



Statewide
Longitudinal
Data Systems
Grant Program

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Early Childhood Integrated Data Systems Toolkit

Self-Assessment Tool

A Product of the SLDS Grant Program State Support Team



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This product of the Statewide Longitudinal Data Systems (SLDS) Grant Program State Support Team was developed with the help of knowledgeable staff from state education agencies and partner organizations. The content of this publication was developed with input from the SLDS National ECIDS Leadership Workgroup on Stakeholder Engagement. The information presented does not necessarily represent the opinions of the SLDS Grant Program.

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

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Introduction

This self-assessment tool is designed to help early childhood integrated data system (ECIDS) Leadership Teams assess their needs as they develop and enhance an ECIDS and integrate ECIDS data into a P-20W+ (early childhood through workforce) statewide longitudinal data system (SLDS). It guides states through a reflective process of identifying areas of strength and areas for improvement around seven key components of a high-quality data system. States may opt to complete one or more components of the self-assessment at the same time or over an extended period of time. States are encouraged to use the self-assessment as part of an ongoing improvement process in which they continuously examine the status of their ECIDS.

The sections of this self-assessment align to the seven components of the SLDS Framework:

- Purpose and Vision
- Project Planning and Management
- Stakeholder Engagement
- Data Governance
- System Design
- Data Use
- Sustainability

The components of the framework are not linear. ECIDS teams often start with the components where they currently have capacity and resources. More information about the SLDS Framework is available at <https://slds.ed.gov/#program/slds-framework>.

Additional information, self-assessments, challenges and strategies, and related resources for all seven components are available in the ECIDS Toolkit at <https://slds.ed.gov/#program/ecids-toolkit>.

Instructions

1. Respond to the self-assessment questions by marking the column most closely matching the current status of your state's ECIDS:
 - **Yes, Completed.** The team has completed the relevant task.
 - **Yes, But Would Like to Improve.** The team has completed the task, but it could be improved or enhanced.
 - **Planning.** The team intends to complete the task but has not yet begun implementation.
 - **No.** The team does not plan to complete the task.
 - **Unsure.** The team does not know the status of the task.
2. Reflect on your responses and identify where the state has been successful and where more work is needed to move forward. Use the **Next steps** section to determine and document action items for improvement.

Purpose and Vision

Documenting and communicating the purpose and vision

Mark the appropriate column for each question below.

Has the ECIDS Leadership Team ...	Yes, Completed	Yes, But Would Like to Improve	Planning	No	Unsure	Notes
Documented a purpose for the ECIDS that describes the value it will bring to the state and its early childhood programs?						
Documented whom the ECIDS will serve?						
Documented what data elements will be included in the ECIDS?						
Documented the policy and program decisions and essential questions that the ECIDS will support?						
Identified the key audiences who should be informed of the ECIDS's purpose and vision?						
Communicated the ECIDS's purpose and vision to all key audiences?						

Considering linkages to P-20W+ data

Mark the appropriate column for each question below.

Has the ECIDS Leadership Team ...	Yes, Completed	Yes, But Would Like to Improve	Planning	No	Unsure	Notes
Documented how the purpose and vision for the ECIDS relates to the purpose and vision for the P-20W+ SLDS (e.g., through critical questions or use cases)?						
Documented the intended outcomes of the ECIDS's connection to the P-20W+ SLDS (e.g., calculating a distinct count of children entering kindergarten with prior early learning experiences)?						
Determined which early childhood audiences the P-20W+ data will serve?						

Next steps

Reflect on your self-assessment responses and identify steps that you can take to develop or strengthen your ECIDS Leadership Team's work related to purpose and vision.

	Action Item	Assigned To	Due Date
1.			
2.			
3.			

	Action Item	Assigned To	Due Date
4.			
5.			

Project Planning and Management

Establishing an ECIDS Leadership Team

Mark the appropriate column for each question below.

Has the ECIDS Leadership Team ...	Yes, Completed	Yes, But Would Like to Improve	Planning	No	Unsure	Notes
Identified and documented the responsibilities of the ECIDS Leadership Team?						
Identified and documented a process for selecting members of the ECIDS Leadership Team?						
Determined how to coordinate the team's work with other statewide early childhood and related information technology (IT) initiatives?						
Developed a process for reviewing and revising the ECIDS Leadership Team membership as needed over time?						
Established a process for onboarding members to the ECIDS Leadership Team to ensure that they understand what is expected of them?						

