



Minnesota Early Childhood Longitudinal Data System (ECLDS)

Data Access Management Policy and Data Guide

*Approved by the ECLDS Governing Body
June 30, 2023*

Table of Contents

Purpose and Overview	3
Recommended Citation for Use.....	4
Governance of the ECLDS	4
Using the ECLDS	6
Understanding and Talking about ECLDS Data	8
ECLDS Data Sources	17
Maintaining Privacy	24
References and Resources	32
ECLDS+SLEDS Guiding Principles.....	33

Purpose and Overview

The purpose of this guide is to promote understanding of the integrated data contained in the Early Childhood Longitudinal Data System (ECLDS; eclds.mn.gov) by describing how data are to be used, accessed, and kept secure—and to define important terms used in the system.

Important Note: *Content in this guide is similar to content presented in the [Data Access Management Policy](#) for the Statewide Longitudinal Education Data System (SLEDS) due to the technical structures shared by these two projects. Although originally funded under different sources over different time periods, and while containing different data, ECLDS and SLEDS have always shared information technology resources. This requires a set of agreed-upon standards to promote efficiency. Where content is shared with SLEDS, sections are indicated as “[Aligns with SLEDS].”*

The ECLDS integrates existing data on young children and families participating in publicly-funded programs from the Minnesota Departments of Education (MDE), Health (MDH), and Human Services (DHS). Data are reported publicly at an aggregated (grouped) level and individual children are not identified. ECLDS data is available to the public while protecting individual privacy. These data are integrated so that Minnesota can have a better understanding of children’s growth, achievement, and well-being in relation to their participation in a variety of educational, health, and social programs over time. Funding to support the development of ECLDS was included in Minnesota’s federal [Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge Grant](#) that was awarded in 2011. This funding allowed Minnesota to build the governance and system infrastructure that is now available to the state. The [ECLDS public website](#) was launched in February 2016. Minnesota was awarded a second federal [SLDS grant](#) from the Institute of Education Sciences in 2015, aimed at promoting ECLDS use and improving data literacy.

P-20W and Statewide Longitudinal Education Data System (SLEDS)

The ECLDS is part of larger work related to integrating data to study a variety of outcomes for publicly-funded programs in Minnesota. This larger work is referred to as P-20W, or systems that integrate data across the lifespan: “P” refers to early childhood and prekindergarten; “20” represents K-12 education and higher education; and “W” for wages and workforce. Minnesota’s first integrated data system was the Statewide Longitudinal Education Data System, or SLEDS. SLEDS allows for the matching of student data through completion of postsecondary education into workforce. SLEDS brings together data from education and workforce to:

1. Identify the most viable pathways for individuals in achieving successful outcomes in education and work;
2. Inform decisions to support and improve education and workforce policy and practice; and
3. Assist in creating a more seamless education and workforce system for all Minnesotans.

ECLDS leadership works closely with SLEDS. In 2019, ECLDS was codified in statute alongside SLEDS under direction of the [P-20 Education Partnership](#), and is funded by the Minnesota Office of Higher Education.

Authority

State agencies are able to integrate existing data through allowable use articulated under the following authorities:

- 34 C.F.R. Chapter 303 for early intervention program for infants and toddlers with disabilities;
- 45 C.F.R. § 303.21 for child support;
- FERPA, the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act, 20 U.S.C. 1232g;
- Minnesota Statutes, 125B.07, requirement to maintain data on students;
- Minnesota Government Data Practices Act, Minnesota Statutes Chapter 13;
- Minnesota Statutes, 13.05, subdivision 7;
- Minnesota Statutes, 13.3805 and 13.3806; and
- Minnesota Statutes, 13.46, on welfare system data.

There are additional federal authorities around the construction of longitudinal data systems that support this project.

Recommended Citation for Use

Data is uploaded in the ECLDS twice annually. Programs may request complete reloads of their contributed data for a variety of reasons. ECLDS users should note that counts can and do change in the system. Therefore, users of ECLDS data products found at ecls.mn.gov are encouraged to use the following citation:

[Chart Title], [Year] by [Geographic Level]. Minnesota Early Childhood Longitudinal Data System [Date Printed].

This citation format is provided to users who choose to download a PDF of a chart or graph created on the ECLDS. For more information, email ecls.support@state.mn.us.

Governance of the ECLDS

Decisions about the ECLDS are made through a three-part governance structure. The two primary ECLDS bodies are comprised of individuals representing the state and local agencies contributing data to the ECLDS, as well as from professional associations from education, health, and human services practice communities. Two additional members are appointed by the P-20 Education Partnership to serve a two-year term. The following is a brief description of how the governance process works. A full description of the entire governance process, members, and its decision-making history is maintained in the ECLDS Governance Document, available upon request.

ECLDS Governing Body

The purpose of the Governing Body is to articulate parameters for the Minnesota ECLDS. It is comprised of leadership from participating state agencies and affiliated organizations. Specific duties include:

1. Set state goals and priorities for research and reporting using ECLDS,
2. Approve requests for new data elements to be included in the system,
3. Approve data security protocols,
4. Appoint ECLDS Research and Data Committee members,
5. Approve requests for accessing data,
6. Ensure data access within data privacy laws, and
7. Approve designs for analytics and portal access.

ECLDS Research and Data Committee

The Research and Data Committee is comprised of program experts, research experts, and data experts knowledgeable about each of the interagency data sets included in ECLDS. Early childhood practice community organizations also have representation. The ECLDS Research and Data Committee reports to the ECLDS Governing Body. Duties of the committee include:

1. Review proposals for ECLDS-branded research and evaluation web reports, print reports, and other deliverables.
2. Develop research and evaluation proposals for utilizing the ECLDS data to further state research goals set by the ECLDS Governing Body, including identifying policy questions and data elements;
3. Provide technical expertise and consultation on research methodologies;
4. Develop protocols for maximizing the validity and reliability of ECLDS data;
5. Recommend protocols to the ECLDS Governing Body for allowing non-MNIT staff access to ECLDS data;
6. Evaluate research proposals and make recommendations for approval to the ECLDS Governing Body; and
7. Provide technical expertise and consultation on data structure and data linkages for existing and new data.

Members serve ongoing terms and decisions are made using consensus methods.

ECLDS+SLEDS Executive Committee

The ECLDS+SLEDS Executive Committee includes the Chair and Vice Chair of the SLEDS Governance Committee, and the Commissioners of MDE, OHE, MDH, and DEED or their designees. (DHS has been invited to participate on the Executive Committee, but has so far not accepted this role.) The Executive Committee has overall legal and financial responsibility over ECLDS+SLEDS.

ECLDS Data Coordinators

ECLDS Data Coordinators are appointed by MDH, MDE, and DHS executive leadership. The Coordinators have the following duties:

1. Represent respective agencies in ECLDS governance, keep others at agencies informed of ECLDS work, garner input from others at agencies when needed, and actively participate in governance meetings and decisions;
2. Work with MNIT staff on data security, data privacy policies and practices, and data validation;
3. Maintain awareness and compliance with FERPA, MGDPA, HIPAA, and other relevant state and federal privacy laws, including compliance with data security and data privacy policies;
4. Work with the ECLDS Research and Data Committee to coordinate data management including: document data elements, document data processes, and identify file specifications;
5. Work with the ECLDS Research and Data Committee to facilitate reporting using ECLDS data;
6. Assist in public relations aspects of ECLDS in communication with early care and education organizations, and the public; and
7. Work with the ECLDS Governing Body to identify funding opportunities to support ECLDS work.

ECLDS Contact Information

The Minnesota Office of Higher Education (OHE) has administrative oversight of the ECLDS. The ECLDS Lead is embedded in the Early Learning Services division at the Minnesota Department of Education through an interagency agreement.

ECLDS Project Lead, Minnesota Department of Education

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Using the ECLDS

Children’s early environments, their families, and communities are complex. Even for children who participate in early care and education programs, their experiences can be widely divergent. The ECLDS has begun to integrate existing information about publicly-funded programs that support children and families. We are working towards inclusion of additional data sources in the ECLDS that will help to build a more comprehensive view of children’s foundational and developmental experiences. When evaluating information from the ECLDS, it is important to acknowledge the limitations of the data available.

Considerations and Cautions

The early care and education environment in Minnesota is multi-faceted. Families can use many types of care for their infants and preschoolers and sometimes use more than one form of care simultaneously and over time.

Before the ECLDS was built, understanding of children's participation in and use of early care and education programs was limited to specific programs that were studied through research projects or time-intensive, small-scale studies. This left many gaps in knowledge about prekindergarten experiences.

With the ECLDS, Minnesota is starting to fill these gaps in knowledge by linking data on early care and education participation to kindergarten records and by linking data from these early care and education programs to one another at the child level. ***In spite of this, there will likely always be some gaps.***

In particular, the ECLDS does not contain data on children who:

- Participated in private-pay child care and preschool arrangements.
- Go on to attend private or parochial K-12 schools.
- Participated in programs for which data are not committed and integrated into the ECLDS (see [Data Sources](#), page 17).

The ECLDS has limited information on children who:

- Were not born in Minnesota.
- Were born in Minnesota but leave.
- Have mobility between Minnesota and another state.

