

System Transformation for Equitable Preschools (STEP Forward with Data) Framework

Moving Toward an Equitable Preschool System

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Introduction

The System Transformation for Equitable Preschools (STEP Forward with Data) Framework was developed to help preschool systems leaders understand where in the preschool system there may be inequities in how children and families are accessing, being supported by, and experiencing the system. The Framework offers preschool systems leaders a pathway to answer common questions about preschool using data in a consistent, equity-centered way.

The Framework was developed over two years by a consortium of experts using an iterative process and informed by different perspectives, including from expert networks, state preschool systems leaders, and technical assistance (TA) providers. Key principles grounded the development of the Framework, including its alignment with broader early childhood systems and the fact that it is asset-driven rather than deficit-focused, applicable for all preschool structures, and user-centered and actionable. The Framework emphasizes the need to focus on populations that have typically experienced inequities in the preschool system, including:

- Black, Hispanic/Latino, or Indigenous people
- People who are immigrants
- People experiencing poverty
- People who are multilingual learners
- People with disabilities
- People with intersectional needs and identities

For more details on the development of the Framework, see the [Appendix](#).

Product overview

The Framework document first establishes the rationale for developing a unifying data framework in preschool. Second, it details the goals of the Framework, including guidance for preparing to use it. The Framework then provides a list of essential questions which preschool systems leaders may want to answer about their preschool system, organized around six steps in the preschool system. For each step, we describe how children, families, and workforce members experience the system and establish the relevant questions that could be answered at each step. These essential questions are broken down into recommended metrics that can help answer the question using data, which also include suggested ways to calculate the metric, the level at which to collect the data, and example data sources. Finally, we include a glossary that defines terms used throughout the Framework.

Background

Despite policy efforts to increase access to [high-quality](#) preschool and prioritize enrollment for those who have been marginalized, inequities persist.¹ According to the National Institute for Early Education Research's (NIEER) most recent State of Preschool Report, enrollment in state-funded preschool has more than doubled from 695,383 in 2002 to 1,526,116 children in 2022.² However, per child spending is relatively unchanged and supply still falls short of need, with only 6.4 percent of 3-year-old children and 32 percent of 4-year-old children enrolled. Analysis of workforce policies has found that preschool professionals earn, on average, less than their K-12 counterparts and have less agency to improve working conditions.³

To combat disparities in workforce policies, quality, and access—which can be exacerbated by limited funding and supply of care—policymakers need comprehensive data on children and families' access to, experiences with, and outcomes in preschool.

The preschool landscape is complex

The preschool system is complex, which makes it difficult to use and apply preschool data in a consistent and systemic way. Publicly available preschool programs are offered in a host of settings, administered differently, funded in various ways, and may have different standards from one program to the next. These factors impact the type of data that are collected and thus the type of decisions that can be made across the system.

- **Preschool is offered in a variety of settings.** Programs can be delivered in schools, centers, homes, or community organizations (e.g., church). Mixed delivery systems offer preschool slots across settings, providing children and families with maximum flexibility, and allow for different settings to offer care.
- **Preschool programs can be administered at the federal, state, or**

Key Terms

Children: 3- or 4-year-olds not yet enrolled in kindergarten.

Families: Individuals who live with or care for children.

Workforce members: Individuals who work within the preschool system at all levels and across all roles, including support staff, teachers, family child care providers, child care owners or directors, or school administrators. (*Note: This term is used when referring to the whole group of individuals, whereas specific roles are called out when relevant to only certain roles.*)

Focal populations: Populations of children, families, and workforce members that have been shown in history and research to experience inequities in the preschool system. These populations should be identified by preschool system leaders, in partnership with their community.

Preschool: Early learning programs offered to 3- and 4-year-olds. In this Framework, we focus on those that are local, state, Tribal, or federally funded, including through state-funded, locally funded, and Tribal preschool and Head Start programs.

Preschool program: A type of preschool with a shared approach or curriculum, set of standards or regulations, funding stream, and/or administration. For example, families across sites know that Head Start is a free preschool option that also serves the family, whereas a citywide preschool program may share funding and administrative leads but could use differently approaches within each site.

Preschool site: The location at which a child receives preschool, including center-, school-, home-, or faith-based settings.

Preschool system: The set of preschool programs that are overseen by a common set of leaders. The preschool programs in the system could be one type of program (e.g., state public pre-K) or multiple programs (e.g., Head Start, subsidized family child care, and state-funded pre-K).

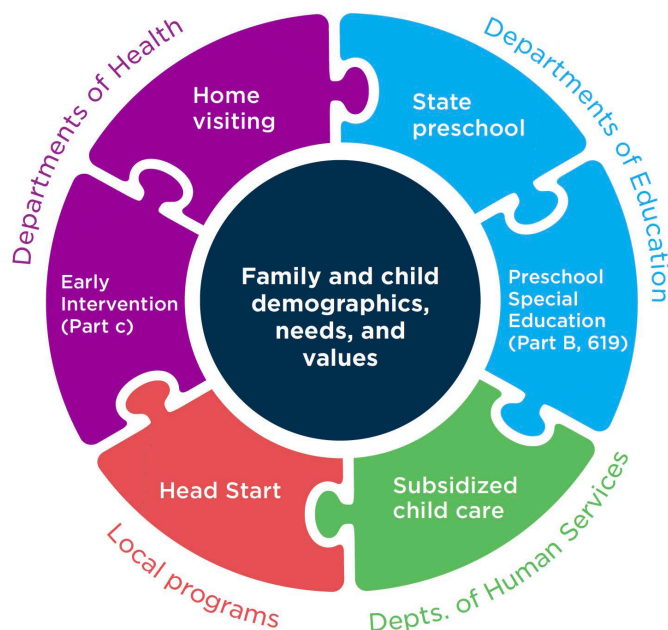
Preschool systems leaders: Those who oversee preschool programs and who can make systems-level decisions about how to improve preschool programs. Leaders may include state public pre-K administrators, Head Start State Collaboration Office directors, federal Head Start administrators, Head Start grantees overseeing large or multi-site preschool programs, Tribal early childhood administrators, state officers or administrators managing systems-wide early childhood initiatives, and city- or county-wide public preschool administrators.

local level. Federal preschool programs include Head Start,⁴ which offers comprehensive preschool services for children ages 3 to 5 whose household income meets federal guidelines. Some children attend preschool by receiving a child care or early education subsidy, often funded through the Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF).⁵ These federal dollars are provided to states, which determine how to use funds. State-funded preschool programs (sometimes known as state-funded public pre-K) typically serve 3- and 4-year-olds, with some states offering universal preschool⁶ for children that meet age and/or income eligibility requirements. At the local level, Tribal, municipal, or community organizations administer preschool in different settings and hours according to families' needs.

- **Programs in the preschool system may be funded in a variety of ways**, both publicly and privately. Public programs often receive funds from federal and state agencies or philanthropic donors to offset the cost of care for families with minimal costs (if any) to families. Often, public preschool programs use braided or blended funding,⁷ which combines funding from multiple state or federal sources to cover costs. In privately funded programs, families typically pay out-of-pocket.
- **Preschool programs have different standards, requirements, and eligibility criteria.** Preschool programs vary by age served (e.g., only 3-year-olds, only 4-year-olds, or mixed-aged classrooms), hours and days of operation, and quality standards. Programs also differ by eligibility criteria required for children to participate, such as income level requirements. These different standards and requirements also impact workforce members. Depending on the program, workforce members may be required to have different professional or educational experiences, are expected to conduct different activities in the learning setting and have different earning potentials.

The preschool landscape is also intricately connected to other systems that serve children during their early years. It is important to consider how preschool fits within the broader early childhood system, as children and families interact with multiple programs and services within the early childhood landscape. Figure 1 shows how preschool is embedded within larger early childhood system.

Figure 1. Preschool within the early childhood system



Source: King, C. (2022). Using Integrated Data to Increase Equitable Access to Early Childhood Programs. Early Childhood Data Collaborative at Child Trends accessible at <https://www.childtrends.org/publications/using-integrated-data-to-increase-equitable-access-to-early-childhood-programs>.

Access to preschool is not equitable

On top of the complex nature of preschool, families who experience systemic discrimination and marginalization in broader settings may also face such inequities in preschool. Children and family members often have multiple identities that intersect in ways that are supportive of children's learning, cultural traditions, rich language development, and resilience. Yet having intersecting marginalized identities (intersectional needs or identities) can compound and exacerbate challenges related to access and experiences in preschool.⁸ For example, Black children are often expelled at higher rates than children of other races or ethnicities, and Black children with a disability are even more likely to be expelled at higher rates.⁹

Access to preschool means that, with [reasonable effort](#) and [affordability](#), families can enroll their child in a preschool that supports the child's development and meets the family's needs, based on a definition adapted from [Defining and Measuring Access to High-Quality Early Care and Education \(ECE\): A Guidebook for Policymakers and Researchers](#).

Current inequities are also shaped by policies and practices—many in place decades ago—that sought to create disparities in access to early care and education. For example, day nurseries and mothers' pensions were created to support working mothers in an increasingly industrialized society. However, they often denied access and benefits to Black families, which necessitated development of care options by and for Black communities.¹⁰ Additionally, federal policies and early care practices geared toward Native and Indigenous communities sought to assimilate Tribal communities to White society.¹¹

Further, the workforce serving young children continues to face its own inequities within the preschool system. For instance, individuals who experience systemic discrimination and marginalization are often overrepresented in the preschool workforce yet underrepresented in higher leadership roles within the preschool system. These individuals are undercompensated for their work, which contributes to inequitable experiences for children and families.^{12,13,14}

Despite decades-long efforts to expand the supply of high-quality preschool, address wide-ranging levels of quality, and prioritize enrollment for groups marginalized by systemic inequities and racism, inequitable access continues. Systems leaders must understand the experiences of children, families, and workforce members to build equitable preschool systems.

Data can increase equity for children, families, and workforce members

Preschool systems leaders can pull on many levers to build equitable preschool systems: policies, regulations, reporting, monitoring and continuous quality improvement, [funding mechanisms](#), and—most relevant to the Framework—data systems. Data is a critical lever in equity efforts, helping systems leaders understand existing areas of inequity, drive policies and practice, and monitor their progress.

When preschool data are collected and used in a coordinated way, leaders can:

- Understand which populations of children and families are served in preschool programs
- Understand more about the workforce members who are serving preschool-aged children
- Identify needs and gaps to better serve children, families, and workforce members
- Track and monitor progress toward goals when data are collected over time

However, due to the complex and often fragmented preschool system, **data across and within preschool programs are often siloed**. For instance, when preschool programs are administered by different agencies, each agency may collect data on children, families, and the workforce separately. Many times, these data are not connected with each other, unless there is an integrated data system within the state or community.

Further, many **preschool systems do not have access to all types of data needed** to understand comprehensive lessons about children across a specific geography (e.g., within a city or across the state). In a survey conducted by ECDC to understand more about the types of data systems leaders can use to inform systems-level decisions, findings showed that states were more likely to have access to child- and program-level data than data about their preschool workforce or systems. The survey also found that states encountered challenges with data quality, along with barriers to linking and sharing data—each of which inhibit their ability to examine data within the larger preschool system.¹⁵

About the STEP Forward with Data Framework

A unifying data framework can bring the field together around data needed to answer common questions about preschool. A data framework can also help leaders use data to answer questions in a consistent, equity-centered way. It can also bolster ongoing efforts to ensure that all children experience the benefits of preschool and that all families and workforce members are supported.

Purpose of the Framework

The purpose of the Framework is to help preschool systems leaders understand where in the preschool system there may be inequities in how children and families are accessing, being supported by, and experiencing the system. The Framework offers preschool systems leaders a pathway to leverage data—both quantitative and qualitative—to answer questions about improvements to their preschool systems. While privately funded preschool programs are not the primary focus, the Framework components are applicable for use in these settings as well as in the broader early childhood system.

The Framework is designed specifically for **preschool systems leaders**—those who can influence decisions or establish a policy for more than one preschool program or site. Other individuals are helpful secondary audiences who can promote the use of the Framework in their own equity and systems improvement work, such as advocates, state and federal legislators, funders, researchers, families, members of the early care and education workforce, and community partners.

The Framework serves as a guide for preschool systems leaders to:

- Answer key questions about their preschool systems, with a specific focus on experiences of focal populations
- Establish standardized and consistent ways to collect and use data that address issues related to equity in preschool
- Assess data gaps and integration needs to support the use of preschool data
- Identify clear action steps for creating a more equitable preschool system based on the data they collect and the questions they answer

Outcomes of the Framework

Preschool systems leaders who use the Framework can expect to:

- **Identify areas of progress and growth in the preschool system and understand where they can make changes to make their system more equitable over time.** The Framework is not meant to serve as a goal post by which preschool systems leaders determine whether their system is or is not equitable.
- **Use data that can inform actionable changes to policies and practices to address identified areas of progress or growth.** The Framework is designed to promote data use and build data capacity that can preschool systems leaders make actionable changes.

- **Track the outcomes and progress toward system-level goals over time.** The Framework is designed to promote continuous quality improvement through measuring and tracking progress. It is not to be used for punitive purposes such as determinations around funding specific programs.
- **Identify disparities between populations.** The Framework should not be used to norm against a specific population, but instead should be used to explore what may be contributing to existing differences and how to ensure that children—regardless of their identities—are receiving a [high-quality](#) preschool experience.

Because data is just one tool that should be used to make a system more equitable, an important next step is to explore the root causes for disparities seen in the data. Preschool systems leaders will need to work with others in their community to understand what is causing inequities and learn how best to address and resolve them.

Equity approach in the Framework

The Framework centers equity within the preschool system, which aligns with how it was developed by centering equity as both a process and an outcome. Within the preschool system, equitable *outcomes* happen when children and families’ access to, experiences within, and impacts from preschool do not vary based on their identities. Equitable *processes* are those whereby programmatic preschool policies and practices are shaped to support equitable outcomes and by those who have been most impacted by inequities.

Equity within the context of the Framework centers the experiences of those whom the data represents (i.e., children, families, and workforce members from identified focal populations important to preschool systems leaders). When preschool systems leaders seek improvements for children and families who have faced historic or systemic inequities, these system-level changes help all children and families access preschool programs that meet their needs.

