Using Integrated Data to Answer Critical Policy Questions: Lessons Learned in Three States

November 19, 2018

The Early Childhood DATA Collaborative

Overview

Presenters:

- Carlise King, Executive Director, Early Childhood Data Collaborative
- Stephanie Hogenson, Outreach Director, Children's Defense Fund of Minnesota
- Ben Walker, Project Manager, Mississippi State University's Social Science Research Center
- Leanne Barrett, Senior Policy Analyst, Rhode Island KIDS COUNT

Facilitator:

- Elizabeth Jordan, Director of Policy Communications, Child Trends

Agenda

- Overview of demonstration projects
- Findings from the report
- Successes and challenges in Rhode Island, Mississippi, and Minnesota
- Q&A

Early Childhood Data Collaborative
www.ecedata.org

The **Early Childhood Data Collaborative** (ECDC) promotes policies and practices to support policymakers' development and use of coordinated state early care and education (ECE) data systems.
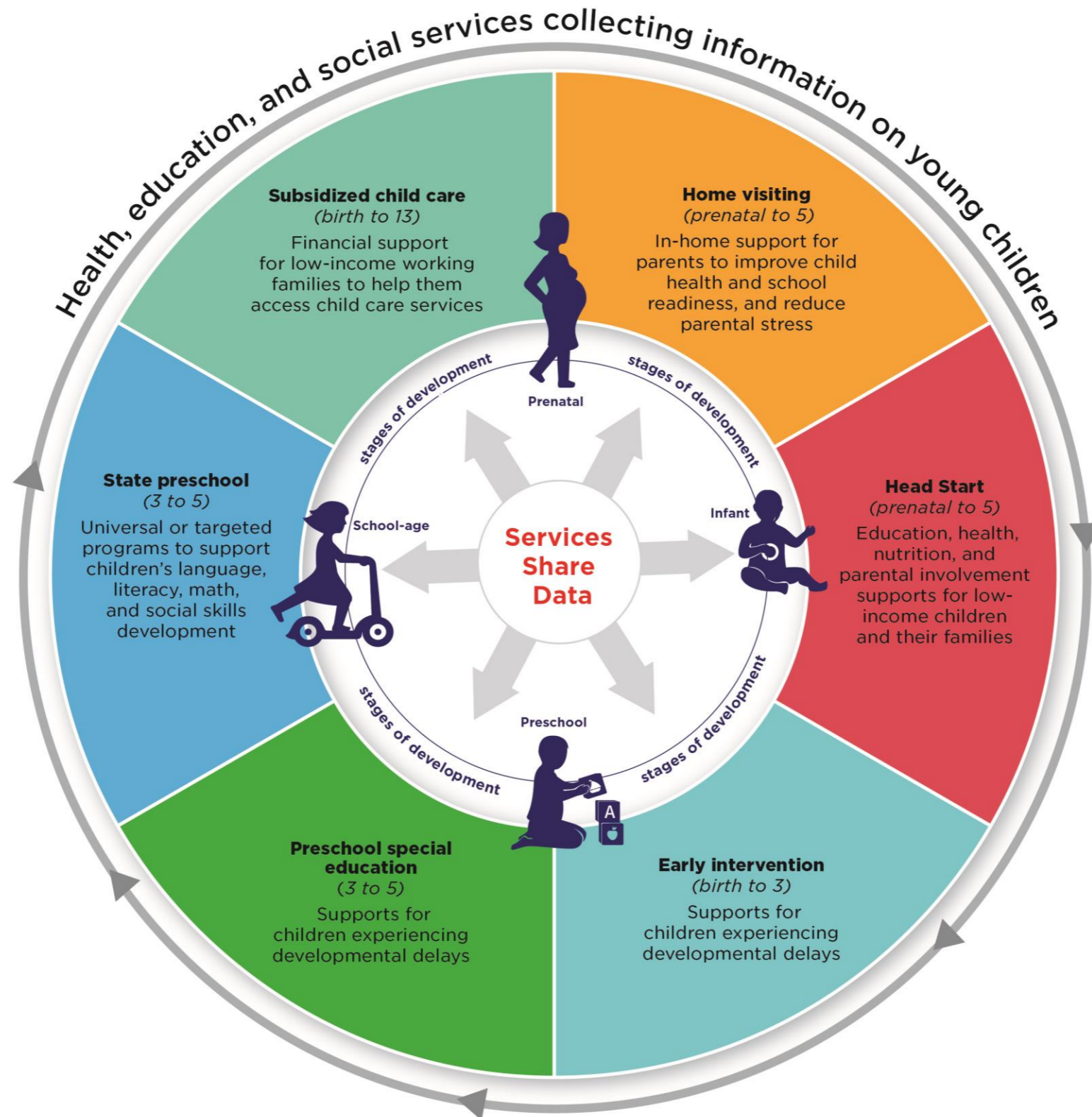
| Effective use of data systems will help policymakers improve:	Equity policy concerns:
• Access to high-quality programs • Program quality • ECE workforce quality • Child outcomes	• Equal access to high quality early childhood programs • Preschool expulsion • Equity for early learning professionals

