

Community Profiles: Getting Started

Guidelines and Tools for Developing Early Childhood Community Profiles

What Is a Community Profile?

A community profile is a tool with information that describes the status and characteristics of people and programs in a geographic area. Many states use—or are planning to use—community profiles to provide information to the public and interested stakeholders about early childhood programs and services in specific geographic areas. The community profiles typically include data illustrating the need for, availability of, and quality of such programs and services. A community might be defined as one or more counties, school districts, legislative districts, or U.S. Census tracts, or as the state as a whole. Federal guidance for early childhood needs assessments recognizes that states might need to define communities in a number of different ways:

Each State should describe its understanding of the term "community" in accordance with the unique structure and make-up of the State. Communities, furthermore, may necessarily be categorized in more than one way within a single State. For example, a community in an urban area may be described in terms of zip codes, neighborhoods, or census tracts, while in rural areas of the State, counties may be the only units for which data are available as a means of determining community needs and risks. Further, data indicators may not map perfectly onto community boundaries as the State chooses to describe them. For this reason, the State should use its best discretion in determining the community or communities for which it is reporting and describe the basis for this understanding.*

Community profiles can be created for different purposes depending on the interests of their intended audience. For example, state legislators can use community profiles to determine how best to allocate public resources based on the demand for services and the success of programs in different areas of the state. Early childhood programs can use the profiles to measure outcomes for the children they serve and identify areas for improvement. The data presented in a community profile will vary based on audience needs.

About This Guide

Community Profiles: Getting Started offers an overview of the types of data frequently included in early childhood community profiles and how those data can be presented to inform key audiences. Essential data elements have been compiled into a Common Education Data Standards (CEDS) Connection. The Early Childhood Profiles



Connection uses standardized data element names and definitions. State agencies can use the CEDS Align tool to compare standardized definitions to data elements in their own systems.

This guide contains the following sections:

- Creating a Community Profile outlines important considerations for planning the content and format of a
 community profile. It introduces the EASI Framework for organizing profile content and describes possible
 types of data and data sources for a community profile.
- How to Use the CEDS Connection describes the Early Childhood Profiles Connection, lists the data elements it contains, and explains how to use it via the CEDS Connect tool.
- Community Profile State Example introduces an example profile created by Kentucky.
- Additional Resources offers links to related products and tools for further information on this topic.

^{*} U.S. Office of Management and Budget. (2010). Affordable Care Act Maternal, Infant and Early Childhood Home Visiting Program Supplemental Information Request for the Submission of the Statewide Needs Assessment. Available online at https://nww.ok.gov/health2/documents/MIECHV-Needs%20 Assessment%20Guidance.pdf.

The guide was developed by the Early Childhood Integrated Data Systems (ECIDS) Community Profiles Workgroup, facilitated by the Statewide Longitudinal Data Systems (SLDS) Grant Program State Support Team in collaboration with CEDS and ECDataWorks. It will be updated over time to reflect best practices and implementation experiences from key stakeholders. The information presented does not necessarily represent the opinions of the SLDS Grant Program. We thank the following people for their valuable contributions:

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Getting Started: Important Considerations

This section identifies key issues that states should consider prior to or early in the process of developing a community profile. Although many decisions made during this process depend on state context, these important considerations will help states think through some of the key decisions and potential issues in developing and using community profiles.

What do you need before getting started?

Before beginning to develop a community profile, states should consider both the technical and programmatic coordination required. The lead author of the community profile might be the agency or office responsible for coordinating a significant share of the state's early childhood services—such as a state department of education or health and human services—or by the agency managing the statewide longitudinal data system (SLDS) or early childhood integrated data system (ECIDS).

In addition to the lead agency, state teams will need to determine which agencies and organizations house other data that are needed for the community profile. If these agencies are not currently involved in the ECIDS, SLDS, or other data sharing efforts, additional outreach is necessary to explain the goals of the community profile and to build trust that shared data will be used responsibly.

