Part C Child Count
Comparison of Cumulative and Point-in-Time Counts Using State-Reported 618 Data

Data Accountability Center

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Data Accountability Center (DAC)

Section 618 of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) specifies that states will provide data each year to the Secretary of Education for children and families served through state Part B and Part C programs [Section 618 (a)]. As part of the Section 618 data collection for Part C, states must report annually the number of children under age 3 who receive early intervention services according to an active individualized family service plan (IFSP) in place on the child count date. The child count date is a state-designated date between October 1 and December 1. This is known as a point-in-time count. States also have the option to report the cumulative number of infants and toddlers birth through age 2 with disabilities who received early intervention services during the most recent 12-month period for which data are available. This is known as a cumulative count.

This brief compares the 2009 point-in-time and cumulative child counts,[1] presenting differences between the two measures and examining differences by several factors.[2]

As the cumulative count is not required for 618 data reporting, not all states report it. The number of states reporting cumulative counts has decreased slightly over time. Thirty-one states (including DC) reported cumulative counts in 2006, 30 states in 2007, 30 states (including DC) in 2008, and 28 states in 2009. Twenty-five states reported cumulative counts all 4 years, and 17 states did not report cumulative counts in any of these recent 4 years.

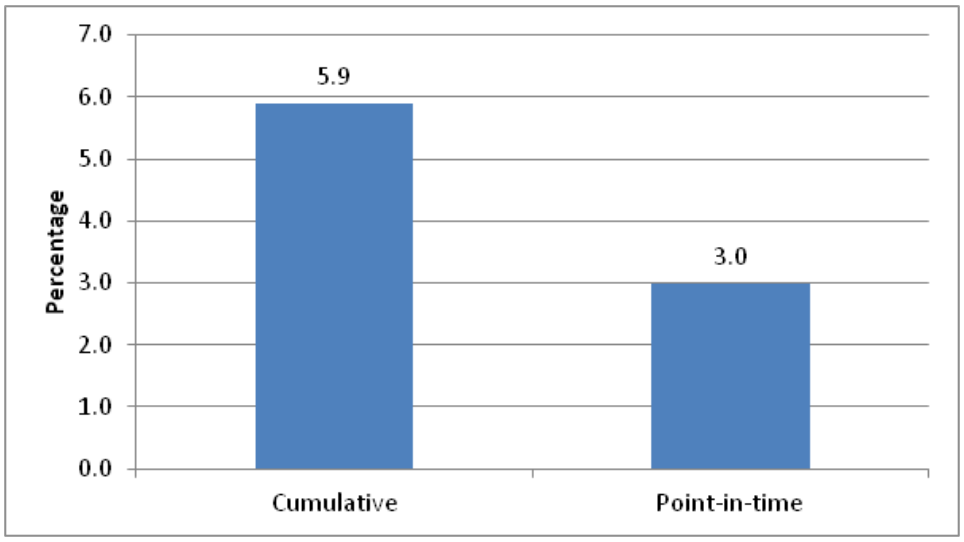
The following 28 states reported cumulative counts in 2009: Alabama, Alaska, Arizona, Connecticut, Delaware, Georgia, Hawaii, Idaho, Illinois, Indiana, Kansas, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Montana, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New Mexico, Nevada, North Carolina, North Dakota, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Texas, Utah, Virginia, Washington, and West Virginia. Note that several large states (California, Florida, and New York) did not report cumulative counts in 2009. This brief focuses on the 28 states, unless otherwise noted. It is important to keep in mind that since not all states reported cumulative counts, this brief does not provide a national comparison of cumulative and point-in-time child counts.

In 2009, all 28 states reported higher cumulative counts than point-in-time counts. In fact, on average, the cumulative counts were about double the point-in-time counts. The difference between the cumulative count and point-in-time count ranged from 562 (Delaware, whose point-in-time count was 675) to 28,536 (Texas, whose point-in-time count was 28,574).

[1] The source for all data reported in this brief is U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs, Data Analysis System (DANS), OMB #1820-0557: "Infants and Toddlers Receiving Early Intervention Services in Accordance with Part C," data updated as of July 15, 2010. Data were obtained from IDEAdata.org.
[2] The IDEA Infant and Toddler Coordinators Association's Birth Cohort Study made an initial attempt to examine this issue, but additional data are being collected before a report is issued.

