



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

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# Introduction

The System Transformation for Equitable Preschools (STEP Forward with Data) Framework is a tool designed to help you, as a federal, state, territory, Tribal, or local preschool leader:

- Answer key questions about your preschool systems with a specific focus on the experiences of those who have been marginalized by racism and systemic inequities, referred to here as 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 collected and the questions the data answer.

Preschool systems leaders are 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.

The [STEP Forward with Data Framework](#) (the Framework) is intended to serve as a tool that can be paired with other current or future data efforts rather than a standalone extensive data project. The Framework is intended to be flexible enough for you to implement it in multiple ways. There is no wrong or right way to move through the steps of the Framework. You can use the Framework in any way that meets your needs and matches your preschool system's current capacity to collect, use, and analyze preschool data. You may decide to address all steps in the Framework and related essential questions sequentially or you may want to focus on one particular step and its associated essential questions. Additionally, the Framework could be used in conjunction with related frameworks, such as the [Education to Workforce \(E-W\) Indicator Framework](#),<sup>1</sup> to understand the connection between preschool and K-12 systems and identify places along any system that may be contributing to disparities in experiences; or the [Access Framework](#), which defines access to early care and education services as four interrelated dimensions of access, affordability, reasonable effort, meets parents' needs, and supports child's development. Since there is flexibility in how the Framework can be used, this guide is intended to support you in determining a starting point.

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<sup>1</sup> 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. To support alignment between the STEP and E-W Indicator Frameworks, this Implementation Guide occasionally references metrics that were drawn from the E-W Indicator Framework. Those metrics are designated with an asterisk (\*) in the STEP Framework and in this implementation guide.

**STEP Forward with Data Framework resources.** As you work through the exercises in this guide, these additional resources about the Framework may be helpful to reference:

- [STEP Forward with Data Framework Report](#): This comprehensive report describes the rationale for developing a unifying data framework for preschool systems, the goals of the Framework, and guidance for preparing to use it. It also provides a PDF version of the full Framework with full descriptions of the preschool system steps, essential questions, metrics, suggested measures, level of data collected, and example data sources. A glossary of the terms is also included.
- [STEP Forward with Data Framework At a Glance](#): This concise resource offers an overview of the Framework Report, including a description of the six preschool system steps and 20 essential questions.
- [STEP Forward with Data Framework Metrics](#): This spreadsheet includes all the recommended metrics from the STEP Forward with Data Framework. Users can use the spreadsheet to filter, isolate, or adapt metrics for their own needs.

The Implementation Guide is a companion resource to the STEP Forward with Data Framework and designed specifically to support you, as a preschool system leader, with implementing the Framework. You can think through how to best approach implementation of the Framework by gathering and reviewing information and working with other preschool system partners through the various activities and exercises in the Implementation Guide.

The Implementation Guide is organized into two sections:

**Section I: Defining the preschool system, identifying focal populations, and determining data practices.** This section includes a series of resources and exercises for you to use to ensure a shared understanding of the preschool context, focal populations of interest, and current data activities. Within this section there are five activities:

- **Activity 1: Defining the preschool system.** This exercise will help you and your partners define and document the scope of the preschool system in your state or community, providing you with a common understanding as you begin implementation.
- **Activity 2: Understanding the data landscape of your preschool system.** Through this exercise, you will create a comprehensive overview of the available data in your preschool system, helping you assess the implementation starting point that best meets your goals.
- **Activity 3: Identifying focal populations of interest.** This exercise provides guiding questions to help you and your partners understand and select the focal population(s) you will center in your implementation of the Framework. It also provides a template to help you understand the scope of the focal population in your preschool system.
- **Activity 4: Considering data collection practices.** In this exercise, you will identify specific data systems that may hold preschool system data and the accessibility of the data housed in those systems as well as describe any qualitative data efforts within your preschool system.
- **Activity 5: Determining data analysis practices.** This exercise will walk you through system data disaggregation capacities and guide you and your team in identifying next steps.

**Section II: Choosing a starting point.** This section provides a set of approaches that you, as a preschool system leader, can take when identifying a starting point for engaging with the Framework. Next, this section provides a short assessment exercise that you and your team can use to determine which approach to take in implementing the Framework and then which of the six preschool system steps and associated essential questions align best to the approach you have selected. The five approaches are:

- Approach A: Start with a full assessment of your preschool system
- Approach B: Start with your data strengths
- Approach C: Start with your data needs
- Approach D: Start with your priority systems areas
- Approach E: Start with your priority focal populations

# Section I: Defining the preschool system and focal populations and determining data practices

An important first step in implementing the STEP Forward with Data Framework is to articulate a shared understanding among you and your partners of the scope of your preschool system, existing data capacity, and data priorities. This series of exercises is designed to help you develop and document these ideas.

