

8 LAYERS OF PROTECTION *within* ECLDS

The Minnesota Office of Higher Education (OHE) and its state partners; the Department of Education (MDE); the Department of Health (MDH); and the Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF), have taken every precaution to ensure that the Early Childhood Longitudinal Data System (ECLDS) is safe and secured with multilayered levels of protection to ensure that personal information is protected.



ECLDS contains the following eight levels of protection within its operating principles and processes:

1. The State of Minnesota is legally bound to protect data.

The Minnesota Government Data Practices Act is the state's comprehensive set of laws that protects individual-level data.

2. Limited access to identified data.

Access to the identified data shared into ECLDS is limited to a few key state staff, and only for the purposes of ensuring data accuracy and system security. Permission for this access requires multiple approvals.

3. No commercial use.

The data shared through ECLDS cannot be sold, used for marketing purposes, or toward the development of commercial products.

4. Data use is restricted and subject to approval.

All requests for access to data for analysis and/or research must be approved by ECLDS governance, represented by data-contributing early childhood education and care, K-12, and higher education partners to ensure that data access and use is relevant and necessary.

5. Data protection beyond what is required by law.

ECLDS complies with all state and federal data protection and privacy laws to ensure individuals' data is protected. OHE and its partners undergo continual technical reviews to ensure data protection and individual privacy follow the core principles of ECLDS and industry best practices.

6. No federal government access.

The federal government does not have access to the data shared into ECLDS.

7. Adherence to the minimum necessary standard.

Data shared into ECLDS by programs is only what is needed to link data that is useful in making decisions that cannot be made using data from a single program or system. ECLDS neither includes nor uses information about political affiliations or beliefs, religious practices, or biometric data.

8. De-identifiable data only.

No personally identifiable information is made public at any point. Data is only reported publicly in aggregate form.



Data are pieces of information collected about the systems and services individuals access and their related outcomes. ECLDS links together data from early childhood programs, family support programs, school districts, and colleges in order to understand the demographics and experiences of children and families who use Minnesota's public programs and services.

SAFEGUARDING DATA *in* ECLDS

We are committed to protecting privacy and security. While personal information is used to link records, personally identifiable information is removed before the data are placed into ECLDS.



IN COMPLIANCE WITH THE LAW

Data included in ECLDS are authorized and limited by the following federal and state laws:

- 1. Minnesota Government Data Practices Act (MGDPA).**
MGDPA addresses three principles:
 - Government's need for data to fulfill its role
 - Accountability and transparency in government
 - Protection of individual privacy rights
- 2. The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA).**
The federal law restricts with whom and under which circumstances states and educational organizations may share students' personally identifiable information.



RESTRICTED DATA ACCESS

Accessing ECLDS data requires approval by ECLDS governance for the following purposes:

-  **Linking records between state agencies**
-  **Research by ECLDS research staff**
-  **Research by state agencies**
-  **Research by approved researchers**