On average across the 28 states in 2009, 5.9% of the population birth through age 2 received early intervention services according to the cumulative count, while 3% of the population birth through age 2 received services according to the point-in-time count[3] (see figure 1).

Figure 1. Percentage of the population birth through age 2 receiving early intervention services, cumulative and point-in-time child counts: 2009 (*N*=28 states)



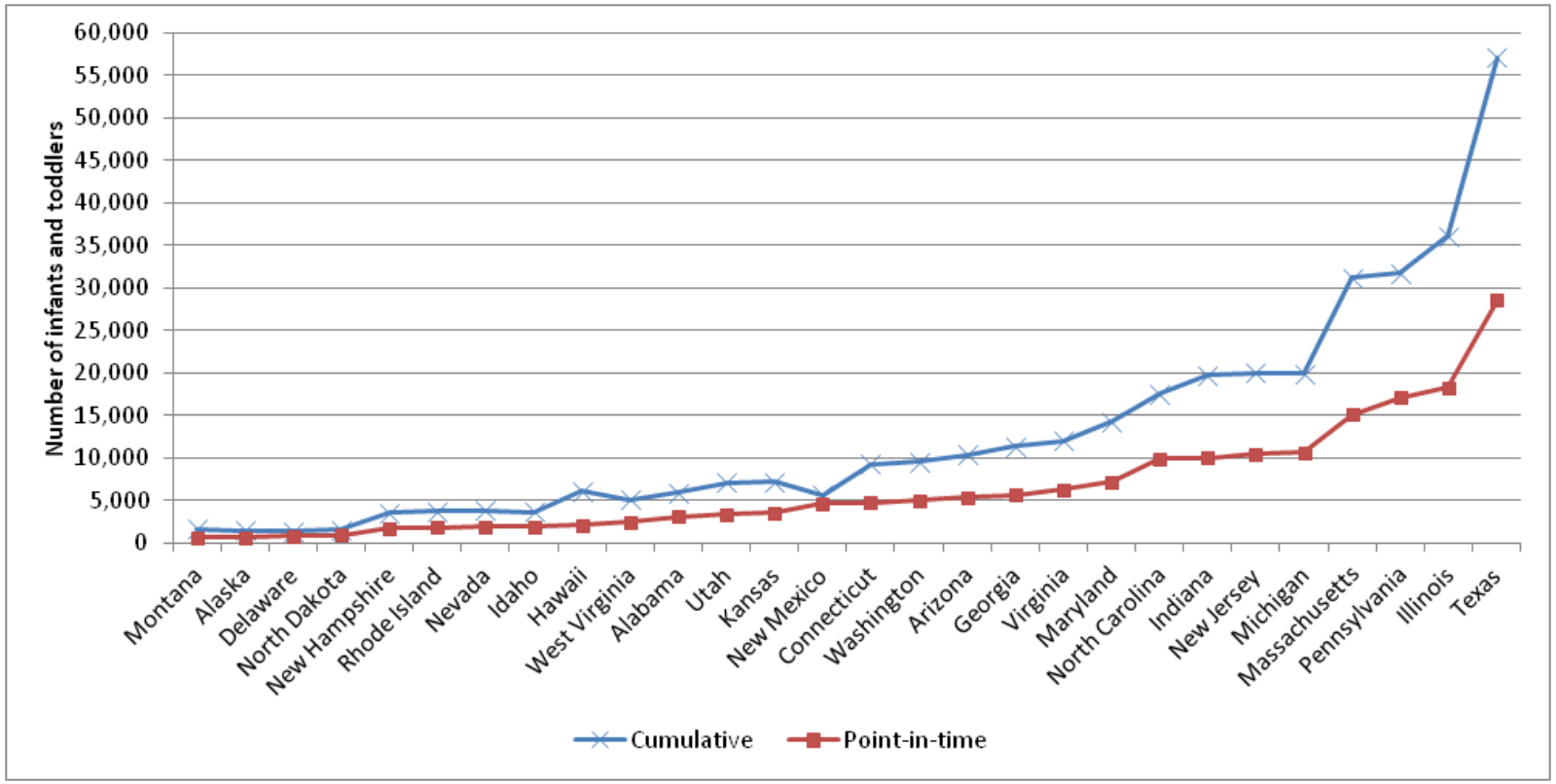
Source: U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs, Data Analysis System (DANS), OMB #1820-0557: "Infants and Toddlers Receiving Early Intervention Services in Accordance with Part C," data updated as of July 15, 2010.
Note: Percentage = Child count (cumulative or point-in-time) birth through age 2 divided by population birth through age 2, multiplied by 100.

