Early Childhood Integrated Data System Communications Toolkit

Oklahoma
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Introduction

Building awareness of the benefits and barriers to early childhood data systems is essential to promoting a culture of data use and to inform political action. Research continues to reinforce the importance of developing policy solutions which support children during their first 8 years of life. Children’s experiences during this critical period of development can set them on a path for better life outcomes in education, health, and economic mobility.¹ To understand how policies, services, and supports work for which children at what time, policymakers need comprehensive data about the accessibility, quality, and effectiveness of government services.

In recent years, states have begun to acknowledge and address the need for integrated, cross-program data to inform decisions about early childhood practices, services, and education. Many states have developed an Early Childhood Integrated Data System (ECIDS) to provide such information. An ECIDS collects, stores, integrates, and maintains data from early childhood programs across multiple agencies within a state. The combined information is used to inform service delivery, public policy, and future investments to ensure all children have access to the supports they need to succeed in school and in life.

The Early Childhood Data Collaborative’s (ECDC) goal is to share information with policymakers on the value of and role of tools like an ECIDS can play in making data-driven policy decisions about young children and their families. Over the last year, ECDC has consulted with Smart Start Oklahoma and stakeholders to design strategic messaging strategies that communicate their vision for an ECIDS. This toolkit was developed to help Smart Start Oklahoma develop a list of stakeholders and policymakers to facilitate direct communications and identify specific policy needs to advance implementation and use of an ECIDS.

Purpose of this toolkit

This toolkit provides an overview of the communications framework used to develop Oklahoma’s ECIDS 2017-2018 communications plan. The toolkit outlines ECDC’s strategic communications process to identify target audiences, develop key messages, and implement outreach strategies specific to ECIDS. From October 1, 2016 to August 31, 2017, the ECDC worked with Smart Start Oklahoma to develop a communications plan and materials to support their ECIDS communications goals over the next year. This toolkit is intended help the Smart Start Oklahoma and its partners as they continue to build awareness of the value of ECIDS and share examples of how other states have used an ECIDS and overcome obstacles to implementation.

Communications Framework

This toolkit is organized into the following five sections based on each component of the communications framework used to develop Oklahoma’s ECIDS communications plan:

1) **Objectives and target audiences** - Any communication strategy should include high-level and specific, measurable objectives. It is important to also identify the target audiences for your communications strategies. Your objectives and audiences should inform one another. In other words, your objectives will vary based on your audience and your audience may be determined by your objectives.

2) **Messaging** – A communications strategy should have clear compelling messages that are tailored for the audience you have identified.

3) **Outreach strategy** – Your outreach strategy includes thinking through timing (when will your audiences be receptive to your message or have the capacity to forward your objectives?) and include other partners who can help support implementing your strategy.

4) **Tactical execution** – During this phase, materials are developed and shared through the channels identified in your outreach strategy.

5) **Data collection** – Your communications strategy should also include gathering information on the execution of your plans and making any necessary adjustments to ensure you meet your communications objectives.

Below, we provide more detailed information about each component of the framework, as well as specific guidance around each component for stakeholders in Oklahoma. This work was informed by conversations with the Smart Start Oklahoma and Oklahoma Department of Education. For additional information on developing a strategic communications plan, you can refer to the Alliance for Early Success’s April 2017 Communications Working Group webinar, available online here: [https://youtu.be/DHTfG5QPiY](https://youtu.be/DHTfG5QPiY).
1. Objectives and target audiences

**Objectives.** Your communication strategy should include both specific and measurable objectives. Objectives will vary by the intended audience and should be measurable over a set time frame. These objectives should support the overall goals of the ECIDS.

Through our conversations with Oklahoma stakeholders, we established two main objectives for this communications strategy around the development of an ECIDS:

- **Specific objective:** To expand the visibility, raise awareness, build value and support for the development of an Early Childhood Integrated Data System (ECIDS) in Oklahoma.

- **Measurable objectives:** Build a strategic target list of stakeholders and policymakers to facilitate direct outreach based on actions needed in the coming year, develop messaging products that convey the importance of an ECIDS, and consult with ECIDS experts to learn strategies for addressing confidentiality and data sharing concerns.

**Target audiences.** The target audiences are the groups of people with the most interest in and/or influence on your issue with whom you expect to communicate. For each target audience, it is important to refine the message and determine what action you want each audience to take, why they should care about this issue, and what they need to know to act.
To determine which audiences Smart Start Oklahoma would focus on over the next year, ECDC first conducted a stakeholder analysis to determine the roles, influence, and communications needs of all relevant stakeholders. A stakeholder analysis is a tool that can help pull together information about your various audiences. It summarizes the specific names and roles of your audiences, how your audiences can impact your objectives, concerns your audiences may have about an issue, and the types of messages that will most resonate with each audience.

For Oklahoma’s communication plan, Smart Start Oklahoma members decided to prioritize staff within the Oklahoma State Department of Education (OSDE) and Head Start grantee organizations. Currently, data about Oklahoma’s early childhood programs are housed in multiple, separate state agencies. External agencies must request data through records requests, a frequently slow and arduous process that provides limited data and undermines coordination between programs. Plans for an ECIDS require the creation of linkages to existing integrated data efforts and infrastructures across the state. An initial goal is to link Head Start/Early Head Start data in with the OSDE’s state longitudinal data system (SLDS), which already has prekindergarten data.

OSDE leadership and Head Start grantees were selected as target audiences because of their authority to act regarding decisions to share their early childhood data and participate in state efforts integrate data across programs. Table I includes a description of each component of a stakeholder analysis and an example from Oklahoma’s plan. The full stakeholder analysis is available in Appendix A.
Table I. Components of a stakeholder analysis and OK example

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Example from Oklahoma</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The names of stakeholders and key messengers</td>
<td>The State Oklahoma Department of Education (OSDE) is the administrative body responsible for overseeing PK-12 education in the state.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Each stakeholder’s level of impact, i.e., how they will be impacted by the development of an ECIDS</td>
<td>OSDE has a high impact on the implementation of a state ECIDS because their data represent a large part of information about prekindergarten programs and children who receive early intervention services through local school districts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Each stakeholder’s level of influence, i.e., how they will influence the development of an ECIDS without having a direct role in its development</td>
<td>OSDE has a high level of influence because successful implementation of an ECIDS requires alignment with OSDE’s state longitudinal data system (SLDS) and efforts to develop a state Master Person Index (MPI) to connect information about children’s experiences across state agencies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concerns that the stakeholder may have about the development of an ECIDS</td>
<td>OSDE will be concerned about how data will be protected and used in an ECIDS.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outreach strategies for reaching the specific stakeholders or key messengers</td>
<td>Communications with OSDE leadership will address what it means to link data, examples of how state education departments share data, and policies which address data privacy concerns.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. Messaging

Messages are the main points that you want to convey to your target audiences. When developing messages on a specific issue, it is important to consider:

1. What is the relevance of message to the target audience?
2. What is the specific intended outcome of you message? In other words, what are you trying to achieve?
3. What information does your audience need to achieve your intended outcome?
4. What are the audience’s preferred ways of accessing this information?