Developing and implementing an ECIDS project management plan

Mark the appropriate column for each question below.

Has the ECIDS Leadership Team ...	Yes, Completed	Yes, But Would Like to Improve	Planning	No	Unsure	Notes
Developed a detailed project plan that aligns to the purpose and vision for the ECIDS?						
Established project milestones with tasks and activities for each milestone?						
Outlined a timeline based on required reporting deadlines (e.g., federal grants, state requirements) and communicated that timeline to vendors, if applicable?						
Developed a budget for implementing the project, established a strategy for tracking budget expenditures, and identified people responsible for tracking the budget?						
Included tasks in the project plan to develop and execute data sharing agreements with agencies and programs that will contribute or use ECIDS data?						

Has the ECIDS Leadership Team ...	Yes, Completed	Yes, But Would Like to Improve	Planning	No	Unsure	Notes
Developed a process for reviewing and revising the project plan and budget as needed throughout ECIDS planning, implementation, and maintenance?						

Aligning the ECIDS project plan to the P-20W+ SLDS project plan

Mark the appropriate column for each question below.

Has the ECIDS Leadership Team ...	Yes, Completed	Yes, But Would Like to Improve	Planning	No	Unsure	Notes
Reviewed the intended outcomes documented in the P-20W+ project plan?						
Identified which tasks and activities in the P-20W+ project plan include early childhood?						
Aligned any early childhood-related tasks and activities in the P-20W+ project plan to the ECIDS project plan?						
Designated representatives to provide feedback to the P-20W+ project team for each task related to early childhood?						

Next steps

Reflect on your self-assessment responses and identify steps that you can take to develop or strengthen your ECIDS Leadership Team's work related to project planning and management.

	Action Item	Assigned To	Due Date
1.			
2.			
3.			
4.			
5.			

Stakeholder Engagement

Identifying and selecting key stakeholders

Mark the appropriate column for each question below.

Has the ECIDS Leadership Team ...	Yes, Completed	Yes, But Would Like to Improve	Planning	No	Unsure	Notes
Developed a transparent process that describes how ECIDS stakeholders are identified, who invites them to participate, and how they are invited?						
Identified and documented stakeholders to be engaged from each agency, program, or organization?						
Developed a process for periodically reviewing and revising stakeholder representation as needed to ensure that all relevant individuals and groups are engaged, including those that are typically marginalized?						

Defining stakeholder roles and articulating expectations

Mark the appropriate column for each question below.

Has the ECIDS Leadership Team ...	Yes, Completed	Yes, But Would Like to Improve	Planning	No	Unsure	Notes
Developed a stakeholder engagement plan that includes roles and responsibilities of stakeholders, how stakeholders will be engaged, timelines for their involvement, a process for maintaining communications, and the human and financial resources necessary to implement the plan?						
Explained the stakeholder engagement plan to stakeholders?						
Developed a process for collecting evidence that the plan is being implemented?						
Developed a process for reviewing and revising the stakeholder engagement plan as needed over time?						
Designated a stakeholder engagement coordinator to lead the implementation and monitoring of the plan?						

Keeping stakeholders informed

Mark the appropriate column for each question below.

Has the ECIDS Leadership Team ...	Yes, Completed	Yes, But Would Like to Improve	Planning	No	Unsure	Notes
Communicated the information and shared relevant resources that stakeholders need in order to give input?						
Created and implemented a transparent process that engages stakeholders through multiple methods (e.g., face-to-face meetings, conference calls, emails, surveys) to gather, compile, and consider their input?						
Developed and implemented a process for notifying stakeholders of decisions made regarding the ECIDS and how their input was considered?						
Developed and implemented a plan for reviewing and revising procedures and methods for gathering, compiling, and considering input as needed over time?						

Coordinating with P-20W+ stakeholder groups

Mark the appropriate column for each question below.