Local Contexts

Trends over Single Year/Single Site Situations

Trends continuing over multiple years and/or multiple sites may reflect broader issues and influences than single year or single site findings. As a result, users are encouraged to interpret results within a single site or single year with caution. For example, a federal grant beginning or ending that influences local services or participation might distort local trends.

Small Sample Size

When building charts and graphs on the ECLDS site, the number of selections used may create very small groupings at certain levels of geography. This is an important consideration when using results. While it is true that smaller population sizes may yield more useful information to inform local planning and program development, it may not be possible to release that information legally because it risks violating privacy. For example, the number of children in a racial or ethnic group may be reportable at the state level. However, when examined by a lower level of geography with a smaller population, the counts will be too small to report (CTSTR). Users with local knowledge may be able to identify individual children if the ECLDS were to allow such small counts.

Another important factor in small sample sizes is trends that are unique to that grouping may not be shared by other areas or the entire state. Small sample sizes may distort multi-year or population-wide trends, similar to trends over single-year/single-site situations above. Users are recommended to seek out

multiple people and local experts (e.g. human and health services providers, educators, program directors in school-based programs, etc.) to assist in interpreting results for small sample sizes.

Know Local Context

Many early learning programs and interventions are undertaken at the local level. These local initiatives likely impact local results and can drive trends that are different from regional or state level trends.

Whenever possible, users of ECLDS data should have an understanding of the local early childhood context in a given community when querying and using data for that area. For example, if a region has access to a local funder that has provided significant planning or implementation support, their results may be affected by this investment. Some areas may also experience shifts in trends due to changing industry or employment patterns. Find more information about local resources through the [MN Family Resource Map](#).

Understanding and Talking about ECLDS Data

Through the construction of the ECLDS, it was necessary to define important terminology and acronyms used throughout the site. Some terms are specific to only one system or program. Others are shared across systems and programs and—in this instance—work groups and ECLDS governance came to agreement on these definitions. The following list will help ECLDS users understand terms when they encounter them on the site or in charts or reports. While every effort was made to come to agreement, some definitions may vary by state agency and program. Definitions that are shared with SLEDS are notated with “[Aligns with SLEDS].” Shared definitions on some terminology are an efficiency intended to support technical staff as the projects share infrastructure.

- **Accredited:** A setting is considered “accredited” if it has earned such accreditation through a nationally recognized body, and that accreditation is current. Accreditation has a start and end date. A list of approved accreditations can be found on the [DHS Child Care website](#).
- **American Community Survey:** The [American Community Survey](#) (ACS) is an ongoing survey conducted by the United States Census Bureau (USCB) that provides data every year -- giving communities the current information they need to plan investments and services. The ACS covers a broad range of topics about social, economic, demographic, and housing characteristics of the U.S. population. It is the premier source for detailed population and housing information about our nation. The [5-year estimates](#) from the ACS are "period" estimates that represent data collected over a period of time. The primary advantage of using multi-year estimates is the increased statistical reliability of the data for less populated areas and small population subgroups. The ECLDS utilizes custom-built ACS 5-year estimate tables in its Census Data Tool and Community Assessment report.
- **Analytics:** The charts, graphs, and reports that come from data in the ECLDS.
- **Capacity:** The number of children a care setting is legally allowed to serve at one time. Capacity is an estimate of the size (number of children served) of each setting. DHS licensing determines the legal capacity for a licensed setting.
- **CCAP:** Minnesota’s [Child Care Assistance Program](#) (CCAP) provides financial assistance (subsidies) to help families who have low incomes and/or have recently received assistance through the Minnesota Family Investment Program (MFIP) to pay for child care. Child care costs can be subsidized so that parents may pursue employment or education leading to employment, and so their children are well cared for and prepared to enter school ready to learn. A family may select any licensed or legally non-licensed child care provider. A family and child remain eligible for assistance as long as they continue

to meet program requirements. The length of eligibility periods varies. The program serves children 12 or younger or up to age 15 if the child has special needs. Most families pay a portion of their child care costs. In some counties there is a waitlist for child care assistance, for families who have not participated in MFIP in the past year.

- **Children:** Counts of children participating in public early care and education programs.
- **Child Count:** The [child count report](#) is collected each year and represents a count of Minnesota children and youth, ages birth through 21, who are eligible for and receiving special education and related services. [Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE) data is included in this as well.]
- **Child Outcomes Summary (COS):** [Survey](#) administered by the Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE) program at MDE to understand the status of children at entry to and exit from ECSE. This survey meets federally required obligations through the Office of Special Education Programs.
- **Child Welfare:** Child protection involvement means the identified child was in a family where a child protection response was completed after an allegation of child abuse (child maltreatment). The situation is determined to meet statutory guidelines for a child protection response and a family assessment or a family investigation was conducted. Child Protection intervenes with families, according to Minnesota State Statute and the [Minnesota Child Maltreatment Screening Guidelines](#), to address family functioning issues and ensure that child victims of maltreatment are safe.
- **Contributing State Agencies:** Refers to the agencies contributing data to the ECLDS. [Similar to “Partner Data Providers” in SLEDS.]
- **Counts:** Number of children.
- **County:** County jurisdiction within the state of Minnesota. Often refers to county of residence of family or child. May refer to county of school of enrollment (see School County).
- **Counts Too Small to Report (CTSTR) (see also Data Suppression Rules):** Data suppression is employed on the ECLDS site to prevent the disclosure of identity on interactive charts. When counts of children under 10 appear in a chart with filters applied, those data appear in the chart as ‘CTSTR.’ Application of specific rules in relation to specific charts available upon request.
- **Data:** Categories of ECLDS data are listed here from most to least sensitive.
 - **Anonymized Data:** Anonymized data are individual-level data that have been de-identified and cannot be linked back to the original record system or other data. [Aligns with SLEDS.]
 - **De-identified Data:** Individual-level data that have enough personally identifiable information removed or obscured so that the remaining information does not identify an individual and there is no reasonable basis to believe that the information can be used to identify the individual. [Aligns with SLEDS.]
 - **Identifiable Linked Data:** Original data from the contributing state agencies or partner data providers which are linked using personally identifiable information. [Aligns with SLEDS.]
 - **Individual-Level Data:** Data on unique individuals. [Aligns with SLEDS.]
 - **Personally Identifiable Information (PII):** Data that identifies the individual. For the purpose of education records, PII is defined by federal law as information that includes, but is not limited to a student’s name; the name of the student’s parent or other family members; the address of the student or student’s family; a personal identifier, such as the student’s Social Security Number, student number, or biometric record; other indirect identifiers, such as the student’s date of birth, place of birth, and mother’s maiden name; other information that, alone or in combination, is linked or linkable to a specific student that would allow a reasonable person in the community,

who does not have personal knowledge of the relevant circumstances, to identify the student with reasonable certainty; and information requested by a person who the educational agency or institution reasonably believes knows the identity of the student to whom the education record relates. [Aligns with SLEDS.]

- **Summary Data:** Statistical records and reports aggregated from data on individuals in a way that individuals are not identified and from which neither their identities nor any other characteristic that could uniquely identify an individual is ascertainable. [Aligns with SLEDS.]
- **Data Mart:** Prepackaged data sets and reports that are more efficient than working directly with the entire warehouse for running analytics (charts and graphs). [Aligns with SLEDS.]
- **Data Sharing Agreement:** Statement signed by the contributing state agencies seeking to share data that outlines the purposes of the data sharing, legal restrictions, and violations. [Aligns with SLEDS.]
- **Data Suppression Rules:** Analytic techniques used for appropriately protecting private or confidential data. Methods involve removing data (e.g. from a cell or row in a table) to prevent the identification of individuals in small groups or those with unique characteristics. This method may result in very little data being produced for small populations, and it usually requires additional suppression of non-sensitive data to ensure adequate protection of personally identifiable information. Suppression rules may apply to all summary reports or may apply to specific reports based on the combination of data elements included. The ECLDS and SLEDS Research and Data Advisory Committees have agreed that suppression of cell sizes less than 10 individuals be used for public reporting. See the [ECLDS+SLEDS Data Suppression Policy](#) for more information. Best practices for data suppression for the purposes of appropriately protecting private or confidential data were issues by the U.S. Department of Education in 2011 (NCEES 2011-603) and are referred to in reporting work. [Aligns with SLEDS due to shared analytic tools and rules.]
- **Data Usage Agreement:** Statement outlining the appropriate uses of the data, which requires each user with access to the ECLDS data to accept the conditions of use before being granted access. [Aligns with SLEDS.]
- **Develop:** A multipurpose data system operated by the Minnesota Department of Human Services (DHS). It contains data about the average education level of teaching staff in certain early learning organizations and also data about quality ratings issued by Parent Aware [Minnesota's Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS)]. More information can be found on the [Develop website](#).
- **DHS:** [Minnesota Department of Human Services](#) (DHS) is the state department responsible for human services programs in Minnesota.
- **Directory Information:** For the purposes of education records, federal law defines directory information as information contained in an education record of a student that would not generally be considered harmful or an invasion of privacy if disclosed. Directory information includes, but is not limited to, the student's name; address; telephone listing; electronic mail address; photograph; date and place of birth; major field of study; grade level; enrollment status (e.g. undergraduate or graduate, full-time or part-time); dates of attendance; participation in officially recognized activities and sports; weight and height of members of athletic teams; degrees; honors and awards received; and the most recent educational agency or institution attended. [Aligns with SLEDS.]
- **Disability Type:** As identified in Minnesota's K-12 public school system. For kindergarten cohort analyses in the ECLDS, disability type originates in [MDE data](#).
- **District:** School district in state of Minnesota.
- **Dosage:** Related to program participation: $Intensity \times Duration = Dosage$.