Appendix B includes the full list of messages generated from our conversations with stakeholders from Oklahoma. This section provides a description of the types of messages stakeholders would use if their state does not currently have an ECIDS and they want to build awareness and support for its development. After you create your general messaging, it is important to tailor each message based on the audiences and outreach strategy.
Messages for states interested in building support for an ECIDS include:

Message 1: Why Early Care and Education (ECE) Matters

Many target audiences for Oklahoma’s ECIDS work may not have a deep understanding of early childhood or early care and education data. To achieve your communications objectives with these audiences, it is important to first establish the critical role ECE programs can play in healthy development and early learning, the importance of having good data about what early childhood services are available and who is accessing those services, and how robust and comprehensive information about early childhood services is essential to making decisions about children birth to age 8.

Figure 2. What is ECE data?

- For example, the visual in figure 2 helps define for the reader what early care and education programs are and how these array of early childhood services supports children’s development. This type of visual can be adapted to state specific programs or agency names.

Much research exists around the importance of early learning services, particularly for children who face multiple risk factors for achieving later school success. Listed below are a sample of available resources on the importance of early care and education for young children – in supporting their healthy development and academic success, as a financial investment with a positive rate of return, and as an area of bi-partisan consensus.

Examples of resources on why ECE matters

- Research on ways high-quality early care and education support healthy development and early learning: Alliance for Early Success Birth Through Eight Policy Framework: Research at Glance
- Research on investing in high-quality early care and education with positive returns on investment over time, reducing costs in remedial education, health and criminal justice expenses: The Heckman Equation
- Polling data on early education: First Five Years Fund 2017 Poll
**Message 2: ECIDS is a powerful tool for answering key policy questions**

As with early childhood services generally, the concept of an integrated data system may be foreign to your audiences. They will need clear, concise information about what an ECIDS is and how it can be used. Visual representations of an ECIDS may be helpful, as is depicted in figure 3.

- Example: Like an unfinished puzzle, most early childhood data are disconnected because they are managed by multiple state agencies. An Early Childhood Integrated Data System (ECIDS) helps assemble the puzzle pieces, making it possible for policymakers and administrators to have critical data to make informed decisions and better serve children. This completed puzzle will also help policy makers understand trends over time.

**Examples of resources on what an ECIDS is**

- The 10 fundamentals of coordinated state data systems  
- An Introduction to Integrated Data Systems (http://www.aecf.org/blog/watch-it-now-an-introduction-to-integrated-data-systems/)

In addition to explaining what an ECIDS is, it’s important to message around the value of an ECIDS for each audience. The list below provides different ways an ECIDS can add value. It’s important that stakeholders think about their audiences and decide which messages will resonate most and move each audience towards the desired outcomes. Additional examples of each message are in Appendix B.

- Streamlining Investments/Making good use of tax-payers’ money
  - *Example:* Information about access to quality early care and school readiness can better inform state investments aimed at improving outcomes for Oklahoma’s children.
- Preparing children for academic success
  - *Example:* Are children starting school healthy, happy, and ready learn? Are children getting what they need to support their healthy development? Do teachers and administrators have the information they need to support kindergarteners entering their schools? In most states, information about children’s experience prior to starting school is not available. Integrating early childhood data can help policymakers focus on the specific needs of vulnerable populations. This information can make all the difference in the world as a child enters school.
• Ensuring access to the right services  
  o Example: ECIDS changes how data are used, from simply complying with funding requirements, to supporting continuous improvement. By securely linking from different state agencies, the agency can target services for vulnerable children and identify gaps in their programs.

• Building knowledge and informing research  
  o Example: An ECIDS can be used to support research on state programs. Early childhood research can guide investments to make sure limited public funds are utilized effectively on what works for young children and families.

• Knowing what works—ensuring our future  
  o Example: Right now, in many states, each agency maintains its own data and uses it for its own planning and reporting. Integrating early childhood data across agencies gives policymakers data on the full constellation of services utilized by young children and their families to assess what works and what doesn’t.

• Safeguarding and protecting personal information  
  o Example: An ECIDS can build trust through transparency of safeguards for the data—protecting the privacy of children’s information.

**Message 3: States have used ECIDS data to improve ECE services and policies**

For audiences that do not have an ECIDS implemented, they will appreciate having specific examples of how an ECIDS has been used and provided value in other states. This can help alleviate fears (it’s hard to be the first to try something out), show how challenges are overcome, and provide examples of ways ECIDS provided concrete assistance to similarly situated stakeholders in other states. The list below provides a sampling of state examples that can be illustrative when talking about the value of an ECIDS. Additional examples can be found in Appendix B.

• Ensuring access to the right services  
  o Example: In North Carolina, integrating early childhood data has allowed administrators to see where there may be additional children eligible for the public pre-k program. They can identify children who are eligible for, but not attending, state-funded pre-k. For example, identifying geographic areas where age-eligible children may be receiving food and nutrition services but not attending public preschool. These data can be used to evaluate programs procedures or state policies which may affect access for families.

• Streamlining investments/Making good use of tax-payers’ money  
  o Example: If the state invests up front for programs that work, it prevents the need for more costly interventions later. In Minnesota, for example, their ECIDS directly connects data about young children to K-12 data, which can be used to assess school readiness by characteristics of children, where they live, and their experiences with early learning. With this information, policy makers know which early care programs are working and can tweak the programs before the children enter kindergarten.
• Preparing children for academic success
  o Example: An Early Childhood Integrated Data System securely connects information about children across programs to understand children’s development and academic progress. New Jersey has already used its integrated early childhood data to conduct research on school outcomes in children from preschool to fifth grade.

• Building knowledge and research
  o Example: In Minnesota, state researchers used their ECIDS to understand how participation in ECE programs across the state varied by program type and race. For example, Hispanic/Latino and Asian children in MN have lower rates of participation in early childhood programs compared to other groups.

• Safeguarding and protecting personal information
  o Example: Data privacy is an important issue for states who have adopted an early childhood integrated data system. In Georgia, for example, state administrators followed security guidelines and worked with Head Start programs to clarify how data would be shared and used.

For additional examples of resources on the how states are integrating its early childhood data, as well as state successes in using ECIDS to support its young children and families, see:

• Early Childhood Data Collaborative Website (http://www.ecedata.org)
  o Interactive state map (http://www.ecedata.org/state-level-data-systems/state/)
  o State spotlights and issue brief (http://www.ecedata.org/publications/)


Message 4: Policies play a vital role in launching an ECIDS

An ECIDS is only as powerful as the laws that govern its use. For stakeholders to access and use early childhood data effectively and efficiently, policymakers need to ensure state policies are aligned across agencies to protect, not prevent, the use of integrated data. Often, existing policies and procedures require updating or revisions to incorporate the use of an ECIDS. It is important to include policy recommendations as part of your messaging to provide concrete next steps for your audience. Below is an example of a policy recommendation related to ECIDS. Additional policy recommendations can be found in Appendix B.