Has the ECIDS Leadership Team ...	Yes, Completed	Yes, But Would Like to Improve	Planning	No	Unsure	Notes
Identified early childhood representatives to participate in P-20W+ SLDS planning, including attending meetings and informing decisions?						
Developed a process for keeping ECIDS stakeholders informed about the activities and actions of the P-20W+ initiative?						

Next steps

Reflect on your self-assessment responses and identify steps that you can take to develop or strengthen your ECIDS Leadership Team's work related to stakeholder engagement.

	Action Item	Assigned To	Due Date
1.			
2.			
3.			
4.			
5.			

Data Governance

Developing and documenting the data governance purpose

Mark the appropriate column for each question below.

Has the ECIDS Leadership Team ...	Yes, Completed	Yes, But Would Like to Improve	Planning	No	Unsure	Notes
Formally established data governance, defined its scope (i.e., what data will be governed and which agencies or organizations will be involved), and described the structure?						
Defined the purpose (e.g., mission, core principles, goals, objectives) of data governance, including how it and the data system support the state's policy and program goals?						

Developing and documenting a data governance structure

Mark the appropriate column for each question below.

Has the ECIDS Leadership Team ...	Yes, Completed	Yes, But Would Like to Improve	Planning	No	Unsure	Notes
Established a data governance structure that includes, at a minimum, a leadership-level group and an implementation-level group?						

Has the ECIDS Leadership Team ...	Yes, Completed	Yes, But Would Like to Improve	Planning	No	Unsure	Notes
Defined each data governance group's role, core responsibilities, and decisionmaking authority in support of the ECIDS purpose and vision?						
Defined each data governance group's decisionmaking process, including examples of the types of decisions that each group makes?						
Defined the relationships—including issue escalation and resolution—and communication mechanisms among the data governance groups?						
Documented and communicated the difference between the data governance groups and the stakeholder groups?						
Acquired signatures on the data governance policy or charter from the leaders of each agency contributing data to the ECIDS?						
Developed a process for reviewing and revising the data governance structure as needed over time?						

Developing and documenting data governance operations

Mark the appropriate column for each question below.

Has the ECIDS Leadership Team ...	Yes, Completed	Yes, But Would Like to Improve	Planning	No	Unsure	Notes
Documented and implemented the decisionmaking model (e.g., majority vote, two-thirds vote, consensus model) that also specifies any required threshold of representation for a decision to be made?						
Established and executed the frequency of convening for each data governance group?						
Established a process for identifying, prioritizing, escalating, and resolving issues that inhibit data quality and data use addressed at data governance meetings?						
Established a process for documenting data governance decisions and issue resolutions where all members can access them and communicating decisions to key stakeholders?						

Has the ECIDS Leadership Team ...	Yes, Completed	Yes, But Would Like to Improve	Planning	No	Unsure	Notes
Documented and implemented a policy and associated process for proposing, reviewing, approving, and inducting new entities into the ECIDS, including criteria for eligibility?						
Documented and implemented an onboarding process to familiarize new members with the data governance program, their responsibilities and expectations, and the data policies and processes?						
Established a process for reviewing and revising data governance documents and procedures as needed over time?						

Developing and documenting data policies and processes

Mark the appropriate column for each question below.

Has the ECIDS Leadership Team ...	Yes, Completed	Yes, But Would Like to Improve	Planning	No	Unsure	Notes
Documented and implemented a process for capturing, maintaining, and making available metadata, including a data collection calendar and a data dictionary?						

Has the ECIDS Leadership Team ...	Yes, Completed	Yes, But Would Like to Improve	Planning	No	Unsure	Notes
Documented and implemented a data access and use policy for ECIDS data?						
Documented and implemented a research or data use agenda that is used to prioritize the creation of data products and is part of the data request process?						
Documented and implemented a policy and associated process for submitting, reviewing, approving or denying, and fulfilling ECIDS data requests?						
Documented and implemented the source of record for data elements contributed by more than one source in the ECIDS?						
Documented and implemented for each source of data in the ECIDS the process to prepare and submit data to the ECIDS, as well as the process for changes to the data submitted?						
Documented and implemented a data destruction policy and associated process to ensure compliance by participating entities and external data requesters?						