That is, the percentage of the population birth through age 2 that received early intervention services was 2.9 percentage points higher when using the cumulative count than when using the point-in-time count. The difference between the percentage of the population served calculated using the cumulative count and the percentage calculated using the point-in-time count ranged from 1.1 percentage points higher (New Mexico) to 7.3 percentage points higher (Hawaii).

Figures 2 and 3 show the cumulative and point-in-time counts and percentage of the population birth through age 2 that received early intervention services in each of the 28 states in 2009, ordered by the point-in-time child count. As mentioned previously, for each state, the cumulative count is higher than the point-in-time count.

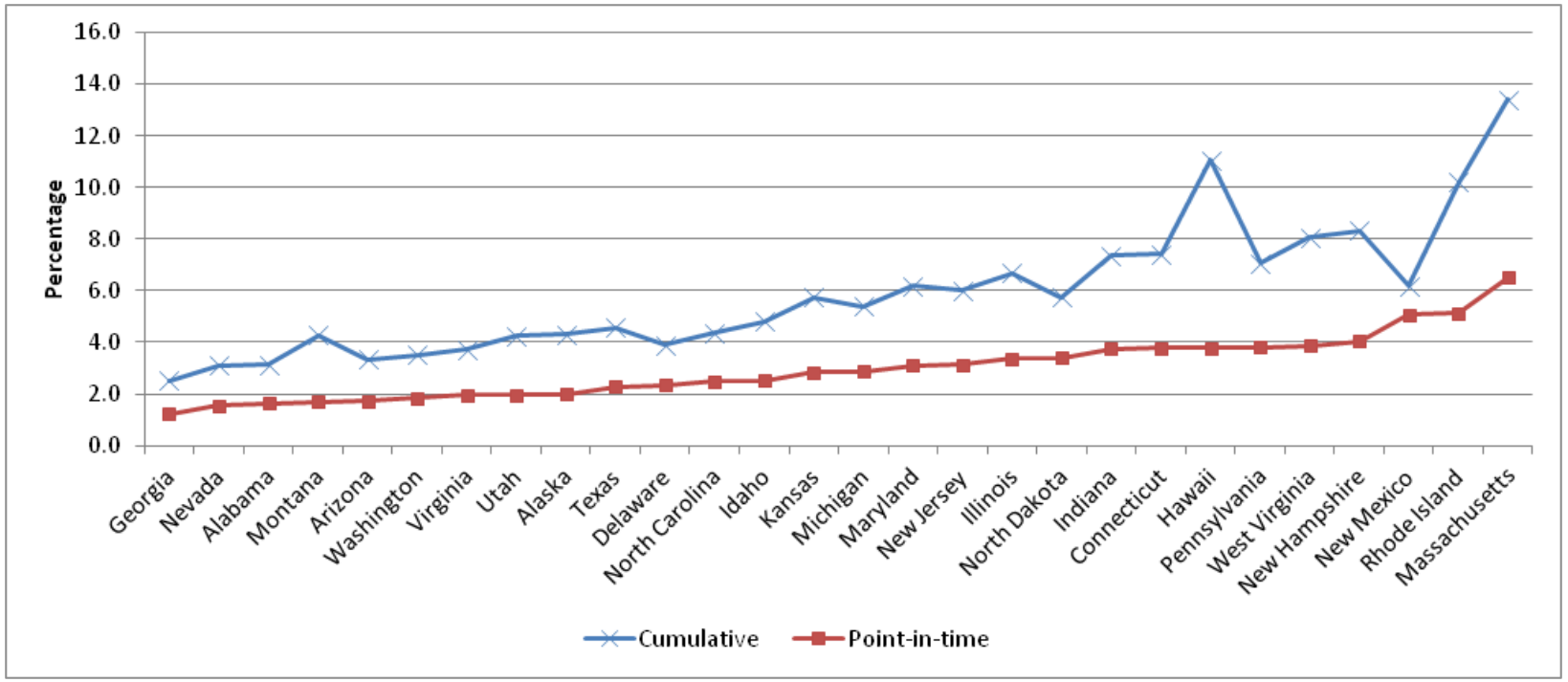
[3] Percentage of children in the population = state child count (cumulative or point-in-time) birth through age 2 divided by state population birth through age 2, multiplied by 100. The source for state population data is U.S. Bureau of the Census, accessed August 2010 from http://www.census.gov/popest/states/asrh/files/SC-EST2009-AGESEX-RES.csv. The same birth through age 2 population number was used as the denominator for calculating the percentage of the population based on the cumulative child count and the percentage of the population based on the point-in-time child count.

