



State Spotlight: Early Childhood Integrated Data System

Minnesota's Early Childhood Longitudinal Data System

As states develop early childhood integrated data systems (ECIDSs) to answer key policy questions related to early childhood programs, they can learn from other states that have already implemented these systems.

This document is part of a series of State Spotlights intended to show how some states have used ECIDS data to create data tools, reports, and other resources to answer specific questions. These resources can serve as models for other states that are planning, designing, and using ECIDS data products to serve a variety of stakeholder and user needs.

This State Spotlight highlights Minnesota's Early Childhood Longitudinal Data System (ECLDS). The content is derived from a December 2, 2015, webinar presented by Courtney Petrosky and Avisia Whiteman of the Minnesota Department of Education and moderated by Missy Cochenour of the SLDS State Support Team.



Reports and products generated from ECIDS data are an important part of a data use plan that meets the needs of users and stakeholders.

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Before Minnesota developed the ECLDS, information on the prekindergarten experiences of children was obtained through small-scale and program-specific studies of early childhood education. In order to more fully understand how young children who have participated in a variety of publicly funded programs fare in the short and long terms, the state needed to develop a long-term, cross-program, longitudinal approach.

Purpose of the Minnesota ECLDS

Minnesota faced increased pressure to report to policymakers and state agency leaders about what investments in early childhood programs are accomplishing. In order to answer those questions, the state needed to integrate child-level data from multiple programs.

Most families do not enroll their children in just one type of early care or education setting prior to kindergarten. For many low-income and high-needs children, such programs are publicly funded. The ECLDS is designed to deliver data to help state leaders and local planners understand what programs or combinations of programs lead to particular results.