- **Duplicated:** Refers to counts across programs in which a child participating in multiple programs is counted in each of those programs for reporting purposes.
- **Duration:** Period of time over which services were received or a child or family participated according to program definitions (e.g. end date minus start date.) $Intensity \times Duration = Dosage$.
- **Early Care and Education (ECE):** Publicly-funded program or service for young children and their families.
- **Early Childhood Screening (ECS):** A free [program](#) required for all children prior to kindergarten. Required screening components include: developmental screening (cognitive, fine and gross motor skills, speech and language, and social-emotional development); vision; hearing; immunization review; height and weight; health care coverage; identification of risk factors which may influence learning; a summary interview with the parent or guardian and referrals and follow-up for assessment; and diagnosis and treatment when potential needs are identified.
- **Early Learning Scholarships:** [State funding](#) that increases access to high-quality early childhood programs for three- and four-year-old children with the highest needs, in order to improve school readiness for all young children.
- **ECFE:** [Early Childhood Family Education](#) (ECFE) works to strengthen families; its goal to enhance the ability of all parents and other family members to provide the best possible environment for their child's learning and growth. The family provides a child's first and most significant learning environment and parents are a child's first and most important teachers.
- **ECLDS:** The [Early Childhood Longitudinal Data System](#) (ECLDS) is an information tool that links existing data across multiple state programs and agencies to create a broader picture of children than is possible using just one data source.
- **ECSE:** [Early Childhood Special Education](#) (ECSE), also referred to as Part B 619 or Part C is part of the [Individuals with Disabilities Education Act](#) (IDEA), is a program that provides supports and services to infants, toddlers, and preschool children with disabilities and their families.
- **Ed-Fi:** A new technology being implemented at MDE to help connect the various data systems used in MDE, to minimize disruption to necessary day-to-day work, like calculating and distributing school funding, and sharing data with testing companies. Learn more on the [MDE website](#).
- **Education Records:** Records that are (1) directly related to a student and (2) maintained by an educational agency or institution or by a party acting for the agency or institution. [Aligns with SLEDS.]
- **EE Enrollment:** [Early Education Enrollment](#) (EE Enrollment) reports children and families' participation in Early Childhood Family Education (ECFE) and School Readiness (SR) programs including children's Status Begin and End Dates and their attendance during that time. EE Enrollment replaces EE Student which was retired in the 2021-2022 school year.
- **EE Student:** The [Early Education Student](#) (EE Student) data system is a mechanism to identify children participating in Early Childhood Family Education, Early Head Start, Head Start, and School Readiness to better understand experiences prior to kindergarten across multiple public funding streams. Data submissions occur annually from public school districts and Head Start agencies.
- **EHDI:** [Early Hearing Detection and Intervention](#) (EHDI) program involves private data on Minnesota newborns, infants, and children with a hearing loss created, collected, received, or maintained by MDH for purposes of the EHDI program.

- **English Learner:** Child or student learning English, and for whom English is not their first language. This designation begins at preschool in E-12 data systems. ([Minnesota Statutes, section 124D.59, subdivision 2](#))
- **Factors:** Groupings of various elements from the data sources that could potentially influence or contribute to an educational outcome or could be associated to a child protection occurrence. The following is a list of factors noted by research that, prior to grade three, are associated with negative outcomes.
 - **Instability:**
 - **Education Instability:** Includes children who switch schools more than once within a school year.
 - **Homeless:** Students flagged as homeless using the [McKinney-Vento definition](#) anytime in kindergarten through grade 3.
 - **Language:**
 - **English Learner:** English learners (ELs) are identified through a two-step process: 1) identification of primary language using responses from parents or guardians on the Minnesota Language Survey (MNL) completed upon enrollment and 2) screening for English language ability using a state-approved language proficiency assessment.
 - **Home Language:** A third grade cohort utilizes MDE home language types as defined in the MDE K-12 data set. ECLDS provides the home language types containing 10 or more children.
 - **Low Income:**
 - **CCAP: [Child Care Assistance Program](#)** (CCAP) helps make quality child care affordable by providing financial assistance to help families with low incomes pay for child care.
 - **DWP: [Diversionary Work Program](#)** (DWP) is a four-month program that helps low-income Minnesota families find a job. When families first apply for cash assistance, most will participate in DWP. Counts include children whose families receive DWP anytime.
 - **Free/Reduced Price Meals: [Food program](#)** offered through public schools for low-income children. Children may be determined “categorically eligible” for free meals through participation in certain federal assistance programs, such as SNAP, or based on their status as a homeless, migrant, runaway, or foster child. Children enrolled in a federally-funded Head Start program, or a comparable State-funded prekindergarten program, are also categorically eligible for free meals. Children can also qualify for free or reduced-price school meals based on household income and family size. Children from families with incomes at or below 130 percent of the Federal poverty level are eligible for free meals. Those with incomes between 130 and 185 percent of the Federal poverty level are eligible for reduced price meals. Students may have participated in the program anytime in kindergarten through third grade. This program begins in pre-K for ECSE students. In March 2023, Governor Walz signed the [Free School Meals](#) bill into law, taking effect with the 2023-24 school year. This legislation provides the reimbursement for a free breakfast and lunch to students who receive meals through their school’s participation in the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) and the School Breakfast Program (SBP). Schools that participate in the United States Department of Agriculture’s (USDA) National School Lunch Program (NSLP) must now participate in the state funded Free School Meals Program. This program begins in pre-K for ECSE students.
 - **MFIP: [Minnesota Family Investment Program](#)** (MFIP), Minnesota’s Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) program, helps families and pregnant women who have low income

go to work and move toward financial stability. Counts include children receiving MFIP anytime.

- **Scholarships:** [Early Learning Scholarships](#) are awarded to eligible children under age 5 and specific priority populations to support access to quality early education and care programs for Minnesota's low income children by bridging funding gaps and decreasing barriers. Children birth to age 2 are eligible if identified as being in one or more of the following priority populations: 1) Child of a teen parent; 2) Currently in foster care; 3) In need of child protective services; or 4) Experienced homelessness in the last 24 months. Families must meet eligibility requirements as outlined in [Minnesota Statutes, section 124D.165](#). Families must have an annual household income equal to or less than 185% of Federal Poverty Guidelines (FPG) as demonstrated by income documentation or participation in one of eight public programs identified in [statute](#). Scholarships may be used in eligible Parent Aware-rated early learning programs.
- **SNAP:** [Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program](#) (SNAP), formerly known as Food Stamps, helps Minnesotans with low income get the food they need for nutritious and well-balanced meals. Counts include children receiving SNAP anytime.
- **Parent Characteristics:**
 - **Absence of Father on Birth Record:** The name for the father on the child's birth record was either missing or listed as Unknown. A woman can be listed in the father section.
 - **Late or No PNC:** A birth that occurs to mothers who reported receiving prenatal care only in the third trimester of their pregnancy or reported receiving no prenatal care (PNC). Data is obtained from the child's birth record.
 - **Maternal Education is Less than High School:** A mother having less than a high school education at the time of the child's birth. Data is obtained from the child's birth record.
 - **Teen Mom:** Includes all mothers under the age of 20 at the time of the child's birth. Data is obtained from the child's birth record.
- **Special Health Needs:**
 - **Deaf/Hard of Hearing:** A child with some degree of hearing loss ranging from mild to profound. Data obtained from the MDH [Early Hearing Detection and Intervention](#) (EHDI) data.
 - **ECSE:** [Early Childhood Special Education](#) (ECSE) provides supports and services to infants, toddlers, and preschool children with disabilities and their families.
 - **K-3 Special Education:** Kindergarten through Grade 3 [special education](#) services.
 - **Parental Refusal of Special Education Services:** Students were evaluated and would benefit from special education services but parents declined the services.
 - **Very Low Birth Weight:** An infant who is born weighing less than 1,500g. Data is obtained from the child's birth record.
- **Family Home Visiting:** [Family Home Visiting](#) (FHV) is a voluntary, home-based service ideally delivered prenatally through the early years of a child's life. It provides social, emotional, health-related, and parenting support and information to families, and links them to appropriate resources.
- **Family Outcome Survey (FOS):** Administered by the Early Childhood Special Education program to understand child outcomes in the family context. The goals of the [program](#) are that families know

their rights, they can effectively communicate their children's needs, and they can help their child develop and learn.