Figure 2. Number of children birth through age 2 receiving early intervention services by state, cumulative and point-in-time child counts: 2009



Source: U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs, Data Analysis System (DANS), OMB #1820-0557: "Infants and Toddlers Receiving Early Intervention Services in Accordance with Part C," data updated as of July 15, 2010.

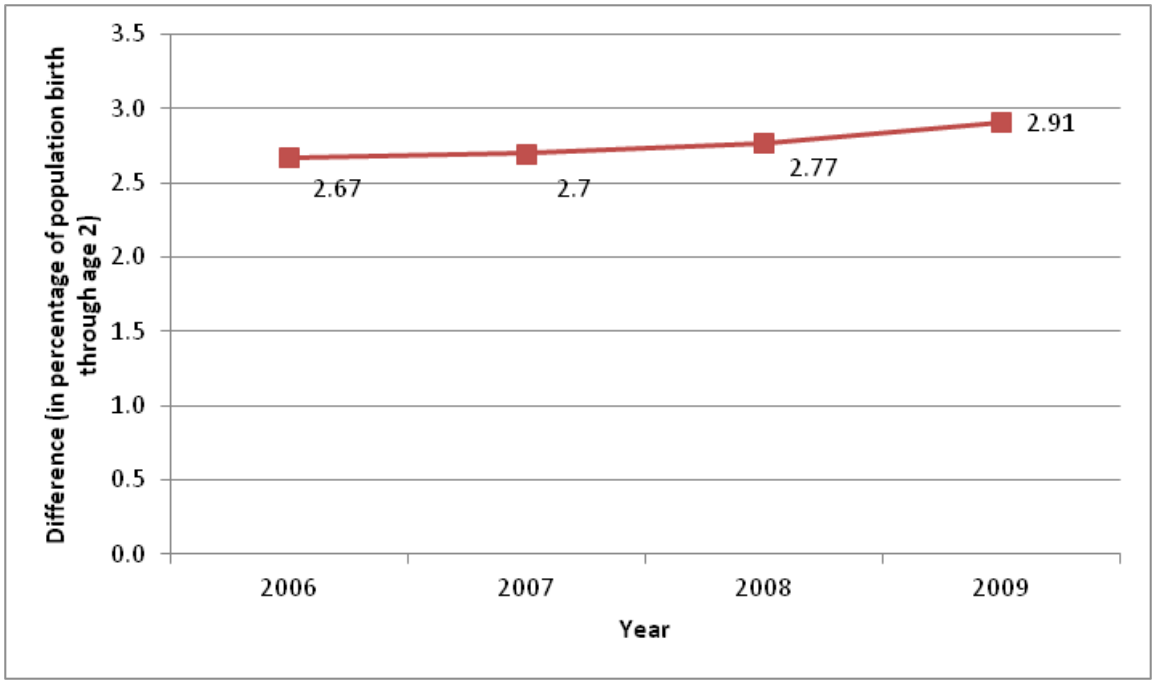
Figure 3. Percentage of population birth through age 2 receiving early intervention services by state, cumulative and point-in-time child counts: 2009



Source: U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs, Data Analysis System (DANS), OMB #1820-0557: "Infants and Toddlers Receiving Early Intervention Services in Accordance with Part C," data updated as of July 15, 2010.
Note: Percentage = Child count (cumulative or point-in-time) birth through age 2 divided by population birth through age 2, multiplied by 100.