After identifying the agencies that will contribute to the community profile, leaders review existing data and reporting among those partners. This review includes a data inventory or the development of data dictionaries. Through continued conversations with stakeholders, state teams should build a vision for the profile that takes into account the content and format that stakeholders need as well as its intended uses. Program regulations that impact this work also should be considered, along with privacy and security requirements.

Who is the audience?

Community profiles can have a broad range of audiences, including educators, program administrators, program staff, policymakers, legislators, and researchers. Learning about these users will inform the profile's content and design. For example, if the state's core profile users will include programs that serve primarily infants and toddlers, the profiles likely will need to display data for this age range. Users also might prefer to see the profiles in different formats. For example, users that are highly mobile may prefer printable or static PDF profiles.

If the intended audience includes staff from agencies contributing data to the ECIDS, sharing data with these users will show them the value of integrating their data and can help keep them engaged.

What information does the audience need?

Community profiles often contain summary or high-level information rather than detailed data. When thinking about what the audience needs, focus on the types of data that will be most useful to them rather than the level of detail. If the profile will be available in an interactive format, it might be possible to accommodate a specific audience's need for more detail by offering filters. Otherwise, there is a risk of making the profile appear overly complex for audiences that are primarily interested in summary-level information.

The following questions can help community profile authors get started:

- What questions do you hope to answer using the community profile?
- Do you plan to use the data in this profile for any specific program or policy goals? This discussion includes, but is not limited to, determining how to address multiple program needs in a single community profile.
- Are there communications efforts, reports, or requirements that this community profile will support in your organization or agency? If so, how frequently does the information need to be refreshed to be useful?
- What levels of measurement do you want the data to convey (e.g., state-level, county-level, school district-level, program-level, center-level, or classroom-level data)?
- Are there specific meetings, events, or legislative sessions where community profile information is shared?

Consider documenting the audience's data needs in a mapping document that includes the specific content to be used, by whom, and with what frequency. This document can demonstrate the need for the community profile and help decisionmakers revise the profile as needs evolve. It may be valuable to determine whether users depend on the data for specific federal program reporting, such as the community assessments required of Head Start programs and the statewide needs assessments required of Head Start Collaboration Offices.

How will the audience use the community profile?

The uses of a community profile will affect its content and format. Before making key decisions on these aspects of the profile, state teams should consider the types of actions or decisions it will inform. For example, state administrators might share the profile with legislators to inform policy changes. Local service providers might use the profile to inform grant applications. Municipal governments might use the profile to identify potential partnerships across programs. These many uses should inform decisions about the profile's content, the geographic areas it represents, and its customizability.

What geographies should the profile show?

Community profiles often show data by county or school district, but state teams can consider other geographies once they have identified the primary audience(s). Geographic areas that may be relevant to audiences include program service areas, legislative districts, school districts, U.S. Census tracts, and zip codes.

Do you need an ECIDS to create a community profile?

With ECIDSs, states can generate community profiles that integrate more and different data than could be provided by a state single agency. Some information in a community profile might require combining data from multiple state agencies as well as external sources. For example, to report rates of children living in poverty by age, states may need to integrate data on family income and child age from different sources. These data allow program and service providers to estimate the number of children eligible for certain services.

Community profiles often include data from the decennial U.S. Census or the American Community Survey (ACS), which are not integrated with child- or provider-level records. These data can fill critical gaps to create a fuller picture of the community. For example, if data on family income are unavailable from a state agency, the ACS might be the best source of this information.

What is the best format for the profile?

State teams will need to determine whether to offer the community profile as a static report, an interactive tool, or both. Dynamic interfaces such as online dashboards give users a high level of flexibility to explore data and gain additional insights. However, some users might not have quick and easy access to the technology needed for dynamic tools. These users might want summary-level information that can be accessed and digested quickly, or they might simply be more comfortable with a static format such as a PDF.