Guidance for using the Framework

The Framework should serve as a resource than an extensive data project. Preschool systems leaders can use the Framework in any way that meets their needs and matches their current capacity to collect, use, and analyze preschool data. They may choose to tackle only pieces of the Framework—for example, one question, or one step at a time, or any combination of approaches. Additionally, the Framework could be used in conjunction with broader frameworks, such as the [Education to Workforce \(E-W\) Indicator Framework](#)^a to understand the connection between preschool and K-12 systems to identify places along any system that may be contributing to disparities in experiences.

We recommend, therefore, that preschool systems leaders conduct five activities at minimum to determine how they can best engage with the Framework:

1. **Define the preschool system.** The preschool system should be the realm over which a preschool systems leader has the influence to make decisions or recommend improvements to ensure equitable access to high-quality preschool learning experiences across multiple preschool programs. For some, the preschool system could include solely state-funded pre-K programs. For others, it could include any publicly funded preschool setting. For others still, the preschool system could include all programs offered at the city level, whereas others may be overseeing a system at the state level. Defining the preschool system also illuminates who is considered a preschool systems leader, who has the authority to make final decisions, who can contribute to decisions made, or who is important to coordinate and collaborate with.

^a The [Education to Workforce \(E-W\) Indicator Framework](#) identifies indicators to address disparities from preschool to workforce, inclusive of K-12 systems. The E-W Framework outlines systems conditions that support institutional or systemic environments, policies, and practices that help or hinder the ability to achieve positive outcomes.

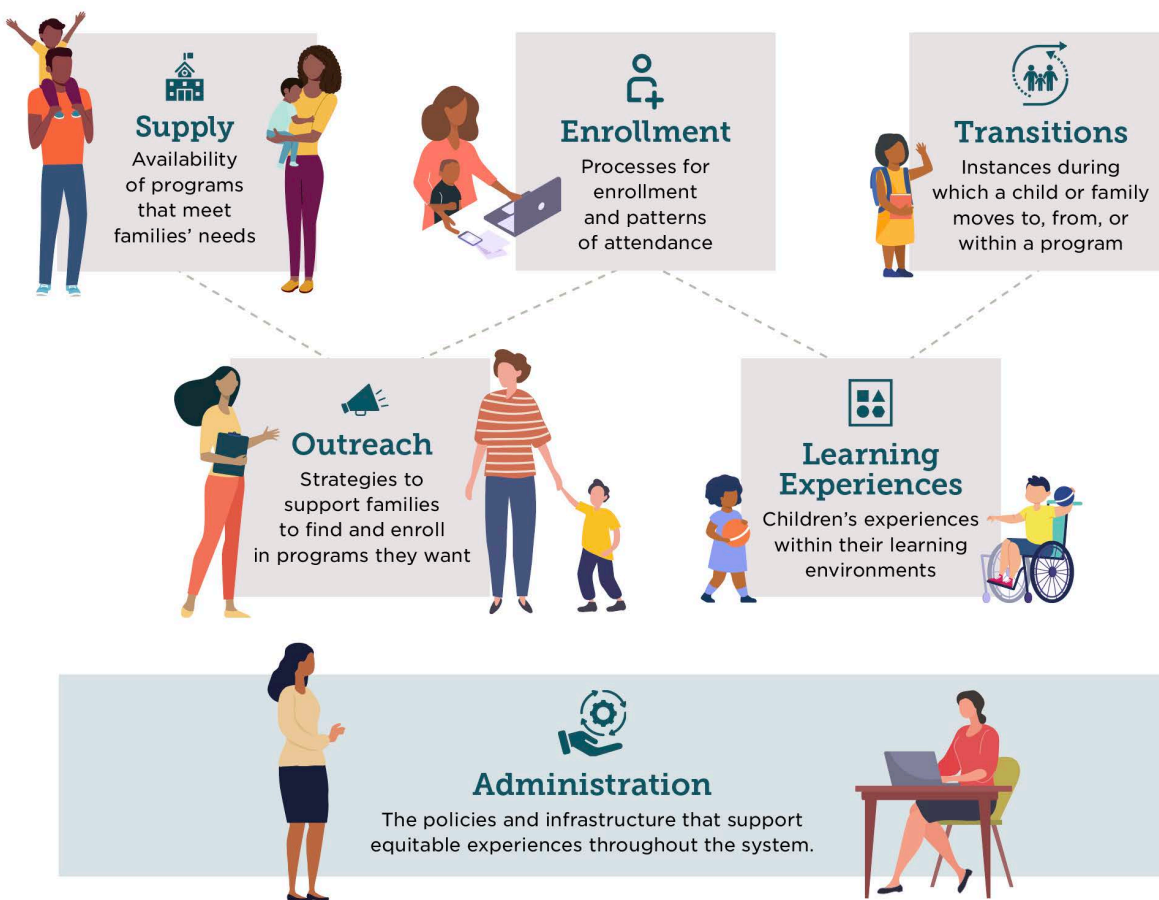
2. **Understand the data landscape.** The data landscape includes the data that are collected, stored, and used. It also includes the data capabilities of staff or data systems to determine what leaders can answer now and what they could collect in the future.
3. **Identify focal populations of interest.** The Framework is built to address the unique needs of focal populations who have experienced systemic barriers to accessing [high-quality](#) preschool experiences. Identifying these populations requires acknowledging that the preschool system was not built to support everyone's needs and that improving the system for one group has the potential to improve the system for all.
 - a. Our emphasis on focal populations is meant to be neither restrictive nor exhaustive. We strongly recommend that, in their efforts to make preschool systems equitable, systems leaders start with the focal populations that were foundational to the creation of the Framework: These populations have historically and consistently been found to have inequities in preschool. However, we acknowledge that each community differs in the types of populations that could most benefit from system-level changes to preschool or the types of populations determined via other agency or policy priorities.
4. **Consider data collection practices.** Preschool systems leaders may use a combination of quantitative or qualitative data to answer the essential questions. Additionally, preschool systems leaders may choose to use various data sources, from administrative data, survey data, or nationally reported data. We recognize that preschool systems leaders may be facing their own data system infrastructure challenges, so it is critical to identify gaps in available data and/or data infrastructure when answering these questions. In the absence of available data, the Framework can outline additional or new data collection that could be considered for future data efforts.
5. **Determine data analysis practices.** An important aspect of the Framework is that data are collected in a standardized way and can be disaggregated to the extent possible; this allows information to be exchanged across the preschool system and examined to identify where inequities exist. Across the metrics, data will also need to be disaggregated appropriately for the question being answered and for the focal populations of interest. Although preschool systems leaders will need to determine how they ultimately analyze data, recommended disaggregates include age of child, race/ethnicity, languages spoken, gender, family/household income, geographic setting or location, program type, type of care setting, or quality designations.

For further guidance on conducting each of these activities, please refer to the [STEP Forward with Data website](#).

STEP Forward with Data Framework

The STEP Forward with Data Framework is designed to help preschool systems leaders use data to promote greater equity at every step of their system. In using this Framework, leaders will better understand the experiences of children, families, or workforce members within their systems to begin identifying potential inequities and examine root causes that could be addressed. The Framework organizes 20 essential questions into six preschool system steps. The steps align with points at which a child, family, or workforce member may face inequities and at which a preschool system leader could make actionable changes to improve quality and access to equitable preschool experiences.

Preschool System Steps





Supply refers to both the quantity and quality of preschool programs across setting types that exist in the preschool system. Supply may include the geographic locations of existing programs, as well as differences in the types and quality of programs available in communities. Publicly funded preschool programs are equitable when they facilitate families' access to preschool programs that meet their needs and preferences, particularly for families who have been marginalized by systemic inequities and/or racism.



Outreach means the processes and resources that inform families about the types of programs that their children are eligible to attend. Outreach may include the strategies used to let families know about existing programs. Publicly funded preschool programs are equitable when they develop policies and strategies that help all families learn about preschool eligibility and program options.



Enrollment encompasses the type of engagement families have with the preschool system to ensure that their children can sign up for and attend the programs of their choice. Enrollment may extend from the time at which families submit enrollment documentation to programs through the monitoring of children's attendance in these programs.



Learning Experiences are the factors that influence a child's experience within their learning setting. Learning Experiences may include instructional activities; curricula or assessments; social interactions between staff, children, and families; classroom climate; or available materials used within the classroom. Publicly funded preschool programs are equitable when they celebrate the races, cultures, languages, or identities of children and families and when they offer resources that allow their workforces to provide an inclusive environment for children.




Transitions are the various ways in which a child or family may switch into, within, or out of the preschool system during a child's early learning experience. Transitions may include switching between preschool classrooms or teachers/providers, transitioning from one learning support to another, or moving up into kindergarten. Publicly funded preschool programs are equitable when they help children and families experience positive transitions—whether into, within, or out of the preschool system.



Administration entails the policies and infrastructure that facilitate how preschool systems operate. Administrative activities may include regulations applied to all programs in the system, available funding for programs, or systemwide trainings available to the workforce. Publicly funded preschool programs are equitable when they share leadership and decision making with families and workforce members, especially those from focal populations; are fully funded; build culturally and developmentally affirming policies; and retain a qualified and supported workforce.

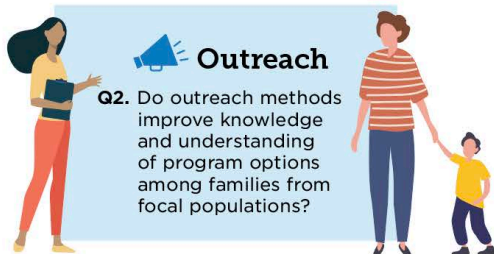
20 Essential Questions

The STEP Forward with Data Framework outlines 20 essential questions across the six preschool system steps that help preschool systems leaders and decision makers identify where inequities exist within their preschool system to equitably serve children and families.




Supply

Q1. Does existing supply meet the needs of families from focal populations?



Outreach

Q2. Do outreach methods improve knowledge and understanding of program options among families from focal populations?



Enrollment


Q3. Do eligibility processes allow families from focal populations to attend programs they want?

Q4. Do enrollment procedures help families from focal populations attend programs they want?

Q5. Are children from focal populations enrolled proportionate to or higher than their representation in the community?

Q6. Are children from focal populations enrolled in programs rated as high-quality proportionate to their representation in the system?

Q7. Do children from focal populations have consistent attendance?



Learning Experiences

Q8. Are identities of children from focal populations and families reflected in programs?

Q9. Do workforce members receive training in supporting the needs of children from focal populations and families?


Q10. Do children from focal populations receive positive behavior supports?

Q11. Do children from focal populations have the learning accommodations they need?

Q12. Does the program offer or connect families from focal populations with whole family services?

Q13. Are multiple forms of evidence used to understand the developmental progress, strengths, and needs—across domains of development—of children from focal populations?

Q14. Are facilities structured and maintained to support the well-being of children from focal populations?



Transitions

Q15. Do transition activities meet the needs of families from focal populations?

Q16. Are children from focal populations reaching developmental and learning milestones when transitioning to kindergarten?



Administration

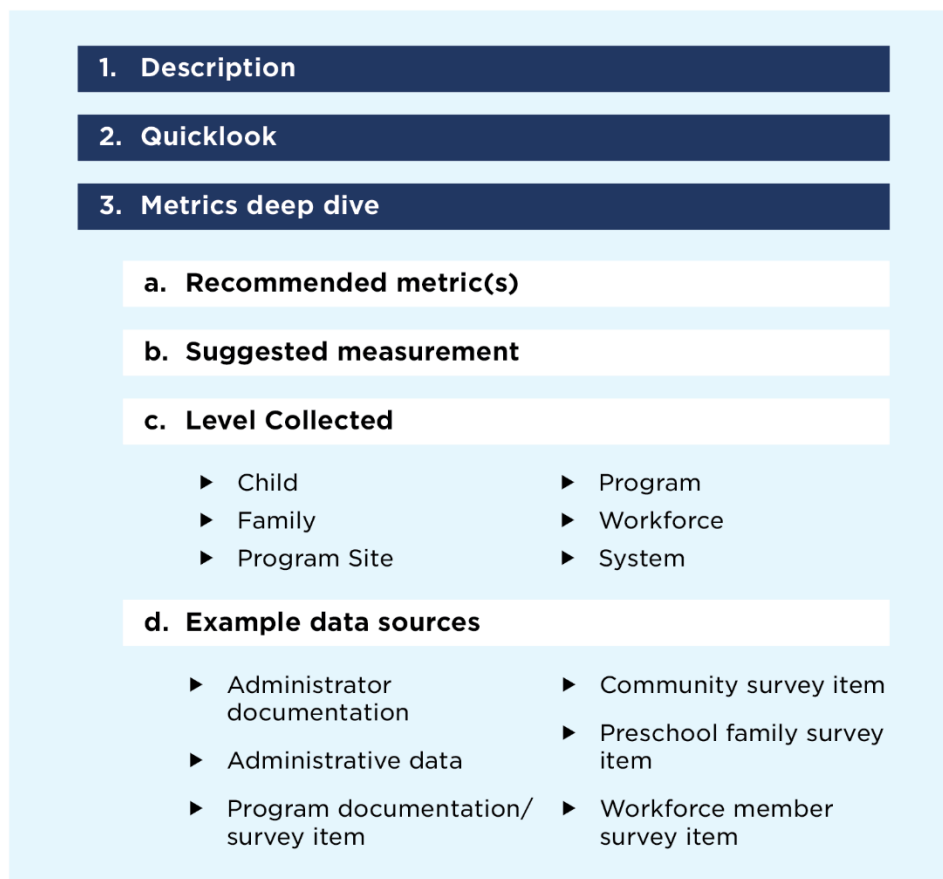
Q17. Are families from focal populations and workforce members engaged in shared leadership?

Q18. Are there funding mechanisms to support equitable experiences for children, families, and workforce members?

Q19. Is there system-level guidance for how to support equitable experiences for children, families, and workforce members?

Q20. Are there mechanisms to support equitable experiences for workforce members from focal populations?

