Child Care & Early Education RESEARCH CONNECTIONS

Integrated Early Childhood Data Systems

To improve data-driven decision making, states and localities are beginning to integrate administrative data systems that have historically been developed and maintained independently by the programs that serve young children. A number of federal initiatives, such as State Advisory Councils on Early Childhood Education and Care, American Recovery and Reinvestment Act Statewide Longitudinal Data Systems Grants and State Fiscal Stabilization Funds, and Race to the Top, provide funding to states to support these early childhood data system efforts.

A paper from the Early Childhood Data Collaborative (ECDC), a consortium of seven national research and policy organizations, presents a framework for approaching early care and education data system coordination and integration, and identifies key elements of an integrated early childhood data system.

Recently INQUIRE (Quality Initiatives Research and Evaluation Consortium), funded by the Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation (OPRE) in the Administration for Children and Families (ACF), has developed a tool and guides focusing on the components of a high-quality early childhood data system that are relevant to state quality rating and improvement systems. Through its Interoperability Initiative, ACF has released a confidentiality toolkit to aid human services agencies in data systems integration while ensuring the privacy and security of the children and families they serve.

This **Topic of Interest** highlights the ECDC paper, the INQUIRE tool and guides, and the ACF Interoperability Initiative toolkit, as well as other resources, including reports, projects, and bibliographies from the Research Connections collection, that explore the state of state early childhood data systems and state efforts to develop high-quality integrated early childhood data systems.

See the ECDC paper:

- [Building and using coordinated state early care and education data systems: A framework for state policymakers (2010)](#)

Access the INQUIRE resources:

- [INQUIRE data toolkit (2013)](#)
- [Best practices in data governance and management for early care and education: Supporting effective quality rating and improvement systems (2014)](#)
- [Best practices in ensuring data quality in quality rating and improvement systems (QRIS) (2014)](#)

Access the ACF Interoperability Initiative toolkit:

- [Confidentiality toolkit: A resource tool from the ACF Interoperability Initiative (2014)](#)

The State of State Early Childhood Data Systems

Much of the existing research on early childhood data systems is descriptive. Multistate surveys have explored characteristics of child-level data systems, early intervention and early childhood special education data systems, early childhood workforce registries, and early childhood trainer and training registries.

See multistate surveys:

- [2013 state of states' early childhood data systems (2014)](#)
- [IDEA Part C and Part B 619 state data systems: Current status and future priorities (2013)](#)
- [State of Registries survey 2012: A survey of the nation's early childhood and school-age registries (2013)](#)
- [2012 The State of the Nation's Training and Trainer Registries and Approval Systems (2013)](#)

State Case Studies

State case studies have also examined the features of early childhood data systems in particular states, including in Maryland, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, and Vermont.

See case studies:

- [A look at Maryland's early childhood data system (2010)](#)
- [On track: Developing New Jersey's early childhood data system: A report to the New Jersey Council for Young Children (2011)](#)
- [Putting the pieces together: New York early learning program data systems (2011)](#)
- [A look at Pennsylvania's early childhood data system (2010)](#)
- [State spotlight: Vermont: Early Childhood Data Reporting System (ECDRS): Improving outcomes for young children and their families (2013)](#)

Early Childhood Data System-Building Efforts

Since 2000, OPRE has funded State Child Care Data and Research Capacity Projects, which allow state grantees to build the capacity of their Child Care and Development Fund administrative data systems and to conduct policy-relevant research. In Connecticut, South Carolina, Virginia, and Wisconsin these projects produced resources that provide accounts of and lessons learned from the states' efforts to develop high-quality child care administrative data systems.

Explore project resources:

- [Connecticut Early Childhood Research and Development Project: Child Care Data CONNections](#)
- [South Carolina Child Care State Research Capacity Building Project](#)
- [Improving the Quality of Child Care Available and Used by Low-Income Working Parents and At-Risk Families through the Development of an Integrated Data Systems Model for Policy Research and Decision-Making](#)
- [Wisconsin Child Care Data Sharing Project](#)

Additional resources

Explore resources in the *Research Connections* collection related to the topic, including a [Key Topic Resource List](#) and [updated search results](#).

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