• Example: Create and strengthen state ECE data governance entities to enhance the coordination, security, and appropriate use of ECE data. Convene stakeholders (e.g., parents, ECE professionals, program administrators, policymakers) to identify data needed to inform ECE polices, safeguards to ensure privacy, and strategies to build fully coordinated longitudinal ECE data systems.
Examples of resources for stakeholders on how to implement an ECIDS

- For policymakers:
  - Roadmap for Early Childhood and K-12 Data Linkages- Key Focus Areas to Ensure Quality Implementation: Includes 7 key areas for implementation of an ECIDS 1) stakeholder engagement, 2) data governance, 3) privacy, security, and transparency, 4) linking, matching and sharing, 5) data access and use, 6) data quality, and 7) state capacity (http://www.ecedata.org/publications/roadmap-early-childhood/)

- For agency staff:
  - Early Childhood Integrated Data System Toolkit- Reviews 7 components of developing an ECIDS 1) purpose and vision, 2) planning and management, 3) stakeholder engagement, 4) data governance, 5) system design, 6) data use, and 7) sustainability (https://slds.grads360.org/#program/ecids-toolkit)

Message 5: Data privacy is a critical component of ECIDS

It’s important to talk with stakeholders about data privacy issues. Data privacy refers to the rules which govern the sharing and disclosure of information about individuals. Ensuring that the information about young children and their families is protected, and that the data in the ECIDS are secure, is a critical piece of your messaging. Data privacy policies should be transparent and communicated regularly to all relevant stakeholders. Below are suggestions on how to talk about data privacy issues with stakeholders:

- Acknowledge early and often that the issue is important, and that the ECIDS can be developed in ways that protect the confidentiality of the data it contains.
- Initiate conversations about data privacy during your interactions with stakeholders. It shows that you take the issue seriously and allows you to set the tone of the conversation. If you wait for a concerned stakeholder to bring up the issue, it may put you in the position of being defensive. Data security is a goal of all interested stakeholders.
- Explain how having an ECIDS can support data privacy and security. An ECIDS requires a formal system and process for sharing data across agencies. This ensures that stakeholders have discussed and made decisions around the purposes of the data sharing, who will be able to access the data, and the right partners to bring to the table.
- Emphasize the importance of a data governance body and clear governance structure. These systems will guide decisions about who can use the data and for what purposes.
Examples of resources on data privacy

- Administration for Children and Families (ACF) Confidentiality Toolkit - Explains applicable privacy and confidentiality laws and regulations for the following human services programs: child welfare, TANF, child support, child care, the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP), and SNAP. (https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/assets/acf_confidentiality_toolkit_final_08_12_2014.pdf)

3. Outreach Strategies

When developing outreach strategies, it is important to plan how to deliver your messages at the right time using the right messengers. Select messengers that will have credibility with your target audience and other groups that can support your effort. To develop strong outreach strategies in Oklahoma, we held phone calls with individuals who worked in the State Department of Education. They provided us with unique and valuable insight into the strategies needed to progress work of this nature. Specific recommendations from these conversations are shared as examples for each of the strategies described below:

- **Timing**: This is both logistical (what do you need to do before, during, and after you launch your communications materials?) and strategic (are there particular times when your audiences may be more or less receptive to your message?).
  - *Example*: Leverage existing meetings with state and city agency leadership (ex. monthly cabinet meetings) to reach the largest number of stakeholders with interest and influence on early childhood data.

- **Messengers**: Think carefully about each audience and who that audience is more likely to find credible. Then, identify the people and organizations who can serve as messengers and share your message with your audiences. For example, a local decision-maker may put more stock in a messenger who knows the local community.
  - *Example*: DISCUSS workgroup members, an early childhood subcommittee under the Deliver Interoperable Solution Components Utilizing Shared Service (DISCUSS) state committee, were identified as key messengers to build awareness of the value of ECIDS and to convey messages to agency leadership. Workgroup members represent government and community organizations with authority to make recommendations regarding early childhood data.

- **Needed materials and resources**: Plan how you will share your message. Is it through a press release, a presentation, a fact sheet, an infographic? Remember to think about what will be most powerful and useful to your audiences. If you have a message for a busy policymaker who will only make high-level decisions, make sure your materials can convey your message concisely and have targeted recommendations and action steps. If you have a message for a
programmatic officer who will be completing a complex task, make sure your materials provide the level of detail needed for that officer to act.

- Example: ECDC developed a one-page fact sheet to convey why early childhood data is important and how an ECIDS can support young children in Oklahoma. The fact sheet includes messages with examples of how other state department of education agencies have used an ECIDS.

- Communication vehicles: Devise a plan to have your message included in communication channels commonly used by your target audience (i.e., tv, newspaper, blogs, listservs, etc.). Use the appropriate format to ensure your message is picked up by the desired communication vehicle. For example, a press release for a news media, or an op-ed to be picked up by the editorial department of a publication. You also want these communication channels to be sources target audiences trust.
  - Example: Smart Start Oklahoma may to develop an op-ed for messages intended for state legislators.

- Partnerships: Identify other people and groups who can help. Share materials, messages, and guidance so that your partners can help you get your message out, and be open to listening to their input on your messages and strategies – they may bring different relationships with and insights on your audiences.
  - Example: Smart Start Oklahoma plans to share communications materials through their website and listserv. The organization has connections with a diverse group of early childhood stakeholders inside and outside of state government.

4. Tactical Execution
During this stage, you will develop the materials you planned earlier in the process and conduct outreach to your target audiences. Each target audience will have specific direct and indirect ways in which to reach them. Direct means of communication include reaching them through organizations and individual opinion leaders, specific “champions”, or through regular meetings that take place that would allow for them or a champion to deliver key messages.

Based on the tactics above, we can consider forms of communication tools based on clear messaging. Such vehicles for communication include:

- White paper
- One pager
- Infographics
- Short video
- Social media posts and influencer strategies
- Opinion editorials -strategically authored and placed
- Letters from opinion leaders
- PowerPoint presentation
- News release/ public statement.
ECDC developed a one-pager and two infographics to support Oklahoma’s communications efforts. The one-pager was used to convey a message about the value of ECIDS and provide specific examples of how it can support Oklahoma’s young children. The two infographics were developed to provide background information on what it means to share early childhood data and they kinds of questions stakeholders can answer with integrated data. Appendix C contains copies of the final communications tools developed with input from Smart Start Oklahoma staff and other stakeholders.

There is also an opportunity to consider events that could facilitate the delivery of messages and tools. Events can be especially powerful because they provide an opportunity to assess your message for clarity and identify additional information needs. Examples of these type of events are:

- Webinars
- Closed meetings
- Public meetings
- Conferences

Smart Start Oklahoma decided to use direct communications strategies through in-person meetings to delivery their ECIDS messages. This method also allows the messenger to provide background information about Oklahoma’s ECIDS planning and recommendations from the DISCUSS workgroup.