Integrating Early Childhood Data

2018 Early Childhood Data Systems Survey

**Number of States Linking
Child, Workforce, and Program Data**
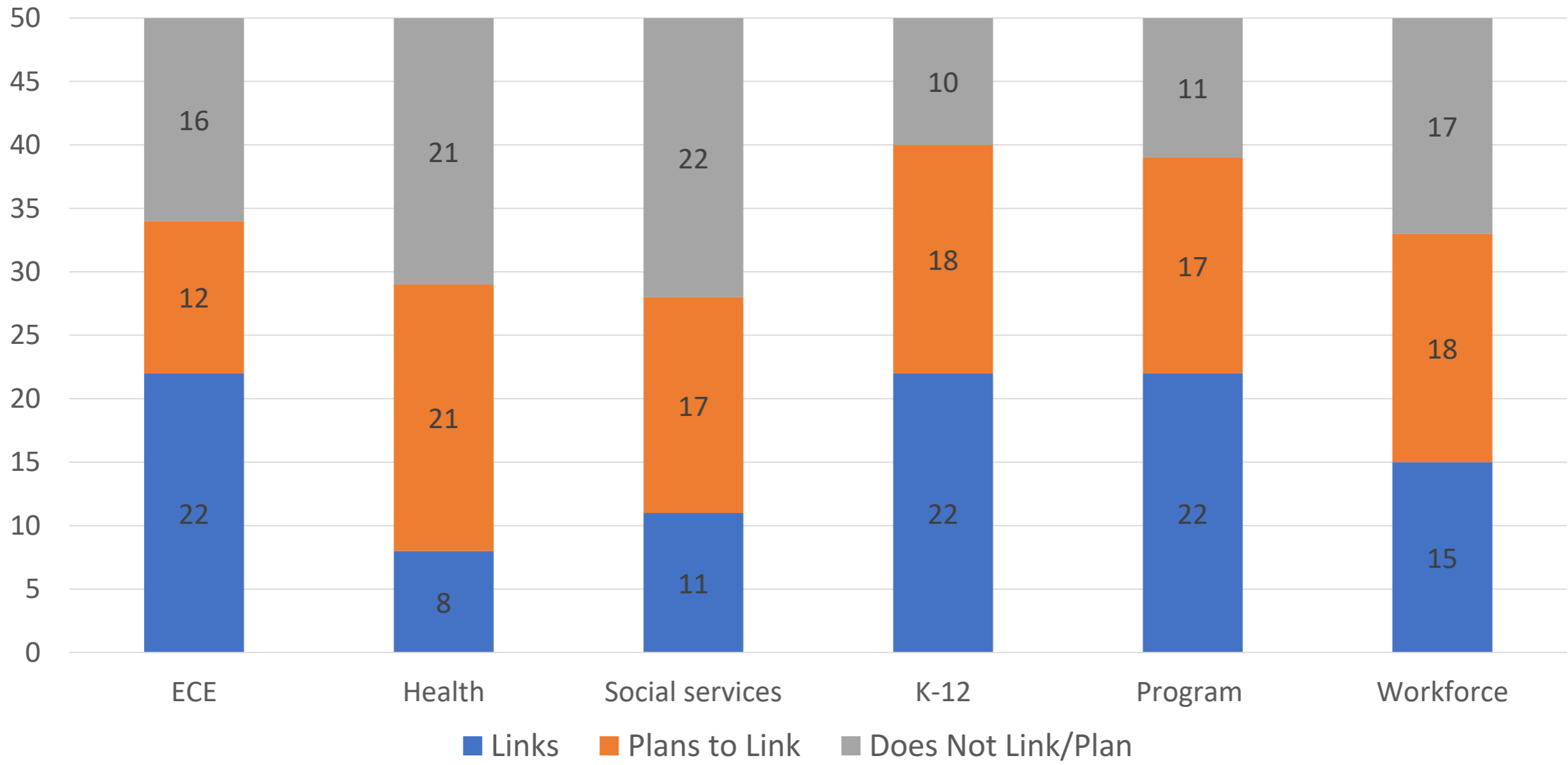
ECIDS Demonstration Project: Goals

1. To **demonstrate the types of policy questions** that can be answered when agencies share data about the families they serve.