- **Fiscal School Year, State Fiscal Year, or State School Year:** Time period that runs from July 1 of a given year through June 30 of the following year. The exact timeframe may vary by program.
- **Food Assistance:** Program providing supplemental food and/or nutrition. In ECLDS charts, food assistance pertains to SNAP, School Nutrition Programs, or the Free and Reduced-Price Meals program.
- **Free/Reduced-Price Meals:** [Food program](#) offered through public schools for low-income children. Children may be determined "categorically eligible" for free meals through participation in certain federal assistance programs, such as SNAP, or based on their status as a homeless, migrant, runaway, or foster child. Children enrolled in a federally-funded Head Start program, or a comparable State-funded prekindergarten program, are also categorically eligible for free meals. Children can also qualify for free or reduced-price school meals based on household income and family size. Children from families with incomes at or below 130 percent of the Federal poverty level are eligible for free meals. Those with incomes between 130 and 185 percent of the Federal poverty level are eligible for reduced price meals. Students may have participated in the program anytime in kindergarten through third grade. This program begins in pre-K for ECSE students. This program begins in pre-K for ECSE students.
- **Gender:** Sex: male, female. For kindergarten cohort analytics, gender comes from K-12 enrollment data source (MARSS, MDE).
- **Head Start/Early Head Start:** Programs promote the school readiness of infants, toddlers, and preschool-aged children from low-income families. Services are provided in a variety of settings including centers, family child care, and children's own home. Head Start programs also engage parents or other key family members in positive relationships; parents participate in leadership roles, including having a say in program operations. [Head Start](#) services include early learning, health, and family well-being.
- **High Quality:** The Race to the Top grant defined "high quality" as programs with three or four stars in [Parent Aware](#) [Minnesota's Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS)].
- **Highest Education Level:** For teachers, the average Career Lattice level of the teachers who lead groups or classrooms within a setting. The Minnesota Center for Professional Development has defined a Career Lattice that puts professional development for early educators on a scale from 0 to 12. Using that scale, it is possible to mathematically average Career Lattice levels. Additional information about the Career Lattice can be found on the [Achieve website](#).
- **Home Language:** Home language types as defined in the MDE K-12 enrollment record. ECLDS provides the home language types containing 10 or more children. Primary home language and information is obtained from the home language survey in the appendix of MDE's Standardized English Learner Procedures: [Minnesota Language Survey](#).
- **IDEA:** The [Individuals with Disabilities Education Act](#) (IDEA) is a federal law that ensures services for children with disabilities throughout the nation.
- **Intensity:** Amount of service received over a defined period of time. Definition of "amount" may be different for different programs (hours, multi-tiered system of supports, dollars, etc.). $Intensity \times Duration = Dosage$.
- **K-12 Assessment:** General term referring to any number of a variety of assessments of learning in the public school system in Minnesota.

- **K-12 Enrollment:** Data source containing information on students enrolled in public education programming under MDE oversight.
- **Kindergarten Cohort:** A group of children who participated in public kindergarten in a given school year.
- **Licensed Child Care Center:** Licensed child care centers care for infants, toddlers, preschoolers, and school-age children in a care center, community centers, or place of worship. State law regulates the number of children who may attend based on the number of staff working at the center. Children are typically cared for in groups divided by age.
- **Licensed Family Child Care:** Licensed family child care providers may care for infants, toddlers, preschoolers, and school-age children in their homes. State law limits the number of children a care provider may look after.
- **Low Birth Weight:** An infant who is born weighing less than 2,500g. Data comes from the child's birth record.
- **MARSS:** [Minnesota's Automated Reporting Student System](#) (MARSS) includes a unique number for each student, assigned to student records in Minnesota's education system. It is the source for K-12 Enrollment data in ECLDS. [Aligns with SLEDS.]
- **MAXIS:** An automated public assistance [computer system](#) used by county and local agency staff to determine public assistance program eligibility and benefit levels and make payments throughout the state of Minnesota. The MAXIS data system is the source of information on the Minnesota Family Investment Program (MFIP), Diversionary Work Program (DWP), and Supplemental Nutrition and Assistance Program (SNAP).
- **MCCC:** The [Minnesota Common Course Catalogue](#) (MCCC) is a course classification and data collection system intended to provide uniform information about courses that are taught in Minnesota schools.
- **MDE:** The [Minnesota Department of Education](#) (MDE) is the state department responsible for education in Minnesota.
- **MDH:** The [Minnesota Department of Health](#) is the state department responsible for health programs in Minnesota.
- **MEC²:** [Minnesota Electronic Child Care System](#) (MEC²) is a web-based system used by county and local agency staff to determine Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP) eligibility and make payments to child care providers. The MEC² data system is the source of information on CCAP.
- **MFIP/DWP:** The [Minnesota Family Investment Program](#) (MFIP) and [Diversionary Work Program](#) (DWP) provide income assistance to help families with low incomes move to financial stability through work. MFIP is Minnesota's Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) program. The DWP is a short-term economic and employment assistance program for low-income families and pregnant women. The goal is to help parents quickly find work and avoid going onto the MFIP.
- **Minnesota (MN) District Preschool:** Districts provide preschool services in a number of formats for children ages three to five years old. School Readiness is a public school program for children ages 3 and 4 that intends to prepare children to enter kindergarten. School Readiness programs must meet certain requirements, as listed on the [MDE website](#). As of June 2021, included in ECLDS MN District Preschool data are voluntary prekindergarten (VPK) and school readiness plus (SRP), which are publicly funded prekindergarten programs. Funded classrooms provide free, high-quality early childhood education opportunities for eligible 4-year-old children that prepare them for success as they enter kindergarten the following year. Not all districts have VPK or SRP programs. More information about VPK and SRP can be found on the [MDE website](#).

- **MNIT:** [Minnesota IT Services](#) (MNIT) is the state agency responsible for setting information technology (IT) direction, standards and policies for the state of Minnesota, managing oversight and compliance of those standards, and providing IT services to all Minnesota state agencies. [Aligns with SLEDS.]
- **No ECE Data Available:** Data are not available for a specific category or attribute of a chart, graph, or report for the early care and education experiences of a group of children. This may be due to the fact that a data source is not committed to the ECLDS or the data do not exist.
- **Outcomes:** Status of children along a variety of measures over time. Can vary by data source.
- **P-20W:** Refers to the overarching IT system of linked data serving Minnesota’s three data initiatives including Early Childhood Longitudinal Data System (ECLDS), Statewide Longitudinal Education Data System (SLEDS), and Graduate Employment Outcomes (GEO). [Aligns with SLEDS.]
- **Parent Aware:** Minnesota’s Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS), offers tools and resources to help families find quality child care and early education, improve child care program practices, and prepare children for school and life. [Parent Aware](#) is administered by the Minnesota Department of Human Services (DHS).
- **Part B or Part C:** The [Individuals with Disabilities Education Act](#) (IDEA) is the federal law that governs special education services. There are four different parts to IDEA: Parts A through D. Part A lays out the basic foundation and covers general provisions, and Part D covers national activities to improve education of children with disabilities. Parts B and C govern the provision of services for children with disabilities. Part C applies specifically to infants and toddlers, ages birth through age 2, while Part B is for children ages 3 to 21 years of age.
- **Participation:** Child meets program-specific requirements to be considered engaged or participating in the target public early care and education program.
- **Percentage:** Number of children in relation to a denominator.
- **Premature:** An infant who is born before 37 weeks gestational age as calculated from the imputed (estimated) gestational age based on mother’s last menstrual period from the child’s birth record.
- **PRISM:** A federally mandated computer system that supports Minnesota’s Child Support Enforcement program in efforts to: a) locate missing non-custodial parents; b) implement automatic withholding with employers for support; c) enforce child support orders; d) centralize receipt and disbursement of child support payments as required by federal law. [Learn more](#) about PRISM.
- **Program:** The programmatic funding stream or “umbrella” program under which a service is administered and paid—typically a public funding source with eligibility criteria—targeted to young children.
- **Publicly-funded:** Program or service funded all, or in part, with tax dollars.
- **Public Schools:** Schools in Minnesota that are funded with public dollars. This includes charter schools.
- **Quality:** The extent to which the setting has demonstrated use of kindergarten-readiness best practices, as defined by [Parent Aware](#) [Minnesota’s Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS)].
- **Quality Rating:** Designation given to programs through Parent Aware. Programs that participate in Parent Aware submit evidence of their use of kindergarten-readiness best practices. Evidence is reviewed and programs earn a Star Rating of One, Two, Three, or Four Stars. For more information, visit the [Parent Aware website](#).
- **Race/Ethnicity:** Race or ethnic identification present in a given data source.