## Activity 1: Defining the preschool system

This exercise will help you and your partners come to a shared understanding of the scope of the preschool system in your state or community. Each preschool system is unique in its administration, makeup of participating programs, funding sources, data collection practices, and eligibility criteria. You and your preschool system partners may have different views on which types of programs may be considered within the broader system. Therefore, a critical first step is to come to agreement on the geographic, financial, and programmatic bounds of the system and have shared knowledge about data collection and reporting practices.

The STEP Forward with Data Framework defines the **preschool system** as 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-funded prekindergarten [pre-K]) or multiple programs (e.g., Head Start, subsidized family child care, and state-funded pre-K), and could be overseen at the state and/or local levels.<sup>2</sup> While your goal more broadly may be to serve all children and families in your geographic area (e.g., statewide, countywide, regionally, etc.), for this exercise, **think about the programs in your public preschool context that you and your partners are directly able to make decisions about.** If you would like to include other types of preschool programs that you do not have oversight on, make sure to invite those leaders into this discussion.

### Who to include when implementing the Framework

When thinking about which preschool system partners should be involved in the implementation of the Framework, consider the wide range of partners and individuals who play a role within the preschool system. This may include partners such as Head Start State Collaboration Officers, state-funded pre-K administrators, Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) Part B, 619 coordinators and state Early Childhood Advisory Councils.

We also recommend you include those who may not have traditionally been at the table when decisions about the preschool system were made, yet whose experiences are influenced by preschool policies and processes. For example, engaging families from focal populations or workforce members that have not previously been involved in decision making about the preschool system. Including family voice can provide insight into how families move through the preschool system, from outreach to enrollment and transitions to kindergarten, and where challenges may exist to equitable access and experiences that should be addressed. Similarly, workforce member perspectives can elucidate how their experiences influence the experiences of children and families and highlight any barriers or opportunities for further growth within the preschool system.

As you move through this Implementation Guide and begin to implement the Framework, consider who should be included in discussions and decision making regarding the adoption and use of the Framework for your preschool system.

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<sup>2</sup> The Framework focuses on publicly available education programs for 3- and 4-year-old children, but it is designed to be flexible enough for you to expand your focus to include other programs if applicable.

## Defining your preschool system context

Below is an exercise to help you and your partners describe the scope and reach of your preschool system. Depending on the specific preschool system context, there may be additional questions that you and your partners will want to answer, so these are meant to help start the conversation.

First, select which types of early care and education programs are included in your preschool system. That is, which types of preschool programs do you have oversight of and can make decisions about? Next, for each early care and education program selected above, please list them out in the lefthand column and fill in the remaining columns to describe the context of your preschool system.

Preschool Program Type (e.g., state pre K, Head Start)	Geographic bounds in which the program is administered	Program funding source(s)	Types of settings in which preschool services are provided	What are the eligibility requirements to receive preschool services in your preschool system (i.e., ages, incomes, populations, or reasons for care)?
<input type="checkbox"/> State-funded pre-K program <input type="checkbox"/> Head Start <input type="checkbox"/> Private child care programs <input type="checkbox"/> Preschool special education program <input type="checkbox"/> Tribal child care/Head Start <input type="checkbox"/> Locally funded pre-K program <input type="checkbox"/> Other, please specify: _____	<input type="checkbox"/> Statewide <input type="checkbox"/> City; please specify which city(ies): _____ <input type="checkbox"/> County; please specify which county(ies): _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Regional; please specify which region(s): _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Tribal region; please specify tribal region(s): _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Other; please specify: _____	<input type="checkbox"/> Federal funding <input type="checkbox"/> State funding <input type="checkbox"/> Local funding <input type="checkbox"/> Private funding	<input type="checkbox"/> Public schools <input type="checkbox"/> Head Start <input type="checkbox"/> Center-based child care <input type="checkbox"/> Family child care homes <input type="checkbox"/> Private center-based care <input type="checkbox"/> Military-based care <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____	
<input type="checkbox"/> State-funded pre-K program <input type="checkbox"/> Head Start <input type="checkbox"/> Private child care programs <input type="checkbox"/> Preschool special education program	<input type="checkbox"/> Statewide <input type="checkbox"/> City; please specify which city(ies): _____	<input type="checkbox"/> Federal funding <input type="checkbox"/> State funding <input type="checkbox"/> Local funding <input type="checkbox"/> Private funding	<input type="checkbox"/> Public schools <input type="checkbox"/> Head Start <input type="checkbox"/> Center-based child care	