2. To **understand any barriers** to accessing and using these types of data for states that have systems in place and capacity to provide integrated data for research purposes.

3. To **share the stories** of these states' experiences to promote changes needed to develop integrated data system, which link early childhood data with other systems (i.e., K-12, housing or financial assistance programs, or parental employment data).

ECIDS Demonstration Project Overview

- Identified research questions related to current policy conversations that could only be answered through integrating early care and education data with data from other public systems:

Rhode Island (child welfare)
Minnesota (public assistance (TANF/SNAP))
Mississippi (Medicaid)

- Each state is at a different stage of their ECE integration efforts

# Findings from the Demonstration Projects

Key Findings

1. This work is groundbreaking for states and comes with a myriad of challenges:
   - Setting up data-sharing agreements, building stakeholder interest, translating data for policy audiences.

2. Strong partnerships are key in overcoming those challenges
   - Agency leaders, the governor, other advocates

3. Even for the state with the most advanced early childhood integrated data system (ECIDS), there is still much work to be done.
   - Adding in new data sources, building capacity, sharing the data

Recommendations

1. Include all the systems that touch young children's lives: health, family, education, public assistance

2. Convene leaders across systems and promote brainstorming, goal setting, and discussion

3. Invest in a data governance structure to guide the work and drive it into the future

4. Build the time and skills for public agencies to support data integration

5. Use the data regularly in programmatic and policy work, sharing successes with others in the field

# Minnesota: Stephanie Hogenson Children's Defense Fund of Minnesota
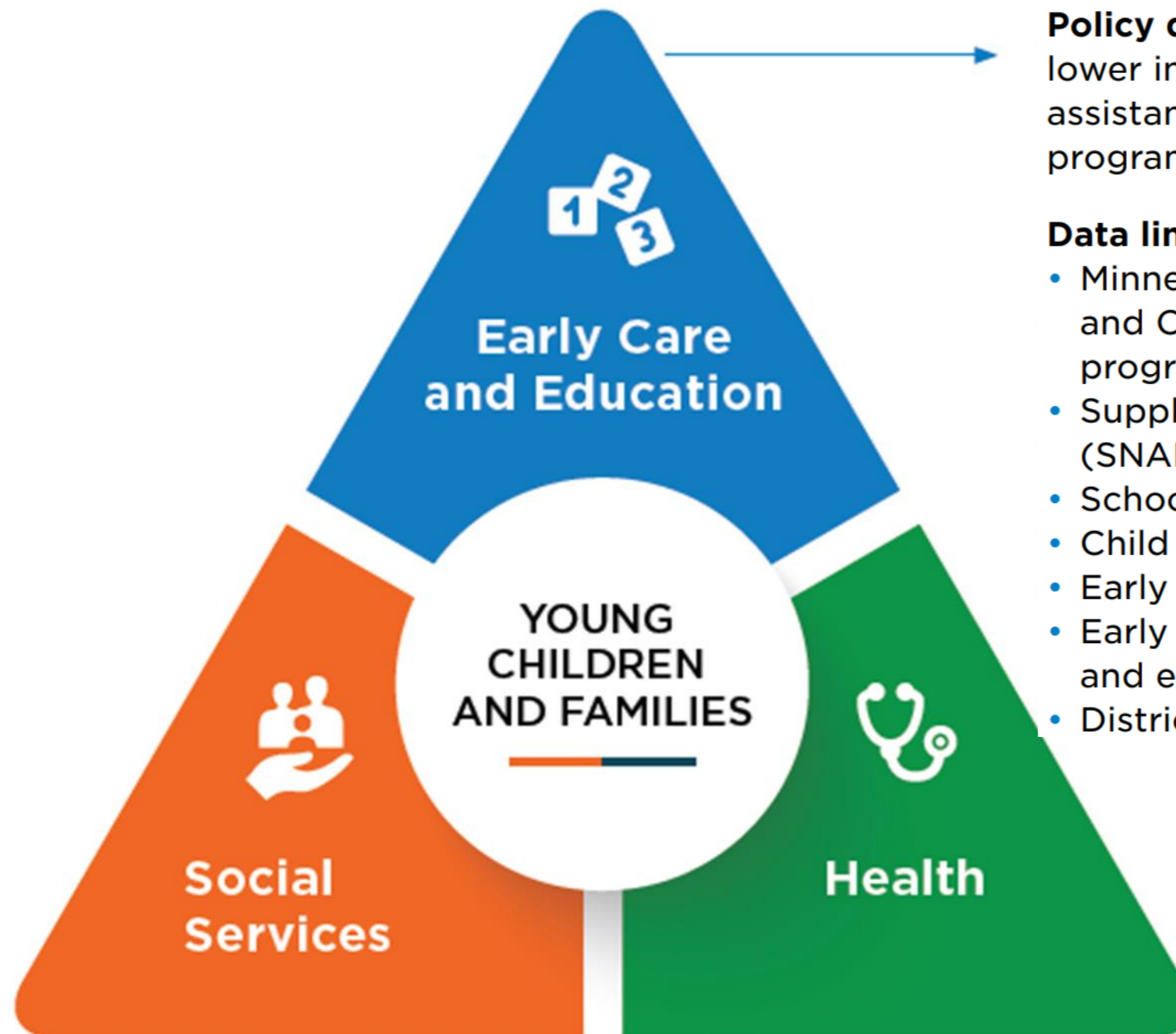
Minnesota

Policy question: Do children of color and lower income children participating in public assistance programs have equal access to ECE programs?

Data linkages needed:
- Minnesota Family Investment Program (MFIP) and Cash assistance (Minnesota's TANF program)
- Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)
- School Meal Program
- Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP)
- Early Childhood Family Education (ECFE)
- Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE) and early intervention
- District preschool

Mississippi: Ben Walker, Mississippi State University's Social Science Research Center
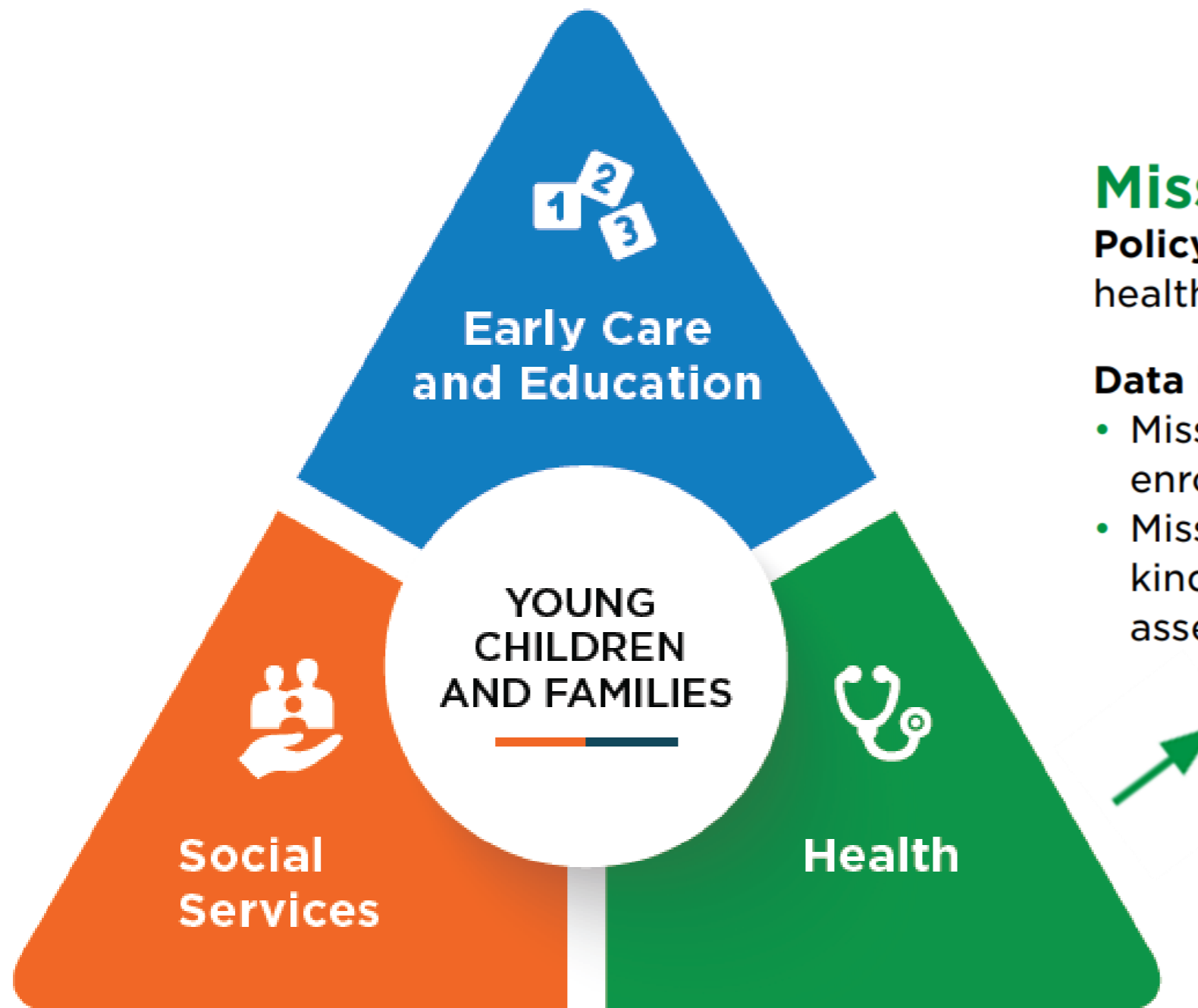
Mississippi