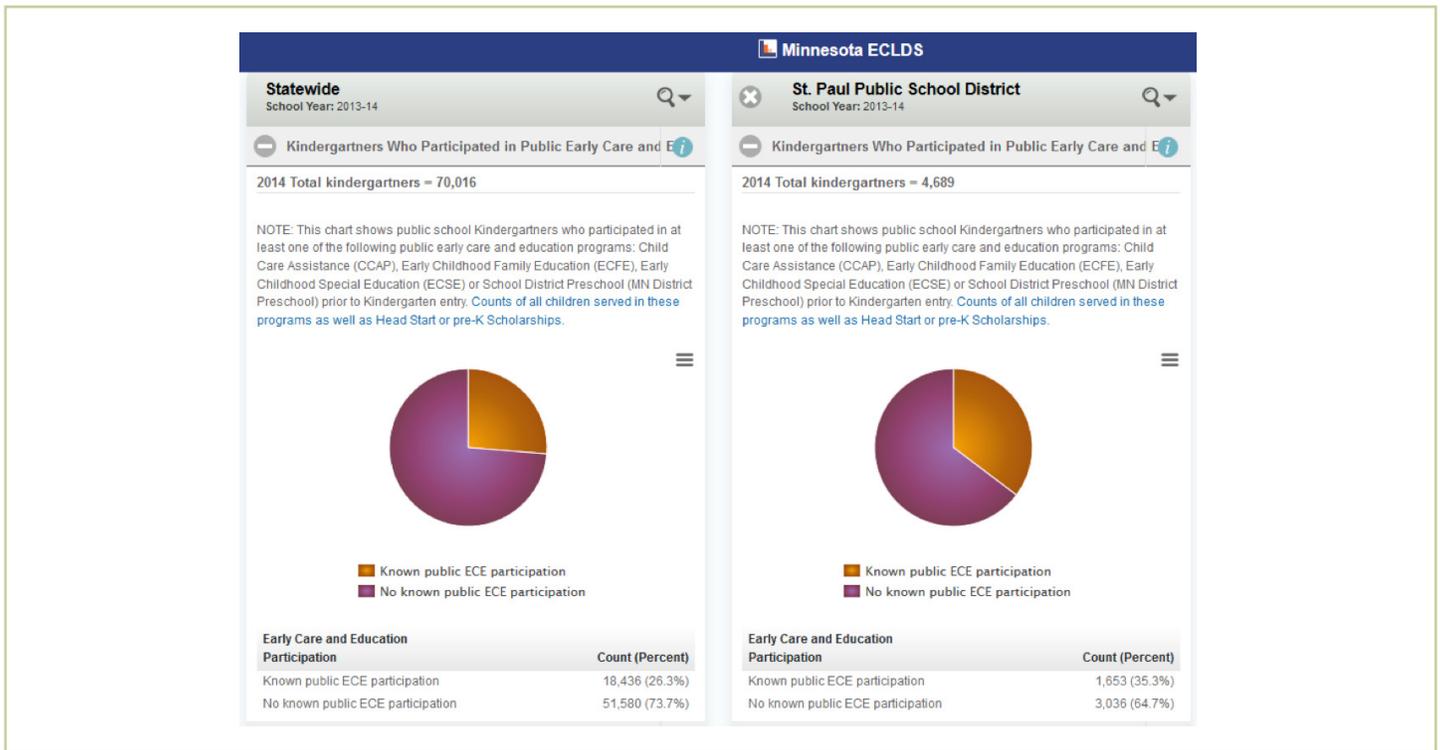
Intended Uses and Users

Initially, the ECLDS will focus on answering state-level questions about early childhood programs for policymakers, state agency leaders, and advocates. In future phases, county- and district-level data will be available so that programs and individuals engaged in community planning can retrieve information to suit their needs.

Process

Minnesota based its ECLDS data governance and data sharing policies on the work of the state's Statewide Longitudinal Education Data System (SLEDS), which is five to eight years ahead of the ECLDS in its planning and operation. ECLDS leaders also took advantage of technical assistance offered by the SLDS State Support Team.

Development of ECLDS reporting was driven by the policy questions most frequently asked by policymakers, advocates, and state leaders. The ECLDS team received guidance from state-level professional associations and program staff about the questions and analytics. Also, stakeholder focus groups were organized in different parts of the state to garner local feedback for analytics and site features.



Data from Minnesota's ECLDS show the number of children participating in public early care and education programs before kindergarten statewide and in St. Paul Public Schools. The ECLDS is designed to give Minnesota policymakers and agency leaders more information about early childhood program participation and the status of children over time.

Data Collection

Three state agencies contribute data to the system. The Department of Education provides data about K12 enrollment and assessments, public preschool and parenting education, early childhood special education, ACCESS (English language learners), kindergarten entry, and teacher licensing data. The Department of Human Services contributes data about the Child Care Assistance Program, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), and Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). The Department of Health provides birth records.

Data from the three state agencies are sent to a linking and de-identification system and then to the ECLDS website, which provides reports that answer the following questions:

- How many children are served?
- In what programs are children participating?
- In what type of quality program do children participate?
- What are child outcomes over time?

Future Steps and Next Phase

The ECLDS launched in January 2016. Analytics focus on child status into the early elementary grades, and additional improvements will be developed in 2016. Minnesota also plans to use its current SLDS grant to develop a variety of projects to facilitate data use. Additional datasets will be added to the system including datasets from Head Start, Help Me Grow, and Early Hearing and Detection Inventory.

For more information about early childhood data use, visit the ECIDS Toolkit at

<https://slds.grads360.org/#program/ecids-toolkit>

Additional Resources

Minnesota Early Childhood Longitudinal Data System
<http://eclds.mn.gov>

This product of the Institute of Education Sciences (IES) SLDS Grant Program was developed with the help of knowledgeable staff from state education agencies and partner organizations. The information presented does not necessarily represent the opinions of the IES SLDS Grant Program.

For more information on the IES SLDS Grant Program or for support with system development, please visit <http://nces.ed.gov/programs/SLDS>