5. Data collection

The final part of the communications outreach strategy is to track the response to each outreach component. It is important to identify measures of communication success, or metrics, when developing communication objectives. These metrics can include the number of people who visit a website with ECIDS information on it, interviewing or surveying people who received ECIDS messaging, and the number of people that meet with stakeholders about an ECIDS. Collecting this information will help determine what works best and how to improve future communication efforts. In addition, it can help keep track of output (i.e., actions that you take) and outcomes, (i.e., the impacts for your objective). See Table II for a summary of Oklahoma’s plan for collection data about their communications outreach strategies and tactical execution.
Table II. Outreach Strategies, Tactical Execution, and Data Collection Plan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Target Audience(s)</th>
<th>Messenger(s)</th>
<th>Tactical Execution</th>
<th>Data Collection</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>State Department of Education (SDOE)</td>
<td>DISCUSS workgroup members and Smart Start Oklahoma</td>
<td>OK ECIDS State Handout and Infographics</td>
<td>• The number of people that attend the meeting&lt;br&gt;• How the people in attendance responded to the messages&lt;br&gt;• Questions asked and additional information requested&lt;br&gt;• Follow-up resources provided&lt;br&gt;• Action steps developed and completed based on discussions at the meeting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Head Start Grantees</td>
<td>Head Start representatives, DISCUSS workgroup members, and Smart Start Oklahoma</td>
<td>OK ECIDS State Handout and Infographics</td>
<td>• The number of people that attend the meeting&lt;br&gt;• How the people in attendance responded to the messages&lt;br&gt;• Questions asked and additional information requested&lt;br&gt;• Follow-up resources provided&lt;br&gt;• Action steps developed and completed based on discussions at the meeting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Head Start grantee meeting EHS-CC partnership grantee meeting</td>
<td>• Email open rate, website visitors, number of times the link was clicked, number of likes or shares on social media, and/or qualitative feedback from key stakeholders</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>Website and email distribution to stakeholders to build awareness</td>
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</table>
Conclusion

We are grateful for the opportunity to work with the Smart Start Oklahoma and look forward to seeing your achievements as you advance ECIDS in your state. We hope these tools will be useful to you in your planning, communications, and outreach.
## Appendix A. Stakeholder Analysis

**Oklahoma—Early Childhood Integrated Data System**

---List of Target Audiences---

Impact and Influence: L=Low, M=Medium, H=High

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stakeholders &amp; Key Messengers</th>
<th>Impact</th>
<th>Influence</th>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Concerns</th>
<th>Outreach Strategy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Smart Start                   | M      | M         | Smart Start is Oklahoma’s statewide early childhood initiative and serves as the Early Childhood Advisory Council. It is an extra-governmental organization that provides advocacy, funding, and support for issues related to early childhood healthy development and school readiness. It is a key partner in promoting the importance and usefulness of an ECIDS. | • Being able to access linked data to perform analyses across EC datasets to understand statewide early childhood programs and the families those programs serve  
• How data will be used and ensuring that data is being used responsibly. | -- |
| Governor’s office             | M      | H         | The OK Governor and office staff responsible for early childhood initiatives is interested in promoting early childhood state programs that meet the needs of the state’s neediest children in an effective way. They will be concerned about how the benefits of an ECIDS will help them meet this goal such that any investments are resource efficient. | • Cost  
• Efficiency  
• Long-term use  
• Long-term sustainability  
• Promotion of OK early childhood systems | Comprehensive summary/white paper, including executive summary, of most of the topics presented in the communications template. Focus on:  
• What ECLDS are (e.g., history, governance, types of integrated systems)  
• How ECLDS improve the work of agencies serving young children and their family to improve child outcomes |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Role</th>
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<tr>
<td>Legislature</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Cost</td>
<td>• Descriptions of other states with established and well-functioning ECLDS</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Efficiency</td>
<td>• Estimates of costs for a “component” system</td>
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<td>• Long-term use</td>
<td>• Description of how use of an ECLDS could support efficiency for state spending over time</td>
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<td>• Long-term sustainability</td>
<td>• Actions for policymakers to address to support successful implementation.</td>
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<td>• Ability of integrated data system to identify families and children most in need</td>
<td>Comprehensive summary/white paper, including executive summary, of most of the topics presented in the communications template. Focus on:</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• What ECLDS are (e.g., history, governance, types of integrated systems)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• How ECLDS improve the work of agencies serving young children and their family to improve child outcomes</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Descriptions of other states with established and well-functioning ECLDS</td>
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<td>• Estimates of costs for a “component” system</td>
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<td>• Description of how use of an ECLDS could support efficiency for state spending over time</td>
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<td>Stakeholders &amp; Key Messengers</td>
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<td>DISCUSS Data Governance Committee</td>
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<td>Actions for policymakers to address to support successful implementation.</td>
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The DISCUSS Data Governance Committee is responsible for overseeing the integration of datasets included in the Health-E Oklahoma state Health Information Exchange system (vehicle for ECIDS). They set policy and guidelines related to data sharing, integration, and management, within that system.

- Data governance
- Outreach and advocacy to member agencies to promote and inform about the benefits of the ECLDS
- Minimization of burden on member agencies, maximizing benefits
- How data will be used

Communication template sent as a one-pager, e-news, or alternative format that focuses on the following topics:
- Data linking
- Data sharing
- Privacy/confidentiality

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<tr>
<th>State Department of Education</th>
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The State Oklahoma Department of Education is the administrative body responsible for overseeing PK-12 education in the state. Their early childhood data is in large part made up of information related to the statewide pre-k program, in addition to information about children who receive early intervention services through local school districts. The Department of Education is primarily interested in the process and security concerns around developing a Master Person Index (MPI) that would provide a shared unique identifier for all children, that is consistent with the identifiers the department already uses.

- Development of a Master Person Index
- Ensuring their data are linked in secure ways that protect participant confidentiality
- Being able to access linked data to perform analyses across EC datasets to understand their programs and the families those programs serve
- How data will be used

