and should be used in combination with technical assistance/coaching and information resources (e.g., factsheets, articles, videos, modules)."
(https://www.nationaldb.org/info-center/professional-development/practice-guides/)

The Practice Guides posted at the NCDB website include Building Trusting Relationships, Appropriate Assessment Strategies, Optimizing Availability for Learning, Preparing the Learning Environment, and Hand-Under-Hand Technique.

In response to the survey question "*In what ways have you used at least one of the Practice Guides (Building Trusting Relationships, Appropriate Assessment Strategies, Optimizing Availability for Learning, Preparing the Learning Environment, Hand-*
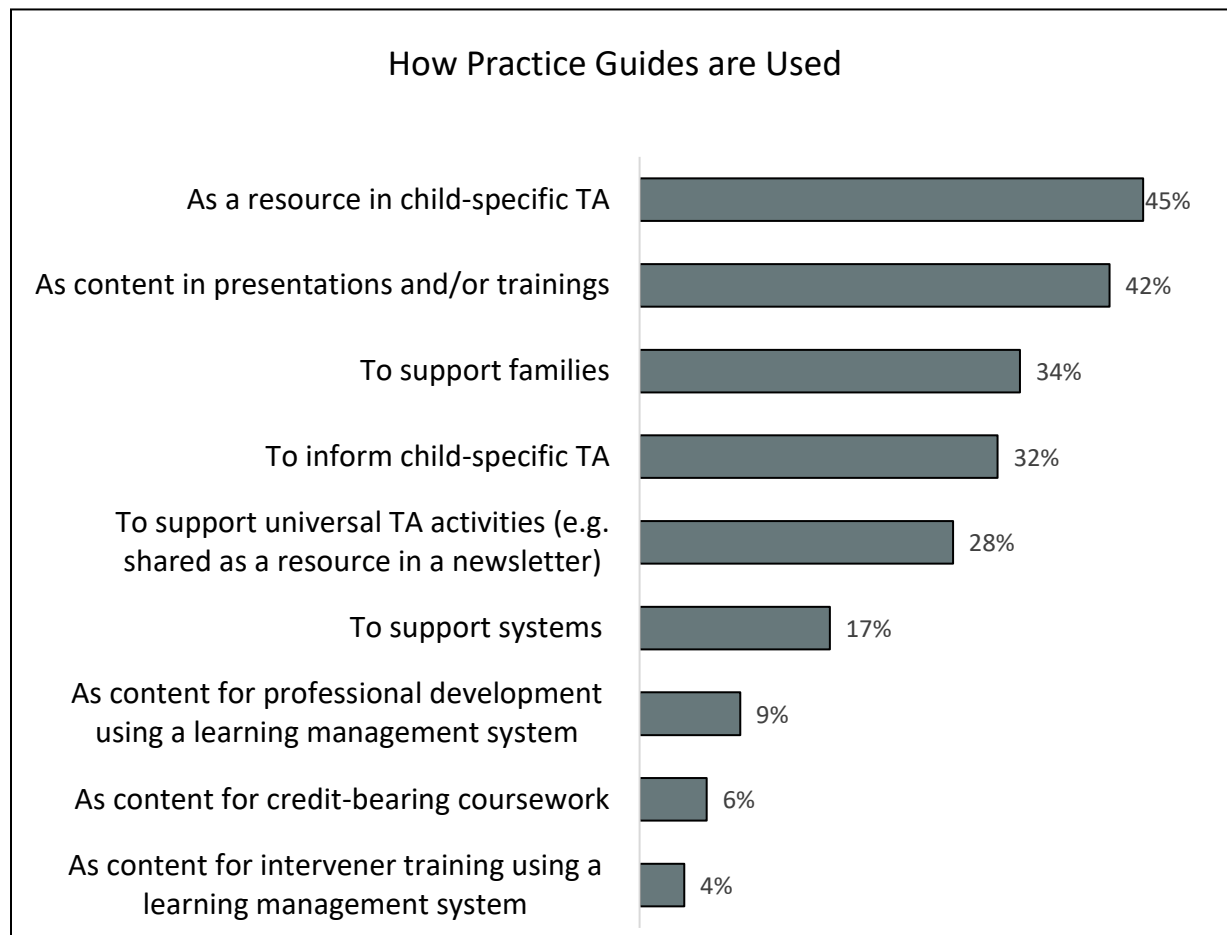
Under-Hand Technique) between March 1, 2021 and Feb 28, 2022?," 66% of respondents identified at least one way they used content. Most of the users (85%) applied the Practice Guides for multiple purposes. Respondents in all roles utilized the Practice Guides.