Preschool Program Type (e.g., state pre K, Head Start)	Geographic bounds in which the program is administered	Program funding source(s)	Types of settings in which preschool services are provided	What are the eligibility requirements to receive preschool services in your preschool system (i.e., ages, incomes, populations, or reasons for care)?
<input type="checkbox"/> Tribal child care/Head Start <input type="checkbox"/> Locally funded pre-K program <input type="checkbox"/> Other, please specify: _____	<input type="checkbox"/> County; please specify which county(ies): _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Regional; please specify which region(s): _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Tribal region; please specify tribal region(s): _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Other; please specify: _____		<input type="checkbox"/> Family child care homes <input type="checkbox"/> Private center-based care <input type="checkbox"/> Military-based care <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____	
<input type="checkbox"/> State-funded pre-K program <input type="checkbox"/> Head Start <input type="checkbox"/> Private child care programs <input type="checkbox"/> Preschool special education program <input type="checkbox"/> Tribal child care/Head Start <input type="checkbox"/> Locally funded pre-K program <input type="checkbox"/> Other, please specify: _____	<input type="checkbox"/> Statewide <input type="checkbox"/> City; please specify which city(ies): _____ <input type="checkbox"/> County; please specify which county(ies): _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Regional; please specify which region(s): _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Tribal region; please specify tribal region(s): _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Other; please specify: _____	<input type="checkbox"/> Federal funding <input type="checkbox"/> State funding <input type="checkbox"/> Local funding <input type="checkbox"/> Private funding	<input type="checkbox"/> Public schools <input type="checkbox"/> Head Start <input type="checkbox"/> Center-based child care <input type="checkbox"/> Family child care homes <input type="checkbox"/> Private center-based care <input type="checkbox"/> Military-based care <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____	
<input type="checkbox"/> State-funded pre-K program <input type="checkbox"/> Head Start <input type="checkbox"/> Private child care programs <input type="checkbox"/> Preschool special education program	<input type="checkbox"/> Statewide <input type="checkbox"/> City; please specify which city(ies): _____ <input type="checkbox"/> County; please specify which county(ies): _____	<input type="checkbox"/> Federal funding <input type="checkbox"/> State funding <input type="checkbox"/> Local funding <input type="checkbox"/> Private funding	<input type="checkbox"/> Public schools <input type="checkbox"/> Head Start <input type="checkbox"/> Center-based child care <input type="checkbox"/> Family child care homes	

Preschool Program Type (e.g., state pre K, Head Start)	Geographic bounds in which the program is administered	Program funding source(s)	Types of settings in which preschool services are provided	What are the eligibility requirements to receive preschool services in your preschool system (i.e., ages, incomes, populations, or reasons for care)?
<input type="checkbox"/> Tribal child care/Head Start <input type="checkbox"/> Locally funded pre-K program <input type="checkbox"/> Other, please specify: _____	<input type="checkbox"/> Regional; please specify which region(s): _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Tribal region; please specify tribal region(s): _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Other; please specify: _____		<input type="checkbox"/> Private center-based care <input type="checkbox"/> Military-based care <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____	
<input type="checkbox"/> State-funded pre-K program <input type="checkbox"/> Head Start <input type="checkbox"/> Private child care programs <input type="checkbox"/> Preschool special education program <input type="checkbox"/> Tribal child care/Head Start <input type="checkbox"/> Locally funded pre-K program <input type="checkbox"/> Other, please specify: _____	<input type="checkbox"/> Statewide <input type="checkbox"/> City; please specify which city(ies): _____ <input type="checkbox"/> County; please specify which county(ies): _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Regional; please specify which region(s): _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Tribal region; please specify tribal region(s): _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Other; please specify: _____	<input type="checkbox"/> Federal funding <input type="checkbox"/> State funding <input type="checkbox"/> Local funding <input type="checkbox"/> Private funding	<input type="checkbox"/> Public schools <input type="checkbox"/> Head Start <input type="checkbox"/> Center-based child care <input type="checkbox"/> Family child care homes <input type="checkbox"/> Private center-based care <input type="checkbox"/> Military-based care <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____	

**Example:** Our preschool system is administered by a state agency and is funded by federal and state funding. Services are delivered through schools in public school districts in 25 counties and includes preschool special education programs. Our preschool system serves 3- and 4-year-old children whose family incomes are at or below 200% of the federal poverty level. Enrollment priority is given to children involved in the child welfare system regardless of family income.



