



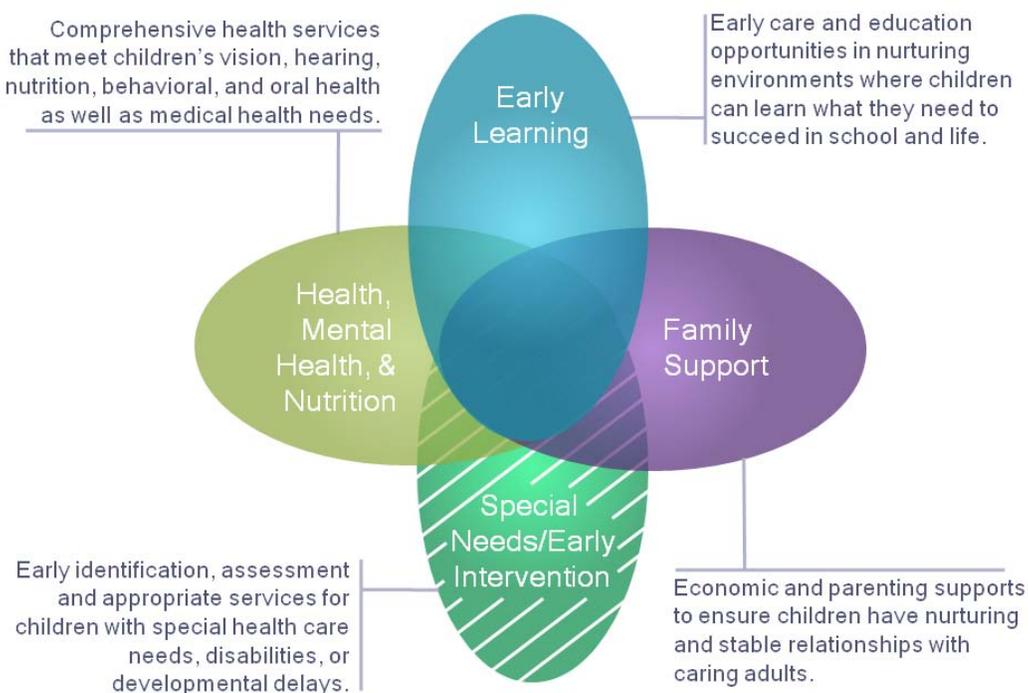
SLDS Topical Webinar Summary

Creative Solutions to Defining and Capturing the 'P' in 'P-20'

The preschool system encompasses a variety of programs, students, outcomes, and goals. Therefore, capturing preschool data can be as difficult as it is vital. This webinar focused on how states can collect “P” data when a state does not have a “P” or when a state’s “P” falls within many programs. Helene Stebbins of the Early Childhood Data Collaborative (ECDC) gave an overview of early childhood development systems and programs, Steve Barnett of the National Institute for Early Education Research (NIEER) shared some results from the NIEER Preschool Yearbook, and Michael Fahey from Good Beginnings Alliance in Hawaii detailed his state’s efforts to establish systematic data collection for early childhood workforce data. The information presented in this webinar can help to guide states as they develop preschool data systems, which can then be integrated with K-12, postsecondary, and workforce data.

Defining the ‘P’

The webinar began with a slide (upon which the figure below is based) depicting the multi-faceted nature of state early childhood development systems:



* Between 8 to 16% of young children have some special developmental or behavioral needs.

A list of early care and education programs that serve the “P” population was also provided, including:

- Childcare (subsidy and licensing)
- Head Start/Early Head Start
- State Pre-K
- Early Intervention (IDEA, Part C)
- Preschool Special Education (IDEA, Part B, Section 619)

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



Challenges to Capturing “P” Data

The *State of Preschool 2010* report (<http://nieer.org/yearbook>) analyzes data collected primarily through surveys of state preschool administrators from the 40 states that offer state-funded Pre-K programs in the United States, as well as the District of Columbia. The webinar shared results from the report and introduced many of the challenges inherent in capturing Pre-K data. These challenges include the following:

Participation in state Pre-K varies widely from state to state. For example, while the nationwide participation average is 25%, participation rates for the ten states with the highest participation ranged from 38-71%.

One third of state Pre-K children are served by private programs. States may differ in their approach to private participation (contract with private providers, reimbursed by state based on enrollment, etc.), and some private programs are very loosely connected—if at all—to public education.

Although most programs collect some kind of Pre-K data for monitoring purposes, the type of data collected varies widely. For example:

- Only 24 of the 38 states offering state-funded Pre-K at the time of the 2009 *State of Preschool* publication can report the number of English Language Learners (ELLs) in Pre-K;
- Thirty-nine programs in 30 states require transition to kindergarten activities, however, it is unknown what these transition activities are; and
- States may require specific assessments, provide a list of assessments from which providers can choose, require assessments but leave the choice of assessment to be locally determined, have a mixture of state- and locally-determined assessments, or may not require Pre-K assessments at all.

Many states have multiple Pre-K programs that are administered and funded separately. Because children may be participating in more than one program, unique identifiers for programs, students, and teachers are necessary in order to fully capture data.

A great deal of information is already being collected in state-funded education programs, but not being shared with or incorporated into K-12 data systems. In fact, data collected at the local level may not be aggregated in any way.

One State’s Approach to Establishing the ‘P’ in Its Data Collection

The webinar also shared the process that established a systematic collection and methodology for an early childhood workforce data system in Hawaii. First, a data workgroup, Hawaii Careers with Young Children (HCYC), was formed with representatives from stakeholder institutions throughout the state (Head Start, Early Learning Council, Department of Human Services, etc.). The goals of HCYC are to review its Career Access and Navigation of Early Childhood Systems (CANOES, www.canoes-hawaii.com) and professional development systems, and to establish a guiding principle for systematic data collection.

HCYC first identified questions and issues regarding systemic data collection, including:

- Who should evaluate the process? About whom should data be collected?
- Is there a direct correlation between increased professional development and child outcomes?
- The need for common definitions/terminology
- Clear instructions for data entry

These questions and issues were then taken into account to create a workgroup action plan:

- Identify and hire a contractor to conduct a Pre-K workforce study.
- Begin discussions with relevant parties regarding common ID numbers for practitioners.
- Make a presentation to the Early Learning Council regarding the workgroup’s progress.
- Make recommendations to the Early Learning Council to initiate discussion around common identifiers for children in the early learning system.

Hawaii is just beginning the process of establishing a systematic data collection, but learned from this process that a detailed action plan is key in this difficult environment: its Early Learning Council is currently unfunded, none of the state’s departments have children or families as priority areas in their goals and/or objectives, and the state’s current data systems (for Head Start, Early Intervention, etc.) do not exchange data. Through the work of the HCYC, Hawaii’s education stakeholders hope to have a plan and specific recommendations in place when the state has the will and resources to address issues of data collaboration.

