NCDB ANNUAL SURVEY

2021 findings from the Annual NCDB Survey

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"NCDB is a huge component of our success as a state project. I refer to resources constantly, and appreciate the PLCs."

Executive Summary

In all, 80 professionals responded to the National Center on Deaf-Blindness (NCDB) evaluation survey about the time period of March 2020 – February 2021. The respondents work in state deaf-blind projects as educational specialists, technical assistance specialists, family engagement specialists, program coordinators, project directors, and other project staff.

- About half of the state deaf-blind project respondents used the *Literacy for Children Who Are Deaf-Blind: Building a Foundation* module, typically to support child-specific technical assistance, to support families, to support universal TA activities, and for presentations/trainings.

- Similarly, about half of the state deaf-blind project respondents used the READY Tool: Readiness Evaluation of Transition to Adulthood for Deaf-Blind Youth, typically to support families, to inform child-specific technical assistance, to support universal TA activities, and for presentations/trainings.

- Nearly all state deaf-blind project respondents…
    - …accessed the NCDB website.
    - …agreed with statements about the website that resources were well-organized, aligned with policy/professional practice, addressed their needs, were useful, and increased their knowledge.
    - …agreed that the website's "For State Projects" section was well-organized, informative, and helpful for TA practices.
    - …interacted with NCDB staff, primarily through NCDB webinars or conferences, online training, consultations, and peer learning communities. Several respondents commented about the knowledgeable, responsive, and timely staff.

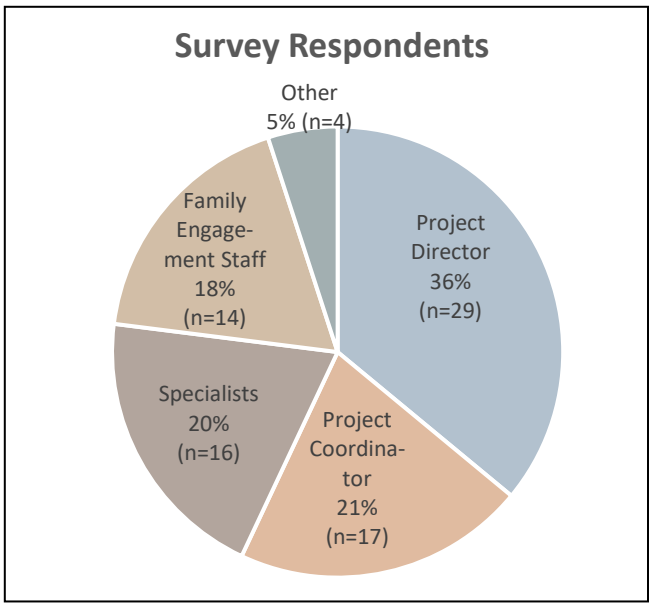
Few provided recommendations, but several respondents wrote positive remarks about individual NCDB staff and the NCDB in general. "We couldn't be more thrilled with all the support we receive from NCDB staff!" wrote one respondent.

NCDB Annual Survey Results

In March 2021, 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 13 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, 2020 - February 28, 2021. The following report summarizes the findings.

Respondents

A total of 80 professionals in state deaf-blind projects participated in the survey. The respondents include specialists (educational and technical assistance specialists), family engagement staff (coordinators and specialists), project coordinators, project directors (including assistant and co-directors), and other respondents (including board members and other roles in national partner organizations). Most of the respondents are project directors and project coordinators.