Given that displaying geographic areas is a key feature of a community profile, state teams should consider including maps in the profile. Maps provide a visual context to help people relate the data to their community. Privacy concerns may dictate what type of mapping is appropriate; if there is a concern about users being able to determine the physical location of points on the map, then it may be necessary to disable the zoom feature on a dynamic report or create a static map image. For interactive reports, states might consider providing users with different levels of data within the same report. For example, a county profile also could allow users to view data by zip code.

In addition, states are moving toward using analysis or comparison metrics such as percentile rankings to highlight differences within a state. Including such metrics in a community profile increases its value as an analytic tool beyond descriptive statistics.

Taking Action from a Community Profile

Well-designed community profiles can inform a variety of decisions and activities undertaken by their target audiences, including the following:

• Legislators can better understand the needs of the early childhood population in their constituencies and make policy and funding decisions accordingly.

- State and local early childhood programs can use the data to measure and reflect on the effectiveness of their services. They can compare their outcomes to those of programs in other communities.
- Advocacy organizations can use community profiles to articulate and demonstrate need for additional resources or content.

By communicating information about the need for and availability early childhood services throughout a community, community profiles can help programs identify service gaps and opportunities to collaborate with other providers to better serve children and families. Programs can refer to these data in grant applications and when advocating for state resources to pursue new initiatives. Additionally, the relationships that develop among programs when sharing data and producing community profiles can lead to further cooperation in the future.

Designing a Community Profile

Although the information included in a community profile will vary based on the needs of the audience and the data available, most profiles contain similar types of information. ECDataWorks created the EASI framework to describe broad categories of information that could be included in community profiles spotlighting early childhood programs and services.

Е	Eligibility	Includes information about community demographics and other factors that demonstrate the need for early childhood services in a geographic area.
		Examples: service demand; risk factors based on population data
Α	Access	Includes information about the supply of services available in the area.
7.		Examples: number of service providers; provider characteristics including quality
c	Services	Includes information about the ${\it use}$ of services by children and families in the area.
3		Example: program enrollment
1	Improvement and Impact	Includes information about the effect of services on children and families in the area over time.
		Examples: measurements of outcomes; changes in key risk factors over time

The CEDS Early Childhood Profiles Connection described in this guide uses the EASI framework to help organize information in a community profile.

Data Types and Sources

Ideally, a community profile integrates multiple types of data to provide actionable information about early childhood programs and services. Below are several sources of information relevant to early childhood services and examples of data elements from each.



Population

The U.S. Census collects demographic information at the national, state, and local levels. Data relevant for a community profile might include the following:

- Population data
 - Child population by age
 - State median income
- Risk factors
 - Federal poverty level
 - Children with employed parent(s)



Developmental Progress

Many states use various assessments to determine whether children are developing appropriately. These assessments evaluate children in a range of domains. Data relevant for a community profile might include the following:

- Domain-specific scores
- Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) / Individualized Education Program (IEP) information
- Kindergarten readiness scores



Third Grade Education Status

Third grade state assessment scores are commonly used to measure children's early academic success. These data might be used in a community profile to help demonstrate the impact of early childhood programs and services on students' future outcomes. Data relevant for a community profile might include the following:

- Reading assessment scores
- Math assessment scores



Quality Rating

Quality rating and improvement systems (QRISs) are designed to measure, rate, and disseminate information about the quality of early care and education programs. They can include data about licensed child care centers, home-based programs, Head Start and Early Head Start programs, and state prekindergarten programs. QRISs assign tiered quality indicators such as stars or numbered ratings to each participating program based on its performance on quality standards. Data relevant for a community profile might include the following:

- Number and percentage of programs participating in the QRIS
- Program ratings



Birth Registry

Birth records from a department of health can provide information about the number of children in a geographic area and the prevalence of certain risk factors. Data relevant for a community profile might include the following:

