



## PROJECT UPDATE: The Early Childhood Iowa Integrated Data System (IDS)

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**Background:** In response to demands on public service systems to *do more, do better, and cost less*, there is increased attention to the value of integrated data systems (IDS) to inform executive decision-making. IDS 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 effective 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***.

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### **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.

### **Iowa’s Early Childhood IDS Plan**

The ECI IDS Taskforce has been working with AISP over the last 18 months to develop (1) a plan for Iowa’s IDS and (2) a high-value, demonstration project to test the capacity of an IDS to inform ECI’s vision for more coordinated, comprehensive services for young children and their families. **The current report details progress on the IDS Plan (see reverse for details).**

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**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 IDS that comprehensively identifies and addresses the needs of Iowa 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 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, and validity.
- Minimize costs associated with the AI 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.

## ECI IDS 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 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 \$700,000:

- **Actionable Intelligence for Social Policy** provided 18-months of funding to develop core components of an Iowa IDS and demonstration project 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:** Participation in AISP Learning Community facilitated successful advancements in our IDS plan.

- Updated statewide data system inventories to articulate our current capacities and opportunities for IDS.
- Proposed an IDS Governance Plan including core infrastructure components to actualize our *ECI IDS Vision, Mission, and Principles* into legal and ethical auspices and technology for data security and integration.
- Submission of two competitive funding proposals to support the first IDS Demonstration Study to focus on early childhood Birth-to-Five indicators and service system connections (*Institute of Education Sciences, August 2018*; and *Administration for Children and Families Preschool Development Grant, November 2018*).
- Secured legal agreements for the demonstration study

**2019 Goals:** Actualize the IDS infrastructure plans and implement the demonstration study to “test” our proposal.

In alignment with our IDS vision, mission, and principles, the IDS Taskforce proposed a State-University partnership model of governance that allows the state and representative departments to retain control of data use and direction while capitalizing on expertise and capacity of Iowa’s land-grant University to administer the system. This model has the capacity to expand and contract to meet changing demands for evaluation and analytics, and we also believe it has greater capacity for political and economic sustainability because of its partnership approach – something ECI values through our continued pursuit of private-public partnership approaches. The partnership model includes standing groups (Governance Board, Data Stewardship, and IDS Resource Center) and ad-hoc stakeholder groups (Data Experts, Scientific Reviewers, and Community Advisory Teams) that will facilitate the IDS operations and help maintain our core values while actualizing the IDS principles through collaborative processes. The phased approach to the demonstration study recognizes the need to secure resources, agreements, and datasets over time to answer policy questions in a cyclical nature whereby findings from one phase will inform development and elaboration in future phases.