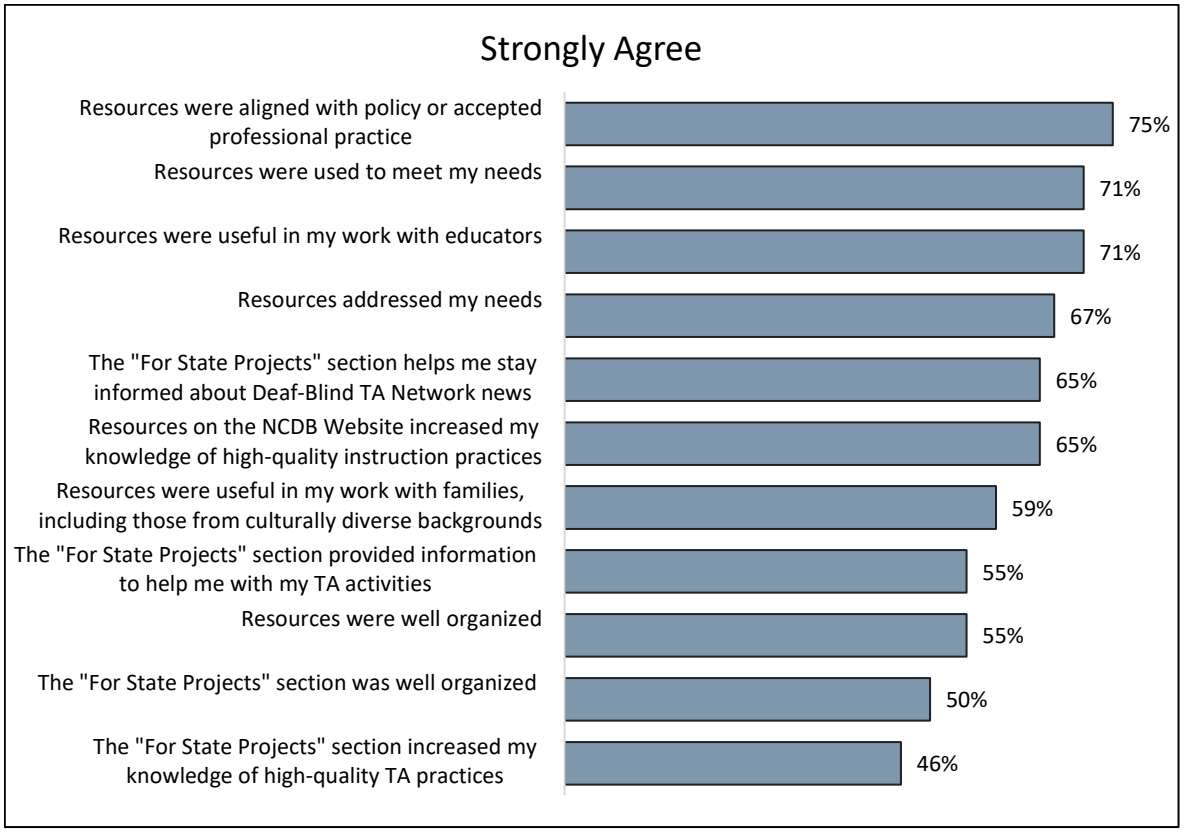


National Center on Deaf-Blindness Website

Nearly all respondents (95%) accessed the NCDB website https://www.nationaldb.org during March 2020 – February 2021. At least 94% agreed or strongly agreed with the following statements about the website, excluding the "Not applicable" responses.

- Resources were well organized.
- 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 instructional 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, that resources addressed their needs, that resources were aligned with policy or accepted professional practice, and that resources were used to meet their needs. Rates did not differ significantly by type of role.



In addition, several respondents identified features of the NCDB website that were particularly helpful including the redesign, the website being well-organized, and the extensive resources.

> *"Great information on maintenance of overall project infrastructure through a focus on important variables such as TA practices, benchmarks, policy and professional development."*

> *"Great resource -- for families and providers, and for state projects. Thank you."*

> *"Tremendous amount of information, extremely well organized; flawless and highly useable."*

> *"I use the website practically on a daily basis. It has been very helpful in my practice, especially as a newer DB Project staff. I also use it as a model for*

how to potentially organize materials, resources, and information in our own state. Thank you for all the work that went into making the website so user friendly and comprehensive!"

"Excellent resource."

"I find the redesign of the website to be much improved, very organized and easy to navigate. I appreciate the variety of topics and different formats presented in the Info Center and under the National Initiatives. I share resources and materials and announcements from the website with many educational teams and families. The only area for continued attention would be ensuring that resources on the website meet the needs of culturally and linguistic diverse families. There are some good and useful resources for this group currently, but I think this is an area of growth for all systems right now. I'm glad it an area that NCDB is continuing to look at closely."

"I think the new format is excellent. As Robbie Blaha said at the Symposium yesterday, how remarkable is it that we have a national center/ clearinghouse!"

"I am always able to find what I need on the website. I truly appreciate all the resources for state projects."

On the other hand, of the 30 comments written, 16 were complaints about the new website, mostly complaints about the difficulty of locating information and using the search feature. Still, only 4% disagreed with the statement, "Resources were well organized" on the NCDB website and only 6% disagreed that "The For State Projects section was well organized."