## Application: Defining your preschool system

The three steps I/my team need to do to answer the questions above are...

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

The three people/agencies I need to reach out to for answers to these questions are...

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

What are three concrete action items I/my team can take to better define my preschool system context?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

## Activity 2: Understanding the data landscape of your preschool system

After defining the preschool system, the next step in implementing the STEP Forward with Data Framework will be to understand the data landscape in your preschool system. The data landscape includes the data that are collected, stored, and used. It also includes the data capabilities of staff to determine what leaders can answer now and what they could collect in the future.

We recommend that you identify what data are accessible and the data capabilities of the preschool system to understand what Framework questions may be feasible to answer and/or understand where data capacity needs to be expanded to answer priority questions. The Framework is intended to support you regardless of the level of sophistication of your preschool system's data landscape. The following exercise is designed to walk you through your existing data system landscape.

After completing this exercise, you should have a better understanding of where you have strong data capabilities and access to data and where there are areas to improve. You and your partners can then decide whether you want to begin with a step or question in the Framework where you have sufficient data to answer the question(s), or begin in an area where you want to strengthen your data collection and accessibility practices.

### Access to programmatic preschool system data

Do you have access to data on the number of preschool programs in your preschool system broken down by type or setting?

- Yes
- No
- Unsure

*If no or unsure, what is the next step in obtaining that data (i.e., who do you need to speak with, who should be part of this conversation, what data access do you need, etc.)?*

Do you have access to data on the number of preschool slots available in your preschool system?

- Yes
- No
- Unsure

*If no or unsure, what is the next step in obtaining that data (i.e., who do you need to speak with, who should be part of this conversation, what data access do you need, etc.)?*

What, if any, reporting requirements exist for the preschool system (e.g., Head Start Program Information Reports (PIR); Preschool Development Grant (PDG) reporting; Department of Education Civil Rights Data Collection Reporting; licensing inspection reports, etc.)?

## Identifying what data you have on the children, families, and workforce members in your preschool system

To answer the questions in the STEP Forward with Data Framework, you will need to understand who is included in your preschool system (i.e., children, families, workforce members). The Framework questions typically encompass three types of populations in addition to data collected at the preschool program or site level:

- Eligible preschool-aged children and their families in the system who are enrolled in a preschool program.
- Eligible preschool-aged children and their families who live within the geographic bounds where the preschool system is administered.
- The preschool workforce.

The exercise below is intended to support you in identifying what type of data you have access to directly or by request. Depending on which Framework questions and associated metrics you will focus on, you may need this data as you think through how to calculate the total population of children, families, and/or workforce members. Therefore, this exercise is intended to be a starting point to determine what data you have or what data you may need to gather to answer questions of interest within the Framework. The righthand column in the exercise is intended for you to add in any notes or next steps about how to

access or collect the data if they are not accessible or indicate a next step if you are unsure about the accessibility of the data. The questions below designated with an asterisk (\*) are aligned with the E-W Indicators Framework.

**Data about eligible preschool-aged children and their families in the system who are enrolled in a preschool program**

Are data accessible on....	Notes
How many eligible children are enrolled in the preschool system? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unsure	
What number or percent of children in preschool are receiving child care assistance/subsidy?*" <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unsure	

**Data about eligible preschool-aged children and their families living within the geographic bounds where the system is administered**

Are data accessible on....	Notes
The total number of children eligible for preschool in the geographic area overseen by the preschool system? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unsure	
The number of children eligible for preschool in the geographic area overseen by the preschool system who are on a waitlist for preschool? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unsure	

Data about the preschool workforce

What data, if any, are collected on workforce members in the preschool system?				
Type of data collected	Who is the data collected on (e.g., lead teachers, assistant teachers, etc.)?	Is data accessible at the system level (versus only available locally at program sites)?	Which entity oversees or owns the data?	Can these data be linked with other data outside of the entity who oversees it?