As shown in the following chart, respondents typically used Practice Guides as a resource for child-specific technical assistance, for presentations and trainings, to support families, and to inform child-specific TA. The Practice Guides were used less frequently for professional development and intervener training through learning management systems (e.g., Blackboard and Google Classroom.) Not surprisingly, Family Engagement specialists were more likely to use the Practice Guides to support families while educational and technical specialists were more likely to use the Practice Guides for child-specific TA, either as a resource or to inform the technical assistance.

How Practice Guides are Used

Category	Percentage
As a resource in child-specific TA	45%
As content in presentations and/or trainings	42%
To support families	34%
To inform child-specific TA	32%
To support universal TA activities (e.g. shared as a resource in a newsletter)	28%
To support systems	17%
As content for professional development using a learning management system	9%
As content for credit-bearing coursework	6%
As content for intervener training using a learning management system	4%

Comments about the Practice Guides demonstrate that they are used frequently and are valued by state project staff.

"I appreciate the resource."

"The practice guides are really well put together. They are easy to use, easy to understand and thoughtfully organized."

"I have shared several of the practice guides with families to share with their teams and / or providers. My fear is this always falls on the parents and hope there is buy-in with their child's team."

"Each of the Guides is very helpful."

"They are wonderful! Please make more?"

"I like the practice guides very much. I think that of all the resources that I have included in my TA activities for individual students, they have been the most likely to be read by educators and family members."

"I think they are fantastic, very well-organized and the content included is high-quality, useful and relevant for preparing practitioners."

Providing Technical Assistance to Families: A Guide for State Deaf-Blind Projects

The Providing Technical Assistance to Families: A Guide for State Deaf-Blind Projects provides "detailed, intensive technical assistance (TA) processes that are effective, yet provide boundaries and ensure that services fit within a project's capacity." (www.nationaldb.org/products/family-ta-guide)

The guide details technical assistance activities (documentation, action planning, collaboration, and evaluation) and describes specific tiered (universal, targeted, and intensive) TA activities.