How the Framework is organized



The Framework is organized by six preschool system steps and 20 essential questions. A [glossary](#) of key terms is provided at the end of the document. For each step, we provide:

1. A **description** of the system step with information about how focal populations would benefit from improvements to the preschool system at this step.
2. A **quick look** that offers a high-level glimpse at the essential questions for this step, the recommended metrics to measure the question(s), and an explanation for why understanding each question is important for an equitable preschool system.
3. A **metrics deep dive** that offers more details about how to measure the metrics, organized by each essential question, which allows preschool systems leaders to take concrete steps toward measuring the metrics. The deep dive provides three key components:
 - a. **Recommended metric(s):** A recommendation for how to answer the essential question using data. These metrics are not meant to be prescriptive. Rather, preschool systems leaders can adapt as necessary to meet their needs. *(Note: Some metrics designated with an asterisk (*) are those that have been drawn from the [E-W Indicators Framework](#).)*
 - b. **Suggested measurement:** A suggested method for measuring and calculating the recommended metric, which can be adapted as necessary to meet the needs of the preschool system.

- c. **Level collected:** Each metric is meant to be interpreted at the system level. However, the data may be collected at different levels or from different perspectives and rolled up to the systems level. We note which of the **six** levels that data could be collected for the recommended metric:
 - i. **Child:** Data collected on a child
 - ii. **Family:** Data collected from families or about the family/household unit
 - iii. **Program Site:** Data collected from individual preschool locations
 - iv. **Program:** Data collected about a preschool program, which could be at one site or multiple sites
 - v. **Workforce:** Data collected from workforce members or on workforce members
 - vi. **System:** Data collected across the system or about how the system is operated

- d. **Example data sources:** Examples of data sources are provided to help preschool systems leaders identify whether they currently have relevant data sources they can leverage or whether they may need to acquire additional data. However, the data sources are not meant to be exhaustive and data that are already available to preschool systems leaders could be used instead. Example data sources may include data collected at a level that differs from the level collected but can also be rolled up to the identified level of collection (e.g., collected from families to understand information at the program level). Rather, the example data sources offer an illustration for leaders of possible data they could use. We identify six types of data sources and offer specific details for these sources:
 - i. **Administrator documentation:** Documents that preschool system leaders possess as the administrator of the preschool system. These may include policy and budget documents, strategic plans, meeting minutes, or manuals about operating the preschool system.
 - ii. **Administrative data:** Information about individual children, families, and/or workforce members that are collected and maintained as part of the operation of preschool programs. This data could be collected at the program, political or geographic area, or system level.
 - iii. **Program documentation/survey item:** Documents that preschool programs may have about their program or collect on their program. These data differ from those that are collected for reporting or compliance purposes (which are likely administrative data on programmatic information).
 - iv. **Community family survey item:** Data collected through surveys from families within the communities that the preschool system serves. These families should include those who have children in preschool as well as those who may have not enrolled their children in preschool.
 - v. **Preschool family survey item:** Data collected through surveys from families with children who are enrolled in a preschool program. These data would focus more on the experience within the preschool system.
 - vi. **Workforce member survey item:** Data collected through surveys administered to workforce members across the preschool system.



Supply

Supply refers not only to the quantity of preschool programs in the preschool system but also to the quality of these programs. Equitable supply within a preschool system ensures that all families, especially those from focal populations, can access the preschool programs they want. Accessing preschool means that, with [reasonable effort](#) and [affordability](#), families can enroll their child in preschool that [supports the child's development](#) and meets the [family's needs](#).¹⁶

Having enough programs ensures that families with different needs can select a program from a range of options that differ on such factors as ages served, setting, location, or language used by providers. This is essential for families with intersectional needs because they may need a unique set of specifications for a preschool program to meet their child's needs.

Having [high-quality programs](#) ensures that children are enrolled in settings that allow them to thrive. Preschool systems leaders may have different approaches in determining a [high-quality program](#). Some designate sites through a standardized quality initiative or definition of quality (e.g., Quality Rating and Improvement Systems [QRIS]), whereas others may designate programs as high-quality based on how well they align with families' preferences. In the absence of a standardized quality definition, early childhood leaders may create—in coordination with workforce members and families—an agreed-upon standard of quality to [meet families' needs](#). Regardless of how quality is measured, preschool systems leaders should consider whether programs are equitably accessible, provide positive and fair experiences for all children, and actively work to identify and close disparities in child outcomes.¹⁷

Equitable preschool supply is critical because focal populations face far more barriers accessing high-quality preschool programs than families who are not in focal populations, especially when the supply of [high-quality programs](#) is low or is distributed variably across locations. Assessing whether there is sufficient supply that meets the needs of focal populations will ensure that children and families can equitably access the preschool programs they want.

Quick look

Essential Question	Recommended Metrics	Understanding the question and metrics ensures that an equitable preschool system...
Q1. Does existing supply meet the needs of families from focal populations?	Preschool system has enough preschool openings for the number of children who want to attend preschool, especially those from focal populations (reasonable effort).	...has an adequate supply of preschool programs whereby families from focal populations have the choice to attend preschool programs they want.
	Percentage of children from focal populations who are on a waitlist for at least one preschool program (reasonable effort).	
	Percentage of families from focal populations who were able to enroll in their preferred preschool program (reasonable effort).	
	Percentage of children from focal populations enrolled in a program whose care is subsidized (affordability).	
	Percentage of families from focal populations who report being able to afford to enroll their children in the preschool program of their choice (affordability).	
	Percentage of families from focal populations who do not pay above a system-defined threshold of affordability (affordability).	

		Understanding the question and metrics ensures that an equitable preschool system...
Essential Question	Recommended Metrics	
	Percentage of children from focal populations who did not experience a change in teacher/provider during the program, school, or calendar year (supports child's development).	
	Percentage of workforce members who are fluent in the language spoken by the children they serve (supports child's development).	
	Percentage of program sites that support a language other than English (support's a child's development).	
	Percentage of program sites where children with a disability or developmental delay are enrolled in which workforce members have early childhood special education training or experience working with children with special needs (supports child's development).	
	Percentage of workforce members who have early childhood education endorsements, certification, or training, or experience working with preschool-age children (supports child's development).	
	Percentage of program sites that meet Quality Rating and Improvement Systems (QRIS) state benchmarks of quality (supports child's development).	
	Percentage of program sites that offer transportation services between child's home and preschool site (meets families' needs).	
	Percentage of available full-time slots (i.e., available six hours per day for five days per week) (meets families' needs).	
	Percentage of programs that provide before and after school programming (meets families' needs).	
	Percentage of programs where classrooms demonstrate equitable sociocultural interactions (meets families' needs).	

Metrics deep dive

Question 1. Does the existing supply meet the needs of families from focal populations?

Metric	Suggested Measurement	Level Collected	Example Data Source Details
Preschool system has enough preschool openings for the number of children who want to attend preschool, especially those from focal populations (reasonable effort).	<p>Whether (yes/no) the program capacity of all the preschool programs in the system matches the number of eligible 3- and 4-year-old children in the community.</p> <p>Number of families from focal populations reporting that there are enough preschool options divided by all families from focal populations.</p> <p>These data should account for any geographic considerations, such as whether eligibility is defined by geographic area or whether children and families may attend a preschool only within a certain geographic boundary from their work or home (e.g., within a 10-mile radius or within 30 minutes driving from work or home).</p>	System	<p>Administrative data: Data on preschool program capacity (e.g., licensing data); data on the number of eligible 3- and 4-year-old children in the community (e.g., Census data).</p> <p>Program documentation: Program report of the number of children who are waitlisted for their program (e.g., child care supply survey).</p> <p>Community family survey item: Question about whether families had enough preschool options when searching for care.</p>
Percentage of children from focal populations who are on a waitlist for at least one preschool program (reasonable effort).	The number of children from focal populations on a waitlist for their preferred preschool program divided by the number of 3- and 4-year-old children from focal populations.	Child	<p>Administrative data: Child care resource and referral (CCR&R) data; enrollment and waitlist data.</p> <p>Program documentation: Program report of the number of children who are waitlisted for their program.</p>
Percentage of families from focal populations who were able to enroll in their preferred preschool program (reasonable effort).	The number of families from focal populations who were able to enroll in their preferred preschool program divided the number of families from focal populations.	Family	<p>Preschool family survey item: Question about whether families enrolled their child in their preferred preschool program or whether they selected an available slot that did not meet their needs; question about the number of preschool programs they considered.</p> <p>Community family survey item: Question about whether families did not enroll their child into preschool because a program that met their needs was not available; question about the number of preschool programs they considered.</p>

Metric	Suggested Measurement	Level Collected	Example Data Source Details
Percentage of children from focal populations enrolled in a program whose care is subsidized (affordability).	The number of children from focal populations enrolled in a program whose care is subsidized (e.g., Head Start, sliding scale payment structure, child care or early education subsidy, Child Care and Development Fund subsidy, etc.) divided by the total number of children from focal populations enrolled.	Child	Administrative data: Data on whether a child's care is paid for through a subsidy; Head Start program lists; Child Care and Development Fund subsidy recipient.
Percentage of families from focal populations who report being able to afford to enroll their children in their preschool program (affordability).	The number of families from focal populations who report being able to afford to enroll their children in their preschool program divided by the number of families from focal populations.	Family	Preschool family survey item: Question about whether families were able to afford the cost to enroll their child in preschool; question about how much of their income they pay to enroll their child in preschool. Community family survey item: Question about whether families were unable to enroll their child in preschool due to cost considerations; question about what they would be able to pay to enroll their child in preschool.
Percentage of families from focal populations who do not pay above a system-defined threshold of affordability (affordability).	The number of families from focal populations whose total cost of care (including attendance, fees, copays, and before/after care) are at or below the system-defined threshold of affordability (e.g., 10% of a family's income; no cost to the family; or a set monthly amount) divided by the total number of families from focal populations.	Family	Administrative data: Average household income within the geographic area of the preschool; families' payment data. Preschool family survey item: Question about the amount spent on total preschool costs and families' household income.
Percentage of children from focal populations who did not experience a change in teacher/provider during the program, school, or calendar year (supports child's development).	The number of children from focal populations who did not experience a change in teacher/provider during the program, school, or calendar year divided by the total number of children from focal populations	Child	Administrative data: Lead teacher or provider data. Preschool family survey item: Question about whether the child experienced a change in lead teacher or provider during the program, school, or calendar year.
Percentage of workforce members who are fluent in the language spoken by the children they serve (supports child's development).	The number of workforce members who are fluent in the language spoken by the children they serve divided by the total number of workforce members.	Workforce	Workforce member survey item: Question about whether the workforce can speak fluently in the language spoken by the children they serve.

Metric	Suggested Measurement	Level Collected	Example Data Source Details
Percentage of program sites that support a language other than English (supports child's development).	The number of program sites that provide language supports for children and families from focal populations who do not speak English (e.g., translation of materials, in-house translator, consulting translator, instruction in another language) divided by the total number of program sites.	Program Site	<p>Administrative data: Language supports offered by programs in languages other than English (e.g., child care resource and referral (CCR&R) data).</p> <p>Program documentation/survey: Policies about how languages other than English are supported in the program or program site.</p> <p>Preschool family survey item: Question about whether the program site supported a language other than English.</p>
Percentage of program sites where children with a disability or developmental delay are enrolled in which workforce members have early childhood special education training or experience working with children with special needs (supports child's development).	The number of program sites where children with disability or developmental delay are enrolled in which workforce members have early childhood special education training, certification, endorsement, or years of experience working with children with special needs, divided by the total number of program sites where children with special needs are enrolled.	Program Site	<p>Administrative data: Workforce registry data on education, experience, or training; enrollment data with children's status of disability or developmental delay.</p> <p>Program documentation/survey: Human resource records about workforce members' education, experience, or training; enrollment data with children's status of disability or developmental delay.</p> <p>Workforce member survey item: Question about whether workforce members worked with a child with a disability or developmental delay and the type of experience they had to support the child.</p>
Percentage of workforce members who have early childhood education endorsements, certification or training, or experience working with preschool age children (supports child's development).	The number of workforce members who have early education endorsement, certification, training, or experience working with preschool age children divided by the total number of workforce members.	Workforce	<p>Administrative data: Workforce registry data, licensing data, Quality Rating and Improvement Systems (QRIS) data, human resources data for each program.</p> <p>Workforce member survey item: Question about workforce members' professional or educational experience and/or certification.</p>
Percentage of program sites that meet Quality Rating and Improvement Systems (QRIS) state benchmarks of quality (supports child's development).	The number of program sites that meet Quality Rating and Improvement Systems (QRIS) state benchmarks of quality divided by the total number of program sites.	Program Site	<p>Administrative data: QRIS data.</p>

Metric	Suggested Measurement	Level Collected	Example Data Source Details
Percentage of program sites that offer transportation services between child's home and preschool site (meets families' needs).	The number of program sites that offer transportation services between child's home and the preschool site divided by the total number of program sites.	Program Site	Administrative data: Licensing data, program transportation permission forms; child care resource and referral data on transportation offered. Program documentation/survey item: Question to program directors or owners about whether they offer transportation services to children and families.
Percentage of available full-time slots (i.e., available six hours per day for five days per week) (meets families' needs).	The number of available full-time slots that are six hours per day for five days per week divided by the total number of slots.	Program	Administrative data: State licensing data, child care resource and referral data. Program documentation/ survey item: Question to program directors or owners about their operating schedule.
Percentage of programs that provide before- and after-school programming (meets families' needs).	The number of programs that provide before- and after-school programming divided by the total number of programs.	Program	Administrative data: State licensing data, child care resource and referral (CCR&R) data. Program documentation/survey item: Question to program directors or owners about before- and after-school programming offerings.
Percentage of programs where classrooms demonstrate equitable sociocultural interactions (meet's families' needs).	The number of programs where classrooms demonstrate equitable sociocultural interactions divided by number of programs observed.	Program	Administrative data: Observational assessment data on sociocultural interactions (e.g., Assessing Classroom Sociocultural Equity Scale [ACES]).



Outreach

Outreach covers the processes and resources that inform families about available programs and sites so that families understand where their children are eligible to attend. When preschool systems leaders prioritize outreach efforts, they can ensure that they meet families where they are instead of creating barriers for families to access programs that could otherwise [support both the child's development](#) and the [family's needs](#). Preschool systems leaders must also understand the various eligibility requirements of preschool programs and clearly communicate them to families so that families from focal populations understand where they can or cannot attend.

