**What is this resource?**

- NJ Fellows Project is a New Jersey Department of Children and Families (NJ DCF) effort to build capacity in "managing by data": quality improvement effort using quantitative and qualitative data on the ground and throughout the organization.
- Supervisors, managers and quality coordinators learn how to better utilize data to support improved case practice and outcomes for children and families.
- Objectives: grounded in good case practice model principles; understand and demystify data; develop presentation skills; master qualitative and quantitative tools; recognize challenges; celebrate good practice; support positive change; act as a local resource; grow as managers and leaders.
- 18 Seminars (1 full day per month, over 18 months) involving interactive and applied learning methods.
- Three course modules: knowledgeable consumers of data; using data to manage change; and improving outcomes.
- Resource Fellows present at the project meetings, at all Fellows classes and meet monthly with trainers.
- Training Academy staff integrate curriculum into existing and future agency classes.

**What are the critical findings?**

- Keys to successful implementation: leadership commitment; stakeholder involvement (communication, participation); organizational readiness; effective partnership with Implementation Center, agency and training contractors; operational details; frequent monitoring and evaluation; coaching; cross-functional team resources.
- Fellows gained skills in leadership, presentation and team building.
- Coursework is strengthened by case studies, homework, presentations and coaching.
- Coaching is time consuming but critical to sustaining use of data.
- Fear of data/numbers is gone; more focus on quality improvement now.
- Program is embedded in the middle of the organization and supported from the top. IT became more connected with the field. Each Area Office has a team skilled in the use of data that utilizes a variety of datasets.
- Increased competency of targeted staff to engage in data-informed supervision and management to support case practice model.

**What are the implications for our work?**

- Using data for decision-making and practice change takes resources but is invaluable and adds intensity to the work.
- Important to focus on data that needs improvement or needs further exploration.
- Staff are able to own the data, experience bad data, set limits on how much data is important and see the value of disaggregation. Staff at all levels make recommendations on changes (practice, policy, SACWIS systems).
- Use individual meetings with Area Directors to break down barriers.
- Individual coaching and peer learning are critical and important.
- No segregation of quantitative and qualitative data - all equally important.
- Project Manager needs to be open to listening and developing relationship with the field.
- Include opportunities for to go beyond statewide data and Integrate data with case practice.
- Sharing of data to new levels of the organization can be scary at first but adds transparency and accountability.
- ChildStat presentations in each district office help bring learning to the Area Offices and mirror Fellows' behavior.