# State Support Team

**Effective Planning for Including Early Childhood Data in the SLDS**

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## Leadership Team

### *Roles*

- Conducts *Early Childhood Self-Assessment*
- Drives vision development and planning
- Ensures accountability steps are taken

*The state will need to establish who is on the Leadership Team (in terms of positions not identities) and document these so that as transitions may occur, there are protocols in place to handle changes in membership.*

### *Composition*

- Key agency partners
- Early Childhood leaders
- Possibly a committee of the State's Early Childhood Advisory Council

*Review the Governance Slides for more information about how the SLDS work is governed and in what way this might impact the composition of the membership team.*

# Purpose, Vision and Mission

## Purpose

*Purpose means - reason, intention, rationale, drive, or objective*

Clearly set out in writing the rationale behind the intent to add early childhood data to the SLDS. Be sure to keep the well-being of children a central part of this rationale. This focus ensures that end users can trust the state's intentions, which is an important part of buy-in.

*When defining the purpose, be sure to give thought to the following:*

- Who is served by the SLDS?

- Who leads the effort?

- How will the end user use the data?

- Are key partners supporting the work?

- Does a mechanism for coordination exist?

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## Third - Construct a Vision and Mission Statement

**Vision and Mission Statements**

**Vision and mission statements outline simply and succinctly, based on the documented purpose (which may be a lengthier explanation), the dream and the charge for the project.**

- They should connect back to the purpose the state outlined for including early childhood data in the SLDS,
- Serve as pivot points for all future discussion,
- Reflect consideration for what all stakeholders value in an SLDS, and
- Should be reiterated frequently.

**Important Considerations**

Document how the system will profit the well-being of children

Document the populations that will be served

Document the intended outcomes (as a result of this work, what behaviors will change – both children and adults)

*Essential State Questions frame the actual work of integrating EC data in the SLDS, and provide a focus for analysis and use of data.*

**Types of Questions:**

- Research
- Policy
- Program/Operational

**Important Considerations**

- May be a lengthy process
- Ensure diverse stakeholder group
- Connect back to the vision and mission statements

# The State Plan

## A State Plan is an:

- Analysis of the capacity of state agencies
- Assessment of the knowledge base among key leaders
- Analysis of existing state legislation
- Outline of important milestones including timelines
- Identification of funding sources
- Accountability plan
- Inventory of Early Childhood programs

*Analyze capacity (funding, programs, people, policy), identify players and resources, and outline important steps and accountability measures.*

## Sixth - Write the Project Plan

**A Project Plan should include the following:**

**Why** – vision and mission statements

**What** – the outlined steps

**Who** – people, programs, and agencies responsible for implementation

**When** – timeline with major and <u>minor</u> milestones

*A project plan is a step by step outline of major and minor milestones towards accomplishing the vision and mission of the project.*

**Special Considerations  - Communication:**

- Central to the success of the project
- Important enough to create a plan for how the state will communicate to its stakeholders
- Address products such as signature slides, communication materials
- Identify a timeline for engaging stakeholders
- Provide a clear explanation of who needs to be communicated to, when and how, and who is responsible for doing so

# Capacity

*Capacity is the ability of state agencies to take on the task of including Early Childhood data in the slds and the extent to which it can.*

**As the project evolves, reevaluate the following:**

- Role or functions of state agencies

- Current state needs for successful implementation

- Potential opportunities and challenges

- Early childhood funding streams that collect and report data

- Partnership with the State's Early Childhood Advisory Council and existing Data Governance Committees

## A Data Roundtable is:

- Intentional discussion with all early childhood programs (local and state) to consider existing data collection efforts

- An opportunity to build public will and increase knowledge base

- An opportunity to uncover data that might be hidden but beneficial, or to encourage participation for future/planned data coordination efforts

- An opportunity to bring together a diverse stakeholder group who can accomplish an important project task in one day – like refining State Essential Questions

## Ninth – Inventory Early Childhood Programs

**Potential Programs:**

- Preschool/pre-K programs (public and private)

- Head Start or Early Head Start

- Part C and Part B

- Center Based and Family Child Care

- Home Visitation or Family Support Programs

- Early Literacy Programs

- Professional Development Systems

- Licensing and Accreditation Systems

- Early Learning community-based networks like the Smart Start North Carolina model

*Many states have already begun or completed a state inventory through the efforts of the State's Early Childhood Advisory Council. Or, this might be the outcome of a Data Roundtable.*

# Engaging Stakeholders

**Where to Start:**

- Define stakeholder, partner, supporter

- Identify stakeholders essential to the project in terms of roles, then people

  - Supporter

  - Implementer

  - Leader

  - User

  - Decision maker

  - Consultant

- Categorize key agencies, leaders (decision makers and spokespersons), workers

**Determine the key leaders whose involvement is critical to the project.**

- Ensure that they fully understand the purpose of the project and can serve as a spokesperson to communicate the vision, mission, and purpose of including EC data in the SLDS.