- Population data
 - Number and demographics of children born
 - Number of preterm babies born
- Risk factors
 - Incidence of low birth weight
 - Age of mothers
 - Natality of the mother



Program and Enrollment

Enrollment data show how many children are participating in different early childhood programs and services. Data relevant for a community profile might include the following:

- Program characteristics
- Enrollment
 - Number of children enrolled in early childhood programs
 - Number of children enrolled in health and human services programs, including the number eligible for child care subsidies
- Investment in early childhood programs and services



Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)

State agencies collect data on incidents and experiences that might affect a child's educational and social outcomes. Data relevant for a community profile might include the following:

- Incidence of child abuse
- Homelessness status
- Incarcerated parents



Workforce

Workforce data describe the characteristics and credentials of education and child care professionals working with early childhood programs. Data relevant for a community might include the following:

- Degrees or certificate earned
- Licensure
- Employment status
- Professional development activities completed



Other

Data from additional sources can create a clearer picture of the need for and operations of early childhood programs and services.

HOW TO USE THE CEDS CONNECTION

The Early Childhood Profiles Connection in the CEDS Connect tool was created to help states locate and use data to create effective early childhood community profiles. It contains the names and definitions of more than 60 data elements, as well as a description of the calculations and steps needed to use those data elements in a community profile.

Accessing the Connection

The Early Childhood Profiles Connection is published in the CEDS Connect tool. It is available at the URL at right, or by navigating to the CEDS Connect web page (https://ceds.ed.gov/connect.aspx), clicking the green button labeled "Find Existing Connection" under the "Use" menu, and searching for "early childhood profile."

Early Childhood Profiles Connection

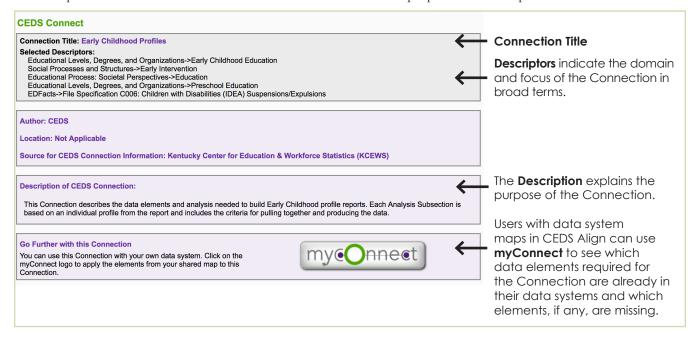
https://ceds.ed.gov/connectReport. aspx?uid=2981

Understanding the Connection

Each CEDS Connection is composed of several parts that provide supporting information about its elements and use.

Descriptive Information

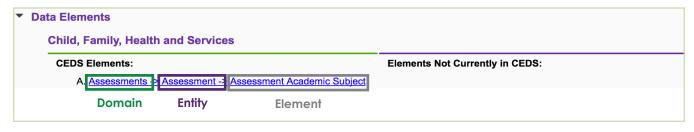
The first part of the connection contains basic information about its purpose and development.



Data Elements

This section lists the data elements required to use the Connection. The name of each element is composed of multiple parts indicating its location within the CEDS domain entity schema. Click a data element to view its CEDS definition, format, and option sets.

The Early Childhood Profiles Connection contains 68 data elements from the Assessments, Early Learning, and K12 domains.



Analysis Recommendations

This section describes how data elements can be integrated and used to create calculations and visualizations for the community profile.

Analysis Recommendations

BAR CHARTS

Kindergarten Readiness: The percent of students screened during the 2013-14, 2014-15, 2015-16, 2016-17 (or the current) school years who were ready, or ready with enrichments for kindergarten based on the BRIGANCE K Screen III. Students are counted in their count of enrollment, which may not be the same county in which they were tested. The bar chart shows student percentages by year, county and state.