Are data accessible on....	Notes
The total number of workforce members in the preschool system? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unsure	
Workforce demographics (e.g., race, ethnicity, languages spoken, disability status, low-income status, gender/sex)* <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unsure	
The type of role of workforce members (i.e., lead teachers, assistant teachers, program directors/principals, etc.)? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unsure	
The education levels of workforce members? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unsure	
Are you able to compare education levels across workforce members: Roles <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unsure Years of experience <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unsure Ages served <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unsure Program setting type <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unsure	
The percentage of lead teachers that have at least a bachelor's degree?* <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unsure	

Are data accessible on....	Notes
Teachers with a CDA or other credential (e.g., NAEYC)? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unsure	
The percentage of lead teachers with specialized training in preschool/pre-K/Head Start?* <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unsure	
The number of years workforce members have worked with preschool aged children? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unsure	
The percentage of teachers who have less than one year, one to five years, and more than five years of experience?* <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unsure	
Turnover rates among workforce members in your preschool system? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unsure	

Are data accessible on....	Notes
<p>The staff vacancy percentage in your preschool system?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/>Yes</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/>No</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/>Unsure</p>	
<p>The average salary for lead teachers in your preschool system?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/>Yes</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/>No</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/>Unsure</p>	
<p>Which benefits lead teachers receive (e.g., paid leave, health insurance, retirement, etc.)?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/>Yes</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/>No</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/>Unsure</p>	
<p>How many teachers are receiving assistance for services through subsidies?*</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/>Yes</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/>No</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/>Unsure</p>	



Data about preschool program sites and classrooms

What data, if any, are collected on child outcomes (e.g., Woodcock Johnson Assessments, Desired Results Developmental Profile (DRDP), Teaching Strategies GOLD, etc.)?				
Name of tool/assessment	Is data collected on all children in the system? If no, specify.	Is data accessible at the system level (versus only available locally at program sites)?	What entity oversees or owns the data?	Can these data be linked or shared with other data outside of the entity who oversees it?

What data, if any, are collected on classroom environments and/or teacher child interactions (e.g., ERS, CLASS)?				
Name of tool/ assessment	Is data collected on all classrooms in the system? If no, specify	Is data accessible at the system level (versus only available locally at program sites)?	Which entity oversees or owns the data?	Can these data be linked or shared with other data outside of the entity who oversees it?

**Example:** *Our preschool system collects information on children’s developmental screening results, workforce member characteristics and qualifications, and classroom level observations for all program types. Children’s individual developmental screening results are stored at the program level in a student information system. Individual developmental screening results are available at the program level only. Preschool programs report aggregated screening results to state level administrators. Classroom level observational assessments (CLASS/ECERS-R) are administered by state observers and outcomes data is stored in an Access database at the state level accessible to a database administrator. Information of workforce member characteristics, qualifications, and work experience are collected in a state-funded early childhood workforce registry that can produce state level aggregate reports. Workforce member data are also collected through a statewide teacher credentialing system. At this time, classroom observation (CLASS/ECERS-R) information is only used for coaching and training purposes and is not linked to child level data or data on workforce member characteristics.*

**Application: Understanding your data landscape**

The three steps I/my team need to do to answer the questions above about accessible data on children, families, and the workforce where we responded no or unsure are.....

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

The three steps I/my team need to do to identify what child outcome, classroom environment, and workforce data are collected within my preschool system are...

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

What are three concrete next steps we need to take to determine which data are accessible to me and my team that can be used to answer the Framework questions of interest?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

## Activity 3: Identifying focal populations of interest

Once you have a holistic understanding of your preschool system and the data landscape, you can pivot into identifying the specific focal populations you would like to focus on through your implementation of the STEP Forward with Data Framework. As defined in the Framework, focal populations are “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 you, as a preschool system leader, in partnership with their community.”

In the Framework, we identified the following focal populations:

- Families experiencing poverty
- Black, Hispanic/Latino, and Indigenous families
- Families of children with disabilities or developmental delays
- Children in immigrant families
- Families with multilingual learners
- Preschool workforce members
- People with intersectional needs and identities

Identifying focal populations for the implementation of the Framework in your state involves acknowledging that the preschool system was not built to support the needs of every child and family and that certain groups have been left out of access to high-quality preschool programs. Improving the system for one group has the potential to improve the system for all.

We strongly recommend that, as a preschool systems leader, you adopt all the identified focal populations as populations of interest in your effort to make the preschool system equitable. However, we acknowledge that each community may have their unique set of needs and histories that may result in various combinations of populations who make up the focal populations. We suggest conducting a community survey with families about preschool to help co-create and identify which focal populations are of most interest to your system.