"The NCDB website has improved. However, is still cumbersome to navigate. Still seems like a rabbit hole and does not seem intuitive to find materials."

"I would like to see more cross referencing of materials so that when you search it is broader."

"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. :)"

"The Search feature is still problematic for me. I input a word or phrase in the website search feature and I don't come up with a good result. I use Google to search phrase or word coupled with National CDP to find good results quicker and more efficiently."

Three respondents offered the following recommendations about the website:

"I would like more specific information related to policy and the services DB projects provide. A lot of our work is policy driven and sometimes policy updates from USDOE can be tedious to read if there is a lot that doesn't necessarily pertain to deaf-blindness."

"Needs information/resources for Mentors of Interveners participating in NICE at a more prominent place on this page: https://www.nationaldb.org/national-initiatives/iqp/national-intervener-certification-eportfolio/."

"Since the site has been redesigned and there is no longer the map on the homepage to find other SDBPs, it is difficult to sift through to find what you are looking for. Bring back the map! :)"

NCDB Staff

Nearly all the respondents (98%) interacted with NCDB staff during March 2020 - February 2021. Of the two who did not, one is new and one had no interactions with NCDB staff or the website. As shown in the chart below, most respondents attended at least one NCDB webinar or conference or online training, and most asked NCDB staff specific questions and participated in at least one peer learning community. Over one-third (36%) were involved in all of the first four types of interactions listed below.

I attended at least one NCDB webinar, teleconference, and/or conference	91%
I attended at least one online training	73%
NCDB staff answered specific questions related to my work	72%
I participated in at least one peer learning community with NCDB staff	69%
I received consultation/technical assistance from NCDB staff	48%
NCDB staff provided technical assistance/consultation to my project/organization	48%
I collaborated with NCDB to provide a peer learning community	21%
I collaborated with NCDB to produce an article, fact sheet, or other product	16%

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. The area that could be improved was help from NCDB staff in creating system changes. Ratings did not differ significantly based on role.

	Disagree / Strongly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree	TOTAL
Overall, the responses from NCDB staff were timely	1%	16%	82%	100%
NCDB staff addressed problems or issues critical to my work	3%	21%	76%	100%
Interactions with NCDB staff proved useful in my work to support educators	4%	23%	73%	100%
Interactions with NCDB staff proved useful in my work to support families, including those from culturally diverse backgrounds	6%	32%	62%	100%
Interactions (including information) with NCDB staff proved useful in my work in systems change	8%	35%	57%	100%
Information I received from NCDB was delivered in a way that was easily understood	0%	25%	75%	100%
Information I received from NCDB staff was aligned with policy or accepted professional practice	1%	25%	73%	100%

Comments about NCDB Staff

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

"[Information Services and Technology coordinator] is an asset! [Family Engagement Initiative lead] is an amazing resource for staff turnover - helped to train the new FEC."

"[Identification and Referral Initiative lead] and [Deaf-Blind Child Count coordinator] were very helpful in providing information and suggestions addressing our declining 0-2 numbers for the DB Census."

"[I] got great assistance from [evaluation coordinator] and [director] around the matrices for the common measures for Quality PD and Systems change. [Director] is always great to talk to in getting me back on track around project activities!"

"[Evaluation coordinator] and [director] have been an incredible support to our project in providing intensive TA. They have guided us through our processes and we now have a solid TA process in place because of their assistance and guidance. [Transition consultant] and [Transition Initiative lead] have also provided our project with support as we work to build our capacity on HS transition. [Transition consultant] was instrumental in making a [connection] for us with a local pre-ETS provider that is blooming into a partnership. We couldn't be more thrilled with all the support we receive from NCDB staff!"

Others complimented NCDB staff as a whole:

"During a challenging year, NCDB staff persevered to provide support, resources and webinars on a range of topics. The staff are professional in the technical aspects of the child count, hosting webinars, OHOA modules, and regarding website requests and systems change consultation."

"The NCDB staff is very responsive and supportive. All of my interactions with the staff at NCDB have contributed to improving my TA activities and my understanding and implementation of our common measures as well as our project's goals and objectives."

"Greatly appreciate all the NCDB staff for making themselves available on behalf of their initiatives, and or expertise to offer support and TA whenever needed."

NCDB staff was noted for being knowledgeable.

"Everybody is knowledgeable, but provides information in ways I understand. Thank you!"