Equitable [outreach strategies](#) must be built with an exploration of what families from focal populations do or do not know about preschool, which can be informed by actively engaging families from focal populations in the community. Then, preschool systems leaders should also think through the type of information that is critical to communicate in these outreach efforts. For instance, families who are considering the affordability of preschool should clearly understand the cost of various preschool programs. Families who need care at specific hours should be fully aware of the sites around them that operate during the hours that work for their schedules. Finally, preschool systems leaders must understand how they can best communicate this information. For example, materials can be translated into families' home languages. Offering as much information as possible is critically important for families with intersecting needs and identities as they may need more information to make an informed decision about preschool. Communicating as many details as effectively as possible will support not only families from focal populations more broadly, but especially those who have intersecting needs and identities.

Quick look

Essential Question	Recommended Metrics	Understanding the question and metrics ensures that an equitable preschool system...
Q2. Do outreach methods improve knowledge and understanding of program options among families from focal populations?	Percentage of programs that use more than one outreach strategy to inform families from focal populations about preschool options.	...seeks to ensure that families, especially those from focal populations, know and understand the preschool options available to them.
	Percentage of families from focal populations who report having knowledge and understanding of their preschool options.	

Metrics deep dive

Question 2. Do outreach methods improve knowledge and understanding of program options among families from focal populations?

Metric	Suggested Measurement	Level Collected	Example Data Source Details
Percentage of programs that use more than one outreach strategy to inform families from focal populations about preschool options.	The number of outreach methods used by the program to inform families from focal populations about preschool options divided by the total number of preschool programs.	Program	<p>Administrative documentation: Documents with outreach policies and efforts required by programs in the system.</p> <p>Program documentation/survey: Outreach strategies reported by programs.</p>

Metric	Suggested Measurement	Level Collected	Example Data Source Details
Percentage of families from focal populations who report having knowledge and understanding of preschool programs.	The number of families from focal populations who report having knowledge and understanding of preschool programs divided by the total number of families from focal populations.	Family	Community family survey item: Question about families' knowledge and understanding of preschool programs in their community; question about the various ways that a family from focal populations reported learning about preschool options.



Enrollment

Enrollment covers the activities that occur once a family has decided that they would like to enroll their child into a preschool program or site. This also includes how systems help children stay enrolled in programs. In other words, enrollment is not a one-time event—rather, enrollment for children and families includes both the processes and procedures with which families must engage to get their children into a preschool program and the supports that are offered to children and families to ensure that children stay enrolled in programs they want.

Equitable enrollment occurs when the processes and resources available to families help them easily enroll in a program and consistently attend their preschool program of choice. When there are barriers to getting into a preschool program or a child's ability to consistently attend, families from focal populations may not receive equitable access to the same learning opportunities as their peers. For instance, some families may struggle through the enrollment process if the required forms and documentation are written in a language they do not understand or if they are required to submit documentation that is difficult to acquire (e.g., a document with their home address only accessible in-person at an office during work hours). Families with intersecting needs or identities may face compounded barriers to enrollment, which are important for preschool systems leaders to understand. For example, a child from an immigrant family who is also experiencing poverty may be able to enroll in a program, but if their family is not able to read the policies that allow them to access transportation to and from their house and misses a deadline to access these supports, they may struggle to bring their child to preschool each day.

Quick look

Essential Question	Recommended Metrics	Understanding the questions and metrics ensures that an equitable preschool system...
Q3. Do eligibility processes allow families from focal populations to attend programs they want?	Preschool systems leaders regularly conduct community assessments to understand children from focal populations' eligibility to attend their preschool program of choice.	...establishes program eligibility criteria that allow children and families from focal populations to attend preschool programs of their choice.
	Preschool systems leaders make changes to their eligibility criteria based on community assessments to help families from focal populations attend their preferred choice of preschool program.	
Q4. Do enrollment procedures help families from focal populations attend programs they want?	Percentage of programs that offer multiple ways for families to verify their child's eligibility for enrollment.	...aims to make the enrollment process as seamless as possible for families from focal populations.
	Percentage of programs that have a defined process dedicated to helping families from focal populations with preschool enrollment applications.	
	Percentage of program sites that offer at least two types of supportive enrollment resources to families, especially families from focal populations, to support enrollment in the programs families want to attend.	
	Percentage of families from focal populations who report no barriers to enrolling children in the program of their choice.	

Essential Question	Recommended Metrics	Understanding the questions and metrics ensures that an equitable preschool system...
Q5. Are children from focal populations enrolled proportionate to or higher than their representation in the community?	Percentage of eligible 3- and 4-year-olds enrolled in public preschool from focal populations.*	...aims to enroll as many children as possible into preschool programs, especially those from focal populations who would benefit from preschool.
Q6. Are children from focal populations enrolled in programs rated as high-quality proportionate to their representation in the system?	Percentage of preschool-aged children from focal populations enrolled in high-quality preschool.	...ensures that children from focal populations can access high-quality preschool options.
Q7. Do children from focal populations have consistent attendance?	<p>Average length of enrollment for children from focal populations.</p> <p>Average number of days children from focal populations were present in preschool</p> <p>Percentage of enrolled preschool children from focal populations who are present for more than 90 percent of their enrolled days, excluding children enrolled for less than three months.*</p>	...helps children attend preschool for the intended duration of the preschool program to maximize the impact of benefits from preschool.

Metrics deep dive

Question 3. Do eligibility processes allow families from focal populations to enroll in programs they want?

Metric	Suggested Measurement	Level Collected	Example Data Source Details
Preschool systems leaders regularly conduct community assessments to understand children from focal populations' eligibility to enroll in their preschool program of choice.	Whether (yes/no) the preschool system conducts community assessments on a regular basis to understand families from focal populations' eligibility in relation to their preschool program of choice.	System	Administrative data: Community assessment data.
Preschool systems leaders make changes to their eligibility criteria based on community assessments to help families from focal populations attend their preferred choice of preschool program.	Whether (yes/no) the preschool system leaders make changes to their eligibility criteria on a regular basis based on community assessments to help families attend their preschool program of choice.	System	Administrator documentation: Track changes to written system guidance/policies on eligibility, legislation, budgeting aligned with community/needs assessment recommendations.

Question 4. Do [enrollment procedures](#) help families from focal populations attend programs they want?

Metric	Suggested Measurement	Level Collected	Example Data Source Details
Percentage of programs that offer multiple ways families can verify their child’s eligibility for enrollment.	The number of programs that offer two or more methods for families to verify their child’s eligibility for enrollment divided by the total number of programs in the system.	Program	Administrator documentation: Policies for verifying eligibility across preschool programs. Program documentation: Program guidebook with descriptions about eligibility processes.
Percentage of programs that have a defined process dedicated to helping families from focal populations with preschool enrollment applications.	The number of programs that have a defined process to support families with enrollment applications divided by the total number of programs in the preschool system.	Program	Program documentation/survey: Program guidebook with descriptions about eligibility processes, human resource’s role descriptions.
Percentage of program sites that offer at least two types of supportive enrollment resources to families, especially families from focal populations, to support enrollment in the programs families want to attend.	The number of program sites that offer two or more methods to support families to enroll in their program of choice divided by the total number of programs in the preschool system.	Program Site	Program documentation/survey: Guidebook with descriptions about eligibility processes, including what resources or supports are offered to families.
Percentage of families from focal populations who report no barriers to enrolling children in the program of their choice.	The number of families from focal populations in the community that report having no barriers to enrolling their children into their program of choice divided by the total number of families from focal populations in the community.	Family	Preschool family and/or community survey item: Question about the types of barriers families face during enrollment.

Question 5. Are children from focal populations enrolled proportionate to or higher than their representation in the community?

Metric	Suggested Measurement	Level Collected	Example Data Source Details
Percentage of eligible 3- and 4-year-olds enrolled in public preschool from focal populations.*	The number of eligible 3- and 4-year-olds from focal populations who are enrolled in public preschool divided by the total number of eligible 3- and 4-year-olds from focal populations who reside in the community.	Child	Administrative data: Enrollment data and community-level data for general population (e.g., Census data).

Question 6. Are children from focal populations enrolled in programs rated as [high-quality](#) proportionate to their representation in the system?

Metric	Suggested Measurement	Level Collected	Example Data Source Details
Percentage of children from focal populations enrolled in high-quality preschool.	The number of children from focal populations who are enrolled in program sites considered high-quality divided by the total number of children from focal populations.	Child	Administrative data: Enrollment data, licensing, accreditation, or quality standard data (e.g., QRIS rating data).

Question 7. Do children from focal populations have consistent attendance?

Metric	Suggested Measurement	Level Collected	Example Data Source Details
Average length of enrollment for children from focal populations.	The average number of months per year children are enrolled in preschool.	Child	Administrative data: Enrollment data.
Average number of days children from focal populations were present in preschool.	The average number of days children are present during the enrollment period.	Child	Administrative data: Attendance data.
Percentage of enrolled preschool children from focal populations who are present for more than 90 percent of their enrolled days, excluding children enrolled for less than three months.*	<p>The number of children from focal populations who were present for at least 90 percent of their enrolled days divided by the total number of children from focal populations enrolled in preschool.</p> <p>Children who are enrolled for less than three months of preschool (i.e., 90 days) should be excluded from this metric.</p>	Child	Administrative data: Enrollment and attendance data.



Learning Experiences

Learning Experiences are the factors that influence a child’s experience within their learning environment. Learning experiences may include instructional activities; the ways in which staff use curricula or assessments; social interactions between staff, children, and families; classroom climate; or available materials within the classroom.

Children have equitable learning experiences when their identities are considered, reflected, and celebrated in their learning environment. This kind of environment also offers the necessary resources that allow their workforce to provide an inclusive environment for children. Children from focal populations who see themselves in books, in artwork, in characters they learn about, or in their teaching staff can see themselves reflected in others. Additionally, those who hear about historical leaders or who see their teacher/provider and peers celebrate holidays that are associated with their identities can see their identities esteemed by others. Intentionally immersing children with various identities and perspectives gives every child the chance to see themselves in their classroom. For children with intersecting needs or identities, this intentional effort increases their ability to see parts of themselves throughout their learning experience. In many instances, learning environments that mirror the metrics defined in this section may be considered a [high-quality](#) learning experience for children from focal populations, regardless of whether they also meet external standards of quality.

Quick look

Essential Question	Recommended Metrics	Understanding the questions and metrics ensures that an equitable preschool system...
Q8. Are identities of children from focal populations and families reflected in programs?	Percentage of program sites where children from focal populations are exposed to staff in their program who reflect their own identities.	...has children and families from focal populations reflected, appreciated, and celebrated in preschool programs.
	Percentage of program sites that use materials, projects, activities, curricula, and resources that reflect or celebrate the identities of children from focal populations and their communities.	
Q9. Do workforce members receive training in supporting the needs of children from focal populations and families?	Percentage of workforce members who receive training in culturally responsive instruction , especially to understand a child’s developmental progress to inform instruction.	...builds in and fully supports continued professional development to workforce members; this professional development should be culturally responsive, developmentally appropriate , trauma-informed , and tailored to the needs of children from focal populations and their families.
	Percentage of workforce members who receive training on trauma-informed care or responsiveness.	
	Percentage of workforce members who receive training on reducing or eliminating bias in their work.	
Q10. Do children from focal populations receive positive behavior supports ?	Percentage of workforce members that demonstrate high-quality instructional practices and interactions with children.	...ensures that children from focal populations receive positive behavior supports and have limited exposure to discipline practices that may cause them harm.
	Percentage of children who do not experience any of the following: in-school suspensions, out-of-school suspensions, disciplinary use of restraint and seclusion, or expulsions.*	

		Understanding the questions and metrics ensures that an equitable preschool system...
Essential Question	Recommended Metrics	
	<p>Percentage of families from focal populations who report that their children experience positive behavior supports.</p> <p>Presence of program-level policies aimed at offering alternative approaches to negative discipline and promoting positive behavior supports.</p> <p>Percentage of children from focal populations reporting positive feelings toward their program.*</p>	
Q11. Do children from focal populations have the learning accommodations they need?	Percentage of children from focal populations who are screened for learning accommodationsensures that children from focal populations have the learning accommodations they need to fully participate in activities with their peers.
	Percentage of children from focal populations who have an identified need for a learning accommodation .	
	Percentage of children from focal populations who have a learning accommodation provided to them in an inclusive setting .	
	Percentage of families from focal populations who are satisfied with the learning accommodations provided to their children.	
	Percentage of children from focal populations with identified health or developmental concerns as identified by a developmental screening tool.*	
	Percentage of children from focal populations with identified concerns who are connected to services.*	
	Percentage of children from focal populations who can fully participate in learning activities.	
Q12. Does the program offer or connect families from focal populations with whole family services?	Percentage of programs that offer whole family servicessupports the whole family by connecting them to services they need, such as housing supports or nutrition assistance programs.
	Percentage of programs offering health, mental health, and social services in-house, including staff or consultants providing infant and early childhood mental health consultation (IECMHC) services.*	
	Percentage of programs that provide referrals to families from focal populations about whole family services .	
	Percentage of families from focal populations who use whole family services .	
Q13. Are multiple forms of evidence used to understand the developmental progress, strengths, and needs—across domains of development—of children from focal populations?	Preschool system requires multiple forms of evidence to be used to understand a child's development.	...gathers information from a variety of sources (and does not lean on one source) to understand a child's development.
	Percentage of programs that use multiple forms of evidence to understand a child's development.	
	Percentage of workforce members who report that they utilize more than one form of evidence to inform their instruction.	

Essential Question	Recommended Metrics	Understanding the questions and metrics ensures that an equitable preschool system...
Q14. Are facilities structured and maintained to support the well-being of children from focal populations?	Preschool system makes planned improvements for facilities to ensure they meet basic health and safety requirements , and in which focal populations make up at least half of the student population.	...maintains facilities that meet basic health and safety requirements to support learning for children from focal populations.
	Percentage of programs in facilities that have the infrastructure necessary to support student learning, and in which focal populations make up at least half of the student population.	
	Percentage of programs in facilities that ensure the safety and security of children and workforce members, and in which focal populations make up at least half of the student population.	
	Percentage of programs in facilities that meet children and workforce members' health and hygienic needs, and in which focal populations make up at least half of the student population.	

Metrics Deep Dive

Question 8. Are identities of children from focal populations and families reflected in programs?