- **Resiliency Factors:** Protective factors noted by research that, prior to grade 3, are associated with positive outcomes for children with high needs.
- **School-based PreK:** See Minnesota District Preschool.
- **School County:** County of the location of public school of enrollment.
- **School Nutrition Programs:** Federally assisted [nutrition programs](#) that operate in public, nonpublic, and residential child care institutions in Minnesota.
- **School Readiness:** A public school program for children ages 3 and 4 that intends to prepare children to enter kindergarten. School Readiness programs must meet certain requirements, as listed on the [MDE website](#).
- **School Readiness Plus (SRP or SR+):** A publicly funded prekindergarten program to provide free, high-quality early childhood education opportunities for eligible 4-year-old children that prepare them for success as they enter kindergarten the following year. Not all districts have SRP programs. More information about SRP can be found on the [MDE website](#).
- **School Year:** Period of time that covers July 1 of one year through June 30 of the following year.
- **Setting or Site:** Location (physical address) where early learning is provided (or smaller unit when multiple programs operate at one location).
- **SLEDS:** The [Statewide Longitudinal Education Data System](#) (SLEDS) uses linked data from K-12 education to higher education to workforce for informing education and workforce policy.
- **Small Cell Size:** Refers to a very small count of children in a given table or graph. Small cell sizes are usually suppressed in some way to prevent the identity of an individual to be discernible.
- **SNAP:** [Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program](#) (SNAP), formerly known as Food Stamps, helps Minnesotans with low incomes get the food they need for nutritious and well-balanced meals. The program provides financial assistance to purchase food as a supplement to a household food budget for families with incomes up to 165% of Federal Poverty Guidelines (FPG).
- **Source System ID:** Refers to the ID used on individual person records by the data provider, contributing state agency, or state agency when submitting data to P-20W systems.
- **Staff:** Individuals working in programs to provide early care and education to children.
- **Third Grade Proficiency:** Proficiency of students exhibited on the annual [Minnesota standards-based assessments](#) in Reading and Mathematics. Proficient results indicate that the student has met state standards.
- **Voluntary Prekindergarten (VPK):** VPK is a publicly funded prekindergarten program in Minnesota. Funded classrooms provide free, high-quality early childhood education opportunities for eligible 4-year-old children that prepare them for success as they enter kindergarten the following year. Not all districts have VPK programs. More information about VPK can be found on the [MDE website](#).
- **WIC:** [Women, Infants and Children](#) (WIC) provides federal grants to states for supplemental foods, health care referrals, and nutrition education for low-income pregnant, breastfeeding, and non-breastfeeding postpartum women, and to infants and children who are found to be at nutritional risk.

ECLDS Data Sources

The following information provides details on which data sources are included in the ECLDS and over which time periods. For the most current view of data sources, see the [data source matrix](#) on the ECLDS website.

Birth Records

Description: Birth certificate data.

Data System: Minnesota Center for Health Statistics (MCHS) maintains a research file of birth records for all births occurring in that state as well as births occurring out-of-state to Minnesota residents. Computerized records are available from 1980 to present and paper records are available back to 1900. The birth record includes information on the mother and father (e.g. age, race, and education), medical information on the mother prenatally and at delivery (e.g. risk factors, prenatal care usage, characteristics of labor), and medical description of the infant (e.g. gestational age, birth weight, congenital anomalies). In March 2011, the birth record underwent a significant overhaul that expanded race categories, adjusted education codes, and added mother's height and weight pre-pregnancy and at delivery. Previous year's birth data are available 9 months after the beginning of the next year (e.g. 2013 birth data was ready in Sept. 2014).

Provided By: MDH

Beginning Year: 1999

Information: Data loaded into ECLDS annually in the spring.

Census

Description: The U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey (ACS) provides information about families with young children. The Minnesota Department of Education purchases five-year estimates from the ACS, and uses it in its Census Data Tool as well as some ECLDS public reports. MDE currently has tables from the 2006-10, 2011-15, and 2016-20 ACS.

Data System: U.S. Census Bureau custom tables

Provided By: MDE

Beginning Year: 2006

Information: Data loaded into ECLDS every five years when new five-year ACS estimates are available from the U.S. Census Bureau.

Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP)

Description: Program providing financial assistance (subsidies) to help families who have low incomes and/or have recently received assistance through the Minnesota Family Investment Program (MFIP) to pay for child care.

Data System: MEC²

Provided By: DHS

Beginning Year: 2009

Information: Data loaded into ECLDS annually in the spring.

Child Count

Description: Special Education children are reported to the federal government once each year. MARSS data changes during the school year as children go on and off special education services after the December 1st reporting date. The Child Count accounts for all students officially reported to the federal government as participating in special education.

Data System: MARSS

Provided By: MDE

Beginning Year: 2005

Information: Data loaded into ECLDS annually in the spring.

Child Outcomes

Description: The ECSE Child Outcomes data source collects survey data from the child care professionals who serve children with special needs. Data is collected at the starting and ending periods of the child's involvement in the ECSE program where they enrolled.

Data System: Collected throughout the ECSE Outcomes portal on the MDE website.

Provided By: MDE

Beginning Year: 2011

Information: Data loaded into ECLDS annually in the spring.

Child Support

Description: Child support is money parents pay to their child's other parent or caregiver to support their children. The Minnesota Department of Human Services' Child Support Division and county child support agencies work with parents, employers, government agencies, other states, and community partners to help children receive the financial, medical, and child care support they deserve.

Data System: PRISM

Provided By: DHS

Beginning Year: Prior year only available for analysis at this time. *Note: Program area considering additional years of data, pending results of analysis.*

Information: Data loaded into ECLDS annually in the spring.

Child Welfare

Description: Continuum of intervention with children and families due to concerns of child maltreatment; most often referred to in the ECLDS as Child Protection Involvement. Child Welfare (CW) provides services to families to address functional issues and ensures that determined child victims of maltreatment are safe, which may include out-of-home-placement when necessary. For children who cannot safely return to their parent/caregiver, CW ensures children find an alternative permanency family through adoption or Transfer of Permanent Legal and Physical Custody (TPLPC) to a relative. ECLDS data includes if a child was ever in their life, up to the age represented in the ECLDS report, involved in a completed Child Protection assessment or investigation.

Data System: SSIS

Provided By: DHS

Beginning Year: 2013

Information: Data loaded into ECLDS annually in the spring.

Early Childhood Family Education (ECFE)

Description: A parenting education program for all Minnesota families with children between the ages of birth to kindergarten entrance. School districts that have a PreK-Third Grade initiative may offer programming for parents with children up to third grade, in order to support continued parent engagement in children's learning and development.

Data System: EE Student, EE Enrollment

Provided By: MDE

Beginning Year: 2014

Information: Data loaded into ECLDS annually in the spring.

Early Childhood Screening

Description: Early Childhood Screening is offered by school districts to children aged three to the start of kindergarten. Screening supports children’s readiness for kindergarten and promotes healthy development by providing referrals to families. It is used to identify potential health or developmental problems in children who may need a health, mental health, or educational evaluation. Screening links families to Head Start, prekindergarten programs, Early Learning Scholarships, home visiting programs, WIC, and more.

Data System: MARSS

Provided By: MDE

Beginning Year: 2009

Information: Data loaded into ECLDS annually in the spring.

Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE)

Description: Also referred to as Part B 619 or Part C, ECSE is part of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and is a program that provides supports and services to infants, toddlers, and preschool children with disabilities and their families.

Data System: MARSS

Provided By: MDE

Beginning Year: 2005

Information: Data loaded into ECLDS annually in the spring.

Early Education

Description: Early Education records information on children and families registering for classes set to meet six or more times during the school year for either ECFE and/or School Readiness. This information allows us to understand more about program participation prior to the kindergarten year.

Data System: EE Student

Provided By: MDE

Beginning Year: 2014

Information: Data loaded into ECLDS annually in the spring.

Early Hearing Detection and Intervention

Description: Early Hearing Detection and Intervention (EHDI) works to improve access to and quality of services for children who are deaf or hard of hearing. The EHDI program works with birth hospitals and midwives to ensure all newborns have access to hearing screening. It also helps families of children who are deaf or hard of hearing connect with educational, social, and community resources. The population represented in EHDI data is quite small. Three-year cohorts at a strictly statewide level are utilized in the ECLDS to avoid suppression issues.

Data System: MEDSS

Provided By: MDH

Beginning Year: 2007

Information: Data loaded into ECLDS annually in the spring.

Early Learning Scholarship

Description: The Early Learning Scholarship program supports access to high-quality early learning programs by bridging funding gaps and decreasing barriers for young children with the highest needs.

Data System: ELSA

Provided By: MDE

Beginning Year: 2016

Information: Data loaded into ECLDS annually in the fall.

Family Home Visiting

Description: Family home visiting (FHV) is a voluntary, home-based service for pregnant and parenting families. FHV provides social, emotional, health-related and parenting support and information to families, and links them to appropriate resources. Depending on the goals identified by a family and based on developmental and risk assessments, a family may work with a home visitor from the prenatal period through age three; some FHV programs extend to age five. FHV in Minnesota is provided by local public agencies, non-profit agencies, and tribal governments. Data are only available from Saint Paul-Ramsey County Public Health (SPRCPH) at this time.

Data System: SPRCPH uses an electronic health record for data collection and visit documentation.

Provided By: Saint Paul-Ramsey County Public Health

Beginning Year: 2019

Information: Data loaded into ECLDS annually in the spring.

Family Outcomes Survey

Description: The ECSE Family Outcomes data source collects survey data from families who have a child with special needs, were served in a program at a district, and the child has now turned three. The district gives the family a survey to complete and return to MDE.

Data System: Survey responses from families are either emailed or postal-mailed back to MDE. Results are entered into a centralized database.

Provided By: MDE

Beginning Year: 2011

Information: Data loaded into ECLDS annually in the spring.

Head Start/Early Head Start

Description: Head Start/Early Head Start supports the comprehensive development of children from birth to age 5 to promote school readiness for young children from low-income families. Head Start services include early learning, health, and family well-being. Participating Head Start agencies contribute data only for secure reports at this time.

Data System: Locally determined; often Child Plus

Provided By: Individual Head Start agencies

Beginning Year: Varies by agency

Information: Data loaded into ECLDS annually in the fall.

K-12 Assessment

Description: Standardized assessment data from students attending publicly-funded schools. Includes ACCESS for English Language Learners, MCA, MTAS, and spans grades kindergarten through grade 12. Includes selected pre-K information.