"I LOVE working with NCDB staff! They are knowledgeable, easy to access, always willing to help, and patient. So very patient."

"Everyone is knowledgeable and responsive. Our newest project staff member is also really appreciating the 'newbie' group."

Others appreciated the responsiveness and timeliness of the services NCDB staff provided. Comments include

"NCDB are always very quick to respond and provide resources."

"NCDB staff is always responsive and welcoming. I feel comfortable approaching any of the staff with questions or to find out about resources or ideas about a specific challenge I am facing. Thank you!"

"Each and every one has been kind, highly professional, and generous with their time and knowledge."

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

1. Support
2. Helpful
3. Knowledgeable
4. Responsive
5. Information
6. Resources
7. Amazing
8. Assistance
9. Great
10. Professional

Literacy for Children Who Are Deaf-Blind: Building a Foundation Module

Literacy for Children Who Are Deaf-Blind: Building a Foundation is a six-part, open-access module that is used in conjunction with the Literacy for Children with Combined Vision and Hearing Loss website. The module addresses foundations for literacy and early emergent literacy.

In response to the survey question "In what ways have you used the *Literacy for Children Who Are Deaf-Blind: Building a Foundation* Module (also known as the Literacy Module) between March 1, 2020 and Feb 28, 2021?," 54% of respondents identified at least one way they used content, and many (29%) identified multiple ways of using the content. Educational/technical assistance specialists were more likely to use the module than family engagement specialists or program coordinators.

As shown in the following chart, those who used literacy module content typically used it to support child-specific technical assistance (TA), to support families, to support universal TA activities (e.g., shared as a resource in a newsletter), and for presentations/trainings. The module was used less frequently for professional development and intervener training through learning management systems (e.g., Blackboard and Google Classroom.) One family engagement specialist used the module "as content in development of materials for parents." Project directors were more likely to use the module

content to support universal TA activities and for presentations/trainings than did staff in other roles.

"I love this website and have shared it with countless families and educators. I provided specific guidance navigating the site with more teams this year during [the] distance learning period through regular video meetings. I also have suggested teams use the Related Skills section for each level to help educational teams identifying meaningful literacy and communication goals."

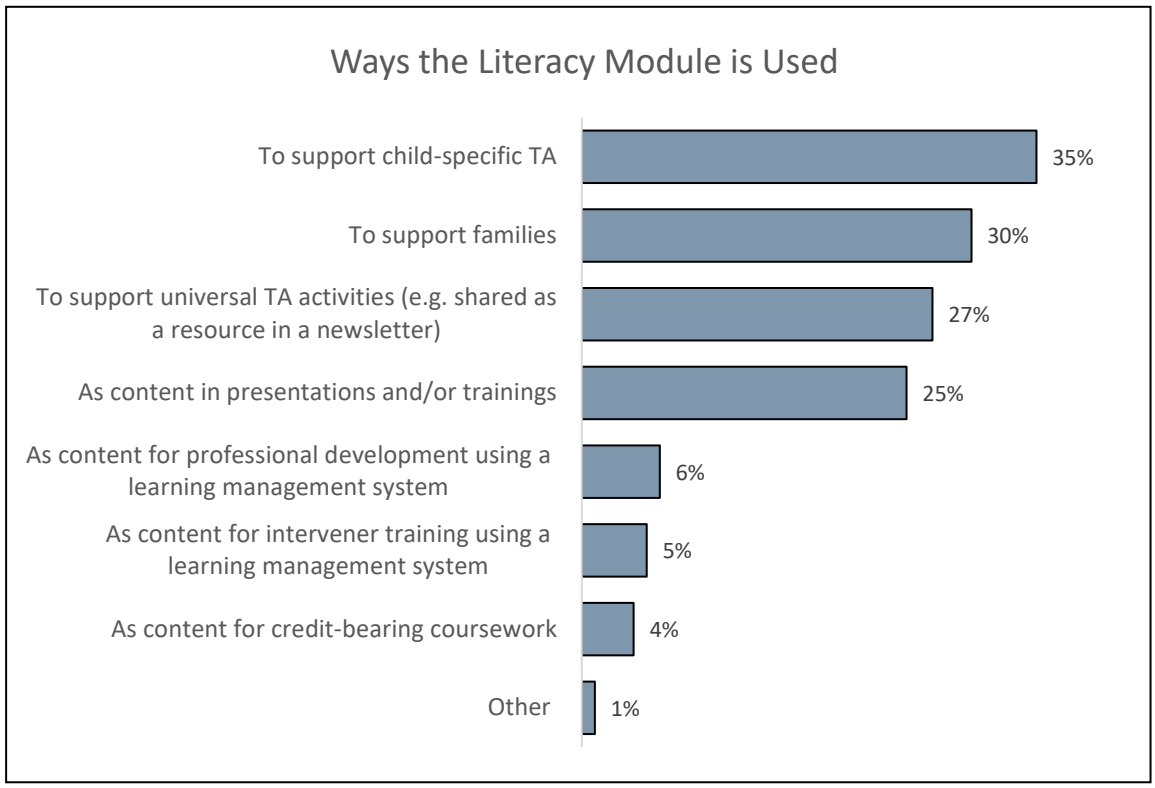
"I use the Literacy Skills Checklist, The Literacy skills scope and sequence, and on almost a daily basis, and in practically every webinar or PD that I provide (as embedded tools). I have not yet used the Literacy Module in perhaps as much depth as I should."