The emphasis on focal populations is meant to be neither restrictive nor exhaustive. 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. Ultimately, we encourage you to answer the question: For whom are my efforts to make the preschool system equitable? Who has faced the most inequities in my preschool system?

### Guiding Questions for Identifying Focal Populations of Interest

Are there specific populations of children, families, or workforce members that you and your partners in your state have identified as focal populations? If so, please list them here and describe why they are focal populations for your preschool system.

Are there specific populations of children, families, or workforce members in your community or state that are not enrolled in your preschool system, or are under enrolled based on the percentage within your community or state?

Within these focal populations, are there subpopulations that may hold additional identities that are of interest? For example, children with disabilities living in poverty.

Do you have data showing these children, families, or workforce members are experiencing disproportionate access, experiences, or outcomes within the preschool system compared to their peers?

After you have identified the focal population(s) you wish to focus on for Framework implementation, you can use this template to ensure you have the necessary data needed to answer the Framework questions. The first row provides an example of how to complete this template. While this template focuses on children and families currently enrolled in your preschool system, this exercise could also be completed with eligible focal population members in your state or community that you would like to focus on enrolling in your preschool system.

Focal population(s) of interest	Level of focus	Total number of focal population members enrolled in your preschool system	Total number of children enrolled in your preschool system	Percentage of focal population members enrolled in your preschool system
<p><b>Example</b></p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Those experiencing poverty</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Black individuals</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Hispanic/Latino individuals</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Indigenous individuals</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Those with disabilities or developmental delays</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Those in immigrant families</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Multilingual learners</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____</p>	<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Child</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Family</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Workforce members</p>	<p><i>5,428 enrolled preschoolers in families earning at or below FPL</i></p>	<p><i>13,256 total enrolled preschoolers</i></p>	<p><i>41%</i></p>
<p><input type="checkbox"/> Those experiencing poverty</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Black individuals</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Hispanic/Latino individuals</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Indigenous individuals</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Those with disabilities or developmental delays</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Those in immigrant families</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Multilingual learners</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Child</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Family</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Workforce members</p>			
<p><input type="checkbox"/> Those experiencing poverty</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Black individuals</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Hispanic/Latino individuals</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Indigenous individuals</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Those with disabilities or developmental delays</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Those in immigrant families</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Multilingual learners</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Child</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Family</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Workforce members</p>			

Focal population(s) of interest	Level of focus	Total number of focal population members enrolled in your preschool system	Total number of children enrolled in your preschool system	Percentage of focal population members enrolled in your preschool system
<input type="checkbox"/> Those experiencing poverty <input type="checkbox"/> Black individuals <input type="checkbox"/> Hispanic/Latino individuals <input type="checkbox"/> Indigenous individuals <input type="checkbox"/> Those with disabilities or developmental delays <input type="checkbox"/> Those in immigrant families <input type="checkbox"/> Multilingual learners <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____	<input type="checkbox"/> Child <input type="checkbox"/> Family <input type="checkbox"/> Workforce members			
<input type="checkbox"/> Those experiencing poverty <input type="checkbox"/> Black individuals <input type="checkbox"/> Hispanic/Latino individuals <input type="checkbox"/> Indigenous individuals <input type="checkbox"/> Those with disabilities or developmental delays <input type="checkbox"/> Those in immigrant families <input type="checkbox"/> Multilingual learners <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____	<input type="checkbox"/> Child <input type="checkbox"/> Family <input type="checkbox"/> Workforce members			
<input type="checkbox"/> Those experiencing poverty <input type="checkbox"/> Black individuals <input type="checkbox"/> Hispanic/Latino individuals <input type="checkbox"/> Indigenous individuals <input type="checkbox"/> Those with disabilities or developmental delays <input type="checkbox"/> Those in immigrant families <input type="checkbox"/> Multilingual learners <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____	<input type="checkbox"/> Child <input type="checkbox"/> Family <input type="checkbox"/> Workforce members			

Focal population(s) of interest	Level of focus	Total number of focal population members enrolled in your preschool system	Total number of children enrolled in your preschool system	Percentage of focal population members enrolled in your preschool system
<input type="checkbox"/> Those experiencing poverty <input type="checkbox"/> Black individuals <input type="checkbox"/> Hispanic/Latino individuals <input type="checkbox"/> Indigenous individuals <input type="checkbox"/> Those with disabilities or developmental delays <input type="checkbox"/> Those in immigrant families <input type="checkbox"/> Multilingual learners <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____	<input type="checkbox"/> Child <input type="checkbox"/> Family <input type="checkbox"/> Workforce members			



## Application: Identifying focal populations

The three steps I/my team need to do to identify focal populations of interest are...