Has the ECIDS Leadership Team ...	Yes, Completed	Yes, But Would Like to Improve	Planning	No	Unsure	Notes
Documented and implemented policies and processes to ensure that data are accurate, complete, timely, and relevant to stakeholder needs?						
Documented each contributing agency, organization, or program's process for preparing and submitting data to the ECIDS?						
Documented the process for adding new data elements to the ECIDS?						

Coordinating with P-20W+ data governance efforts

Mark the appropriate column for each question below.

Has the ECIDS Leadership Team ...	Yes, Completed	Yes, But Would Like to Improve	Planning	No	Unsure	Notes
Identified an early childhood representative with voting rights in the P-20W+ data governance structure?						
Developed a process for early childhood representatives in the P-20W+ governance structure to share governance decisions with the appropriate ECIDS data governance groups, and vice versa?						

Next steps

Reflect on your self-assessment responses and identify steps that you can take to develop or strengthen your ECIDS Leadership Team's work related to data governance.

	Action Item	Assigned To	Due Date
1.			
2.			
3.			
4.			
5.			

System Design

Aligning the ECIDS design with the state's long-term purpose and vision

Mark the appropriate column for each question below.

Has the ECIDS Leadership Team ...	Yes, Completed	Yes, But Would Like to Improve	Planning	No	Unsure	Notes
Developed a plan outlining methods for establishing business requirements based on stakeholder input to ensure that the ECIDS purpose and vision are being met?						
Developed and prioritized business requirements for the system?						
Shared information about the system design in accessible language with stakeholders who need to be aware of plans, decisions, or changes throughout the life cycle of the project?						

Reflecting the current and continued needs for the ECIDS in its design

Mark the appropriate column for each question below.

Has the ECIDS Leadership Team ...	Yes, Completed	Yes, But Would Like to Improve	Planning	No	Unsure	Notes
Selected a system design that can best address the system requirements?						

Has the ECIDS Leadership Team ...	Yes, Completed	Yes, But Would Like to Improve	Planning	No	Unsure	Notes
Reviewed agency-, organization-, or program-specific data retention policies and considered possible solutions for accessing data required for a longitudinal system?						
Evaluated relevant data elements from each contributing agency, organization, or program to ensure accurate data mapping and common definitions?						

Describing the ECIDS design to stakeholders

Mark the appropriate column for each question below.

Has the ECIDS Leadership Team ...	Yes, Completed	Yes, But Would Like to Improve	Planning	No	Unsure	Notes
Defined any system and subsystem architecture and provided a detailed list of system hardware?						
Created a system design diagram showing where ECIDS data come from, who owns the data, and how the data are integrated?						

Has the ECIDS Leadership Team ...	Yes, Completed	Yes, But Would Like to Improve	Planning	No	Unsure	Notes
Developed a communications plan so that team members can explain the ECIDS system design to intended audiences?						
Documented data file requirements and definitions related to the ECIDS data dictionary, database management systems, data stores, or other system tools?						
Documented an output layout that includes what users can expect in the form of reports, dashboards, query results, and other features?						
Created a process for reviewing and revising data system documentation as needed to ensure its accuracy as the system is further developed or enhanced over time?						

Establishing a unique identifier (UID) or other matching process

Mark the appropriate column for each question below.

Has the ECIDS Leadership Team ...	Yes, Completed	Yes, But Would Like to Improve	Planning	No	Unsure	Notes
Developed a process for creating unique identifiers (UIDs) for children, staff members, centers or sites, and programs, with input from the data governance group(s)?						
Developed a process for creating or managing UIDs as data are integrated, with input from the data governance group(s)?						
Identified a vendor or in-house staff members to implement and support the UID solution?						
Identified long-term goals and future needs for UIDs across multiple systems?						
Established a systems change management process addressing how to integrate future program UIDs into the ECIDS?						

Developing and implementing appropriate business rules for data access and privacy

Mark the appropriate column for each question below.

Has the ECIDS Leadership Team ...	Yes, Completed	Yes, But Would Like to Improve	Planning	No	Unsure	Notes
Identified appropriate levels of data access for various ECIDS users, with input from the data governance group(s)?						
Developed data access and security business rules within the terms of data sharing agreements, with input from the data governance group(s)?						
Established a test plan and/or change management process outlining key security features?						
Developed a communications and/or training plan to ensure that users comply with federal and state data privacy and confidentiality requirements?						
Implemented the exchange of data among participating agencies, organizations, or programs in accordance with data sharing agreement(s)?						
Established a process for reviewing and revising data access and security business rules as needed over time?						

