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Framework | Data Story: A New Approach to Building Early Childhood Data Stories

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Abstract

Use of the Data Story Framework encourages states to bring together comprehensive data to build a data story and inform action steps.

Keywords

early childhood integrated data systems

Framework | *Data Story*

A New Approach to Building Early Childhood Data Stories

While states developing ECIDS understand the importance of making data available to inform decision making, many are still exploring strategies to convey the information so that policy makers can derive meaning from the data and use it to make decisions. As in other fields of practice, when ECIDS data are disseminated without providing proper context and/or highlighting findings, it creates risk for misunderstanding by allowing audiences to draw their own inferences and conclusions. Data stories are an effective tool for communicating ECIDS information as they create a shared understanding of the context and the most important information, target issues that require decisions, improve transparency, and provide consistent and useful outputs for state administrators and policymakers.

Use of the Data Story Framework encourages states to bring together comprehensive data to build a data story and inform action steps. While the focus of the early childhood data stories will vary based on the partnering programs and agency priorities, all stories should include the four key elements: conclusions, narrative, visuals, and key takeaways.

Why a Framework?

State agencies are being charged to create tools and reports that better leverage integrated data to support program and policy decisions. ECDataWorks, in partnership with state agencies, developed conceptual frameworks to guide the discussions and development of analytic tools in four critical policy areas: school readiness, community assessment, data stories, and data governance.

The Data Story Framework

Conclusions
Answers to questions of interest based on analysis of the data

Narrative
Contextual factors and descriptive information to increase understanding of the topic/issue of the data story

Key Takeaway(s)
The "so what?" factor of the conclusion: actionable message points for specific audience base on date

Visuals
Visual representation and presentation of data to enhance understanding of critical data points