Figure 4 shows the mean difference between the percentage of the population birth through age 2 receiving early intervention services calculated using the cumulative count compared to the percentage calculated using the point-in-time count in 2006 through 2009. The difference in the percentage of the population served using the two counts has increased slightly over the 4 years.

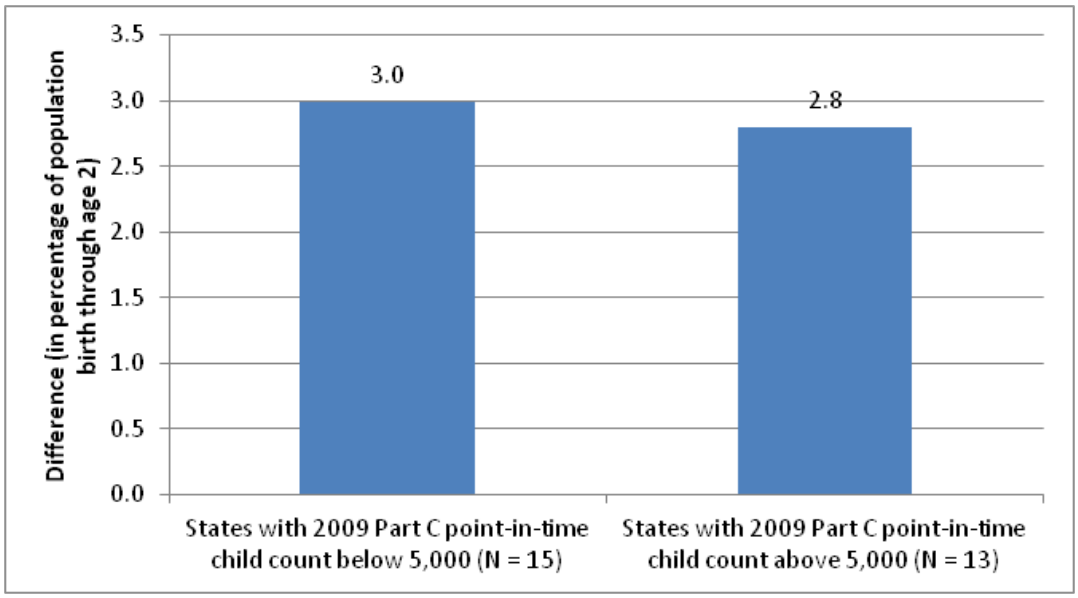
Figure 4. Mean difference in percentage of population birth through age 2 receiving early intervention services between cumulative and point-in-time child count: 2006-2009 (*N*=25 states)



Source: U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs, Data Analysis System (DANS), OMB #1820-0557: "Infants and Toddlers Receiving Early Intervention Services in Accordance with Part C," data updated as of July 15, 2010.
Notes: This chart includes only the 25 states that reported cumulative counts in 2006–2009. Percentage = Child count (cumulative or point-in-time) birth through age 2 divided by population birth through age 2, multiplied by 100.

The difference between the cumulative and point-in-time counts was examined by three state characteristics: number of children served under Part C (point-in-time child count), Part C eligibility category, and Part C lead agency. As shown in figure 5, of the 28 states that reported cumulative counts in 2009, the difference between the percentage of the population receiving early intervention services calculated using the cumulative count and the percentage calculated using the point-in-time count was slightly larger for states with a Part C Child count of 5,000 or less than for states with a Part C child count of over 5,000: 3.0% compared to 2.8%.

Figure 5. Mean difference in percentage of population birth through age 2 receiving early intervention services between cumulative and point-in-time child count by size of point-in-time count: 2009 (*N*=28 states)



Source: U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs, Data Analysis System (DANS), OMB #1820-0557: "Infants and Toddlers Receiving Early Intervention Services in Accordance with Part C," data updated as of July 15, 2010.
Note: Percentage = Child count (cumulative or point-in-time) birth through age 2 divided by population birth through age 2, multiplied by 100.