Metric	Suggested Measurement	Level Collected	Example Data Source Details
Percentage of program sites where children from focal populations are exposed to staff in their program who reflect their own identities.	The number of program sites where children from focal populations have at least one staff member in the program (e.g., teachers, assistants, support staff, administrators, or owners) who also shares the same or similar identity or characteristic (e.g., race/ethnicity, disability status, or gender).	Program Site	<p>Administrative data: Enrollment data with demographic data; workforce registry data with staff demographics.</p> <p>Program documentation/survey: Enrollment data with demographic data; human resources data with staff demographics.</p> <p>Workforce member survey item: Question about whether workforce members shared identities with children in their program.</p>

Metric	Suggested Measurement	Level Collected	Example Data Source Details
Percentage of program sites that use materials, projects, activities, curricula, and resources that reflect or celebrate the identities of children from focal populations and their communities.	The number of program sites that used at least two or more materials, projects, activities, curricula, and resources in the past year that reflect and/or celebrate the identities of children from focal populations and their communities divided by the total number of program sites.	Program Site	<p>Administrative data: Licensing or monitoring data about the types of materials, projects, activities, curricula, or resources available in programs in the past year.</p> <p>Program documentation/survey: Observational and/or survey data on number of culturally appropriate materials used in a program in the past year.</p> <p>Workforce member survey item: Question about whether a workforce member used materials, projects, activities, curricula, and resources in the past year that reflect or celebrate the identities of children from focal populations and their communities in their learning environment.</p>

Question 9. Do workforce members receive training in supporting the needs of children from focal populations and families?

Metric	Suggested Measurement	Level Collected	Example Data Source Details
Percentage of workforce members who receive training in culturally responsive instruction , especially to understand a child's developmental progress to inform instruction.	The number of workforce members who receive training in culturally responsive instruction divided by the total number of workforce members.	Workforce	<p>Administrative data: Workforce member participation in system-wide training opportunities on culturally responsive instruction (e.g., training and/workforce registry data).</p> <p>Workforce member survey item: Question about whether a workforce member has received training on culturally responsive instruction; question about how equipped the workforce member feels to provide culturally responsive instruction.</p> <p>Program documentation/survey: Workforce member participation in training opportunities on culturally responsive instruction.</p>

Metric	Suggested Measurement	Level Collected	Example Data Source Details
Percentage of workforce members who receive training on trauma-informed care or responsiveness.	The number of workforce members who receive training on trauma-informed care or responsiveness divided by the total number of workforce members.	Workforce	<p>Administrative data: Workforce member participation in system-wide training opportunities on trauma-informed care or responsiveness (e.g., training and/workforce registry data).</p> <p>Workforce member survey item: Question about whether a workforce member has received training on trauma-informed care or responsiveness; question about how equipped the workforce member feels to provide trauma-informed care.</p> <p>Program documentation/survey: Workforce member participation in training opportunities on trauma-informed care or responsiveness.</p>
Percentage of workforce members who receive training on reducing or eliminating bias in their work.	The number of workforce members who receive training on reducing or eliminating bias in their work divided by the total number of workforce members.	Workforce	<p>Administrative data: Workforce member participation in system-wide training opportunities on reducing or eliminating bias in their work (e.g., training and/workforce registry data).</p> <p>Workforce member survey item: Question about whether a workforce member has received training on reducing or eliminating bias in their work; question about how equipped the workforce member feels to reduce or eliminate bias in their work.</p> <p>Program documentation/survey: Workforce member participation in training opportunities on reducing or eliminating bias in their work.</p>

Question 10. Do children from focal populations receive [positive behavior supports](#)?

Metric	Suggested Measurement	Level Collected	Example Data Source Details
Percentage of workforce members that demonstrate high-quality instructional practices and interactions with children.	The number of workforce members that demonstrate high-quality instructional practices and interactions with children divided by the total number of workforce members.	Workforce	<p>Administrative data: Observation data on workforce members and/or program report on classes utilizing positive discipline models (e.g., Classroom Assessment Scoring System [CLASS], the Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale [ECERS] Interactions subscale, Teaching Pyramid Observation Tool [TPOT]), or the Assessing Classroom Sociocultural Equity Scale [ACSES]).</p>

Metric	Suggested Measurement	Level Collected	Example Data Source Details
Percentage of children who do not experience any of the following: in-school suspensions, out-of-school suspensions, disciplinary use of restraint and seclusion, or expulsions.*	The number of children who do not experience in-school suspensions, out-of-school suspensions, disciplinary use of restraint and seclusion, or expulsions divided by the total number of children.	Child	<p>Administrative data: Administrative data on in-school suspensions, out-of-school suspensions, disciplinary use of restraint and seclusion, or expulsions; US Department of Education Civil Rights Data Collection (Discipline, Restraints/Seclusion) by public school or district.</p> <p>Program documentation/survey: Data on in-school suspensions, out-of-school suspensions, disciplinary use of restraint and seclusion, or expulsions within the program.</p> <p>Community family survey item: Question about whether their child experienced in-school suspensions, out-of-school suspensions, disciplinary use of restraint and seclusion, or expulsions in preschool.</p>
Percentage of families from focal populations who report that their children experience positive behavior supports .	The number of families from focal populations who report that their children experience positive behavior supports divided by the total number of families from focal populations.	Family	<p>Preschool family survey item: Question about the types of discipline practices their child has experienced; question about whether their child has experienced positive behavior supports; positive discipline practices could be assessed through tools, such as CLASS, or through the implementation of strategies, such as the Pyramid Model.</p>
Presence of program-level policies aimed at offering alternative approaches to negative discipline and promoting positive behavior supports .	Whether (yes/no) preschool programs have policies that are aimed at offering alternative approaches to negative discipline and promoting positive behavior supports .	Program	<p>Administrator documentation: Program guidebook or documentation that outlines policies around discipline and behavior supports (e.g., limiting or governing when suspensions or expulsions can be used, investments in professional development or support systems for positive behavior supports [e.g., coaches, mental health consultants]).</p>
Percentage of children from focal populations reporting positive feelings toward their program.*	The number of children from focal populations reporting positive feelings toward their program divided by the total number of children from focal populations.	Child	<p>Preschool family survey item: Question for children about how positively they feel toward their program; measures such as Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning's (CASEL) How I Feel About My School questionnaire.</p>

Question 11. Do children from focal populations have the [learning accommodations](#) they need?

Metric	Suggested Measurement	Level Collected	Example Data Source Details
Percentage of children from focal populations who are screened for learning accommodations .	The number of children from focal populations who are screened for learning accommodations divided by the total number of children from focal populations.	Child	Administrative data: Developmental screening data, early intervention data, pediatric screening data.
Percentage of children from focal populations who have an identified need for a learning accommodation .	The number of children from focal populations who have an identified need for a learning accommodation divided by the total number of children from focal populations.	Child	Administrative data: Data collected on developmental screening tool (e.g., Teaching Strategies GOLD, Battelle Developmental Inventory, Developmental Indicators for Assessment of Learning [DIAL], Brigance Early Childhood Screens, Ages and Stages Questionnaire [ASQ]) that suggest a need for a learning accommodation ; Individualized Family Service Plans (IFSP); or Individual Education Plans (IEP) or 504 plan.
Percentage of children from focal populations who have a learning accommodation provided to them in an inclusive setting .	The number of children from focal populations who are provided a learning accommodation in an inclusive setting divided by the total number of children from focal populations who have an identified need for a learning accommodation .	Child	Administrative data: Service provision data for those who require a learning accommodation ; Individualized Family Service Plans (IFSP); or Individual Education Plans (IEP) or 504 plan and whether the service was provided in an inclusive setting . Preschool family survey item: Question about whether family's child received a learning accommodation .
Percentage of families from focal populations who are satisfied with the learning accommodations provided to their children.	The number of families from focal populations who report that they are satisfied with the learning accommodations provided to their children divided by the total number of families from focal populations who have an identified need for a learning accommodation.	Family	Administrative data: Information collected from families about services provided to them (e.g., Individuals with Disabilities Education Act [IDEA] data on family involvement). Preschool family survey item: Question about how satisfied families from focal populations are with the learning accommodations provided to their children; question about how learning accommodations could be improved to best support their child.
Percentage of children from focal populations with identified health or developmental concerns as identified by a developmental screening tool.*	The number of children from focal populations who have been assessed with a developmental screening tool and were found to have an identified health or developmental concern divided by the total number of children from focal populations.	Child	Administrative data: Data collected on developmental screening tool (e.g., Teaching Strategies GOLD, Battelle Developmental Inventory, Developmental Indicators for Assessment of Learning [DIAL], Brigance Early Childhood Screens, Ages and Stages Questionnaire [ASQ]).

Metric	Suggested Measurement	Level Collected	Example Data Source Details
Percentage of children from focal populations with identified concerns who are connected to services.*	The number of children from focal populations with identified concerns who are connected to services divided by the number of children from focal populations with identified concerns .	Child	Administrative data: Resource and referral data; service receipt data for preschool programs that provide services in-house. Preschool family survey item: Question about whether their child received services for an identified developmental or health concern.
Percentage of children from focal populations who can fully participate in learning activities.	The number of children from focal populations with an identified health or developmental concern who can fully participate in learning activities with their peers divided by the total number of children from focal populations.	Child	Administrative data: Data on the setting in which a learning accommodation was provided (e.g., in regular classroom, in another room within the school, or in another setting outside of the school during school hours); data on least restrictive accommodations provided (e.g., Individuals with Disabilities Education Act [IDEA] data).

Question 12. Does the program offer or connect families from focal populations with [whole family services](#)?

Metric	Suggested Measurement	Level Collected	Example Data Source Details
Percentage of programs that offer whole family services in their programs.	The number of programs that offer whole family services divided by the total number of programs.	Program	Administrative data: Child care resource and referral (CCR&R) data on program offerings; policies on what services must be offered by preschool programs (e.g., preschools within a community school that must offer whole family services). Program documentation/survey: Program guidebook or documentation about services offered in-house; program budgets about supported services; question whether programs offer whole family services.
Percentage of programs offering health, mental health, and social services in-house, including staff or consultants providing infant and early childhood mental health consultation (IECMHC) services.*	The number of programs offering health, mental health, and social services in-house divided by the total number of programs.	Program	Administrative data: Child care resource and referral (CCR&R) data on program offerings. Program documentation/survey item: Program guidebook or documentation about services offered in-house; program budgets about supported services; question whether programs offer health, mental health, and social services in-house.

Metric	Suggested Measurement	Level Collected	Example Data Source Details
Percentage of programs that provide referrals to families from focal populations about whole family services .	The number of programs that provide referrals to families from focal populations for whole family services divided by the total number of programs.	Program	<p>Program documentation/survey item: Program guidebook or documentation about how referrals are made; newsletters where service referrals are provided; question about whether programs provide referrals for whole family services.</p> <p>Preschool family survey item: Question about whether programs provide information about whole family services.</p>
Percentage of families from focal populations who use whole family services .	The number of families from focal populations who have used whole family services offered by the program divided by the total number of families from focal populations.	Family	<p>Administrative data: Service receipt of whole family services.</p> <p>Preschool family survey item: Question about whether families utilized any whole family services offered by the program or referred by the program.</p>

Question 13. Are multiple forms of [evidence](#) used to understand the [developmental progress](#), strengths, and needs—across [domains of development](#)—of children from focal populations?

Metric	Suggested Measurement	Level Collected	Example Data Source Details
Preschool system requires multiple forms of evidence to be used to understand a child's development.	Whether (yes/no) the preschool system requires using multiple forms of evidence to understand a child's development across all domains (i.e., across language/literacy; cognition; social emotional development; approaches to learning; and physical development).	System	Administrator documentation: Written system guidance on child development monitoring.
Percentage of programs that use multiple forms of evidence to understand a child's development.	The number of programs that use more than one form of evidence to understand a child's development divided by the total number of programs.	Program	Administrative data: Program monitoring data on the types and number of pieces of evidence used to understand a child's developmental progress that notes the types of evidences used to determine their progress. Program documentation/survey: Program documentation or guidance that outlines the types and number of pieces of evidence that must be used to determine a child's development. Workforce member survey item: Question about whether workforce members used more than one piece of evidence to determine a child's development.
Percentage of workforce members who report that they utilize more than one form of evidence to inform their instruction.	The number of workforce members who report that they use more than one form of evidence to inform their instruction divided by the total number of workforce members.	Workforce	Workforce member survey item: Question about whether workforce members used more than one piece of evidence to inform a child's instruction.

Question 14. Are facilities structured and maintained to support the well-being of children from focal populations?

Metric	Suggested Measurement	Level Collected	Example Data Source Details
Preschool system makes planned improvements for facilities to ensure they meet basic health and safety requirements , in systems where focal populations make up at least half of the student population.	Whether (yes/no) the preschool administration has made planned facility improvements for facilities, in systems where focal populations make up at least half of the student population.	System	<p>Administrator documentation: Written facilities improvement plan/policies.</p> <p>Administrative data: Receipt of infrastructure improvement grants and how funds were used; data tracking facility needs and improvements; demographic data on children in each facility.</p>
Percentage of program sites that have the infrastructure necessary to support student learning, in systems where focal populations make up at least half of the student population.	The number of program sites that have the infrastructure necessary to support student learning (e.g., desks, air conditioning, heat) divided by the total number of program sites where focal populations make up at least half of the student population.	Program Site	<p>Administrative data: Demographic data on children in each facility; data on the types of infrastructure present within each facility; data tracking facility needs and improvements.</p> <p>Program documentation/survey: Information on the types of infrastructure available to support student learning and how it is used, maintained, and updated as necessary.</p> <p>Workforce member survey item: Question about whether a facility has the infrastructure necessary to support student learning; question about what infrastructure it may need to better support student learning.</p> <p>Preschool family survey item: Question about whether families feel that a facility has the infrastructure necessary to support student learning; question about what infrastructure families feel they may need to better support student learning.</p>

Metric	Suggested Measurement	Level Collected	Example Data Source Details
Percentage of program sites that ensure the safety and security of children and workforce members, in programs where focal populations make up at least half of the student population.	The number of program sites that ensure the safety and security of children and workforce members (e.g., safety plans, practice safety drills, security measures) divided by the total number of program sites in which focal populations make up at least half of the student population.	Program Site	<p>Administrative data: Citations or reports of safety and security incidents.</p> <p>Program documentation/survey: Information on the types of safety and security measures available and maintained.</p> <p>Workforce member survey item: Question about whether workforce members feel safe and secure in their facility; question about the types of improvements their facility could use to ensure they feel safe and secure.</p> <p>Preschool family survey item: Question about whether families feel safe and secure in their facility; question about the types of improvements their facility could use to ensure they feel safe and secure.</p>
Percentage of program sites that meet children and workforce members' health and hygienic needs, in programs where focal populations make up at least half of the student population.	The number of program sites that meet children and workforce members' health and hygienic needs (e.g., health plans and policies; nurse on-site; first aid policies and procedures) divided by the total number of program sites in which focal populations make up at least half of the student population.	Program site	<p>Administrative data: Citations or reports of health incidents at each program.</p> <p>Program documentation: Health and hygiene policies and procedures.</p> <p>Workforce member survey item: Question about whether workforce members' facility meets their hygienic needs; question about the types of improvements their facility could use to meet their hygienic needs.</p> <p>Preschool family survey item: Question about whether facilities meet families' hygienic needs; question about the types of improvements their facility could use to meet their hygienic needs.</p>
Percentage of families from focal populations who report that their children are in facilities that support their well-being.	The number of families from focal populations who report that their children attend facilities that support their well-being divided by the total number of families from focal populations.	Family	<p>Preschool family survey item: Question about whether facilities' support families' well-being; question about any improvements that could be made to their facility.</p>



Transitions

Transitions are the various ways in which a child or family may switch into, within, or out of the preschool system during a child's early learning experience. Transitions may include switching between preschool classrooms or teacher/provider, transitioning from one learning support to another, or moving up into kindergarten.