"We piloted a Literacy Training using the module, was very successful."

"Use the Paths To Literacy website as a resource to educators frequently."

"Very helpful module to encourage school teams and families to look at Literacy from a different perspective."

"It is a great tool. Teachers seem to be very busy as well so it can be difficult to add one more thing to their list of duties."



READY Tool: Readiness Evaluation of Transition to Adulthood for Deaf-Blind Youth

The READY Tool: Readiness Evaluation of Transition to Adulthood for Deaf-Blind Youth was created and revised to help transition teams, composed of individuals who are deaf-blind, their parents, and professionals. As noted on the NCDB website https://www.nationaldb.org/products/ready-tool/, the team uses the READY Tool to develop "a plan of action and develop goals and objectives for the IEP and transition plans."

In response to the survey question "In what ways have you used the READY Tool: Readiness Evaluation of Transition to Adulthood for Deaf-Blind Youth between March 1, 2020 and Feb 28, 2021," 45% of respondents identified at least one way they used content and many (16%) identified multiple ways of using the content. Program coordinators were more likely to use the READY Tool

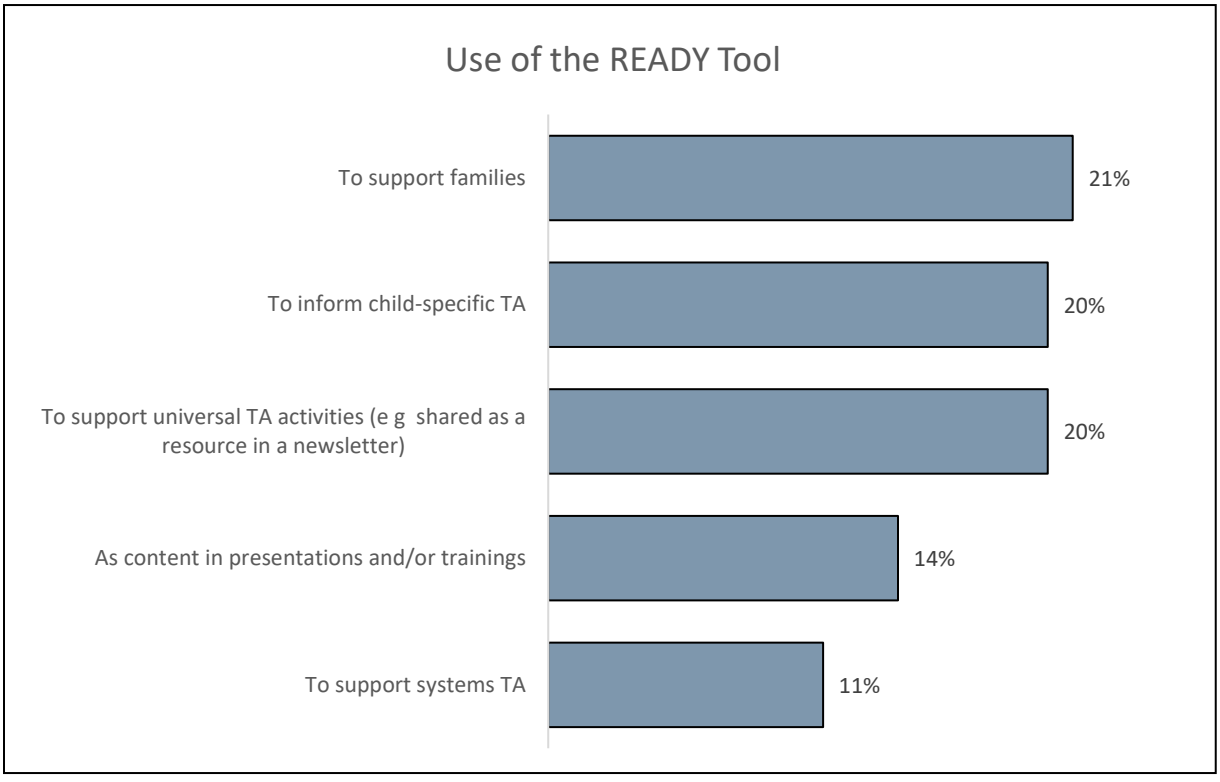
than staff in other roles, and they were most likely to use the READY Tool for child-specific TA and to support families.