Results by Composite Domain: The percent of students screened during the 2016-17 school year who scored "average" or "above average" on the BRIGANCE K Screen III for the following: (a) Academic/Cognitive; (b) Language Development; and (c) Physical Development domains. Students are counted in their county of enrollment, which may not be the same county in which they were tested. The bar chart shows percent scoring Average or Above Average by Domain (Academic/Cognitive, Language Development & Physical Development) by county and state.

Results by Social-Emotional and Self-Help Domains: The percent of students screened during the 2016-17 (or current) school year who scored "average" or "above average" on the BRIGANCE K Screen III for Social-Emotional and Self-Help domains. Scores are reported by the parent. Students are counted in their county of enrollment, which may not be the same county in which they were tested. The bar chart shows percent scoring Average or Above Average by Domain (Self-Help & Social-Emotional) by county and state.

The analysis recommendations for the Early Childhood Profiles Connection cover how to perform calculations and create charts to display information in the following areas:

- Early care and education program enrollments
- Third grade assessment results
- Family health and services
- Support services
- QRIS participation
- Early childhood workforce

Using the Connection

The Early Childhood Profiles Connection provides a starting point for state teams to create and customize a community profile that fits the needs of their intended audiences using the data available to them.

The data elements included in the Connection use standardized CEDS element names and definitions, which might differ from element names and definitions used in local or state data systems. Using the CEDS Align tool to map state and local data systems that will contribute to the community profile is a helpful first step. This process allows state teams to match their own data elements to CEDS element names and definitions and to verify which state elements are comparable or different from those used by CEDS. Technical assistance is available from the CEDS initiative to complete this mapping process.

States that have mapped their data elements to the CEDS model using CEDS Align can use the myConnect feature within the Early Childhood Profiles Connection to identify which data elements required for the Connection exist in their collections and in what data system they are housed. The myConnect tool also highlights data elements in the Connection that are not currently in the state's systems. Users may need to pull these elements from additional data sources for use in the community profile.

Some data elements in the Early Childhood Profiles Connection might not be necessary for community profiles designed for a specific audience. Refer to the Analysis Recommendations in the Connection to determine which elements are needed for the calculations and visualizations the state wishes to include in its community profile. The Analysis Recommendations describe how to select and combine data elements to create features of the community profile, as well as suggested sources for supplemental data. State teams also can create calculations or charts from their data in addition to those suggested in the Analysis Recommendations to meet the specific needs or interests of their audience.

Data Elements in the Connection

Following are the 68 CEDS data elements included in the Early Childhood Profiles Connection. Colored labels to the left of each element indicate the data type.











Population (P)

Developmental Progress (DP)

Third Grade Education Status (3rd)

Quality Rating (QR)

Birth Registry (BR)







Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE)



Workforce (W)



Other (O)

		Domain	Entity	Category	Element
DP	3rd	Assessments	Assessment		Assessment Academic Subject
DP	3rd	Assessments	Assessment		Assessment Identifier
DP	3rd	Assessments	Assessment		Assessment Level for Which Designed
DP	3rd	Assessments	Assessment		Assessment Type
()	Early Learning	EL Child	Contact	State Abbreviation
	P	Early Learning	EL Child	Demographic	Birthdate
D	P	Early Learning	EL Child	Developmental Assessments	Assessment Early Learning Developmental Domain
D	P	Early Learning	EL Child	Developmental Assessments	Assessment Level for Which Designed
D	P	Early Learning	EL Child	Developmental Assessments	Child Developmental Screening Status
D	P	Early Learning	EL Child	Developmental Assessments	Developmental Evaluation Finding
D	P	Early Learning	EL Child	Disability	Disability Status
D	P	Early Learning	EL Child	Disability	Limited English Proficiency Status
P	E	Early Learning	EL Child	Disability	Primary Disability Type
P	Έ	Early Learning	EL Child	Eligibility	Early Learning Program Eligibility Category
P	E	Early Learning	EL Child	Enrollment	Enrollment Entry Date
P	E.	Early Learning	EL Child	Enrollment	Enrollment Exit Date
P	E	Early Learning	EL Child	Enrollment	Participation in School Food Service Programs
Р	Έ	Early Learning	EL Child	Finance	Early Learning Federal Funding Type
P	E.	Early Learning	EL Child	Finance	Federal Program Code
В	R	Early Learning	EL Child	Health	Weeks of Gestation
P	E	Early Learning	EL Child	Identity	Child Identification System
Р	E	Early Learning	EL Child	Identity	Child Identifier