Data System: Data source includes multiple tables

Provided By: MDE

Beginning Year: 2006

Information: Data loaded into ECLDS annually in the spring.

K-12 Enrollment

Description: Enrollment records of students attending publicly-funded schools, including charter schools, in grades kindergarten through 12th grade. Includes selected pre-K information, including Voluntary Prekindergarten (VPK), and School Readiness Plus (SRP). VPK data begin with the 2016-2017 school year; SRP data begin with the 2017-2018 school year.

Data System: MARSS

Provided By: MDE

Beginning Year: 2005

Information: Data loaded into ECLDS annually in the spring.

MCCC

Description: The Minnesota Common Course Catalogue (MCCC) is a course classification and data collection system intended to provide uniform information about P-12 courses that are taught, including the curriculum, assessment tools, site-based initiatives, and instructional approaches. The MCCC also gathers information about the teachers who teach the courses, teacher fidelity for implementation, and the students who complete the courses. The four data collections associated with the MCCC include: 1) Local Course Index, 2) Calendar Information, 3) Staff Course Records, and 4) Student Course Records.

Data System: MCCC

Provided By: MDE

Beginning Year: 2017

Information: Still building participation in MCCC; not all school districts participate. Data loaded into ECLDS annually in the spring.

MDE-ORG (Schools and Organizations)

Description: The Client Relationship Management Tool for MDE to track its districts, schools, and other related organizations that accept payments from MDE.

Data System: ORG

Provided By: MDE

Beginning Year: 2005

Information: Data loaded into ECLDS annually in the spring.

MFIP/DWP

Description: Minnesota Family Investment Program/Diversionsary Work Program data, the state's income assistance program for families.

Data System: MAXIS

Provided By: DHS

Beginning Year: 2002

Information: Data loaded into ECLDS annually in the spring.

Parent Aware

Description: A multipurpose data system that contains data about the average education level of teaching staff in certain early learning organizations, and also data about Quality Ratings issued by Parent Aware.

Data System: Develop

Provided By: DHS

Beginning Year: 2012

Information: Data loaded into ECLDS annually in the fall.

Postsecondary Completer

Description: The Degrees and Other Awards Conferred Database contains data and other formal awards (diplomas or certificates) conferred to students upon successful completion of a program of study from Minnesota private and public postsecondary institutions participating in state student financial aid programs.

Data System: Degrees and Other Awards Conferred Database

Provided By: OHE

Beginning Year: 2007

Information: Records updated during academic year using the twelve-month period that begins July 1 through June 30.

School Readiness

Description: A public school program for children ages 3 and 4, with the purpose of preparing children to enter kindergarten. School Readiness programs must meet certain requirements, as listed on the [MDE website](#). A child is eligible to participate in a School Readiness program if the child: 1) Is at least three years old on September 1; 2) Has completed health and developmental screening within 90 days of program enrollment; and 3) Has one or more of the following risk factors: a) qualifies for free or reduced-price lunch; b) is an English learner; c) is homeless; d) has an individualized education program (IEP) or standardized written plan; e) is identified, through health and developmental screenings under sections 121A.16 to 121A.19, with a potential risk factor that may influence learning; or f) is defined as at risk by the school district. (Part of MN District Preschool counts in ECLDS reports, along with School Readiness Plus and Voluntary Prekindergarten.)

Data System: EE Student, EE Enrollment

Provided By: MDE

Beginning Year: 2014

Information: Data loaded into ECLDS annually in the spring.

School Readiness Plus (SRP)

Description: Publicly funded prekindergarten program that prepares children for success as they enter kindergarten the following year. The funding allows school districts and charter schools with Minnesota Department of Education-recognized early learning programs to incorporate an SRP program into their E-12 system as a new grade level. To participate in SRP free of charge, a child must meet the age requirement and also meet one or more of the following risk factors: 1) qualifies for free or reduced-price lunch; 2) is an English learner; 3) is homeless; 4) has an Individualized Education Program (IEP) or interagency intervention plan; 5) is identified through health and development screening with a potential risk factor; or 6) is in foster care. The full list of [SRP Statutory Program Requirements](#) is available. (Part of MN District Preschool counts in ECLDS reports, along with School Readiness and Voluntary Prekindergarten.)

Data System: MARSS

Provided By: MDE

Beginning Year: 2018

Information: Data loaded into ECLDS annually in the spring.

Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)

Description: Formerly known as Food Stamps, SNAP helps Minnesotans with low income get the food they need for nutritious and well-balanced meals. Data collected is on families receiving food assistance benefits.

Data System: MAXIS

Provided By: DHS

Beginning Year: 2002

Information: Data loaded into ECLDS annually in the spring.

Special Education

Description: Special education services are provided to eligible students with disabilities who need specialized instruction. Generally speaking, if a student is struggling with school, is having trouble keeping up with their peers, or is having difficulty understanding, special education may be an option. Special Education provides a Free, Appropriate, Public Education (FAPE) to a student with a disability in the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE), which is defined as what it takes for the student to be successful among peers in the general education classroom.

Data System: MARSS

Provided By: MDE

Beginning Year: 2005

Information: Data loaded into ECLDS annually in the spring.

STAR (Staffing)

Description: STAR (STaff Automated Reporting) is a web-based system used by school districts to report employment and assignment information to Minnesota's Professional Educator Licensing and Standards Board (PELSB).

Data System: STAR

Provided By: PELSB

Beginning Year: 2010

Information: Data loaded into ECLDS annually in the spring.

Voluntary Prekindergarten

Description: Publicly funded prekindergarten program that prepares children for success as they enter kindergarten the following year. The funding allows school districts and charter schools with Minnesota Department of Education-recognized early learning programs to incorporate an SRP program into their E-12 system as a new grade level. To participate in VPK, all children who meet the age requirement are eligible to participate free of charge. Due to enrollment caps on program allocations, districts may develop criteria giving enrollment priority to students with risk factors. (Part of MN District Preschool counts in ECLDS reports, along with School Readiness and School Readiness Plus.)

Data System: MARSS

Provided By: MDE

Beginning Year: 2017

Information: Data loaded into ECLDS annually in the spring.

Census Data

Some reports on the ECLDS website include American Community Survey (ACS) Census data. MDE was able to purchase ACS data about the nation's youngest children (birth to 5 years old) in smaller age bands for

most counties and all states, so we can better understand the demographics and circumstances of the babies, toddlers, and preschoolers who live in the United States. For more information about the Census data included in and available through ECLDS, please refer to the ECLDS [Census Data Tool user guide](#).

Maintaining Privacy

There are multiple methods to ensuring the privacy of individual-level data in ECLDS.

MNIT Services uses various procedures and security measures to ensure the confidentiality of an individual's records collected and maintained by ECLDS, including but not limited to:

- Assigning a unique ECLDS identification number to each individual;
- Managing levels of access that limit who may have access to data and for what purposes;
- Masking data to ensure that the confidentiality of personally identifiable information (PII) from individual records is maintained in all public reporting;
- Developing and maintaining a list of personnel who have access to personally identifiable child and student information through authentication and internal links;
- Documenting procedures for consistency in implementation policies and practices despite staff churn;
- Implementing and maintaining appropriate administrative, technical, and physical safeguards that prevent any collection, use or disclosure of, or access to electronically maintained or transmitted individual records in ECLDS; and
- Ensuring that all staff with access to ECLDS data understand the sensitivity and classification of the data and follow all requirements to protect the data from unwanted disclosure. [Aligns with SLEDS.]

Contributing state agencies use various procedures and security measures to ensure the confidentiality of an individual's records collected and maintained by ECLDS including but not limited to:

