Examining Outcomes

During the Preparation Phase, the goals and outcomes for the new program should have been clearly established and incorporated into any service contracts. In addition, the process for collecting and reporting outcomes measures should have been determined. Refer to the *Data & Outcomes* (Appendix F2) resource in the Preparation section for more information.

During the Implementation Phase, the key focus will be on ensuring that the measures are being collected on a timely and regular basis and also examining the outcomes to determine if the program is having the desired effects.

Within the first month of services, begin preliminary analyses of the baseline data on clients. A large focus will be on the quality of the data to ensure that it is being collected correctly. Questions to ask include:

- Are some clients missing entire measures? Why are they missing and how can this be addressed to reduce missing data in the future?

- Are certain items on the measures missing?

- How soon after entering services were the intake measures collected?

- Do the clients appear to be appropriate for the program? Correct age group, sufficient impairment level, etc.

Within the first few months, begin examining outcomes from the program at both the process and client level. Baseline levels should have been established and the focus now is looking to see what changes, if any, are occurring.

If client level changes are not occurring, review the process outcomes and fidelity assessments and also confer with the developer to determine what adjustments need to be made to the service delivery process to improve results.

It may be helpful to display the outcomes results in chart or graph format, using Microsoft Excel or similar programs, to show change over time. For example, a chart showing the number of clients served each month by program site can help determine whether new clients are being referred at appropriate rates and what the existing capacity in the program is. Some programs may choose to establish a dashboard of several charts or graphs that are updated periodically as a way to quickly see change over time.