	Domain	Entity	Category	Element
DP	Early Learning	EL Child	Language	ISO 639-2 Language Code
DP	Early Learning	EL Child	Language	Language Type
PE	Early Learning	EL Child	Program	Early Childhood Program Enrollment Type
PE	Early Learning	EL Child	Program	Program Identifier
PE	Early Learning	EL Child	Program	Program Participation Exit Date
PE	Early Learning	EL Child	Program	Program Participation Start Date
PE	Early Learning	EL Child	Services	Early Childhood Services Received
PE	Early Learning	EL Child	Services	Service Entry Date
PE	Early Learning	EL Child	Services	Service Exit Date
0	Early Learning	EL Family	Family/Household Information	Family Income
0	Early Learning	EL Family	Family/Household Information	Source of Family Income
PE	Early Learning	EL Family	Identification	Family Identifier
PE	Early Learning	EL Organization	Contact	County ANSI Code
PE	Early Learning	EL Organization	Directory	Early Childhood Setting
P	Early Learning	EL Organization	Identification	State ANSI Code
PE	Early Learning	EL Organization	Organization Information	Early Learning Program Year
QR	Early Learning	EL Organization	QRIS Rating	Quality Rating and Improvement System Participation
QR	Early Learning	EL Organization	QRIS Rating	Quality Rating and Improvement System Score
QR	Early Learning	EL Organization	Quality	Quality Initiative Score Level
W	Early Learning	EL Staff	Education	Degree or Certificate Conferring Date
W	Early Learning	EL Staff	Education	Early Childhood Degree or Certificate Holder
W	Early Learning	EL Staff	Education	Highest Level of Education Completed
W	Early Learning	EL Staff	Education	Staff Education Entry Date
W	Early Learning	EL Staff	Employment	Employment End Date
W	Early Learning	EL Staff	Employment	Employment Start Date
W	Early Learning	EL Staff	Employment	Employment Status
W	Early Learning	EL Staff	Identity	Staff Member Identification System
W	Early Learning	EL Staff	Identity	Staff Member Identifier
W	Early Learning	EL Staff	Professional Development	Professional Development Financial Support Type
W	Early Learning	EL Staff	Professional Development	Professional Development Scholarship Status
W	Early Learning	EL Staff	Professional Development	Staff Professional Development Activity Completion Date
W	Early Learning	EL Staff	Professional Development	Staff Professional Development Activity Start Date
PE	Early Learning	Parent/Guardian	Contact	Address County Name
PE	Early Learning	Parent/Guardian	Demographic	Birthdate
PE	Early Learning	Parent/Guardian	Identity	Person Identification System
PE	Early Learning	Parent/Guardian	Identity	Person Identifier

	Domain	Entity	Category	Element
PE	Early Learning	Parent/Guardian	Relationship	Custodial Parent or Guardian Indicator
PE	Early Learning	Parent/Guardian	Relationship	Person Relationship to Learner Type
PE	K12	Course Section	Enrollment	Course Section Exit Withdrawal Date
PE	K12	Course Section	Enrollment	Enrollment Entry Date
PE	K12	Course Section	Enrollment	Number of Credits Earned
PE	K12	Course Section	Enrollment	Student Identification System
PE	K12	Course Section	Enrollment	Student Identifier
PE	K12	K12 Course		Family and Consumer Sciences Course Indicator
PE	K12	K12 School	Session	School Year
PE	K12	K12 Student	Enrollment	Entry Grade Level

Kentucky's Early Childhood Community Profiles

For several years, the Kentucky Center for Education & Workforce Statistics (KCEWS) has published early childhood community profiles for Kentucky's 120 counties and for the state. In 2017, the center launched web-based, interactive versions of the profiles in addition to its usual PDF reports. The profiles, built with Tableau visualization software, are based on publicly available data that also can be downloaded from KCEWS's website.