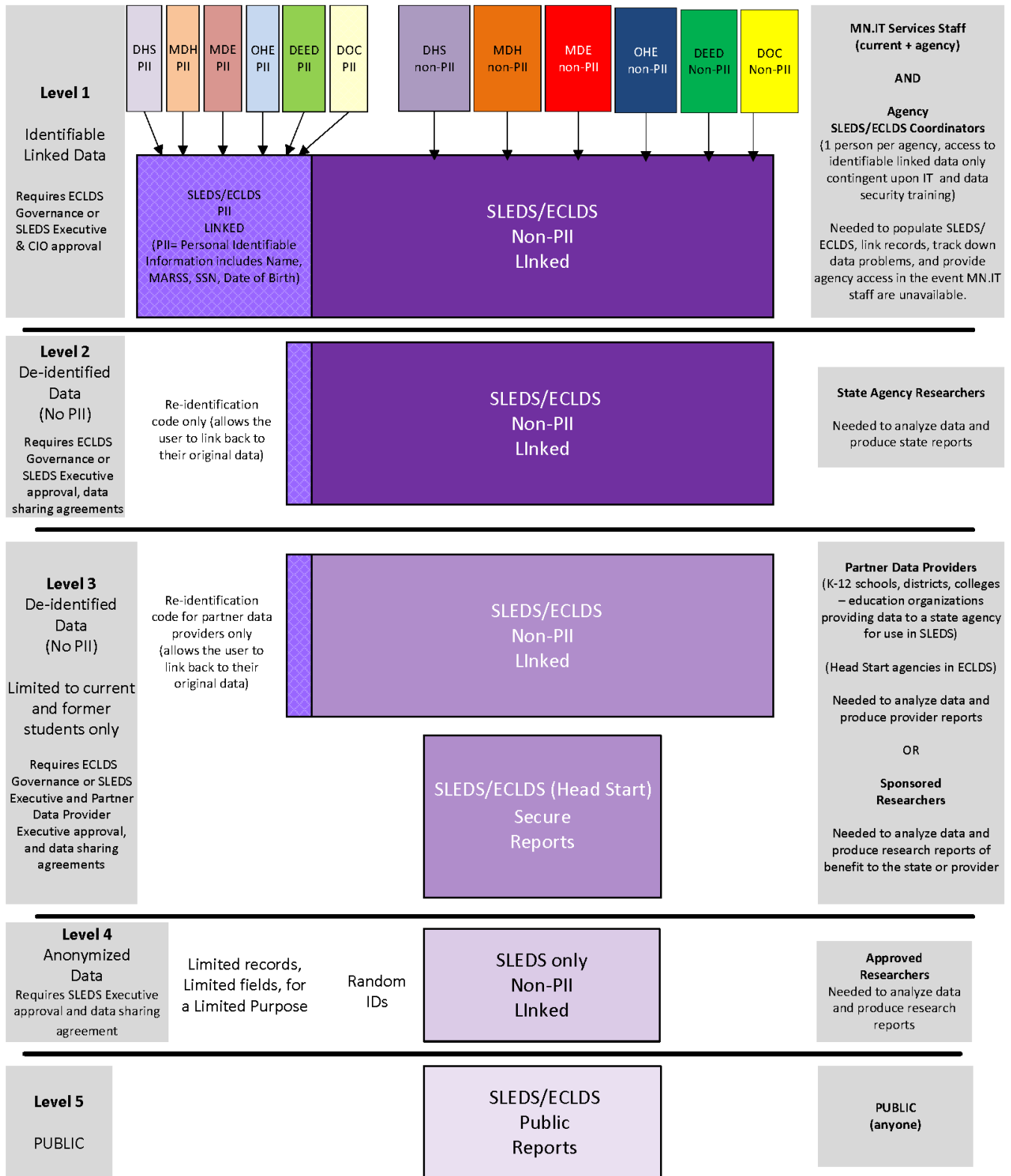
- Training of any state agency and affiliated MNIT personnel collecting and/or using personally identifiable information about the proper use of that information in accordance with this policy, Minnesota Government Data Practices Act (MGDPA), Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), and all applicable state and federal laws and policies;
- Enforcing a code of conduct for state employees; and
- Overseeing and managing all ECLDS-related work, policies and procedures to ensure compliance with data security standards, best practices, and federal and state laws. [Aligns with SLEDS.]

Levels of Access

ECLDS data must be consistently protected in a manner commensurate with its sensitivity and critical nature. The following levels of access were developed to protect the privacy of individuals. A complete list of individuals with access by level is maintained by MNIT services and the contributing state agencies. Access is approved by appropriate leadership as defined for each access level, and approved staff must fulfill training requirements established by MNIT and ECLDS governance. Access levels are listed below in order of most to least restrictive. While all access levels align with SLEDS, some do not pertain to ECLDS.

- **Level 1A** – Allows specific MNIT staff, including those housed at contributing state agencies, to read and write to all records and fields in the P-20W database. This access level is only permitted to a small number of authorized staff members who operate or manage the ECLDS data system or are responsible for maintaining the accuracy and security of the data in the performance of their duties. Approval of access is granted by the appropriate contributing state agency commissioner or his/her designee and the MDE Chief Information Officer upon signing the appropriate data sharing agreements.
- **Level 1B** – Allows one agency staff person (non-MNIT) access to all records and fields within the identifiable linked data in order to manage the P-20W data system, manage reporting from the data system, or maintain the accuracy and security of the data in the performance of their duties. The agency's commissioner or designee approves access for the designated individual and signs the appropriate data sharing agreements before access is granted. Approval by the MDE Chief Information Officer is also required.
- **Level 2** – Allows a small number of authorized contributing state agency staff to access all records and fields of the ECLDS de-identified data. The requesting agency's commissioner or designee approves access for designated individuals and signs the appropriate data sharing agreements before access is granted.
- **Level 3** – Allows access for designated staff to de-identified data and secured reports consistent with best practices, state, and federal law. For approved research projects (partner data provider and sponsored researchers) access to data will be provided by data marts. Approval of access is granted by the contributing state agencies upon consensus of ECLDS governance. Staff from partner data providers must also have approval from their organization's executive and sign the appropriate data sharing agreements before access is granted. Suppression rules must be utilized by the researcher in production of public reports.
- **Level 4** – Allows for access to anonymized data in data marts to produce public reports. Suppression rules will be utilized with the use of data marts so that information is not revealed about individuals in a particular group. Approval of access is granted by the contributing state agencies upon recommendation of the governance research group. Users must be approved by the contributing state agencies and sign a data sharing agreement or data usage agreement before access is granted. Suppression rules must also be utilized by the researcher in production of summary level reports.
- **Level 5** – Allows access to the general public for viewing standard summary ECLDS data. Requests for new public reports move through the ECLDS governance process.

Figure 1. Levels of Access Diagram



Record of Access

Data security standards and requirements of state and federal law mandate that contributing state agencies maintain a record of each request to and each disclosure of personally identifiable information from ECLDS. Such records must be maintained as long as the data are maintained, include the parties who have requested or received the information, and include the legitimate interests of the parties in receiving the information. [Aligns with SLEDS.]

Unauthorized Access

A state agency that collects, creates, receives, maintains, or disseminates private or confidential data on individuals must disclose any breach of the security of the data following discovery or notification of the breach.

A “Breach of the Security of the Data” means unauthorized acquisition of data maintained by ECLDS. Good faith acquisition of government data by an employee, contractor, or agent of a state agency for the purposes of the state agency is not a Break of the Security of the Data, if the government data are not provided to an unauthorized person.

“Unauthorized acquisition” means that a person has obtained data without the informed consent of the individuals who are subjects of the data or statutory authority and with the intent to use the data for nongovernmental purposes.

In the event of a “Breach of the Security of the Data” or possible “Breach of the Security of the Data” involving individual records or aggregate and distributional reporting of individual records disclosed for purposes of ECLDS, contributing state agencies will notify MNIT Services as described in the standard (Enterprise Information Security Incident Management Standard 2010-01); notify the duly authorized representative of state agencies; notify the ECLDS Governing Body; and notify any individual whose private or confidential information was, or is reasonably believed to have been, acquired by an unauthorized individual as required by Minn. Stat. §13.055. The contributing state agencies and MNIT will work together to monitor and respond to privacy and security incidents that do not rise to the level of a breach of security, in order to improve systems and prevent breaches. [Aligns with SLEDS.]

Rights of Subjects of Data to Inspect and Review Data and Records

In compliance with state law, an individual who is the subject of stored private or public data on individuals may request to be shown the data without any charge and, if desired, be informed of the content and meaning of that data. In compliance with federal law, parents and eligible students have the rights to inspect and review education records. All records within ECLDS are managed by MDE, MDH, Head Start grantee agencies, Saint Paul Ramsey County Public Health, and DHS and as such those agencies are jointly responsible for developing a policy for responding to all requests for access to data and records in accordance with federal and state law. [Aligns with SLEDS.]

Legislation Governing Data Sharing and Data Privacy

The majority of data in ECLDS is classified as private data by Minnesota statute. Private data can be used as necessary by the agencies that collect the data or have statutory authority to use the data. Private data cannot be disclosed except in specific situations. Federal regulations provide additional limitations to the use of certain data. Individuals found in violation of federal or state law or resultant policies and procedures are subject to consequences as documented in the Minnesota Government Data Practices Act (MGDPA), Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), and all data sharing and usage agreements for ECLDS. [Aligns with SLEDS.]

Minnesota Government Data Practices Act (MGDPA)

The Minnesota Government Data Practices Act (MGDPA), Minnesota Statutes Chapter 13, asserts that all government data are public data unless classified otherwise. Public data can be disclosed to anyone for any reason. Private data, as designated under Minnesota law, may be collected, stored, used, or disseminated by government entities if the government entity is authorized to do so by state, local, or federal law (Minn. Stat. § 13.05 sub.4(b); the individual subject or subjects of the data have given their informed consent; the data are being discussed at a meeting open to the public (see Minn. Stat. §13D.05). The majority of data in ECLDS are classified as private data, meaning their disclosure is limited to that authorized in statute. The use and preparation of summary data is permitted under Minn. Stat. § 13.05 sub.7. [Aligns with SLEDS.]

Education Data

In general, education data are classified as private under state law in Minnesota Statutes, section 13.32, subdivision 1. "Educational data" means data on individuals maintained by a public educational agency or institution or by a person acting for the agency or institution which relates to a student. Pursuant to Minnesota Statutes, section 13.32, subdivision 11 the Minnesota Department of Education and the Minnesota Office of Higher Education have the authority to share educational data in order to analyze instruction in school districts for the purposes of improvement. [Aligns with SLEDS.]