Communication template sent as a one-pager, e-news, or alternative format that focuses on the following topics:
- Data linking
- Data sharing
- Privacy/confidentiality
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<th>Role</th>
<th>Concerns</th>
<th>Outreach Strategy</th>
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</table>
| Department of Human Services | H | H | The Oklahoma Department of Human Services is a primary holder of early childhood data related to subsidy payment and child care licensing, in addition to other information about service provisions to children and families. They are primarily concerned with ensuring their data is connected in a secure way to other datasets, that is not overly burdensome on staff, and that provides the opportunity for them to access additional information about the families they serve that is housed in other systems. | • Ensuring their data are linked in secure ways that protect participant confidentiality  
• Being able to access linked data to perform analyses across EC datasets to understand their programs and the families those programs serve  
• How data will be used | Communication template sent as a one-pager, e-news, or alternative format that focuses on the following topics:  
• What ECIDS are  
• Uses of EC integrated data  
• Update on OK’s efforts |
| Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse | H | H | The OK Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse is the agency that provides behavioral supports to young children. They are a supporter and resource for how to use data and will be interested in the ECIDS effort to understand more about their families. | • Ensuring their data are linked in secure ways that protect participant confidentiality  
• Being able to access linked data to perform analyses across EC datasets to understand their programs and the families those programs serve  
• How data will be used | Communication template sent as a one-pager, e-news, or alternative format that focuses on the following topics:  
• What ECIDS are  
• Uses of EC integrated data  
• Update on OK’s efforts |
| Department of Health | H | H | The OK Department of Health has data about children participating in the Early Intervention Program as well as data on young children’s immunizations, home visiting, and vital records. They will be a key stakeholder for ensuring buy-in to the system | • Ensuring their data are linked in secure ways that protect participant confidentiality  
• Being able to access linked data to perform analyses across EC datasets to understand their programs | Communication template sent as a one-pager, e-news, or alternative format that focuses on the following topics:  
• What ECIDS are  
• Uses of EC integrated data  
• Update on OK’s efforts |
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| Head Start                    | M      | L         | Oklahoma Head Start oversees the states implementation of its Early Head Start and Head Start programs. Its data collections are, in part, compulsory to meet federal reporting requirements. They would be interested in development of a MPI that allows for a direct link to other early childhood data. | • Development of a Master Person Index  
• Ensuring their data are linked in secure ways that protect participant confidentiality  
• Being able to access linked data to perform analyses across EC datasets to understand their programs and the families those programs serve  
• How data will be used | Communication template sent as a one-pager, e-news, or alternative format that focuses on the following topics:  
• Uses of EC integrated data  
• Update on OK’s efforts  
• Development of an MPI |
| Tribal early childhood data   | M      | M         | OK’s tribes collect and manage a variety of data about their young children. They will likely be interested in accessing integrated data to better understand the experiences of those children, in a way that also ensures their privacy. | • Ensuring their data are linked in secure ways that protect participant confidentiality  
• Being able to access linked data to perform analyses across EC datasets to understand their programs and the families those programs serve  
• How data will be used | Communication template sent as a one-pager, e-news, or alternative format that focuses on the following topics:  
• What ECIDS are  
• Uses of EC integrated data  
• Update on OK’s efforts  
• Confidentiality/privacy |
| Public School Resource Center | L      | L         | The Public School Resource Center provides administrative support and resources to school | • Being able to access linked data to perform analyses across EC datasets to understand outcomes for the children and families they serve.  
• and the families those programs serve  
• How data will be used  
• Funding to sustain the work as well as staff | Communication template sent as a one-pager, e-news, or alternative format that focuses on the following topics:  
• Uses of EC integrated data  
• Update on OK’s efforts  
• Development of an MPI |
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<th>Outreach Strategy</th>
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| districts, particularly small ones. They do not collect child or family level data, but may be interested in an ECIDS in providing information about which districts serve children with the greatest needs. | | | | understand their programs and the families those programs serve | alternative format that focuses on the following topics:  
• What ECIDS are  
• Uses of EC integrated data  
• Update on OK’s efforts |
| Health Care Authority | H | H | The OK Health Care Authority is responsible for monitoring the cost of health care and administering enrollment in the state’s health care program. They have some data at the child level, but will primarily be interested in an ECIDS because of its ability to provide information about the insurance needs of families with young children. | | Ensuring their data are linked in secure ways that protect participant confidentiality  
• Being able to access linked data to perform analyses across EC datasets to understand their programs and the families those programs serve  
• How data will be used | Communication template sent as a one-pager, e-news, or alternative format that focuses on the following topics:  
• What ECIDS are  
• Uses of EC integrated data  
• Update on OK’s efforts |
| Regents vocational | L | L | Regents vocational oversees the OK’s state colleges and universities. It’s interest in and ECIDS is to create a longitudinal dataset that spans from early childhood through post-secondary, to understand the educational challenges and successes of children over time. | | Ensuring their data are linked in secure ways that protect participant confidentiality  
• Being able to access linked data to perform analyses across EC datasets to understand their programs and the families those programs serve  
• How data will be used | Communication template sent as a one-pager, e-news, or alternative format that focuses on the following topics:  
• What ECIDS are  
• Uses of EC integrated data  
• Update on OK’s efforts |
| Department of Corrections | L | L | The OK Department of Corrections is responsible for overseeing community and institutional incarceration and treatment of criminal offenders. | | Ensuring their data are linked in secure ways that protect participant confidentiality  
• Being able to access linked data to perform analyses across EC datasets to understand their programs | Communication template sent as a one-pager, e-news, or alternative format that focuses on the following topics:  
• What ECIDS are  
• Uses of EC integrated data |
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<th>Concerns</th>
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<td>Office of Juvenile Affairs</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>The OK Office of Juvenile Affairs is responsible for overseeing community and institutional incarceration and treatment of juvenile offenders.</td>
<td>• Ensuring their data are linked in secure ways that protect participant confidentiality&lt;br&gt;• Being able to access linked data to perform analyses across EC datasets to understand their programs and the families those programs serve&lt;br&gt;• How data will be used</td>
<td>Communication template sent as a one-pager, e-news, or alternative format that focuses on the following topics: &lt;br&gt;• What ECIDS are&lt;br&gt;• Uses of EC integrated data&lt;br&gt;• Update on OK’s efforts</td>
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<td>Private physicians</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>Oklahoma’s network of private physicians may have interest in participating in an ECIDS to learn more about the health outcomes of the children and families they serve.</td>
<td>• Ensuring their data are linked in secure ways that protect participant confidentiality&lt;br&gt;• Being able to access linked data to perform analyses across EC datasets to understand their programs and the families those programs serve&lt;br&gt;• How data will be used</td>
<td>Communication template sent as a one-pager, e-news, or alternative format that focuses on the following topics: &lt;br&gt;• What ECIDS are&lt;br&gt;• Uses of EC integrated data&lt;br&gt;• Update on OK’s efforts&lt;br&gt;• Data privacy/confidentiality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employment Security Commission</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>Oklahoma’s Employment Security Commission administers the state’s unemployment programs including benefits administration.</td>
<td>• Ensuring their data are linked in secure ways that protect participant confidentiality&lt;br&gt;• Being able to access linked data to perform analyses across EC datasets to understand their programs and the families those programs serve&lt;br&gt;• How data will be used</td>
<td>Communication template sent as a one-pager, e-news, or alternative format that focuses on the following topics: &lt;br&gt;• What ECIDS are&lt;br&gt;• Uses of EC integrated data&lt;br&gt;• Update on OK’s efforts</td>
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</table>
| Governor’s interagency council on homelessness (GICH)   | L      | L         | Council representing the concerns of people, including families with young children, who are homeless. | • Ensuring their data are linked in secure ways that protect participant confidentiality  
• Being able to access linked data to perform analyses across EC datasets to understand their programs and the families those programs serve  
• How data will be used | Communication template sent as a one-pager, e-news, or alternative format that focuses on the following topics:  
• What ECIDS are  
• Uses of EC integrated date  
• Update on OK’s efforts |
| Parent privacy groups (e.g., ROPE 2.0)                  | L      | M         | Parent groups that advocate for data privacy will be concerned about any threats to that privacy posed by data integration. | • Data security  
• Data privacy and confidentiality  
• Processes for data sharing | Focus groups guidelines/topics |
| End users (e.g., agency staff, parents, public)         | M      | M         | End users may be interested in learning how data about young children are used (primarily for parents) and whether they can access aggregated, integrated data to inform their decision-making. | • Access to data  
• Usability | Focus groups guidelines/topics |
Appendix B. ECIDS Messaging