The difference in the percentage of the population birth through age 2 receiving services also varied somewhat by Part C eligibility category[4] and lead agency. Part C eligibility categories are:

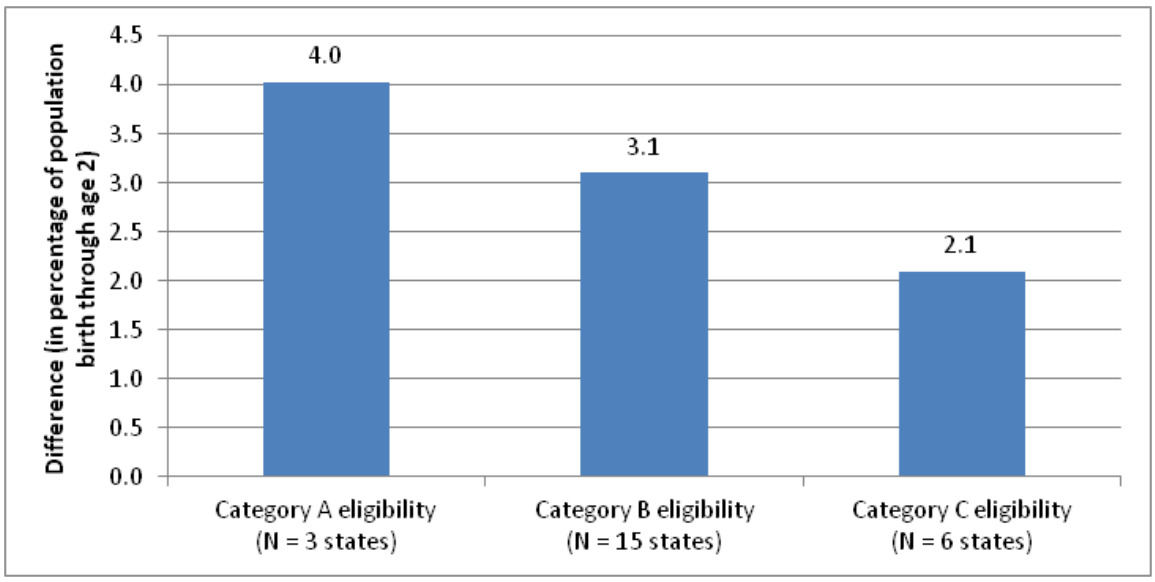
- Category A: At Risk, Any Delay, Atypical Development, one standard deviation in one domain, 25% delay in one or more domains, 20% delay in two or more domains, 22% in two or more domains.
- Category B: 25% in two or more domains, 30% delay in one or more domains, 1.3 standard deviations in two domains, 1.5 standard deviations in any domain, 33% delay in one domain.
- Category C: 33% delay in two or more domains, 40% delay in one domain, 50% delay in one domain, 1.5 standard deviations in 2 or more domains, 1.75 standard deviations in one domain, 2 standard deviations in one domain, 2 standard deviations in two or more domains.

Category A eligibility states had the largest difference between the percentage of the population calculated using the cumulative count and the percentage calculated using the point-in-time count (4%), followed by Category B eligibility states (3.1%) and Category C eligibility states (2.1%) (see figure 6).

[4] Eligibility categories were established by the ITCA Data Committee as of 2010 and can be found at http://www.ideainfanttoddler.org/pdf/2009_Child_Count_Data_Charts.pdf.