Policy question: How does early childhood health relate to kindergarten readiness?

Data linkages needed:
- Mississippi Division of Medicaid/Medicaid enrollment and EPSDT
- Mississippi Department of Education, kindergarten and kindergarten readiness assessments

Rhode Island: Leanne Barrett
Rhode Island KIDS COUNT

The Early Childhood DATA Collaborative

Rhode Island

Policy question: How many young children involved in the child welfare system participate in high-quality ECE?

Data linkages needed:

- Family home visiting
- Public pre-K and preschool special education
- Child care assistance program
- Early intervention
- Early Head Start and Head Start
- KIDSNET health data

Early Care and Education

Social Services

Health

YOUNG CHILDREN AND FAMILIES
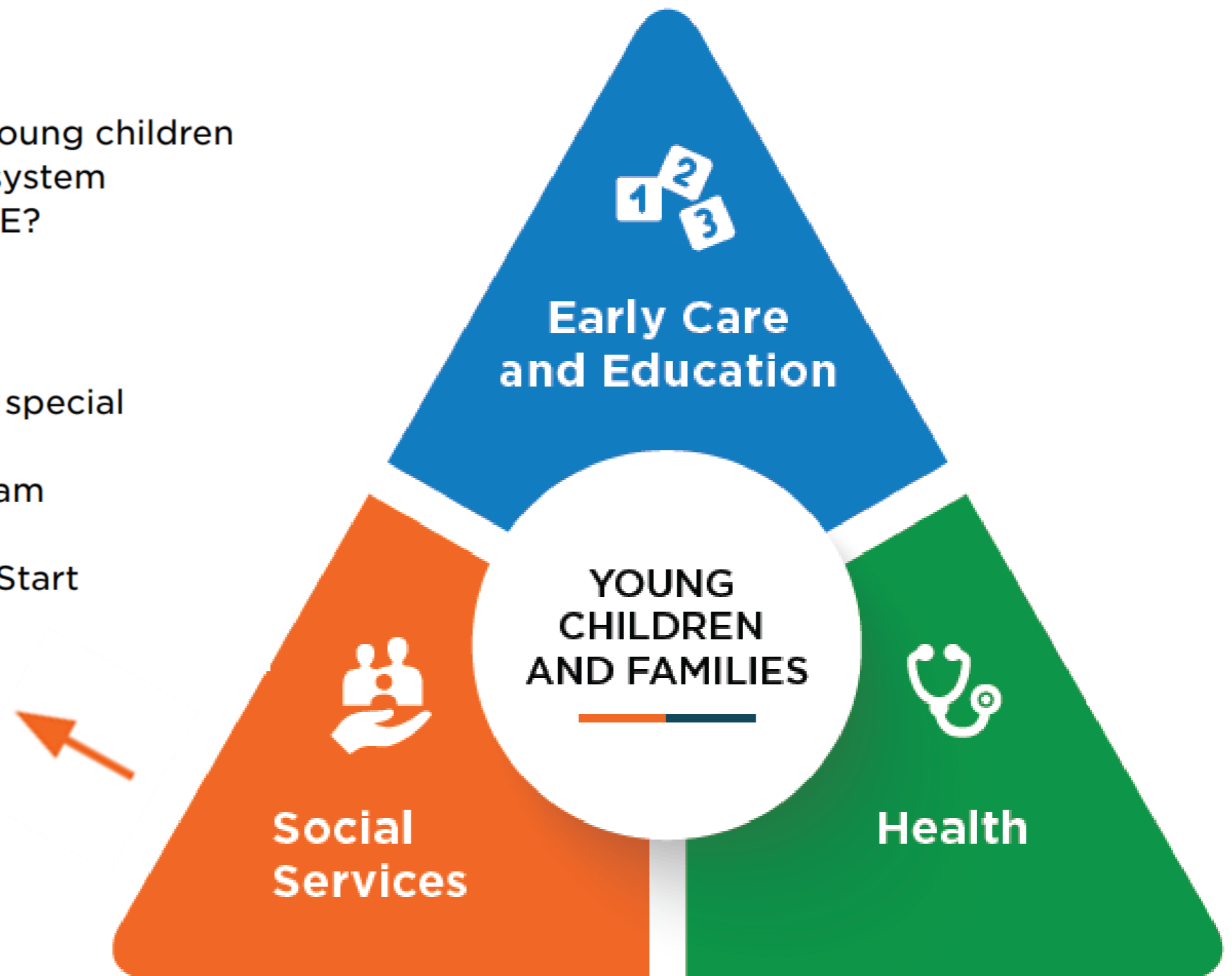
Minnesota: Successes