1. Why early care and education matters

- Investing in high-quality early care and education results in positive returns on investment over time. These positive returns include reduced costs in remedial education, health and criminal justice expenses. (Heckman, James J. "Invest in early childhood development: Reduce deficits, strengthen the economy." The Heckman Equation 7 (2012).)
- Access to a comprehensive, high-quality early childhood program make a world of difference for a vulnerable child. Early learning investments to support a child’s development yields positive returns over time, through better education, economic, health and social outcomes. (Rivera, Miquela. "The importance of quality early childhood education." The Education Digest 74.3 (2008): 61)
- By age three, children living in poverty are already 30-million-vocabulary words behind their wealthier peers. Early care and education programs aimed at supporting children’s development can help narrow that gap. State agencies need to be aware of who is receiving services and where there are gaps, so that the children most in need have access to services. (Colker, Laura J. "The Word Gap: The Early Years Make the Difference." Teaching Young Children7.3 (2013): 26-28.)
- A child’s brain develops rapidly from the time they are born to age five. This is a critical time when children need to develop the skills they need for success in school. (Heckman, James J. "Invest in early childhood development: Reduce deficits, strengthen the economy." The Heckman Equation 7 (2012).)

2. ECIDS is a powerful tool for answering key policy questions

What is an ECIDS?

- Like an unfinished puzzle, most early childhood data are disconnected because they are managed by multiple state agencies. An Early Childhood Integrated Data System (ECIDS) helps assemble the puzzle pieces, making it possible for policymakers and administrators to have critical data to make informed decisions and better serve children. This completed puzzle will also help policymakers understand trends over time.
- Having integrated data from agencies allows policymakers, educators, and parents to think about data differently. For policy makers integrated data can be used as an investment tool to monitor use of state funding.
- Educators can familiarize themselves with children’s needs, and adjust their teaching strategies based on each child’s history.
- For parents, the information will help them see where their child is, and isn’t progressing so they can get them help as soon as possible.
- An early childhood integrated data system will connect data from across agencies, allowing policymakers to see the BIG PICTURE
• Information on which children are being served in one or more programs helps state leaders make sure all children are getting the support they need. By integrating early childhood data, policymakers/administrators can answer questions that can’t be answered by a single program alone, such as which children have access to early care and education programs, which children’s health needs aren’t being met, which children need more resources, and where there are no resources.

• Integrated data are used to support research and conversations about effective program models. These, in turn, can guide program and policy development.

Ensuring access to the right services

• Because of the multiple challenges children in poverty face, young children may be enrolled in more than one publicly funded programs, making it difficult for policymakers to understand the full scope of services a child receives, when they receive it, and how well the services work to address each child’s needs.

• ECIDS changes how data are used, from simply complying with funding requirements, to supporting continuous improvement. Securely linking data from different state agencies can target services for vulnerable children and identify gaps in their programs.

• Securely sharing data across programs can help policymakers/administrator programs reach the children who most need access to public programs.

• Integrating early childhood data makes it easier for different programs to access and share information with each other, making it easier to coordinate services, and determine where there might be gaps in available resources.

Streamlining investments/Making good use of tax-payer money

• Information about access to quality early care and school readiness can better inform state investments aimed at improving outcomes for [state name] children.

• With so many programs servicing young children’s development, it is hard to see the big picture. Integrating early childhood data allows state administrators to connect these agencies and see where their investment works best. This knowledge can guide policymakers in tailoring services for all children, particularly vulnerable children and their families.

• An ECIDS can help reduce duplication of efforts to collect information across agencies by sharing data.

• When state leaders have data about all the programs children are enrolled in, they can identify areas with greater funding needs. An ECIDS allows policymakers to use cross-agency data to guide policies that improve service delivery, quality, and efficiency.

Preparing children for academic success

• Most states lack information about whether a preschool child starts school ready to learn and whether the interventions the states have are effective. Integrated data can be used to conduct research on the program effectiveness and highlight where at-risk children’s needs are not being met.
• Are children starting school healthy, happy, and ready learn? Are children getting what they need to support their healthy development? Do teachers and administrators have the information they need to support kindergarten children entering their schools? In most states, information about children’s experience prior to starting school is not available. Integrating early childhood data can help policymakers focus on the specific needs of vulnerable populations. This information can make all the difference in the world, as a child enters school.

• Many children enter kindergarten without their teachers having a clear picture of the challenges they face. Integrating early childhood data will make it possible to share data between early childhood and K-12 programs to help schools be prepared to have children succeed in school. For example, if a kindergarten teacher had access to information regarding a child’s math skills in preschool, the teacher can adjust her teaching techniques to help that child succeed.

Building knowledge and informing research

• An ECIDS can be used to support research on state programs. Early childhood research can guide investments to make sure limited public funds are utilized effectively on what works for young children and families.

• Integrating early childhood data system can help policymakers identify and tailor services for diverse populations, and make sure all children are on a path to success. It can answer the questions:
  o Are all children starting school healthy and ready to learn?

• Do teachers and administrators have the information they need to help kindergarteners entering school who need additional support? Linking early childhood data is important because it enables informed decision-making about the investments that best support children. For example, by having comprehensive information on the reach of preschool programs, [STATE]’s state administrators can help ensure eligible children across the state have equal access to a high-quality education, or whether service gaps exist in cities or in rural areas.

Knowing what works ensures our future

• Right now, in many states, each agency maintains its own data and uses it for its own planning and reporting. Integrating early childhood data across agencies gives policymakers data on the full constellation of services utilized by young children and their families to assess what works and what doesn’t.

Safeguarding and protecting personal information

• An ECIDS can build trust through transparency of safeguards for the data—protecting the privacy of children’s information.

• ECIDS promotes coordination and collaboration across different state agencies, and it will also foster collaboration between these agencies to keep vital information secure.
• An integrated data system can spark a conversation between the different state agencies about safeguarding all their information and lead to a secure data system across the board.
• Every state agency usually has their own IT professionals, by using the integrated data system, these IT professionals can share best practices and come up with a more comprehensive and secure data system.
• State agencies will be encouraged to develop a Memoranda of Understanding and data sharing agreements before consolidating their information in an integrated data system. Thus, all the agencies will be adhering to the same security rules.
• Just like home owners secure their valuables with an alarm system, an integrated data system allows information from different state agencies to be protected under the same roof, making it easier for IT professionals to be on the same page when securing data.

3. States have used ECIDS data to improve ECE services and policies
Ensuring access to the right services

• In North Carolina, integrating early childhood data has allowed administrators to see where there may be additional children eligible for the public pre-k program. They can identify children who are eligible for, but not attending, state-funded pre-k. For example, identifying geographic areas where age-eligible children may be receiving food and nutrition services but not attending public preschool. These data can be used to evaluate programs procedures or state policies which may affect access for families.
• Pennsylvania can use its early childhood integrated data to understand the services a child is receiving at any age, by linking data across agencies, and how that changes as they grow older, by tracking data over time.
• Pennsylvania learned the state early Intervention and Head Start programs had the greatest geographic reach. They were the only programs serving children under age five in all 67 counties.

