

## Early Care and Education Data Systems

Data related to K-12 student enrollment, demographics, achievement and participation has been tracked since the mid-nineties. Longitudinal data collection is helpful for teachers to target instruction and to identify students who need additional help. School districts and state policy makers can use longitudinal data systems to evaluate the effectiveness of teacher prep programs, professional development for teachers and to evaluate schools or program quality. However, data collection and integration of early childhood data into a longitudinal system has been fragmented and uncoordinated. Data collection is difficult due to the multiple agencies that oversee early care and education programs; each local, state and federal program has its own set of data collection requirements and one data systems may not interact with another system.

Early education teachers and K-3 teachers do not currently see themselves as one system. Communication between preschool and kindergarten has been limited at best. The current early childhood data systems were created to satisfy reporting requirements for a variety of state and federal agencies, not in longitudinal tracking or data sharing with the K-3 system, thus resulting in uncoordinated data collecting systems. According to a report from the New America Foundation, October 2010, "There are no examples, to our knowledge, of any states that have fully incorporated data from the diverse array of early childhood programs into their K-12 longitudinal data systems." The National Center for Children in Poverty stated that, "there is no one inventory of existing databases...that focuses on child care and education..."

*A Framework for State Policymakers: Building and Using Coordinates State Early Care and Education Data Systems, August 2010*, reported that efforts to build an infrastructure and use coordinated data systems have resulted in the establishment of the Early Childhood Data Collaborative (ECDC) which includes the following seven national organizations:

- The Center for the Study of Child Care Employment at UC Berkeley;
- Council of Chief State School Officers;
- Data Quality Campaign;
- National Center for Children in Poverty at Columbia University's Mailman School of Public Health;
- National Conference of State Legislatures;
- National Governors Association Center for Best Practices; and
- Pre-K Now, a campaign of the Pew Center on the States.

Effective data systems will improve program quality, the quality of the ECE workforce, child outcomes and access and availability of high quality programs. The ECDC plans to conduct a 50-state survey and develop tools and resources that advance the development of a coordinated ECE data system in the future.

Sources:

The Early Childhood DATA Collaborative [www.dataqualitycampaign.org](http://www.dataqualitycampaign.org)

The New America Foundation [www.newamerica.net](http://www.newamerica.net)

National Center for Children in Poverty [www.nccp.org](http://www.nccp.org)