Establishing an effective procurement process

Mark the appropriate column for each question below.

Has the ECIDS Leadership Team ...	Yes, Completed	Yes, But Would Like to Improve	Planning	No	Unsure	Notes
Evaluated all systems licensing agreements?						
Secured a vendor or decided to develop the ECIDS internally?						
Ensured that individuals needed to answer questions related to program-specific business rules are available on an ongoing basis?						

Allowing linkages to the P-20W+ SLDS

Mark the appropriate column for each question below.

Has the ECIDS Leadership Team ...	Yes, Completed	Yes, But Would Like to Improve	Planning	No	Unsure	Notes
Shared a list of ECIDS data elements with P-20W+ SLDS partners to determine commonalities?						
Designed a process to ensure that early childhood data can be linked to data from other sectors, such as K12, postsecondary, and workforce?						

Has the ECIDS Leadership Team ...	Yes, Completed	Yes, But Would Like to Improve	Planning	No	Unsure	Notes
Documented how the ECIDS technology platform will be compatible with the P-20W+ SLDS?						
Become familiar with the process and the team's role in addressing nontechnical challenges related to the P-20W+ SLDS, such as delays in data sharing agreements?						

Next steps

Reflect on your self-assessment responses and identify steps that you can take to develop or strengthen your ECIDS Leadership Team's work related to system design.

	Action Item	Assigned To	Due Date
1.			
2.			
3.			
4.			
5.			

Data Use

Identifying and prioritizing intended users

Mark the appropriate column for each question below.

Has the ECIDS Leadership Team ...	Yes, Completed	Yes, But Would Like to Improve	Planning	No	Unsure	Notes
Identified, documented, and prioritized the user roles that the ECIDS is designed to serve, based on the purpose and vision for the system?						
Gathered feedback from high-priority users to identify the critical questions and decisions that they want the ECIDS to answer?						
Articulated the differences between the ECIDS and early childhood components of the P-20W+ SLDS and how their purposes and uses relate to one another, if applicable?						

Identifying and developing useful data products

Mark the appropriate column for each question below.

Has the ECIDS Leadership Team ...	Yes, Completed	Yes, But Would Like to Improve	Planning	No	Unsure	Notes
Worked with stakeholders to identify the types of data needed and requirements for collecting and reporting them, including the level of detail and update schedule for data used in data products?						
Worked with stakeholders to identify and document the types of data products (e.g., static reports) that the ECIDS will produce?						
Established a process for vetting data products with users and revising those products based on their feedback?						
Ensured that all data products produced by the ECIDS align with the terms of data sharing agreements, with input from the data governance group(s)?						

Has the ECIDS Leadership Team ...	Yes, Completed	Yes, But Would Like to Improve	Planning	No	Unsure	Notes
Established a release process to ensure that ECIDS data products are (1) created in accordance with reporting standards to guarantee sufficient data privacy, quality, and consistency over time; and (2) are delivered to users in time to influence the decisions that they are intended to inform?						
Established design standards to ensure adequate accessibility and universal design?						

Providing appropriate user supports

Mark the appropriate column for each question below.

Has the ECIDS Leadership Team ...	Yes, Completed	Yes, But Would Like to Improve	Planning	No	Unsure	Notes
Created a training plan to coordinate the creation and dissemination of various user resources and supports (e.g., manuals, videos, in-person training, help desk support)?						
Designed a training plan that accounts for staff mobility and ongoing updates to the ECIDS data products?						

Has the ECIDS Leadership Team ...	Yes, Completed	Yes, But Would Like to Improve	Planning	No	Unsure	Notes
Developed and disseminated training resources on how to access and use the ECIDS (e.g., site navigation, key functions, and in-line user support documentation)?						
Developed and disseminated training resources on how to understand and use ECIDS information appropriately to inform decisions and improve services for young children and their families?						
Developed and disseminated training resources for users on how to ensure the privacy and security of ECIDS data?						
Developed data-informed decisionmaking tools and resources to help users incorporate ECIDS data into their day-to-day decisions and their organizations' continuous improvement planning?						