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

The three people/agencies I need to reach out to for information regarding focal populations of interest are...

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

What are three concrete actions I/my team can take in the next year to document the experiences and outcomes for focal populations of interest?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

## Activity 4: Considering data collection practices

You may use a combination of quantitative or qualitative data to answer the essential questions. Additionally, you may choose to use various data sources including administrative data, survey data, focus groups, or nationally reported data. We recognize that you may be facing your own data system infrastructure challenges within your preschool system, 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. The type of data collection approach will differ depending on the preschool system, what data are already being collected, and which data are already accessible to you as a preschool leader.

Data systems and data sharing capabilities within the preschool system				
Which data systems are in place to collect and store information about the preschool system?				
Type of data system	Entity that governs or owns data system	Who has access to data in this system?	How are data used from this system?	Can data from this system be linked to other data systems? If so, specify.
<input type="checkbox"/> Workforce registry				
<input type="checkbox"/> Student information systems				
<input type="checkbox"/> Subsidized child care assistance data system (e.g., Child Care Development Fund)				
<input type="checkbox"/> Head Start vendor data system(s), please list: _____				
<input type="checkbox"/> Early childhood integrated data system (ECIDS)				

**Data systems and data sharing capabilities within the preschool system**

**Which data systems are in place to collect and store information about the preschool system?**

Type of data system	Entity that governs or owns data system	Who has access to data in this system?	How are data used from this system?	Can data from this system be linked to other data systems? If so, specify.
<input type="checkbox"/> State longitudinal data system (SLDS)				
<input type="checkbox"/> Tribal child care information system				
<input type="checkbox"/> Preschool special education data system				
<input type="checkbox"/> Other, please specify: _____				

**Does the preschool system have data sharing agreements in place to share data with...**

- with system leaders? Yes No Unsure
- with preschool programs within the system? Yes No Unsure
- with other early childhood programs or services? Yes No Unsure
- with K-12? Yes No Unsure
- with other, specify: Yes No Unsure

If checked unsure for any of these, who do you need to check with to identify if there are data sharing agreements in place?

Data systems and data sharing capabilities within the preschool system				
Which data systems are in place to collect and store information about the preschool system?				
Type of data system	Entity that governs or owns data system	Who has access to data in this system?	How are data used from this system?	Can data from this system be linked to other data systems? If so, specify.
Do you experience barriers in accessing, analyzing, or using collected preschool system data?				

Qualitative data collection practices			
Which types of qualitative data collection practices are currently used in your preschool system?			
Type of data collection	Frequency of data collection effort	What type of information is collected?	How are data used from this data collection effort?
<input type="checkbox"/> Preschool family survey <input type="checkbox"/> Community family survey <input type="checkbox"/> Workforce member survey <input type="checkbox"/> Preschool family focus group <input type="checkbox"/> Community family focus group <input type="checkbox"/> Workforce member focus group <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____			

**Qualitative data collection practices**

**Which types of qualitative data collection practices are currently used in your preschool system?**

Type of data collection	Frequency of data collection effort	What type of information is collected?	How are data used from this data collection effort?
<input type="checkbox"/> Preschool family survey <input type="checkbox"/> Community family survey <input type="checkbox"/> Workforce member survey <input type="checkbox"/> Preschool family focus group <input type="checkbox"/> Community family focus group <input type="checkbox"/> Workforce member focus group <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____			
<input type="checkbox"/> Preschool family survey <input type="checkbox"/> Community family survey <input type="checkbox"/> Workforce member survey <input type="checkbox"/> Preschool family focus group <input type="checkbox"/> Community family focus group <input type="checkbox"/> Workforce member focus group <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____			

## Application: Data collection and storage practices

The three steps I/my team need to do to answer the questions above that we were unsure of are...

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

The three people/agencies I need to reach out to for answers to these questions are...

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

What are three concrete actions I/my team can take in the next six months to identify data sharing needs and remove related barriers?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

## Activity 5: Determining 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 you will need to determine how you and your partners 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.