Equitable transitions occur when preschool systems help children and families experience positive transitions. Transitions can also be small (e.g., a transition from one activity to the next) or big (e.g., transitioning from preschool to kindergarten). Children from focal populations may make more frequent transitions than other children and, when these transitions are made more difficult, they face further barriers in preschool. For example, a child who speaks a language other than English at home is transitioning language every day as they move from home to preschool. A child with a speech delay may engage in a weekly transition to and from a speech therapy session, which can disrupt their learning or peer engagement. Most notably, preschool children will switch to different classrooms or schools as they age from 3 to 4 years old, and then into kindergarten. On top of these transitions, children with intersecting needs or identities may face double or more the number of transitions relative to other children. At each of these points, the preschool system can consider where and how to reduce these transitions and/or make these experiences seamless for children and families.

Quick look

Essential Question	Recommended Metrics	Understanding the questions and metrics ensures that an equitable preschool system...
Q15. Do transition activities meet the needs of families from focal populations?	Percentage of families from focal populations who report that their program offers transition supports that meet their needs.	...facilitates the transition between learning accommodations , services, classrooms, and/or schools for children and families from focal populations.
	Percentage of programs that minimize the number of transitions when supporting children with learning accommodations .	
Q16. Are children from focal populations reaching developmental and learning milestones when transitioning to kindergarten?	Percentage of children from focal populations meeting benchmarks across all developmental domains (language/literacy; cognition; social emotional development; approaches to learning; and physical development).*	...helps children from focal populations reach developmentally appropriate milestones across developmental domains (i.e., language/literacy; cognition; social emotional development; approaches to learning; and physical development) upon kindergarten entry.

Metrics deep dive

Question 15. Do [transition activities](#) meet the needs of families from focal populations?

Metric	Suggested Measurement	Level Collected	Example Data Source Details
Percentage of families from focal populations who report that their program offers transition supports that meet their needs.	<p>The number of families from focal populations who report that transition supports offered by programs meet their needs divided by the total number of families from focal populations.</p> <p>To the extent possible, these data should be disaggregated by different types of transition supports or for the different events when transitions may occur.</p>	Family	<p>Preschool family survey item: Question about families' participation in and satisfaction with transition supports; question about whether these supports meet their needs.</p>
Percentage of programs that minimize the number of transitions when supporting children with learning accommodations .	<p>The number of programs that minimize the number of transitions when supporting children with learning accommodations divided by the total number of programs supporting children with learning accommodations.</p>	Program	<p>Administrative data: Data on the number of transitions experienced by children who have learning accommodations, including transitions that happen within a day or total transitions that occurred for a child in a year.</p> <p>Program documentation/survey: Policies or guidebook detailing the process programs will take to minimize transitions for children with learning accommodations to ensure continuity of care or full participation of the child.</p> <p>Preschool family survey item: Question about whether the number of transitions a child with learning accommodations experienced was minimized.</p>

Question 16. Are children from focal populations reaching [developmental and learning milestones](#) when transitioning to kindergarten?

Metric	Suggested Measurement	Level Collected	Example Data Source Details
<p>Percentage of children from focal populations meeting benchmarks across all developmental domains (language/literacy; cognition; social emotional development; approaches to learning; and physical development).*</p>	<p>The number of children from focal populations who are meeting the expected benchmarks across developmental domains divided by the total number of children from focal populations.</p>	<p>Child</p>	<p>Administrative data: Data on children's development across and by each developmental domain that take into account a host of evidences and sources to inform whether a child is or is not meeting benchmarks (accounting for various approaches to defining benchmarks), such as workforce member, family, or child input, kindergarten readiness assessment, formative assessment, or direct child assessment data that include all developmental domains.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Example direct child assessments that include all developmental domains include Woodcock-Johnson IV Tests of Early Cognition and Academic Development (ECAD) Letter Word and Writing subtests or the Individual Growth and Development Indicators (IGDIs) Early Literacy assessment. Example teacher-reported assessments that include all development domains include Desired Results Developmental Profile (DRDP) Language and Literacy Development domain; Ready 4 Kindergarten Early Learning Assessment (R4K ELA) Language and Literacy domain; or Teaching Strategies GOLD (TS GOLD) Language and Literacy subscales. <p>Program documentation/survey: Policies or guidebook on how a child's development is understood and what may be meaningful benchmarks that align with children and families' expectations.</p> <p>Preschool family survey item: Question about whether families believe their child is meeting developmental expectations across developmental domains.</p>



Administration

Administration encompasses the policies, processes, and infrastructure that facilitate how preschool systems operate, as well as the individual(s) who lead the preschool system. Administrative activities may include establishing regulations applied to all programs in the system, acquiring and distributing available funding for programs, or providing systemwide training to workforce members. The infrastructure to support administration could include the data systems used to collect and understand data on children, families, and workforce members, or the governance structure that dictates the types of decisions preschool systems leaders can make about preschool programs.

Equitable administration occurs when preschool systems leaders share leadership and decision making beyond those who sit on a defined leadership team—for example, they share decision-making power with families and workforce members, especially those from focal populations. Focal populations who are brought to the table or whose perspectives are considered can provide insight and solutions that would best meet their needs. Moreover, bringing these voices into a preschool system’s administration allows intersectional voices to offer a glimpse into how a policy or practice change would be experienced by different populations if implemented. When focal populations are included in administrative activities, their experiences and needs are elevated to ensure that systems-level decisions promote greater access.

Preschool systems leaders will know that their preschool system is functioning equitably when all system programs are sufficiently funded, implement culturally and developmentally affirming policies, and retain a qualified and supported workforce.

Quick look

Essential Question	Recommended Metrics	Understanding the questions and metrics ensures that an equitable preschool system...
Q17. Are families from focal populations and workforce members engaged in shared leadership ?	Percentage of preschool systems leadership and management that identify as members of focal populations.	...is co-created with families and workforce members, especially those from focal populations, to ensure that the system is operated in a way that best meets families' needs.
	Percentage of families from focal populations who report that they are consulted, involved, or collaborate, or are a co-creator in systems level changes, policies, or programmatic decisions.	
	Percentage of workforce members from focal populations who report that they are consulted, involved, collaborate, or are a co-creator in the preschool system.	
Q18. Are there funding mechanisms to support equitable experiences for children, families, and workforce members?	Percentage of system-level funding that is allocated to equity-focused activities targeted for children, families, and/or workforce members from focal populations.	...has sufficient and sustainable funding to ensure that children and families from focal populations have their needs met.
	Percentage of programs that have a funding mechanism for allocating funds to be spent on identified needs for children, families, and workforce members from focal populations.	
Q19. Is there system-level guidance for how to support equitable experiences for children, families, and workforce members?	Preschool system provides guidance on early learning standards, including how to uniquely support children and families from diverse backgrounds, including those from focal populations.	...is made stronger when preschool system leaders provide accessible guidance and expectations for how to support equitable experiences for children, families, and workforce members.
	Preschool system provides guidance on the types of culturally responsive curricula that represent, reflect, and uniquely support children and families from focal populations.	

		Understanding the questions and metrics ensures that an equitable preschool system...
Essential Question	Recommended Metrics	
	<p>Preschool system provides guidance or training on recommended culturally responsive assessments/screenings that represent, reflect, and uniquely support children and families from focal populations.</p> <p>Preschool system provides guidance on professional development activities that represent, reflect, and uniquely support workforce members from diverse backgrounds, including those from focal populations.</p> <p>Preschool system provides guidance or training on quality monitoring tools for classroom environment and/or child-adult interactions that represent, reflect, and uniquely support children and families from diverse backgrounds, including those from focal populations.</p> <p>Preschool system leaders regularly evaluate the number of programs that implement early learning standards, curricula, assessments/screenings, professional development activities, and quality monitoring tools for classroom environment and/or child-adult interactions that meet stated guidelines.</p> <p>Preschool system leaders regularly evaluate whether their guidance meets the needs of children and families from focal populations.</p> <p>Percentage of families and workforce members reporting positive relationship quality with one another.</p>	
Q20. Are there mechanisms to support equitable experiences for workforce members from focal populations?	<p>Number of professional development opportunities the preschool system offers that are intentionally tailored to support the unique needs of workforce members from focal populations.</p> <p>Number of career pathway supports the preschool system offers that are intentionally tailored to support the unique needs of workforce members from focal populations.</p> <p>Workforce members from focal populations earn wages comparable to the overall population of preschool workforce members.</p> <p>Workforce members from focal populations have retention rates comparable to the overall population of preschool workforce members.</p> <p>Percentage of workforce members from focal populations who receive benefits comparable to that of the overall preschool workforce population.</p>	...supports its workforce, especially members from focal populations, by ensuring that they are provided access to supports and resources to enter and continue to thrive in the system.

Metrics deep dive

Question 17. Are families from focal populations and workforce members engaged in [shared leadership](#)?

Metric	Suggested Measurement	Level Collected	Example Data Source Details
Percentage of preschool systems leadership and management that identify as members of focal populations.	The number of members serving on leadership and management teams who identify as members of focal populations divided by the total number of members on the teams.	System	Administrator documentation: Administrative records of leadership and management team members (e.g., advisory councils, committees).
Percentage of families from focal populations who report that they are consulted, involved, or collaborated with—or that they are a co-creator in systems-level changes, policies, or programmatic decisions.	The number of families from focal populations who report that they are consulted, involved, or collaborated with—or that they are a co-creator in systems-level changes, policies, or programmatic decisions—divided by the total number of families from focal populations.	Family	Preschool family survey item: Sample question asking whether families feel like they are consulted, involved, collaborated with, or co-creators in systems-level changes, policies, or programmatic decisions.
Percentage of workforce members from focal populations who report that they are consulted, involved, collaborated with, or a co-creator.	The number of workforce members from focal populations who report that they are consulted, involved, collaborated with, or a co-creator in the preschool system divided by the total number of workforce members from focal populations.	Workforce	Workforce member survey item: Sample question asking whether families feel like they are consulted, involved, collaborated with, or co-creators.

Question 18. Are there [funding mechanisms](#) to support equitable experiences for children, families, and workforce members?

Metric	Suggested Measurement	Level Collected	Example Data Sources
Percentage of system-level funding allocated to equity-focused activities for children, families, and/or workforce members from focal populations.	The amount of funding allocated for equity-focused activities spent by the system divided by the total amount of funding for the preschool system.	System	Administrative data: Budget records across preschool programs with a line item or earmark for equity-focused activities as defined by the system. Administrator documentation: Administrative records or documentation that describes funding policies.
Percentage of programs that have a funding mechanism for allocating funds to be spent on identified needs for children, families, and workforce members from focal populations.	The number of programs that have a mechanism for allocating funds to be spent on identified needs for those from focal populations divided by the total number of programs in the preschool system.	Program	Administrative data: Budget records across preschool programs with a line item or earmark for identified needs . Administrator documentation: Administrative records or documentation that describes funding policies.

Question 19. Is there [system-level guidance](#) for how to support equitable experiences for children, families, and workforce members?

Metric	Suggested Measurement	Level Collected	Example Data Sources
Preschool system provides guidance on early learning standards, including on how to uniquely support children and families from diverse backgrounds (including those from focal populations).	Whether (yes/no) the preschool administration has early learning standards on how to support children and families from diverse backgrounds that is made available to all preschool programs.	System	Administrator documentation: Early learning standards.
Preschool system provides guidance on the types of culturally responsive curricula that represent, reflect, and uniquely support children and families from focal populations.	Whether (yes/no) the preschool administration provides guidance on selecting culturally responsive curricula as an option for programs that is made available to all preschool programs.	System	Administrator documentation: Curricula selection guide.
Preschool system provides guidance or training on recommended culturally responsive assessments/screenings that represent, reflect, and uniquely support children and families from focal populations.	Whether (yes/no) the preschool administration has written guidance or training on culturally responsive assessments/screenings that represent, reflect, and uniquely support children and families from diverse backgrounds, including those from focal populations.	System	Administrator documentation: Assessment/screenings selection guide, content from system-provided assessment/screening trainings.
Preschool system provides guidance on professional development activities that represent, reflect, and uniquely support workforce members from diverse backgrounds, including those from focal populations.	Whether (yes/no) the preschool administration has written guidance about recommended professional development activities to support workforce members that is made available to all preschool programs.	System	Administrator documentation: Professional development policies or catalog of approved professional development opportunities , workforce registries.
Preschool system provides guidance or training on quality monitoring tools for classroom environment and/or child-adult interactions that represent, reflect, and uniquely support children and families from diverse backgrounds, including those from focal populations.	Whether (yes/no) the preschool administration has written guidance or training about quality monitoring tools for classroom environment and/or child-adult interactions that is made available to all preschool programs.	System	Administrator documentation: Quality monitoring tools selection guide, content (e.g., syllabus) from system-provided trainings on quality monitoring.