> *The ability of families to manage life events effectively as well as gain mastery over their affairs requires that we empower families to become competent and capable rather than dependent upon professional helpers or helping systems. This is accomplished by creating opportunities for families to acquire the necessary knowledge and skills to become stronger and better able to manage and negotiate the many demands and forces that impinge upon the family unit.*
>
> *A proactive approach . . . places major emphasis upon promoting the acquisition of self-sustaining and adaptive behaviors that emphasize growth among all family members and not just an individual child.* – *Dunst, et al., 1988, pp. 6-7*
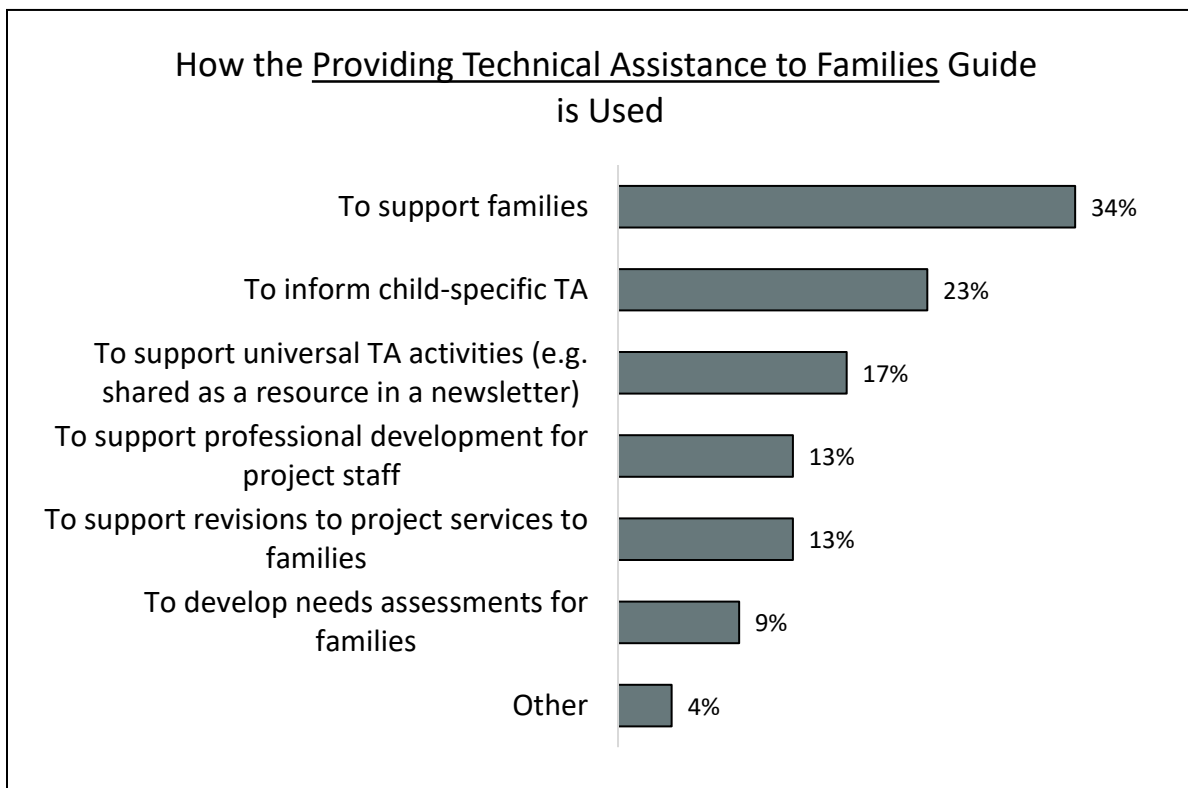
In response to the survey question "*In what ways have you used the product, Providing Technical Assistance to Families: A Guide for State Deaf-Blind Projects, between March 1, 2021 and Feb 28, 2022?*," 49% of respondents identified at least one way they used content. Most of the respondents who used the TA Guide (68%) indicated that they use it for multiple purposes, primarily to support families and inform child-specific TA. Family Engagement Specialists were more likely to use the Providing Technical Assistance to Families Guide than staff in other roles, and they were most likely to use the Guide to support families.

As shown in the following chart, those who used the Providing Technical Assistance to Families Guide typically used it to support families, to inform child-specific technical assistance, to support universal TA activities (e.g., shared as a resource in a newsletter), and to support revisions to project services to families. None of the respondents used the Guide to support systems TA or for professional development / intervener training through learning management

systems (e.g., Blackboard and Google Classroom.) Other uses for the Guide include:

"To inform university courses."

"We are in the process of reviewing as a project to look at ways we can implement and improve."

How the <u>Providing Technical Assistance to Families</u> Guide is Used

Category	Percent
To support families	34%
To inform child-specific TA	23%
To support universal TA activities (e.g. shared as a resource in a newsletter)	17%
To support professional development for project staff	13%
To support revisions to project services to families	13%
To develop needs assessments for families	9%
Other	4%

Some respondents commented on how helpful the Guide is.

"It is perfect. I cannot imagine improving it; but I'm sure you will, based on Family Visualization."

"The overview and discussion of the tool that was provided was very helpful. I do plan to use the information to expand and improve upon what we do for families. I also want to emphasize that it validated some of our current

practices. So, I am implementing some of the content, but was prior to learning about the tool."

Suggestions include:

"Possibly create useful forms that align with the appropriate targeted and intensive TA."

"Wordy, rather vague."

"This has been difficult to implement during the past two years during the pandemic. This guide also does not receive the attention it should by those that matter within state db projects."

Most Useful NCDB Resource

Most respondents commented in response to the survey question "*What was the most useful NCDB product, tool, or resource that you used between March 1, 2021 and Feb 28, 2022?*" Because of the vast number of resources offered by NCDB, there were several resources identified. Most respondents indicated that the most useful NCDB resources were Open Hands, Open Access: Deaf-Blind Intervener Learning Modules (OHOA), Practice Guides (in general or named specifically), and other resources and tools.