Evaluating Early Childhood Program Access:

An Analysis of Participation Data for Lower Income Children, Children of Color and American Indian Children from the Minnesota Early Childhood Longitudinal Data System

Children's Defense Fund
MINNESOTA
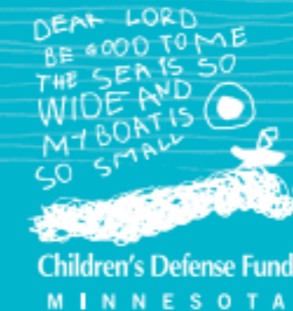
The potential for a future productive workforce, prosperous economy and thriving communities in Minnesota is being formed right now in the experiences and opportunities provided to the state's youngest citizens. During the first years of life a child's brain goes through its most rapid development with 700 new neural connections occurring every second.[1] Those neural connections are the building blocks of the brain, which is constructed from the bottom up starting with simple skills that provide the foundation for more advanced skills later in life. That's why providing a stable foundation for brain development in a child's earliest years through strong caregiver relationships, early education for all young children and early intervention when development is disrupted by adverse experiences (such as poverty, hunger, exposure to violence, or parental mental illness or addiction) is essential to ensuring positive outcomes later in a child's life. Investments in early education and intervention programs not only support future learning and development, but also reduce the need for remedial services like Special Education, justice systems, and public work support programs, and can result in societal returns on investment of up to $16 for every $1 spent on prevention and intervention.[2] This is the best possible investment communities can make in their children's futures. The state's future workforce and economy depends on how we treat children now because today's preschoolers are tomorrow's workforce.

adult-child interactions. These programs can tip the scales toward positive development for children by preparing them socially and academically for school, providing emotional support to build resilience, and including cultural support to develop a secure identity. Evidence has shown that children at greater risk of developmental concerns, like children of color, American Indian children, and lower income children, experience even greater positive effects from participation in rigorously evaluated early childhood programs that incorporate these high-quality components. Gains include improved school readiness, increased reading comprehension by third grade,[3] improved health outcomes,[4] and supported development of executive functioning skills like self-control, memory, leadership skills and mental flexibility.[5]

The benefits of early childhood programs have become widely known and recognized through public investment at the national, state and local levels. In recent years, Minnesota has invested millions of dollars into programs like Early Learning Scholarships, School Readiness, Voluntary Pre-K, Head Start and the Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP) because lawmakers, parents and citizens understand the long-term return on investments of these programs. However, it has become increasingly difficult to track data on children's early childhood program participation, particularly across programs, and long-term outcomes based on that participation primarily because early childhood programs are administered by different state agencies, have various levels and sources of funding, and track participation

Mississippi: Successes

MISSISSIPPI kids count

STARTING EARLY: Developmental Screenings Can Increase a Child's Potential

OCTOBER 2018

Health is a crucial component of childhood academic success. Healthier students consistently perform better on standardized assessments and have lower rates of absenteeism[1], while asthma, vision problems, obesity, and other chronic conditions can prevent children from attending and participating in school. Health is also closely linked to poverty. Family income is one of several factors linked to poor child health outcomes[2]. Children who grow up in economically-stressed environments have higher rates of chronic illness, poorer nutrition, and slower language development [3,4]. Early childhood screening provides an important opportunity to close the achievement gap by identifying developmental delays and health problems during the child's most developmentally critical period.