Metric	Suggested Measurement	Level Collected	Example Data Sources
Preschool system leaders regularly evaluate the number of programs that implement early learning standards, curricula, assessments/screenings, professional development activities, and quality monitoring tools for classroom environment and/or child-adult interactions that meet stated guidelines.	Whether (yes/no) preschool system leaders evaluate the number of programs that implement early learning standards, curricula, assessments/screenings, professional development activities, and quality monitoring tools for classroom environment and/or child-adult interactions that align with stated guidelines.	System	<p>Administrative data: Licensing data where programs report program activities; quality improvement observations (e.g., observations to meet QRIS qualifications).</p> <p>Program documentation/survey item: Question about whether the program is implementing system recommendations around early learning standards, curricula, assessments/screenings and practices, professional development activities, and quality monitoring tools for classroom environment and/or child-adult interactions.</p>
Preschool system leaders regularly evaluate whether their guidance meets the needs of children and families from focal populations.	Whether (yes/no) guidance aligns with the needs identified by children and families from focal populations.	System	<p>Community family survey item: Open-ended survey question to families about what needs they want the preschool to address; Likert scale questions about whether program curricula, classroom experiences, teacher qualification, and/or family engagement meets families' needs and support child's development.</p>
Percentage of families and workforce members reporting positive relationship quality with one another.	The number of families and workforce members who report having a positive relationship with one another divided by the total number of families and workforce members assessed using a relationship assessment tool.	Family and Workforce	<p>Program documentation/survey: Family/teacher relationship assessment tool, such as Head Start family engagement measures or Family and Provider/Teacher Relationship Quality (FPTRQ) survey.</p> <p>Preschool family survey item: Question about whether families have a positive relationship with their teachers or providers.</p> <p>Workforce member survey item: Question about members of the workforce have a positive relationship with families.</p>

Question 20. Are there mechanisms to support equitable experiences for workforce members from focal populations?

Metric	Suggested Measurement	Level collected	Example Data Sources
Number of professional development opportunities the preschool system offers that are intentionally tailored to workforce members from focal populations to support their unique needs.	The number of professional development opportunities that are tailored to meet the needs of workforce members from focal populations divided by the total number of professional development opportunities offered.	System	<p>Administrator documentation: Descriptions of the professional development opportunities available to workforce members.</p> <p>Administrative data: A list of system-wide professional development opportunities with information on workforce members who participated or received these opportunities (e.g., workforce and training registry data).</p> <p>Workforce member survey item: Open-ended survey question to workforce members about what they need in professional development opportunities; Likert scale questions about whether professional development opportunities meet their needs.</p>
Number of career pathway supports the preschool system offers that are intentionally tailored to workforce members from focal populations to support their unique needs.	The number of career pathway supports that are tailored to meet the needs of workforce members from focal populations compared to the total number of career pathway supports offered.	System	<p>Administrator documentation: Descriptions of the career pathway supports available to workforce members.</p> <p>Administrative data: A list of system-wide career pathway supports with information on the workforce members who participated or received these opportunities (e.g., workforce and training registry data) .</p> <p>Workforce member survey item: Open-ended survey question to workforce members about what they need in career pathway supports; Likert scale questions about whether professional development opportunities meet their needs.</p>
Workforce members from focal populations earn wages comparable to the overall population of preschool workforce members.	The average annual income of workforce members from focal populations compared to the average annual income of all workforce members in the preschool system or other groupings of workforce members (e.g., comparing workforce members who are immigrants with those who are not immigrants).	Workforce	<p>Administrative data: Workforce wage data, workforce registry data, human resources records from each program, program budgets with line items for workforce salaries by role, Head Start Program Information Report (PIR) with workforce wage information.</p> <p>Workforce member survey item: Question to workforce members about their annual income.</p>

Metric	Suggested Measurement	Level collected	Example Data Sources
Workforce members from focal populations have retention rates comparable to the overall population of preschool workforce members.	<p>The average length of retention of workforce members from focal populations compared to the average length of retention of all workforce members in the preschool system.</p> <p>Percentage of workforce members from focal populations who return to the same learning setting, position, or program year to year compared to return rates of all workforce members in the preschool system.</p>	Workforce	<p>Administrative data: Workforce member tenure and retention rates, human resources records from each program, workforce registry data, publicly available data or reports (e.g., Early Childhood Workforce Index).</p> <p>Workforce member survey item: Question about how long workforce members have been in their current role and position; question about how long they have worked in preschool or the field.</p>
Percentage of workforce members from focal populations who receive benefits comparable to those received by the overall preschool workforce population.	<p>The number of workforce members from focal populations who receive benefits divided by the number of workforce members from the overall preschool population.</p> <p>These data should be disaggregated by different types of benefits to the extent possible.</p>	Workforce	<p>Administrator documentation: Policies on benefits offered to workforce members.</p> <p>Administrative data: Benefits received by workforce members, human resource records from each program, or publicly available data or reports (e.g., Early Childhood Workforce Index).</p> <p>Workforce member survey item: Question about the types of benefits workforce members receive; question about whether they receive benefits through their employer, a family member's employer, a government program, or another source.</p>

Glossary

- **Affordability**¹⁸ is the cost or price of something—in this case, the total cost families pay for preschool, including tuition, subsidies, copayments (fixed or sliding scale), fees, or costs for materials to attend—compared to their income adjusted for family size. This term is used in the [Background](#), in the [Supply](#) section, and in Essential Question # 1: [Quick Look](#) and [Metrics Deep Dive](#).
- **Basic health and safety requirements** are regulations and policies that outline the minimum expectations for preschool facilities to support student learning. This term is used in Essential Question # 14: [Quick Look](#) and [Metrics Deep Dive](#).
- **Benefits** are optional, non-wage compensation provided to employees in addition to their normal wages or salaries.¹⁹ They may include paid sick leave, holidays, and vacation time; employer-sponsored health insurance; retirement; paid preparation and planning time; and/or other supports and resources offered to workforce members. This term is used in Essential Question # 20: [Quick Look](#) and [Metrics Deep Dive](#).
- **Career pathway supports**²⁰ are resources provided to help workforce members progress in their career. These can include system-level supports, such as policies that reduce barriers to professional development; systematically track professional development; and provide funding, mentoring, and other supports for workforce members to advance their careers. This term is used in Essential Question # 20: [Quick Look](#) and [Metrics Deep Dive](#).
- **Community assessments**²¹ are systemic reviews that identify the strengths, weaknesses, and available resources in a community to meet the needs of families. This term is used in Essential Question # 3: [Quick Look](#) and [Metrics Deep Dive](#).
- **Culturally responsive curricula**²² are sets of classroom instructional content that center a child's lived experience, heritage, and identity in learning settings. A culturally responsive curriculum prompts a teacher/provider to learn about each child's strengths, abilities, experiences, and interests as developed within the child's family and culture. Such a curriculum provides guidance on modifying and enhancing curriculum plans and materials to build on these strengths, abilities, experiences, and interests with the goal of incorporating each child's culture into the classroom.²³ This term is used in Essential Question # 19: [Quick Look](#) and [Metrics Deep Dive](#).
- **Culturally responsive instruction**²⁴ is a method by which a teacher/provider can incorporate the customs and methods of expression of children and their families into classroom instruction. This term is used in Essential Question # 9: [Quick Look](#) and [Metrics Deep Dive](#).
- **Developmental and learning milestones** are age-specific skills typical of average development that are acquired by children by certain ages. This term is used in Essential Question # 16: [Quick Look](#) and [Metrics Deep Dive](#).
- **Developmental domains**²⁵ are areas of early childhood growth and learning that recognize the whole child development, which include language/literacy, cognition, social emotional development, approaches to learning, and physical development. This term is used in Essential Question # 16: [Quick Look](#) and [Metrics Deep Dive](#).
- **Developmental progress**²⁶ refers to a child's growth across developmental milestones. The developmental progress of individual children is often determined by the instrument used to understand a child's development. This term is used in Essential Question # 9: [Quick Look](#) and [Metrics Deep Dive](#) and in Essential Question # 13: [Quick Look](#) and [Metrics Deep Dive](#).
- **Developmentally appropriate** characterizes practices that promote young children's optimal learning and development. The concept incorporates what is known about child development and learning; what is known about how the child fits into a family or community; and what is known about the social and

cultural contexts in which learning occurs.²⁷ This term is used in Essential Question # 9: [Quick Look](#) and in Essential Question # 16: [Quick Look](#).

- **Enrollment procedures** are the required processes or steps that a family must complete to enroll their child into preschool successfully. Procedures could include submitting forms and paperwork; verifying residence, family income, or child's date of birth; or applying into a lottery for a spot. How the enrollment process works and what is required of families should be clearly communicated to all enrollment staff, programs, and families. This term is used in Essential Question # 4: [Quick Look](#) and [Metrics Deep Dive](#).
- **Equitable sociocultural interactions**²⁸ refer to the ways in which workforce members personalize teaching, connect with students by incorporating their cultural experiences, and equitably apply behavior management practices to all children regardless of their identity. This term is used in Essential Question # 1: [Quick Look](#) and [Metrics Deep Dive](#).
- **Equity-focused activities**²⁹ are activities that are specifically focused on meeting the identified needs of children, families, and workforce members from focal populations. These activities can include purchasing culturally responsive curriculum for programs; offering career pathway supports or professional development training for workforce members from focal populations; translating materials across the preschool system into languages used within the community; or paying staff to provide enrollment supports to families. This term is used in Essential Question # 18: [Quick Look](#) and [Metrics Deep Dive](#).
- **Evidence** is, collectively, the pieces of information that workforce members use to exhibit a child's developmental progress. Evidence could include teacher or provider observations; parent input or observations; information shared by pediatricians, counselors, or therapists; coordination of developmental assessment information between organizations; or information from formative or summative assessments. This term is used in Essential Question # 13: [Quick Look](#) and [Metrics Deep Dive](#) and in Essential Question # 16: [Metrics Deep Dive](#).
- **Full participation**³⁰ refers to a child's ability to engage intended learning activities in their entirety, regardless of the child's developmental needs. Full participation could involve the child receiving supports within the classroom rather than needing to leave the classroom or school to receive services they need. It could also look like adapting activities based on a child's needs to ensure that children are not limited in their participation. This term is used in Essential Question # 15: [Metrics Deep Dive](#).
- **Funding mechanisms**³¹ are the pathway(s) by which financial assistance supports could be accessed to carry out an approved project or activity that supports a specified purpose. This term is used in Essential Question # 18: [Quick look](#) and [Metrics Deep Dive](#) and in the [Framework Background](#) section.
- **Health or developmental concerns** are cautionary indications relating to the health or development of a child that require further exploration. Concerns may be identified through the completion of a developmental assessment, from a health screening or observation, or from caregiver input. A health concern might indicate an underlying medical problem and prompt an evaluation by a health professional, and a developmental concern might indicate a developmental delay or abnormal pattern of development (e.g., developing communication/language, motor skills, problem-solving, or social and adaptive behavior).³² This term is used in Essential Question # 11: [Quick Look](#) and [Metrics Deep Dive](#).
- **High-quality program** is one that meets a designated standard of quality to indicate that it is at a greater quality level than other programs. Quality standards can be defined differently for different communities. In some instances, quality is measured by a program's ability to meet quality standards that have been outlined by their program (e.g., Head Start quality standards), the state (e.g., Quality Rating and Improvement Systems [QRIS]), other accrediting bodies (e.g., National Association for the Education of Young Children [NAEYC] or National Association for Family Child Care [NAFCC]), or other measures that center equity (e.g., Trust for Learning's [Measuring the Quality of Early Learning Environments](#)). This may include incorporating observational measures of quality (e.g., Early Childhood

Environment Rating Scale [ECERS], Classroom Assessment Scoring System [CLASS]) or other measures as part of the quality improvement process. Additionally, looking at the metrics used to define equitable learning experiences in this Framework can ensure that children from focal populations are also experiencing high-quality learning experiences, regardless of whether a preschool program has met external standards of quality. This term is used in the [Supply](#) section and in Essential Question # 6: [Quick Look](#) and [Metrics Deep Dive](#).

- **Identified needs** are needs that a child, family, or workforce member have expressed that they want fulfilled by the preschool system. The identification of needs must be driven by family and community input and can include a host of topics, such as expanding family leadership and engagement efforts, translation services, referrals to services that serve families beyond academics, or transportation services. This term is used in Essential Question # 18: [Quick Look](#) and [Metrics Deep Dive](#).
- **Inclusive settings**³³ are classroom environments where instruction, materials, or activities are designed to ensure that all children can participate as much as possible, regardless of a child's ability. This term is used in Essential Question # 11: [Quick Look](#) and [Metrics Deep Dive](#).
- **Leadership and management teams**³⁴ are groups of administrators, teachers/providers, staff members, and stakeholders who have the ability to influence or make system-level decisions about the preschool system and how it is run. These teams could also include parents who serve on advisory councils, boards, or committees as decision makers; and/or as administrators at state, county, region, district, or school level; and/or as funders. This term is used in Essential Question # 17: [Quick Look](#) and [Metrics Deep Dive](#).
- **Learning accommodations**³⁵ are alterations of the learning environment, curriculum format, or equipment that allow a child with a disability to participate in their learning environment. Learning accommodations could include therapies, physical accommodations, assistive technology, or in-class supports as outlined through protocols such as Individualized Education Plans (IEPs), a doctor's note, or in discussion between the family and the program(s). Learning accommodations can be identified by conducting or using information from developmental assessments or screeners; through bias-free teacher/provider observations and reports; or through family report of learning accommodations. These could include screenings for special education under IDEA. This term is used in Essential Question # 11: [Quick Look](#) and [Metrics Deep Dive](#) and Essential Question # 15: [Quick Look](#) and [Metrics Deep Dive](#).
- **Meeting families' needs**³⁶ means that needs that have been identified by and for families have been provided. These needs may include availability of transportation to and from the preschool program, operation hours that meet families' work schedules, offerings of before- and after-school services, language supports when communicating with the program, and offerings of whole family services. This term is used in the [Supply](#) section and in Essential Question # 1: [Quick Look](#) and [Metrics Deep Dive](#).
- **Negative discipline** encompasses punitive punishments that children experience, including office referrals, suspensions, expulsions, restraint, and exclusion (e.g., in school suspensions). This term is used in Essential Question # 10: [Quick Look](#) and [Metrics Deep Dive](#).
- **Outreach strategies** are targeted methods to communicate about enrollment or engagement opportunities to members of a community. These may include sending flyers to families in the community about preschool programs, posting information on a public website or on social media, hosting or attending a fair at a local community center, hosting an open house for prospective parents, canvassing the community to let families know about preschool programs in their area, or partnering with established community organizations to share information about preschool programs. This term is used in the [Outreach](#) section and in Essential Question # 2: [Quick Look](#) and [Metrics Deep Dive](#).
- **Positive behavior supports**³⁷ are strategies that encourage children's positive behaviors. These supports proactively set expectations for students, including the following: encouraging self-control and problem-solving skills; establishing norms and expectations that are understood by children from focal populations; and using equitable practices in responding to children (e.g., examining bias in responses to

children, ensuring that responses to children are tailored for their [developmental needs](#)). These positive discipline practices could be assessed through tools, such as CLASS, or through the implementation of strategies such as the Pyramid Model. This term is used in Essential Question # 10: [Quick Look](#) and [Metrics Deep Dive](#).