Streamlining investments/Making good use of tax-payer money

• If the state invests up front for programs that works, it prevents the need for more costly interventions later. In Minnesota, for example, their ECIDS directly connects data about young children to K-12 data, which can be used to assess school readiness by characteristics of children, where they live and their experiences with early learning. With this information, policymakers understand how early care programs supporting children before they enter kindergarten.
• In North Carolina, where multiple agencies oversee early childhood programs, they could get buy-in from the state by developing a federated data system. That is, they keep data in individual agencies and then link them with a software application, reducing costs by leveraging existing systems.
• Pennsylvania’s ECIDS centralizes program data to help state administrators to effectively manage programs by reducing redundancies and using integrated data to allocate service dollars.
Preparing children for academic success

- An Early Childhood Integrated Data System securely connects information about children across programs to understand children’s development and academic progress. New Jersey has already used its integrated early childhood data to conduct research on school outcomes in children from preschool to fifth grade.
- Georgia has an ECIDS within its state Department of Early Care and Learning that uses the same unique identifiers to link their early childhood and K-12 data together to conduct research on long-term and school outcomes for children. For example, data sharing was developed between Head Start and Kindergarten/public schools to improve the transition into public schools and provide kindergarten teachers with more information to help make informed decisions about instruction.
- In North Carolina, they created a high-quality, comprehensive, integrated early childhood data system that informs policies and practices and produces better outcomes for children and families.

Building knowledge and informing research

- North Carolina built its ECIDS to better understand how its early care and education services are meeting the needs of young children and families. The data system provides the opportunity to better learn about which children are being served, and the impact of those services on children and families.
- In Minnesota, state researchers used their ECIDS to understand how participation in ECE programs across the state varied by program type and race. For example, Hispanic/Latino and Asian children in MN have lower rates of participation in early childhood programs compared to other groups.
- North Carolina can now answer questions about which children are accessing multiple services. Next, they plan to use their ECIDS to answer questions about:
  - How enrollment in early care and education corresponds with academic success?
  - Which service, or combination of services, has the greatest impact on child well-being?
  - Which children and communities need more resources?

Safeguarding and protecting personal information

- Data privacy is an important issue for states who have adopted an early childhood integrated data system. In Georgia, for example, state administrators followed security guidelines and worked with Head Start programs to clarify how data would be shared and used.
- In North Carolina, security and privacy guidelines of all participating agencies were reviewed and the most stringent guidelines from all agencies were the ones used for all data in NC ECIDS.
Oklahoma State Specific Messages

- An educated workforce works like a magnet to attract businesses to the state. By investing in an integrated data system, Oklahoma will be investing in the future financial stability of the state.
- Oklahoma is already on the road towards an integrated data system. By connecting the system to include early care and education programs, Oklahoma will be well on its way to securing the foundation for economic success of future generations.
- What you don’t know, CAN hurt you. An ECIDS helps policymakers see who is accessing the public education programs and who isn’t. It can also tell them how many children are on the waitlist for these programs. Thus, identifying where there is a greater need.
- In Pennsylvania, the PELICAN data system links data across programs and agencies to support business needs—from the Pre-K, the Keys to Quality QRIS, child care works—linking them to questions of interest about child outcomes that can be provided to agency administrators and policymakers.
- Georgia has built an early childhood integrated data system that can link to its state longitudinal data system, GA AWARDS. This linkage between two data systems allows policymakers to better assess early care and education programs and how they are supporting young children to be successful in the future.
- In North Carolina, NC ECIDS has public reports that show how many and which children are enrolled in one or more public early care and education programs, and where those children are being served to better understand who is accessing these programs and services.
- Oklahoma has long been a leader in providing high-quality early care and education. Programs and services like pre-kindergarten, home visiting, Head Start, child care, and developmental screenings provide important supports to young children and their families. To make informed decisions about these investments and know what works, state policymakers need information about services each child receives.

4. Policies play a vital role in launching an ECIDS

Recommendations for developing ECIDS

- Identify critical questions policymakers need answered to inform early care and education investments and policies. State and local agencies, early childhood stakeholders, and foundations in [STATE] have shown interest in understanding which families are served by multiple programs and how different early childhood programs support later school success, for example.
- Establish a data governance body that is representative of your state or community’s early childhood programs, services, and parents. This group can support the development of an integrated early childhood data system that safeguards private information.
- Create and strengthen state ECE data governance entities to enhance the coordination, security, and appropriate use of ECE data. Convene stakeholders (e.g., parents, ECE professionals, program administrators, policymakers) to identify data needed to inform ECE polices,
safeguards to ensure privacy, and strategies to build fully coordinated longitudinal ECE data systems.

- Strengthen states’ capacity to securely link data on young children across all state and federal programs. Develop more effective strategies to incorporate data from [INSERT YOUR PROGRAM NAME] data so policymakers and practitioners have a more-comprehensive view of children’s learning and development.
- Provide guidance to [INSERT PROGRAM/AGENCY] programs on appropriate safeguards to ensure the confidentiality of data on individual children and families.
- Expand state efforts to collect, link, and use screening and child assessment data, including kindergarten entry assessments, and to use these data to improve program effectiveness, inform parents, and improve teaching and learning.
- Strengthen data infrastructures and governance across agencies and programs that gather information needed to maximize investments in early care and education.
- Support the staffing and resources needed to translate this information into actionable reports.
- Encourage local Head Start programs to contribute to state data initiatives and highlight the benefits of linking Head Start data with other state databases.
- Engage Head Start state collaboration offices as they work with state early childhood data system planning and implementation efforts, and communicate with local Early Head Start and Head Start program leaders.
- Support Head Start leaders in joining ECIDS efforts. State leaders need to understand contributions of all early childhood programs, including Head Start. Work closely with local Head Start program leaders to help them contribute to state data initiatives, and provide guidance on appropriate safeguards to ensure the confidentiality of data on individual children and families.
- Use the tools that have already been created to support early childhood data system development. Engage with federal technical assistance groups—such as the State Longitudinal Data System State Support Team (SST), the DaSy Center and the Privacy Technical Assistance Center—for assistance in developing a data system that will best support the work in your community.

5. **Data privacy is a critical component of ECIDS**

- See messages under Safeguarding and protecting personal information
Appendix C. ECIDS Communications Tools
Why Oklahoma should integrate data about services for young children

Better coordination can maximize investments in early childhood programs and services.

Access to a comprehensive, high-quality early childhood program sets children on a path for success and yields positive financial returns for society.

Oklahoma has long been a leader in providing high-quality early care and education. Programs and services like pre-kindergarten, home visiting, Head Start, child care, and developmental screenings provide important supports to young children and their families. To make informed decisions about these investments and know what works, state policymakers need information about services each child receives.

Linking data about early childhood will enable streamlined investments that prepare our children for the future.

Multiple state agencies collect information about programs that serve young children and families. But like pieces of an unfinished puzzle, many of these data sets are disconnected. An Early Childhood Integrated Data System (ECIDS) fits the pieces together and helps decision-makers answer questions that cannot be answered by data from a single program alone. For example:

- How does enrollment in early care and education correspond with academic success?
- Which combination of services has the greatest impact?
- Which children and communities need more resources?