In Mississippi, the effects of early screening might be particularly potent, as young children face persistent poverty and health challenges: 34.6% of children under age 5 live in poverty and 11.4% of infants are born with low birthweight, both the highest rates in the nation[5]. Over half of Mississippi's children (51%) are enrolled in Medicaid or the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP), indicating these programs play a crucial role in the health of Mississippi's children[6]. Rates of public coverage are particularly high for Mississippi's youngest children. Given the connection between health and education and the significant number of children in Mississippi covered by public insurance, preventative care programs such as Medicaid's Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnostic, and Treatment (EPSDT) Program have the potential to not only improve child health, but to improve education outcomes and close the achievement gap for Mississippi's children.

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MISSISSIPPI CHILDREN 0-18 YEARS OF AGE BY TYPE OF COVERAGE, 2015
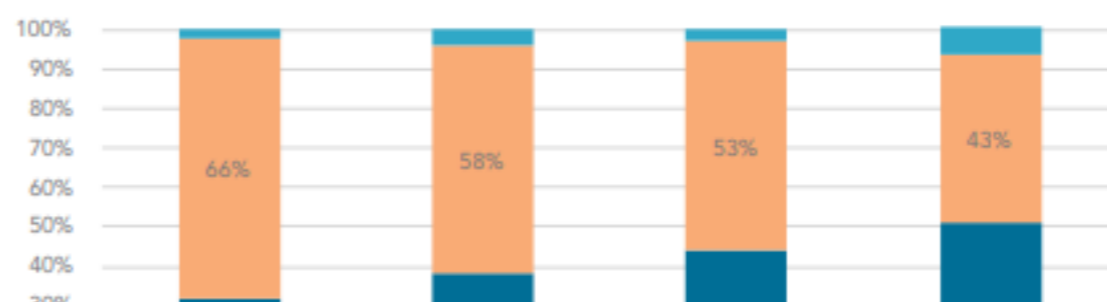
Rhode Island: Successes

Rhode Island KIDS COUNT   2018

EARLY LEARNING POLICY BRIEF

Promoting early learning and development Birth to 8

Focus on Integrated Early Care and Education Data

Decades of research show that when children participate in high-quality programs designed to improve early learning and development, they do better in school and in life. In every state there is a diverse array of programs designed to support the healthy development of young children. These include family home visiting, child care, Early Head Start/Head Start, State Pre-K, Early Intervention, and preschool special education. Programs vary in quality and intensity of services, training and qualifications of staff, and focus of services to improve individual child outcomes (e.g. early language and literacy, social emotional skills, etc.) and/or family outcomes (e.g. economic security, parenting skills, etc.).[1]

Because early care and education programs are funded and managed separately and are sometimes layered on top of each other to meet the needs of children and families (e.g. a child may be participating in Head Start, child care, and preschool special education at the same time), states are developing systems to integrate information across programs. When program data is shared and integrated, program administrators and policymakers can learn which children are

getting the services they need at the right time, without gaps, and with the right dosage and duration to be ready for school — and which children are falling through the cracks.[2]

Development and use of integrated state early care and education data,

INTEGRATED EARLY CARE AND EDUCATION PROGRAM DATA CAN SUPPORT CHILDREN'S DEVELOPMENT & LEARNING

Child Care Assistance Program

Family Home

Minnesota:
Strategies for Continued Work

Continue partnerships

- Continue to build on the stronger relationship between CDF-MN and MN Department of Education

Promote the Early Childhood Longitudinal Data System (ECLDS)

- Encourage stakeholders to tap into the ECLDS and incorporate it into their work

Advocate for additional data

- Encourage expansion of the ECLDS to include additional elements, such as Head Start participation data