NCDB resources that are most useful include:

1. OHOA modules *(n=7)*

2. Practice Guide(s) *(n=6)*

3. Website resources *(n=9):*

   - "For Families" tab on NCDB website *(n=2)*
   - Literacy for Children with Combined Vision and Hearing Loss interactive website *(n=2)*
   - Other website resources (videos, transition page, identification and referral toolbox, Basecamp, FEC Knowledge and Skills)
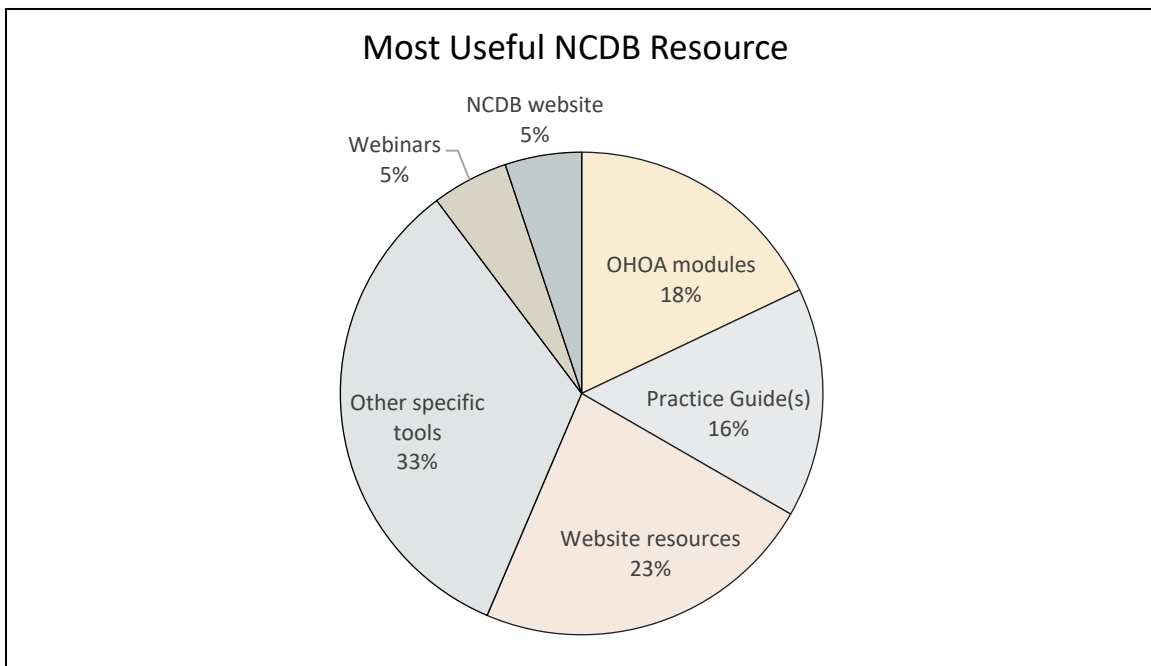
4. Other specific tools *(n=13)*:

    - *Providing Technical Assistance to Families (n=2)*
    - *IEP Discussion Guide: Determining the Need for an Intervener (n=2)*
    - READY tool *(n=2)*
    - Other specific tools (classroom observation tool, accessibility info, early identification self-study, IFHE, Systems Measures checklist, Intensive TA checklist, TA Reference Guide)

5. Webinars and drop ins *(n=2)*

6. NCDB website in general (www.nationaldb.org) *(n=2)*

"All information on the website is a useful tool and resource."

Most Useful NCDB Resource

NCDB website
5%

Webinars
5%

OHOA modules
18%

Practice Guide(s)
16%

Website resources
23%

Other specific tools
33%

Additional Comments

The evaluation survey found several strengths at the National Center on Deaf-Blindness, primarily with the NCDB staff and website. State DB Project staff utilize the staff and the website frequently and rely on the resources for accurate and useful information. Additional study could determine the extent to which specific tools, modules, and guides on the website are accessed and considered useful.