- **Professional development opportunities**³⁸ are opportunities for workforce members to gain new skills and promote professional advancement after entering the workforce. These may include trainings, scholarships or stipends for education, opportunities to gain educational credits, or prioritization in higher education. Opportunities could be tailored to meet workforce members' needs—for example, via trainings in languages spoken by workforce members from focal populations, trainings that are accessible for workforce members with learning accommodations, or trainings that account for the transportation or cost of attending a training for workforce members with low incomes. This term is used in Essential Question # 19: [Metrics Deep Dive](#) and Essential Question # 20: [Quick Look](#) and [Metrics Deep Dive](#).
- **Quality monitoring tools** are validated assessments designed to measure the quality of a preschool learning environment and may include observations of interactions between workforce members and children, the physical classroom environment, teaching practices, family engagement, daily routines, and health and safety (among other components of high-quality early learning environments). This term is used in Essential Question # 19: [Quick Look](#) and [Metrics Deep Dive](#).
- **Reasonable effort**³⁹ means families can easily find out about and enroll in programs without undue burden on the family's part. The concept accounts for the logistics of enrolling in or attending a preschool program, such as geographic location, availability of a spot in a desired preschool program, hours of operation, and cost. This term is used in the [Supply](#) section and in Essential Question # 1: [Quick Look](#) and [Metrics Deep Dive](#).
- **Retention rates** measure the rate by which workforce members return to the same organization year to year. This could be applied to teachers, administrators/owners, providers, or other staff. This term is used in Essential Question # 20: [Quick Look](#) and [Metrics Deep Dive](#).
- **Shared leadership**⁴⁰ means families and/or workforce members form strong partnerships, share decision making, and co-create knowledge with leadership and management teams about how preschool programs are run. This term is used in Essential Question # 17: [Quick Look](#) and [Metrics Deep Dive](#).
- **Supporting a child's developmental needs**⁴¹ means that children are in preschool settings that allow them to develop appropriately. The concept includes quality of instruction, the health and safety expectations of the program, educational supports and services offered to children (e.g., English language learner supports, disability supports), and stability of care. This term is used in the [Supply](#) section and in Essential Question # 1: [Quick Look](#) and [Metrics Deep Dive](#).
- **Supportive enrollment resources** are services that facilitate a family's ability to enroll their child in preschool successfully. This may include dedicated staff who help families complete enrollment forms during the enrollment period, translation of materials to ensure that families have access to information in their home language(s), enrollment fairs or dedicated days for enrolling families, or a customer service line or email for families to ask questions about enrollment. This term is used in Essential Question # 4: [Quick Look](#) and [Metrics Deep Dive](#).
- **System-level guidance** are the specifications and expectations provided to all members of the preschool system, including families, workforce members, and administrators. This guidance should be in writing and provided to those who are most impacted by the guidance or who could benefit from receiving it. For example, early learning guidelines are typically outlined for preschool systems, made available to all preschool programs, and often published online for the public. This term is used in Essential Question # 19: [Quick look](#) and [Metrics Deep Dive](#).

- **Transition activities** are activities that occur when a child, family, or workforce member is going from one context to the next. In preschool, these transitions could occur from one school to another, from one classroom to another, from one educational support or accommodation to another, or from preschool to kindergarten. These could be one-time events but more likely may involve a robust process with multiple events. This term is used in Essential Question # 15: [Quick Look](#) and [Metrics Deep Dive](#).
- **Transition supports** are resources that ease the transition from one context to the next. Supports may include using materials in languages spoken by focal populations, aligning supports to match focal populations' identified needs, or offering supports in settings and times that align with their needs. This term is used in Essential Question # 15: [Quick Look](#) and [Metrics Deep Dive](#).
- **Trauma-informed care** refers to approaches that incorporate strength-based strategies to support children who have experienced trauma.⁴² It includes several key principles: ensuring safety; trustworthiness and transparency; peer support; collaboration and mutuality; empowerment, voice, and choice; and cultural, historical, and gender issues.⁴³ This term is used in Essential Question # 9: [Quick Look](#) and [Metrics Deep Dive](#).
- **Whole family services**⁴⁴ include services for both families and children that are designed to meet their educational, health, and economic needs. These may include health, mental health, and social services, or staff or consultants who provide infant and early childhood mental health consultation services. Offering these services could be done directly within the program—either through co-location of services or bringing in services as necessary—or through a referral process to connect families with whole family services in their community. This term is used in Essential Question # 12: [Quick Look](#) and [Metrics Deep Dive](#).

Appendix. How the Framework was developed

The System Transformation for Equitable Preschools (STEP Forward with Data) Framework was developed over two years by a consortium of experts using an iterative process. The development was also informed by many voices, including researchers, preschool systems leaders, and technical assistance providers.

The Framework is centered on equity

Creating an equitable preschool system requires elevating and centering efforts around equity. In the development of the Framework, we considered equity in our development process and as an outcome.⁴⁵

- As a **process**, equity is applied when those most impacted by structural inequities are meaningfully involved in the creation and implementation of the institutional policies and practices that impact their lives. This includes having an intentional approach to achieving equity by partnering with the people most impacted by inequity to document disparities, identify underlying structural causes of disparities, and propose informed solutions.
- As an **outcome**, equity is the condition achieved when personal characteristics outside a person's control (e.g., their race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, ability status, religion, age, class, geography, immigration status/country of nativity, or languages spoken) do not predict their experiences.

A consortium of experts designed the Framework

The Early Childhood Data Collaborative (ECDC) at Child Trends convened a national consortium of experts and partners to inform the development of the Framework through quarterly meetings across two years, with smaller groups meeting between quarterly meetings to develop specific parts of the Framework. Experts represented federal and state partners, researchers, and organizations that focus on equity, data systems, and preschool. Experts actively contributed to the Framework development and reviewed to ensure that the Framework development was based on guiding principles, which were co-created between ECDC and the experts.

The Framework was informed by different lenses

Although the consortium of experts had a more direct hand in the development of the Framework, the experts and the ECDC team were committed to informing its development through the lens of those who would implement or support the implementation of the Framework such as preschool system leaders and their partners and technical assistance providers.

- **Expert networks.** We selected experts because of their expertise, but also because they represented extensive networks of voices. Many experts took it upon themselves to review the information being developed for the Framework with their partners to ensure that it would meet their needs. Sometimes coworkers, partners, or people these experts served were asked to provide thoughts, which were subsequently incorporated into our development process.
- **Child Trends and ECDC experts.** The Framework is part of a larger project wherein ECDC conducted additional activities to inform the development of the Framework. The broader project included a national survey of preschool systems leaders about whether they could access their data and whether they had the capacity to use this data. Additionally, ECDC leveraged knowledge from staff outside the project who contributed their specific expertise—for example, on supporting children during transitions, supporting children with disabilities or developmental delays, or creating system change measurement strategies.
- **State preschool systems leaders.** Preschool systems leaders were represented in our expert consortium and engaged during the Framework development. Additionally, four other state leaders participated in an in-depth discussion about their state's desires to build equitable preschool systems and how their context may be receptive to a data framework focused on equity. Then, 14 state leaders

were asked to reflect on the level of information provided about how data could answer the Framework's essential questions. This information was vital in communicating and developing the Framework.

- **Technical assistance (TA) providers.** Because the implementation of a new data framework may require additional support, ECDC engaged national TA organizations in a webinar to understand the types of needs their clients face, the structure of products or resources that would best help users pick up the Framework, and the type of information they would need to help preschool systems leaders use the Framework. Input received from this webinar was considered in the development of the Framework.

The Framework is guided by key principles

Building on the Framework goals, ECDC—in partnership with the consortium—identified the following principles to drive the development of the Framework. These principles were used to help prioritize the Framework's content, scope, and design, and were referenced to ensure that the Framework's language and articulated goals were inclusive and useful in all states, territories, and Tribal contexts.

1. **Aligned with the broader early childhood system.** While this Framework is focused on publicly available state-, locally, and Tribal-funded preschool and Head Start programs for 3- and 4-year-olds, it was designed with acknowledgement that these programs are part of the broader early childhood system (e.g., the Framework also considers center- and home-based child care, birth to three services, and the transition into K-12). The Framework and essential questions are transferable to the broader system of early care and education, taking care not to disrupt the system to the extent possible.
2. **Asset-driven rather than deficit-focused approach.** Contributors regularly reviewed the Framework to ensure that the guidance and associated metrics would lead to a strengths-based approach to understanding children's and families' experiences in the preschool system. Data collected and analyzed should not be used for harmful or punitive purposes and should not perpetuate biases by highlighting differences between groups. Different scores or data points should be used to guide improvements to the preschool system rather than attribute differences to groups of people.
3. **Applicable for all preschool structures.** Preschool is administered differently across locations, and the social, political, and historical contexts in which preschool is administered varies by community. The Framework can be applied across all types of preschool structures and is flexible for local needs. Further, the Framework was developed to be malleable to the diversity in eligibility requirements, access to programs, quality of programs, service delivery options, personnel, programmatic requirements, funding, and oversight.
4. **User-centered and actionable.** In developing the Framework, we considered end-users at every stage of the development process. The questions have been designed such that a preschool systems leader will have data specific enough to make actionable improvements in their system upon answering the questions.

The Framework is centered on focal populations

Building on past research about those who face systemic or historical inequities in accessing preschool, we focused the development of the Framework on certain focal populations, while acknowledging that many additional populations may also lack access to [high-quality](#) preschool in their communities. The focal populations include:

- Black people
- Hispanic/Latino people
- Indigenous people

- People who are immigrants
- People experiencing poverty
- People who are multilingual learners
- People with disabilities
- People with intersectional needs and identities

For more information about past research on these focal populations' access to preschool, please see [Pre-K Data on Children, Families, and Workforce Members from Focal Populations Can Help Decision Makers Create More Equitable Systems](#). While we centered these populations in developing the Framework, the Framework also acknowledges that other populations also face inequities that may be important in certain communities or intersect with the focal populations (e.g., lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, queer/questioning, asexual + [LGBTQIA+], Asian or Asian American and Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander [AANHPI], or populations living in rural or urban communities). The Framework is designed to be flexible, allowing users to define and focus on their specific populations of interest.

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- ²⁴ Definition adapted from the [National Equity Project](#).
- ²⁵ Definition developed based on the National Association for the Education of Young Children's [Principals of Child Development and Learning and Implications that Inform Practice](#).
- ²⁶ Betts, A., & Thai, K. (2022) *Handbook of Research on Innovative Approaches to Early Childhood Development and School Readiness*. Hershey, PA: Information Science Reference.
- ²⁷ NAEYC (National Association for the Education of Young Children). *Developmentally Appropriate Practice in Early Childhood Programs Serving Children from Birth Through Age 8, fourth edition* (Washington, DC: NAEYC, 2022), 316–319. Retrieved from https://www.naeyc.org/sites/default/files/globally-shared/downloads/PDFs/resources/naeyc_dap4e_glossary_new.pdf
- ²⁸ Definition developed based on the Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning's (CASEL) special issue brief on [Equity & Social and Emotional Learning](#).
- ²⁹ Definition adapted from NAEYC's [Advancing Equity in Early Childhood Education Position Statement](#).
- ³⁰ Definition adapted from principles outlined in [The Full Participation of Each Preschool Child Leadership Module](#) by the University Center for Excellence in Developmental Disability Education, Research, and Service
- ³¹ Definition adapted from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Administration's.
- ³² Definition adapted from Kennedy Krieger Institute's definition of a [medical concern](#) or [developmental concerns and symptoms](#).
- ³³ Definition based on the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) Topic Area definition of [Early Childhood Inclusion in Least Restrictive Environments](#)
- ³⁴ Definition adapted from the [Glossary of Education Reform](#).

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- ³⁵ Definition adapted from the University of Washinton's [Disabilities, Opportunities, Internetworking, and Technology Center](#) and [Head Start Policy on Inclusion of Children with Disabilities](#)
- ³⁶ Definition adapted from [Defining and Measuring Access to High-Quality Early Care and Education \(ECE\): A Guidebook for Policymakers and Researchers](#).
- ³⁷ Definition adapted from the [National Center on Early Childhood Development, Teaching, and Learning \(NCECDTL\)](#)
- ³⁸ Definition adapted from the [Harvard Division of Continuing Education](#).
- ³⁹ Definition adapted from [Defining and Measuring Access to High-Quality Early Care and Education \(ECE\): A Guidebook for Policymakers and Researchers](#).
- ⁴⁰ Definition adapted from the [Toolkit for Engaging Partners in Precision Home Visiting Research](#).
- ⁴¹ Definition adapted from [Defining and Measuring Access to High-Quality Early Care and Education \(ECE\): A Guidebook for Policymakers and Researchers](#).
- ⁴² Bartlett, J., Steber, K. (2019). *How to Implement Trauma-informed Care to Build Resilience in Childhood Trauma*. Child Trends. Retrieved from <https://www.childtrends.org/publications/how-to-implement-trauma-informed-care-to-build-resilience-to-childhood-trauma>
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- ⁴⁴ Definition adapted from the [Aspen Institute](#).
- ⁴⁵ Gross, E. (2019, Sep 16). Equitable Research Reporting [Webinar]. In Professional Development and Child Care and Early Childhood Education Policy and Research Analysis Workgroup Series.