



PROJECT UPDATE: Developing an Early Childhood Integrated Data System (IDS) for Iowa

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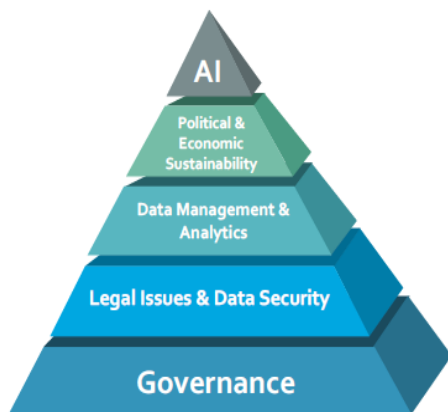
Coordinated by the IDS Taskforce, a subcommittee of ECI Results Accountability Workgroup: Jeff Anderson (DOM), Tammi Christ (DHS), Kelly Davydov (DHR), Cassandra Dorius (ISU), Marion Kresse (BooST, ECI-RA co-chair), Tom Rendon (DOE), Betsy Richey (DPH), Heather Rouse (ISU), & Amanda Winslow (DOE).

Background: In response to demands on public service systems to *do more, do better, and cost less*, attention is being drawn to the value of integrated data systems (IDS) to inform executive decision-making. Such systems capitalize on data already collected by programs that serve families, and create scientifically and legally valid ways to use these data for policy evaluation and population-based analyses to better understand how families are doing across public service systems and over time. ECI efforts to date have focused on enhancing the effectiveness of services through local area boards. However, the legislative recommendations within the ECI Initiative (Chapter 256i) and the 2007 Head Start Reauthorization Act (H.R. 1429-642b) encourage us to go further to advance the development of an early childhood IDS. Such an IDS would facilitate statewide needs assessments to ***identify gaps*** in current public service system networks, ***enhance cross-system programming efforts***, broaden our ability to ***measure successful child outcomes*** in diverse and meaningful ways, and ***promote data-informed decisions***.

Actionable Intelligence for Social Policy (AISP): An Integrated Data System Approach

The IDS approach is an iterative process of problem solving that requires time and resources to produce **Actionable Intelligence**. It is not a “one-shot” research project. Through an iterative and logical process, the results of inquiries shape and refine interventions over time to maximize effectiveness. The core components of the approach are based on decades of development and refinement from existing IDS across the US and internationally. The AISP, a national network comprised of existing state and university partnerships working with IDS to advance social policy, recently documented these best-practices and created training opportunities for developing sites (like Iowa) to capitalize on what others have learned.

The ECI IDS Taskforce, comprised of representatives of each state department with responsibilities for the care and wellbeing of young children in Iowa, is carefully considering how to incorporate key concepts of an IDS approach into an Iowa IDS plan (see page 2 for more details). The core components of an IDS approach are hierarchical:



Sustainability Plan- attention to the costs of BOTH unaddressed social problems and the interventions designed to reduce them

Data Management & Analytics- selecting relevant and high quality data, integrating across datasets, and analyzing data using scientifically rigorous approaches

Legal/Data Security- procedures to protect confidentiality while supporting ethical use of data (maximum benefits + minimum risk)

Governance – structured processes for state leadership, priority setting, project management, scientific integrity, and stakeholder engagement to maximize the ability of the inquiry process to generate actionable intelligence

To maximize the utility and sustainability of an Iowa IDS, communications among stakeholders and executive leaders must attend to tangible benefits to demonstrate efficient use. In the coming months, we will consider the benefits reaped by other IDS sites as we develop a plan that we believe will improve our decision-making capacity on behalf of Iowa's youngest children and their families.

^aFigures and IDS concepts adapted from *Fantuzzo, Henderson, Coe, and Culhane (2017). The Integrated Data System Approach: A Vehicle to More Effective and Efficient Data-Driven Solutions in Government*. For additional information and permission to distribute please contact AISP: (215) 573-5827, www.aisp.upenn.edu

Iowa's Early Childhood IDS Plan

VISION:

Iowa's early childhood system will be effectively and efficiently coordinated among health, social service, and education agencies to support healthy and successful families. This work will be informed by actionable intelligence derived from a statewide integrated data system that comprehensively identifies and addresses the needs of Iowa's young children and their families.

Mission: Ensure ethical integration and analysis of relevant, cross-system data to:

- Identify priority areas for policy and program change to support young children and their families.
- Advance a culture where applied and academic knowledge are effectively brought together to transform theory into practice.
- Strengthen broad outcome assessment and improvement.
- Promote a "data literate" community of researchers, practitioners, and policy makers.
- Encourage the use of analytic findings in practice and policy decision-making.
- Foster an iterative inquiry process that builds, expands, and adapts to knowledge gained.

Principles:

- Act first and foremost in the service of improved public good and services.
 - Maintain high standards for data security that protect privacy and confidentiality.
 - Build mechanisms to ensure that all data meet standards for timeliness, accuracy, validity, and professional collection methods.
 - Minimize the costs associated with the actionable intelligence inquiry process, while maximizing the benefits to be derived from the data.
 - Engage the community of practitioners, policy makers, and researchers in the production and sharing of information generated from the inquiry process.
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Project Milestones:

- Fall 2015: **ECI Results Accountability workgroup** collaborated with Iowa State University partners to learn about IDS.
- 2016: The ECI Board commissioned an **IDS Taskforce** to begin stakeholder engagement and planning activities, which included fundraising to host a mini-summit of cross-systems stakeholders and consult with national IDS experts from AISP.
- 2017: Department directors represented on the ECI Board (i.e., DOM, DHS, IDPH, DE, DHR, IWD) supported two successful, nationally competitive grant applications submitted by the IDS Taskforce that secured training and technical assistance for our IDS planning efforts valued at over \$650,000:
 - **Actionable Intelligence for Social Policy** is providing 18-months of support to help us develop the core components of an Iowa IDS and demonstration project(s) to test the value of an IDS for program coordination and policy decision-making.
 - **Social Innovation Fund and Third Sector Capital Partners** are providing 24-months of support to focus on two-generation program improvements using IDS.
- 2018 Project Goals:
 - 1) Update statewide data system inventories to best understand our current capacities and opportunities for IDS.
 - 2) Prepare an IDS development plan to include the core infrastructure components that actualize our *ECI IDS Vision, Mission, and Principles* into a clear governance structure, legal and ethical auspices, technology for data security and integration, and plans to ensure economic and political sustainability.
 - 3) Propose the first IDS demonstration project to focus on the needs and service utilization patterns of Iowa's young children and their families. The purpose of this demonstration will be to test the capacity of our IDS model to generate **actionable intelligence** to actualize the vision of ECI of creating a more coordinated, comprehensive system of public services that support improved outcomes for children and families in Iowa.