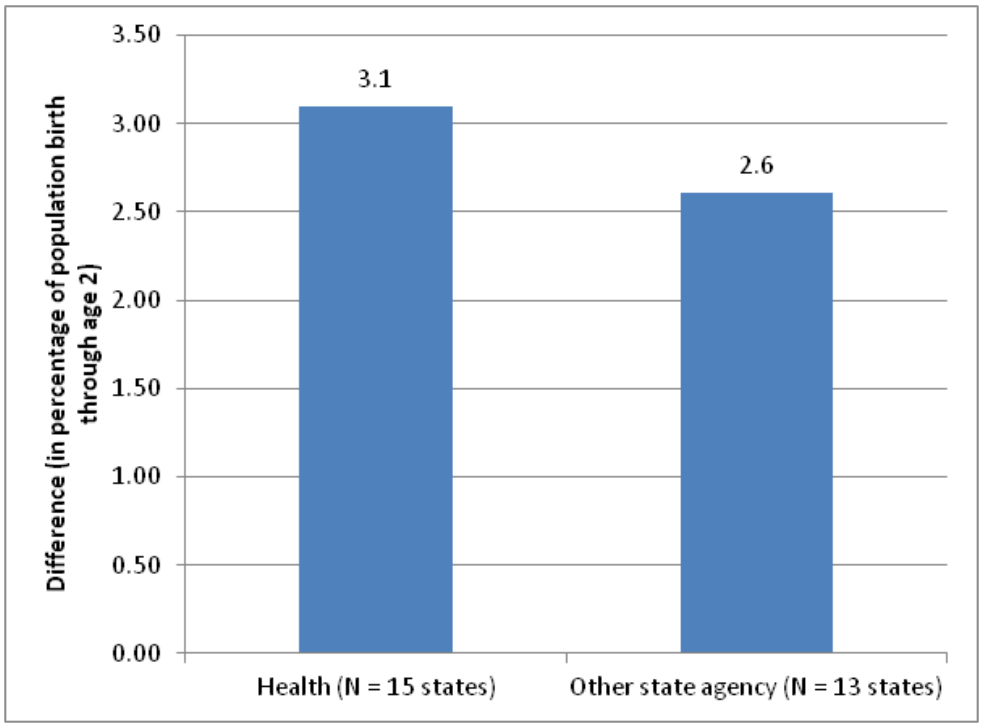
States with health Part C lead agencies had a larger difference between the percentage of the population calculated using the cumulative count and the percentage calculated using the point-in-time count (3.1%) than states with other types of lead agencies (2.6%) (see figure 7).

Figure 6. Mean difference in percentage of population birth through age 2 receiving early intervention services between cumulative and point-in-time child count by Part C eligibility category: 2009 (*N*=24 states)



Source: U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs, Data Analysis System (DANS), OMB #1820-0557: "Infants and Toddlers Receiving Early Intervention Services in Accordance with Part C," data updated as of July 15, 2010.
Notes: Eligibility categories were established by the ITCA Data Committee as of 2010. Four states were not included because their eligibility category was unknown. Percentage = Child count (cumulative or point-in-time) birth through age 2 divided by population birth through age 2, multiplied by 100.

Figure 7. Mean difference in percentage of population birth through age 2 receiving early intervention services between cumulative and point-in-time child count by Part C lead agency: 2009 (*N*=28 states)



Source: U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs, Data Analysis System (DANS), OMB #1820-0557: "Infants and Toddlers Receiving Early Intervention Services in Accordance with Part C," data updated as of July 15, 2010.
Note: Lead agency as reported by the ITCA Data Committee as of 2010. Percentage = Child count (cumulative or point-in-time) birth through age 2 divided by population birth through age 2, multiplied by 100.

In summary,

- In 2009, for all 28 states, the percentage of the population birth through age 2 that received early intervention services was higher when using the cumulative count than when using the point-in-time count;
- On average, in 2009, the 28 states reported nearly twice as many infants and toddlers received early intervention services according to the cumulative count than the point-in-time count;
- This reported difference between the cumulative and point-in-time counts increased slightly from 2006 to 2009;
- In 2009, the reported difference between cumulative and point-in-time counts varied slightly when compared by size of state child count (states with 2009 Part C point-in-time child count below 5,000 compared to states with 2009 Part C point-in-time child count above 5,000);
- In 2009, the reported difference between cumulative and point-in-time counts varied slightly when examined by Part C eligibility category;

- In 2009, there was also a difference between the population served using the cumulative and point-in-time counts when examined by Part C lead agency. The difference was larger for states with health lead agencies than for states with other types of lead agencies.

States are encouraged to submit both point-in-time and cumulative child counts in order to provide a more comprehensive picture of the number and percentage of children birth through age 2 receiving early intervention services. Both sets of data provide important information for decision-making about resource allocation and improvement planning.