For more information about states’ early childhood integrated data systems, go to www.ecedata.org. You’ll find state profiles, stories, reports, and webinars on states’ progress.
How an early childhood integrated data system can support Oklahoma’s young children

1. **Streamlining investments**
   
   When state leaders have data about all programs that children are enrolled in, they can identify service gaps. An ECIDS allows policymakers to use cross-agency data to answer questions about service delivery, quality, and efficiency.

2. **Supporting children’s academic success**
   
   Many kindergarten teachers lack access to information about children prior to their school start date. With an ECIDS, early childhood and school district programs could share information regarding a child’s proficiency to prepare teachers and enable them to target resources for each child’s success.

3. **Improving services and programs**
   
   Integrated data can inform research and conversations about what works.

**Recommendations and strategies for Oklahoma’s state agency leaders**

1. **Identify key questions about early care and education.** For example, state and local agencies and foundations in Oklahoma are interested in understanding which families are served by multiple programs and to what extent early childhood programs yield long-term benefits.

   **North Carolina**’s ECIDS can identify where high-needs children may be eligible for public pre-K programs, but do not attend.

2. **Expand the existing early childhood data governance body to include all stakeholders** (e.g., Department of Education, Head Start, early childhood education professionals, program administrators, policymakers).

   **Minnesota’s** ECIDS data governance body includes the Departments of Education, Health, and Human Services; the information technology agency; the Governor’s Children’s Cabinet; and the Research and Data committee to provide overarching leadership and ensure a comprehensive approach to data coordination, security, and use.

3. **Support Head Start leaders in joining ECIDS efforts.** Work closely to help local Head Start program leaders contribute to state data initiatives and guide them to ensure the confidentiality of data.

   In **Pennsylvania**, state officials can review aggregate child outcome and program quality data, inclusive of Head Start programs, to guide professional development efforts for all programs.

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**89% OF VOTERS** support making high-quality early care and education affordable for working families to give children a strong start.

*Source: 2017 First Five Years Fund National Poll*
Overview of Oklahoma’s Early Childhood Integrated Data System

Purpose

The purpose of Oklahoma’s Early Childhood Integrated Data System (OK ECIDS) is to create an integrated early childhood data system to advance strategies to improve outcomes for children, especially those with high needs. Children in their earliest years, particularly those in economically disadvantaged areas, have a greater chance of success when they receive early learning services from birth to school entry. Through OK ECIDS, the state can use these data to better understand how to support young children and their families.

Design

Currently, data about Oklahoma’s early childhood programs are housed in multiple, separate state agencies. External agencies must request data through records requests, a frequently slow and arduous process that provides limited data and undermines coordination between programs.

Oklahoma’s ECIDS will be built through creating linkages to existing integrated data efforts and infrastructures across the state. This includes the state’s longitudinal data system (SLDS) and Health-E Oklahoma (HEO), two data efforts which are already linking together data from multiple agencies. This design will leverage the considerable strengths and resources of the state’s existing data systems. Additionally, there are other integrated data efforts being built across Oklahoma; some of which are statewide and some are local initiatives, and each of them have different goals and include different data sources.

All data are planning to be linked using a Master Person Index (MPI), which is already being used in current data integration efforts with HEO. The goal is to link in early childhood data using the same MPI in order to leverage this resource. An initial goal is to link Head Start/Early Head Start data in with the SLDS, which already has pre-k data.

Governance

OK ECIDS is governed through the DISCUSS Committee, which oversees the HEO data system, setting and approving all data governance policies. The DISCUSS Committee is made up of multiple subcommittees and partnering agencies, including an Early Childhood Sub-Committee, which is working on OK ECIDS (see Figure 1). Agencies that are part of the Early Childhood Sub-Committee include:

- Office of Management and Enterprise Systems
- Oklahoma Department of Human Services
- Oklahoma Department of Rehabilitative Services
The responsibilities of the Early Childhood Subcommittee include:

- Identify the goals, policies, and direction and provide recommendations for the Early Childhood Integrated System.
- Provide recommendations on the critical policy, program, and research questions related to early childhood issues in support of the goals established.
- Determine and recommend which critical data issues need to be addressed and by which group.

**Participating agencies**
The following agencies are participating in OK ECIDS, as well as the larger DISCUSS Committee overseeing the Health-E Oklahoma data system:
End Goals and Reports

There will be two types of reports through OK ECIDS; aggregate level and child specific data reports. For the aggregate level reports, there will be online dashboards available to provide answers to key state early childhood policy questions. For the child specific data reports and education community requests, these will be managed and overseen by the DISCUSS Committee.

Users of OK ECIDS

There is a range of anticipated users of OK ECIDS. This includes the legislature, cabinet secretaries, and state agencies, as well as the general public (including parents) who would be able to access the aggregate reports. In addition, teachers would be able to make specific data requests regarding students in their classrooms to better inform instruction and practice.
Sharing early childhood information can support children’s development.

Many federal, state, and local programs support children’s development, as children are touched by different health, education, and social services. When these programs share data they collect, providers can see what other services children receive, and policymakers can judge which interventions—alone or combined—best meet children’s needs.

**Subsidized child care** *(birth to 13)*  
Financial support for low-income working families to help them access child care services

**Home visiting** *(prenatal to 5)*  
In-home support for parents to improve child health and school readiness, and reduce parental stress

**State preschool** *(3 to 5)*  
Universal or targeted programs to support children’s language, literacy, math, and social skills development

**Head Start** *(prenatal to 5)*  
Education, health, nutrition, and parental involvement supports for low-income children and their families

**Preschool special education** *(3 to 5)*  
Supports for children experiencing developmental delays

**Early intervention** *(birth to 3)*  
Supports for children experiencing developmental delays

**Subsidized child care** *(birth to 13)*  
Financial support for low-income working families to help them access child care services

For information on early childhood data sharing in your state, see [2013 State of States’ Early Childhood Data Systems at ecedata.org](http://ecedata.org).
Integrated data supports children’s well-being by answering key questions.

Families, child care providers, kindergarten teachers, state administrators, and policymakers frequently have questions about how best to support children’s development and which interventions work best. To answer these questions, people need access to information about all the services and professionals that touch children’s lives and how children’s experiences improve their well-being over time.

**Families**
- How well is my child learning? Is my child healthy?
- Is my child getting the right services at the right time?
- Does my child’s teacher have the right information and training to best meet my child’s learning needs?

**Child care providers**
- What are the characteristics of children who participate in our program?
- Do our staff characteristics and credentials match the needs of our children?
- How do our children do when they reach kindergarten?

**Kindergarten teachers**
- What learning, health, and care experience have my new students had?
- Do my students need specific supports as they enter kindergarten?
- Do I have information about my students’ learning needs to tailor my instruction?

**State administrators**
- Whom are we serving with our programs and whom do we miss?
- How do our programs benefit young children and families?
- How can we make our services better?

**Policymakers**
- Are children, birth to 5 years, on track to succeed when they enter school?
- Which early childhood experiences best prepare children to be successful in school and beyond?
- How effective are state policies and services for vulnerable children and families?