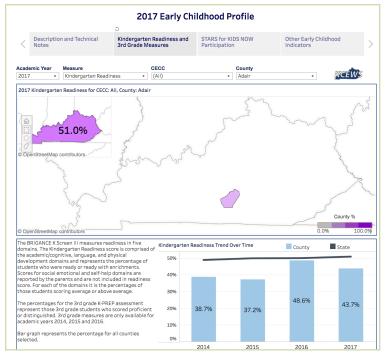
The interactive community profiles consist of four pages, each highlighting different types of early childhood data. The first page contains an overview of the information included in the profile, a link to technical notes on the data, and a searchable map displaying the Community Early Childhood Councils (CECCs) covering each county, contact information, and a brief description of each council.

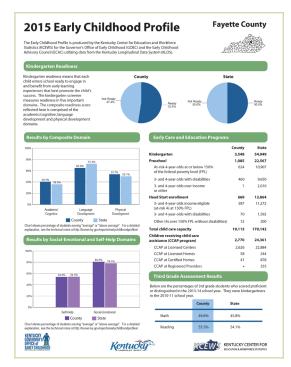
The second page displays kindergarten readiness data from the BRIGANCE K Screen III assessment administered across the state. Users can view overall readiness rates for each county and the state, or they can filter the data to show aggregated student scores for each of the assessment's five domains. The interactive profiles also display trends in county and state scores over time, which were not part of the PDF versions.

The third page shows data from Kentucky's STARS quality rating and improvement system for early childhood programs and care centers. The data include the average STARS rating for all programs in a county, as well as a list of rated and unrated programs in each county.

The fourth page offers broad demographic information about early childhood populations and risk factors, including numbers of children living in the area, children living in poverty, babies born prematurely or to young mothers, and households where English is not the primary language spoken. This page also contains enrollment data for preschool and Head Start programs, kindergarten, and services such as Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) benefits and home visitation.

On each page of the profile, users can select one or multiple counties or CECCs to filter the data displayed. The ability to view data from multiple geographic areas at once was not possible with the PDF reports and was frequently requested by profile users. The interactive features allow stakeholders, including parents seeking quality ratings for nearby child care programs, to customize profiles to cover the geographic areas of most interest to them.





Kentucky's online early childhood community profiles, left, allow users a greater degree of flexibility to select and filter data for different geographic areas than the previously available PDF reports, at right.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

A Primer on Distinct Count of Children: SLDS Issue Brief https://slds.grads360.org/#communities/pdc/documents/9435

Identifying SLDS Users and Their Information Needs: SLDS Issue Brief https://slds.grads360.org/#communities/pdc/documents/2753

QRIS and ECIDS: SLDS Webinar

https://slds.grads360.org/#communities/pdc/documents/6541

Unique Identifiers: Beyond K12: SLDS Issue Brief https://slds.grads360.org/#communities/pdc/documents/4564

What Is an Early Childhood Integrated Data System? SLDS Issue Brief https://slds.grads360.org/#communities/pdc/documents/4441

State Community Profiles and Data Tools

Kentucky Center for Education & Workforce Statistics Early Childhood Profile https://kcews.ky.gov/reports/GetContentAreaRptsList?dropdownText=CA&reportId=ECP

Michigan Center for Educational Performance and Information MI School Data Portal https://www.mischooldata.org/

Minnesota Early Childhood Longitudinal Data System http://eclds.mn.gov/

Utah Department of Workforce Services Local Insights – County Snapshots https://jobs.utah.gov/wi/regions/county/index.html