As shown in the following chart, those who used the READY Tool typically used it to support families, to inform child-specific TA, to support universal TA activities (e.g., shared as a resource in a newsletter), and for presentations/trainings. None of the respondents used the READY Tool for professional development and intervener training through learning management systems (e.g., Blackboard and Google Classroom.) Other uses for the READY Tool included

"For use in consultations with school districts and parents."

"To assist in developing a local transition tool."

"To support parents."



Some respondents explained that they have not used the READY Tool yet.

"I hope to use this tool in the future - just haven't had a chance yet."

"I did look at it a couple of times though."

"Since I am the member of our team who works with Early Childhood and early elementary age students I have not used the READY Tool, but I know that our Project Director who works with transition age students has used it."

"This is a great tool to share with families however the buy in by educators and team members is a must for the tool to be a success."

"In the population I was serving, the readiness tool did not seem to be a fit."

"I am less familiar with this resource and need to use it to better understand it."

Other respondents have used the READY Tool and considered it useful for transition planning.

"Valuable resources for an administrator to share with a new specialist. Makes process tangible and provides direction."

"We have shared the tool with families, but no schools or families have chosen to use it... yet."

"Excellent tool for our middle school and HS teams, families and students."

"The breakdown by age is particularly helpful."

"Useful."

Suggestions include

"I think there needs to be more 'nuts and bolts' to the READY Tool. How to and then What to do for school teams."

"I would like to have a webinar to discuss how other states used the READY Tool."

Additional Comments

Eleven respondents commented in response to the survey question "Please share any additional comments, experiences, outcomes, or needs that you would like us to consider in our evaluation of any other products and services provided by NCDB between March 1, 2020 and Feb 28, 2021." Of these 11 respondents, six expressed appreciation to NCDB staff and for its resources, and three offered recommendations. Comments include the following:

Themes	Comments
Appreciation	*"Excellent support to folks in the field who need the information but do not have enough time to research or locate."* *"I feel so fortunate to have the NCDB knowledge and assistance for my job helping families, schools, and children with dual sensory loss."* *"I love the new website! So much easier to find things and visually attractive. Thanks for all the hard work that went into this."* *"NCDB is a huge component of our success as a state project. I refer to resources constantly, and appreciate the PLCs."* *"We continue to use the OHOA modules on a regular basis. Our project is also working with the Sooner the*

	Better Framework and find the materials to be very beneficial."
Recommendations	*"As we move past the restrictions of COVID I would like to request that NCDB consider continuing to offer virtual meetings for Summit. Travel is a huge hardship for my project and being able to participate virtually will allow me to maintain my connection to the work."* *"We have so many Spanish speaking families in our state that it would be useful to have more of the resources that are accessible from the NCDB website available in Spanish as well as English."* *"NCDB should be the TSBVI DB level. NCDB should be the presenter, informer, instructor and authority on DB. When I have questions or need guidance, I go to other SDBP."*
Other comments	*"Unfortunately, the Transition PLC conflicts with a standing committee meeting that I have on Thursday, every Thursday. It also conflicts with the SE Webinars."* *"Don't forget about the Literacy Skills Checklist & interactive website! It is a most valuable TA tool and instrument to support Service Providers & Families!"* *"Consistent, on-going communication via email announcements/information."*

The evaluation survey found several strengths at NCDB, primarily with its staff and website. State deaf-blind project staff utilize NCDB 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.