-  Identify the necessary agencies whose partnership is essential, as well as the workers who are equipped and trained to do the actual work of implementation.

**In addition to identifying stakeholders, roles and responsibilities should be clarified, as well as strategies for "buy-in."**

- This is not to mean that *all* stakeholders are necessary—the ability to manage and limit stakeholder input is as important as diverse representation and knowing when to bring in the right people at the right time.

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**Document the process for selecting various stakeholders.**

- This provides transparency around the stakeholders' value in the project, and also explains why certain stakeholders were selected to participate.

- Additionally, when others need to be added to the stakeholder group, a process for adding stakeholders will already be in place, allowing the project to move forward without interruptions.

**While it is necessary to include a variety of stakeholders, keeping them engaged and *at the right time* can be a challenge.**
- Think about how stakeholders will interact with one another.

*For example, separating policy and data groups, can help streamline the process, understanding that they may need to be brought back together to establish what is needed and wanted for future project planning.  Sometimes keeping these two groups together for the entirety of the process elicits frustrations: their roles are different, and the expertise from which the state will draw is meant for different purposes.*

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**Plan for organizational change.**

- Sometimes bringing on a new stakeholder may be unexpected, such as when a program is transitioning leadership, so take into consideration handling organizational change. It will become essential to develop signature slides that quickly and concisely speak to the vision, mission, and purpose, and to develop training materials for new staff or leadership.
- Keep in tune with changes in staff and leadership, and quickly acclimate new membership to the project plan.

**Stakeholders need to trust the process.**

- Be responsive and timely.
- Use technology to help—webinars, web pages, conference calls, electronic communication methods, and document servers can assist with collaborative planning.
- Give stakeholders dates and times when the communication team will deliver materials and publications.  Build trust among these groups by sticking to the state's project plan and facilitating ongoing communication.
- Above all, listening and prompt follow up are key.

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**Be transparent.**

- Transparency regarding how the state identified the key leadership team who determined the state's list of prioritized needs and how these decision were made will serve the project well in the long run.

- The broader stakeholder community wants to know and be able to trust that the process was fair, transparent, and free of political gain.

- They also believe in and want to trust that the well being of the state's young children is central to the decisions made by this team. Without this trust, the necessary buy-in for continued work and for full implementation of the project will be limited.

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**Connect with the State's Early Childhood Advisory Council.**

- The state's Early Childhood Advisory Council was designed with the purpose of providing a centralized coordinating body for strategic planning and early learning data analysis.

- The councils are required to have diverse representation which is articulated in federal legislation, thus giving the state a "ready made" stakeholder group.

- Many state councils have already developed or are in the process of developing a data workgroup/committee whose role is to specifically look at how data can be coordinated among early learning programs.

- Their federal legislation lists questions for which they are accountable for answering yearly to the state's Governor, along with recommendations for future early learning state investments.

# Data Governance Basics

# What is EC Data Governance?

Data governance is both an organizational *process* and a *structure*.

It establishes <u>responsibility</u> for data, organizing program area staff to collaboratively and continuously improve data quality through the systematic creation and enforcement of policies, roles, responsibilities, and procedures.

DG can be structured to support one sector (e.g., EC) or span across sectors (e.g., P-20W) – but there are key differences between the two.

# Central Principles for EC

- Inter-agency/program approach to managing information, from collection through use

- Clear, distinct roles for and relationships among program areas, IT, and leadership

- All programs and/or agencies contributing data to the effort are represented

- Program area ownership of information –
  *it's **NOT** an IT initiative*

- Common definitions across programs and/or agencies

-  Inter-agency/program  data governance coordinator

# Intended Outcomes of Data Governance for EC Sector

- Defined key policy and program questions about early childhood

- Coordination between state agencies and programs administering early childhood services and collecting data

- Improved understanding and quality of data collected, reported, and used by multiple agencies and early childhood programs

- Reduced agency and program staff burden

- Improved communication, collaboration, and relationships between:

  Programs/agencies ↔ IT

  Agencies ↔ Programs

# State Support Team
## Contact Us!

### Contact Info and Resources:

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### To Request SST Support:

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