Ensuring that user needs are met over time

Mark the appropriate column for each question below.

Has the ECIDS Leadership Team ...	Yes, Completed	Yes, But Would Like to Improve	Planning	No	Unsure	Notes
Established an ongoing process for defining current and future data use needs?						
Established a process that involves stakeholders in prioritizing requirements for existing and new data products?						
Established a process for retiring data products that are underutilized or unneeded?						
Established a process for measuring the adoption and use of ECIDS data products through methods such as tracking logins, determining high-traffic time periods, and identifying the most-accessed resources and products?						

Coordinating user supports between the ECIDS and P-20W+ SLDS

Mark the appropriate column for each question below.

Has the ECIDS Leadership Team ...	Yes, Completed	Yes, But Would Like to Improve	Planning	No	Unsure	Notes
Identified and communicated to the P-20W+ data governance group(s) the priority early childhood user roles of the P-20W+ SLDS and the types of decisions or actions that each role will need to make with P-20W+ data?						
Informed the type of data products the P-20W+ SLDS will produce to serve early childhood users?						
Established a process for determining whether a prioritized data use need or request will be fulfilled by the ECIDS, by the P-20W+ SLDS, or not at all?						
Established a process for vetting draft data products related to early childhood from the P-20W+ SLDS with early childhood users?						
Established a process, including criteria, for prioritizing requested changes to early childhood-related P-20W+ data products and the creation of new products?						

Has the ECIDS Leadership Team ...	Yes, Completed	Yes, But Would Like to Improve	Planning	No	Unsure	Notes
Worked with the P-20W+ governance group(s) to coordinate an approach to supporting early childhood users of both the ECIDS and the P-20W+ SLDS?						
Developed a process for identifying and resolving potential discrepancies between ECIDS and SLDS data products?						
Ensured that training materials and user manuals explain key differences between the ECIDS and SLDS?						

Next steps

Reflect on your self-assessment responses and identify steps that you can take to develop or strengthen your ECIDS Leadership Team's work related to data use.

	Action Item	Assigned To	Due Date
1.			
2.			
3.			
4.			
5.			

Sustainability

Demonstrating value and quantifying use of the ECIDS

Mark the appropriate column for each question below.

Has the ECIDS Leadership Team ...	Yes, Completed	Yes, But Would Like to Improve	Planning	No	Unsure	Notes
Included all partner agencies and organizations in identifying ongoing system needs?						
Developed a process for tracking and analyzing the demand for and use of the ECIDS?						
Developed a process for responding to the changing needs of users (e.g., system enhancements, new training opportunities, the addition of new data elements)?						
Identified how to measure the value that the ECIDS brings to the state, such as through efficiencies, benefits, or return on investment?						

Identifying and securing resources to maintain and enhance the ECIDS

Mark the appropriate column for each question below.

Has the ECIDS Leadership Team ...	Yes, Completed	Yes, But Would Like to Improve	Planning	No	Unsure	Notes
Developed a 3- to 5-year cost plan for the current system and desired future enhancements, including integrating ECIDS data into the P-20W+ SLDS?						
Analyzed the human resources needed to support ongoing work on the ECIDS?						
Prepared a plan to solicit the needed funding to continue work on the ECIDS, including identifying new funding sources and approaching new partners?						
Acquired the staff needed to support the ECIDS?						
Cross-trained staff members enough to ensure that, where possible, roles and tasks do not depend on a single individual?						

Supporting ongoing state data initiatives across sectors

Mark the appropriate column for each question below.

Has the ECIDS Leadership Team ...	Yes, Completed	Yes, But Would Like to Improve	Planning	No	Unsure	Notes
Identified demand for ECIDS data in the P-20W+ SLDS?						
Defined the scope of the ECIDS data to be integrated into the P-20W+ SLDS?						
Tracked the usage of the ECIDS data in the P-20W+ SLDS?						

Next steps

Reflect on your self-assessment responses and identify steps that you can take to develop or strengthen your ECIDS Leadership Team's work related to sustainability.

	Action Item	Assigned To	Due Date
1.			
2.			
3.			
4.			
5.			