Head Start Data

Head Start agencies are authorized to collect and utilize educational and related data from enrolled children and families (Head Start data) to inform program improvements in accordance with the federal Improving Head Start Readiness Act of 2007, Pub. L. 110-134, § 641A(g)(1) and (2), codified at 42 U.S.C. § 9836a(g). Head Start data is classified as private data pursuant to the federal Improving Head Start Readiness Act of 2007, 42 U.S.C. § 9836a(b)(4), and by Minn. Stat. § 119.50, subd. 2.

Head Start agencies are authorized to delegate the authority to create summary data from private data to another entity pursuant to Minn. Stat. § 13.05, subd. 7. MDE is authorized—through data sharing agreements—to create summary data from private Head Start data via the ECLDS to inform continuous improvement approaches based on the long-term success of Head Start-participating children and families.

Health Data

As part of MDH's duties, MDH collects and compiles data necessary for reporting Minnesota births pursuant to Minnesota Statutes, section 144.213.

- Minnesota Statutes, section 144.225, subdivision 1, designates the information in birth records as public information with the following exceptions.
- Minnesota Statutes, section 144.225, subdivision 2, designates demographic data in a birth record (including the original record of birth and the certified vital record) as confidential when the birth of a child is to a woman who was not married to the child's father when the child was conceived or when the child was born, unless the mother designates the data as public.
- Minnesota Statutes, section 144.225, subdivision 2a, designates as private data the health data associated with birth registrations from which an identification of risk for disease, disability, or developmental delay in a mother or child can be made.
- Minnesota Statutes, section 144.225, subdivision 4, allows MDH to give access to restricted birth information to persons performing medical research who agree in writing not to disclose private or confidential data on individuals.

As part of MDH's duties, MDH administers and operates the Early Hearing Detection and Intervention (EHDI) program pursuant to Minnesota Statutes, section 144.966. EHDI Data created, collected, received, and maintained by MDH are classified as private by Minnesota Statutes, section 13.3805. MDH and MDE may use EHDI Data to implement and evaluate a system of following-up with and tracking children from birth through age three who are at risk for delayed or late onset of permanent hearing loss under Minnesota Statutes, section 144.966, subdivision 2. The statute also allows for evaluating program outcomes to increase effectiveness and efficiency and ensure culturally-appropriate services for children with a confirmed hearing loss and their families.

Human Services Data

DHS is permitted to share the Protected Information with MDE pursuant to [Minnesota Statutes, section 13.05, subdivision 7](#), which allows DHS to delegate the preparation of summary data to others under contract and it is the intent that MDE will use and aggregate DHS data for use in ECLDS.

- [Minnesota Statutes, section 13.46, subdivision 1\(c\)](#) allows DHS to enter into contracts to make other entities part of the welfare system and both parties agree it is their intention to make MDE a part of the welfare system for the limited purposes described in this Agreement.
- [Minnesota Statutes, section 13.46, subdivision 2\(a\)\(5\)](#) allows the disclosure of private data on individuals collected, maintained, used, or disseminated by the welfare system to personnel of the welfare system who require the data to verify an individual's identity; determine eligibility, amount of assistance, and the need to provide services to an individual or family across programs; and evaluate the effectiveness of programs.
- [Minnesota Statutes, section 13.46, subdivision 2\(a\)\(9\)\(iii\)](#) allows the disclosure of private data on individuals between DHS and MDH to monitor and evaluate the Minnesota family investment program or the child care assistance program by exchanging data on recipients and former

recipients of food support, cash assistance under chapter 256, 256D, 256J, 256K, child care assistance under chapter 119B, or medical programs under chapter 256B, 256D, or 256L.

- [Minnesota Statutes, section 13.46, subdivision 2\(a\)\(29\)](#) provides that data on individuals collected, maintained, used or disseminated by the welfare system are private data on individuals and shall not be disclosed except...“counties and the Department of Human Services operating child care assistance programs under chapter 119B may disseminate data on program participants, applicants, and providers to the commissioner of education.

Disclosure of child support data is guided federally by United States Code [42 U.S.C. § 654](#) (26) and the Code of Federal Regulations [45 CFR § 303.21](#).

Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)

In compliance with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, data for use in P-20W data systems such as ECLDS and SLEDS, requires that state agencies and partner data providers specify the conditions of use of data prior to inclusion. The conditions of use must include an anticipated data destruction date.

FERPA generally requires written consent of a parent or eligible student before an educational agency or institution discloses personally identifiable information. However, there are certain limited conditions in which prior consent is not required to disclose information ([34 CFR § 99.31](#)).

These conditions include, but are not limited to, certain disclosures:

- To other school officials within the agency or institution determined to have legitimate educational interests
- To officials of another school, school system, or postsecondary institution where the student seeks or intends to enroll or is enrolled for purposes of the student’s enrollment or transfer
- To authorized representatives of: 1) the Comptroller General of the United States; 2) the Attorney General of the United States; 3) the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Education; or 4) state and local educational authorities
- In connection with financial aid for which the student has applied or received
- To organizations conducting certain types of studies for, or on behalf of, educational agencies or institutions
- If the information disclosed is designated as “directory information”, or
- If the information disclosed has been stripped of all personally identifiable information and determined that a student’s identity is not personally identifiable after taking into account other reasonably available information

For more information on the conditions under which prior consent is not required to disclose information, please see [34 CFR § 99.31](#), of the Code of Federal Regulations for FERPA. Organizations and individuals found to be in violation of FERPA shall be prohibited from accessing information from ECLDS for a period of five (5) years. [Aligns with SLEDS.]

Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA)

The [Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act](#) is a federal law that Congress passed in 1996 to make the sharing and protecting of health data more consistent, efficient, and safe. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) then issued rules (45 CFR Parts 160, 162, and 164) intended to carry out those aims. HHS published a final [Privacy Rule](#) in December 2000, which was later modified in August 2002. This rule set national standards for the protection of individually identifiable health information by three types of covered entities: health plans, health care clearinghouses, and health care providers who conduct the standard health care transactions electronically. HHS also published a final [Security Rule](#) in February 2003, which sets national standards for protecting the confidentiality, integrity, and availability of electronic protected health information. Saint Paul-Ramsey County Public Health data is governed by HIPAA and MGDPA, and so is required to thoroughly explain data-sharing to clients and obtain wet signatures before releasing any private data to any other entity.

Destruction of Data

Any entity receiving ECLDS de-identified or anonymized data must destroy such data when it is no longer needed within the specified study time period or for the purpose for which the study was conducted. The manner of destruction shall protect the confidentiality of the information, and include the purging of all copies from computer systems. The ECLDS Data Coordinators must receive written confirmation of the method and date of destruction of data disclosed from ECLDS. [Aligns with SLEDS.]

Requesting Access to ECLDS Data

Current Data Sharing Agreements between the state agencies prohibit researcher or others access or access to individual student level records at this time. One-time research use may be granted to partner data contributing agencies through a formal ECLDS governance request process. Contact the ECLDS Lead at ecls.support@state.mn.us with questions.

References and Resources

Minnesota Departments of Education, Health, and Human Services. (2012). Minnesota Race to the Top Early Learning Data Linkage Charter. Government document.

SLEDS Governance. (2016). Minnesota Statewide Longitudinal Education Data System (SLEDS) Data Access and Management Policy. Government document.

SLEDS. (2018). SLEDS Data Interpretation Guide. Available at <http://sleds.mn.gov/#research>.

ECLDS+SLEDS Guiding Principles

Our seven guiding principles for data access and management:

1. ECLDS+SLEDS will focus on providing cross-sector, linked data and analysis.

Our data systems focus on cross-sector data use and refer any requests limited to a specific field or sector (early childhood, K-12 education, postsecondary education, or employment) to the appropriate agency or partner data provider.

2. ECLDS+SLEDS rely on transparency and clarity in all we do.

Early childhood, education, and workforce data, including its use, are presented in plain and readily comprehensible language and formats. Partners maintain a level of detail and disaggregation in accordance with state and federal regulations and best practices adopted by consensus. Policies and procedures, including roles and responsibilities of all parties, are defined and available for all to see.

3. Protecting the privacy of individuals is a priority.

ECLDS+SLEDS recognize that an individual's privacy is a primary concern for contributing state agencies, partner data providers, and users of the data systems. This requires users be aware of and respect the differing data privacy requirements of the various data sets included in ECLDS+SLEDS.

4. Common understanding and use of data increase its value.

Contributing state agencies and partner data providers must jointly develop an understanding of and common language regarding the transitions between local programs and systems to empower and inform data-driven decision-making. State agencies and partner data providers discuss and commit to overcoming obstacles to this understanding, such as the issues of turf, trust, technology, and time.

5. Data providers, at the state and local levels, are critical sources for understanding and explaining the data.

Training and opportunities for data users to connect with data providers is imperative for success. Data users should be specific and transparent in describing their methodologies and assumptions, and are encouraged to vet those methods and assumptions with contributing state agencies and partner data providers.

6. Maintenance of ECLDS+SLEDS and the provision of research and analysis is the responsibility of all data providers.

ECLDS+SLEDS require the coordinated and collaborative efforts of contributing state agencies, the Minnesota P-20 Education Partnership, and partner data providers for system maintenance, use, and growth.

7. Local partner data provider access is needed in order for data-driven continuous improvement in local and state systems.

Access to and use of data at the local level by early childhood programs, K-12 schools and districts, colleges and universities, and workforce programs is valued and better informs the continuous improvement of local and state policy and propels systemic change.