Mississippi:
Strategies for Continued Work

Continue to monitor progress over time

- Use this analysis as a baseline to understand whether and how outcomes improve

Be flexible

- Consider carefully the scope of administrative data availability when developing research questions

Support data access

- Work on policies that build agency staff capacity (time and skills) to support the use of integrated data

Rhode Island:
Strategies for Continued Work

Establish an ECE data governance process

- Design process for housing and managing state's data systems

- Assign roles and responsibilities among state agency leaders

- Guide efforts to strengthen coordination, funding, security, and appropriate data use

Questions?
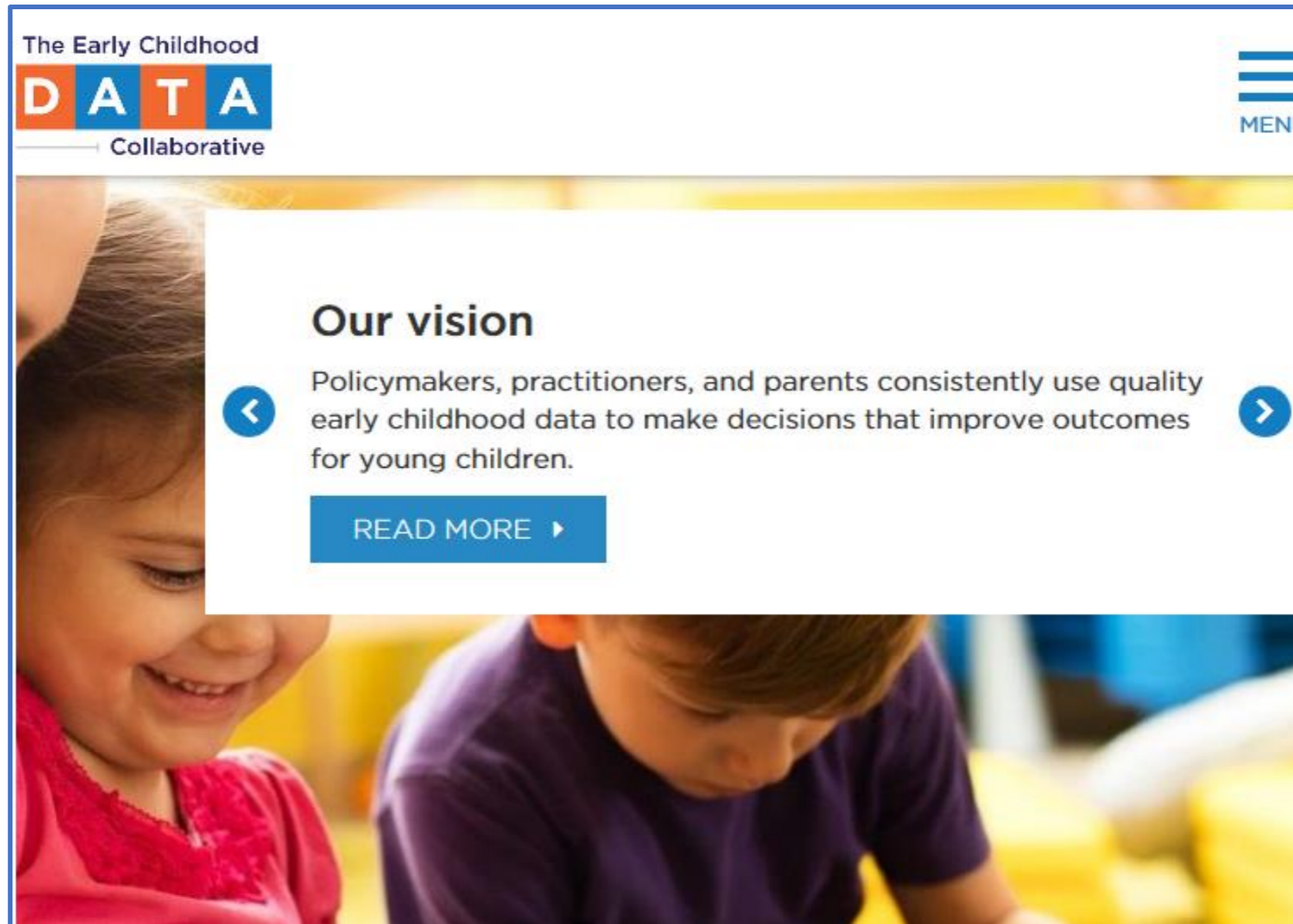
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THANK YOU!