Call to Action Series | Data Governance Dashboard: Interactive Data Governance Tools and Processes are Needed for Effective and Sustainable ECIDS

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Call to Action Series | Data Governance Dashboard: Interactive Data Governance Tools and Processes are Needed for Effective and Sustainable ECIDS

Abstract
ECDataWorks developed the Data Governance Dashboard Framework to guide states in establishing transparent and ongoing methods for gathering ECIDS stakeholder feedback. Gathering input from diverse stakeholders and leadership about policy priorities and how data are used enables responsive decisions about updates needed to the state research agenda, data elements required, and resources necessary for new or enhanced analytics. This structured feedback creates a reliable source of information and a basis on which governance groups can make decisions. The Data Governance Dashboard Framework supports the continued improvement, use, and sustainability of the ECIDS over time.

Keywords
early childhood integrated data systems

Disciplines
Education
State Agencies Struggle to Operationalize Data Governance Processes and Understand ECIDS User Needs

While Early Childhood Integrated Data Systems (ECIDS) are invaluable tools for users to learn from and leverage data to inform decisions about programs serving children and families, these systems must be responsive to the changing needs of users. To be effective and sustainable, state agencies must establish clear data governance processes and mechanisms for gathering continuous input from stakeholders so that they have comprehensive information about the reporting needs, policy questions of interest, and successes of using ECIDS data among their stakeholders. Without this information, state agencies cannot make informed decisions about their research agenda, use of existing analytics, and the direction of ECIDS efforts.

ECDataWorks developed the Data Governance Dashboard Framework to guide states in establishing transparent and ongoing methods for gathering ECIDS stakeholder feedback. Gathering input from diverse stakeholders and leadership about policy priorities and how data are used enables responsive decisions about updates needed to the state research agenda, data elements required, and resources necessary for new or enhanced analytics. This structured feedback creates a reliable source of information and a basis on which governance groups can make decisions. The Data Governance Dashboard Framework supports the continued improvement, use, and sustainability of the ECIDS over time.

Why a Call to Action?

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, identified the need for analytic tools in four critical policy areas: school readiness, community assessment, data stories, and data governance.

The Call to Action Series examines common challenges and highlights states’ successes in using topical frameworks to build tools to address these policy issues. These briefs charge other states to develop similar analytic tools to guide evidence-based program and policy decisions.

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1 The overall management of the availability, usability, integrity, quality, and security of data. Data governance is both an organizational process and a structure. It establishes responsibility for data, organizes program area/agency staff to collaboratively and continuously improve data quality through the systematic creation and enforcement of policies, roles, responsibilities, and procedures. (Source: SLDS Data Governance Toolkit Overview)
Georgia’s Department of Early Care and Learning (DECAL) has a strong data infrastructure and several reports with integrated data across early childhood programs. Without a process for gathering feedback from users on their Cross-Agency Child Data System (CACDS), the department had a limited understanding of who was using CACDS and what their needs were. CACDS leadership identified the need for a tool that would allow the governance committee to understand the use of CACDS by eliciting and documenting input from CACDS stakeholders. In response to this need, DECAL and ECDataWorks partnered to design the CACDS Leadership Dashboard, an interactive tool that collects data from key stakeholders and provides reports to the CACDS governance committee to inform their decision-making and manage the research agenda. The dashboard allows stakeholders to submit questions, convey information needs, suggest report improvements, and share how they are using ECIDS data in their work.

DECAL partnered with ECDataWorks to use the Data Governance Dashboard Framework and develop the CACDS Leadership Dashboard, which addresses all three areas of the framework.

As a result, the CACDS Leadership Dashboard includes the following data:

**Data Usage**
Data on how reports are used (quantitative and qualitative)

**Data Needs**
Data on user program/policy questions of interest; requests for report enhancements or additional reports

**Research Agenda**
Data on how reports align to research agenda

DECAL will focus on introducing the tool the Leadership Team (comprised of persons from all contributing programs) and the Executive committee (comprised of persons representing all agencies and Head Start) through webinars and in-person meetings. DECAL is also offering trainings at the community level through several community partnerships. As they gather feedback through these conversations and through the governance dashboard, they will refine the tool to ensure that it meets the needs of CACDS users and DECAL leadership.

DECAL hopes that using the Data Governance Dashboard to support their governance process will yield the following benefits:

1. Engage users by creating a mechanism for ongoing feedback
2. Responsiveness to user needs and requests for data
3. Demonstrated value of CACDS through user feedback
4. Transparent process for ongoing management of the agency’s research agenda based on input from diverse stakeholders

**Are You Ready to Take Action?**

If you are interested in using the Data Governance Dashboard Framework to build tools to inform and support data governance processes, ECDataWorks and their state partners recommend three steps. First, engage your state/community partners to determine their interest in developing a tool or report using the framework. When engaging your partners, consider using the following prompts.

1. Is there a data governance body interested in using data to inform decisions about the ECIDS?
2. Are you interested in gathering feedback from those using your reports and those new voices with data needs?

Second, to determine the feasibility of developing and implementing a tool or report using the Data Governance Dashboard Framework in your state. When determining feasibility, consider the following.

1. Do you have ECIDS governance policies developed or in development?
2. Do you have sufficient staff and financial resources to consider enhancements to the ECIDS?

Third and final, visit ecdataworks.org to access more resources on this topic.