### Exploring data disaggregation capabilities

An important aspect of the Framework is that data are collected in a standardized way and can be disaggregated to the extent possible to examine the experiences of different subgroups of children to identify if and where inequities may exist to guide decision making. Additionally, disaggregated data allows you to look at intersectional identities and experiences to ensure all children have an opportunity to grow and learn. Below we offer recommendations for ways in which to collect and/or disaggregate the data to fully answer the essential questions and associated metrics about focal populations.

Exploring disaggregation capabilities		
Recommended metrics for disaggregation		Is data in my state available?
<b>Age of child</b>	Breakdown by year (i.e., 3-year-olds, 4-year-olds),	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Partially <input type="checkbox"/> Unsure
	Breakdown by preschool age (i.e., ages 3 up to age 5)	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Partially <input type="checkbox"/> Unsure
	Breakdown by early childhood age span (i.e., 0-5-year-olds; 0-8-year-olds)	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Partially <input type="checkbox"/> Unsure
<b>Race *</b>	American Indian or Alaskan Native	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Partially <input type="checkbox"/> Unsure
	Asian	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Partially <input type="checkbox"/> Unsure
	Black or African American	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Partially <input type="checkbox"/> Unsure
	Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Partially <input type="checkbox"/> Unsure
	White	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Partially <input type="checkbox"/> Unsure
	Two or More Races	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Partially <input type="checkbox"/> Unsure
	Race Unknown	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Partially <input type="checkbox"/> Unsure
<b>Ethnicity</b>	Hispanic or Latino ethnicity	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Partially <input type="checkbox"/> Unsure
<b>Gender/Sex of Child</b>	Male	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Partially <input type="checkbox"/> Unsure
	Female	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Partially <input type="checkbox"/> Unsure
	Nonbinary, if applicable	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Partially <input type="checkbox"/> Unsure
	Transgender, if applicable	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Partially <input type="checkbox"/> Unsure
	Other	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Partially <input type="checkbox"/> Unsure

Exploring disaggregation capabilities		
Recommended metrics for disaggregation		Is data in my state available?
<b>Family or household income*</b>	Family or household income (in dollars)	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Partially <input type="checkbox"/> Unsure
	Family income level (i.e., FPL, SMI)	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Partially <input type="checkbox"/> Unsure
	Families that are fully funded (no co-pay or tuition)	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Partially <input type="checkbox"/> Unsure
	Families who are private paying	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Partially <input type="checkbox"/> Unsure
	Families who have a co-pay	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Partially <input type="checkbox"/> Unsure
<b>Disabilities</b>	Disability type	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Partially <input type="checkbox"/> Unsure
<b>Language</b>	Language other than English spoken at home	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Partially <input type="checkbox"/> Unsure
	Language spoken at home	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Partially <input type="checkbox"/> Unsure
	English language learner	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Partially <input type="checkbox"/> Unsure
	Dual language learner	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Partially <input type="checkbox"/> Unsure
<b>Nativity</b>	Foreign born	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Partially <input type="checkbox"/> Unsure
	Country of birth	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Partially <input type="checkbox"/> Unsure
<b>Geographic setting or location</b>	County	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Partially <input type="checkbox"/> Unsure
	Region within the state	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Partially <input type="checkbox"/> Unsure
	Local education agency (LEA)	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Partially <input type="checkbox"/> Unsure
	Tribal land or reservation	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Partially <input type="checkbox"/> Unsure
	Poverty or income characteristics of geographic areas	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Partially <input type="checkbox"/> Unsure
<b>Program type</b>	State-funded pre-K only	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Partially <input type="checkbox"/> Unsure
	Head Start only	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Partially <input type="checkbox"/> Unsure
	Public child care/ child care subsidies only	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Partially <input type="checkbox"/> Unsure
	Privately funded child care (including faith-based)	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Partially <input type="checkbox"/> Unsure
	Blended funding	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Partially <input type="checkbox"/> Unsure
	Other	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Partially <input type="checkbox"/> Unsure
<b>Type of care setting</b>	Center-based	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Partially <input type="checkbox"/> Unsure
	Public school-based	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Partially <input type="checkbox"/> Unsure
	Head Start	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Partially <input type="checkbox"/> Unsure
	Special education preschool	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Partially <input type="checkbox"/> Unsure
	Military preschool	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Partially <input type="checkbox"/> Unsure
	Home-based	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Partially <input type="checkbox"/> Unsure
<b>Rated quality</b>	Star rating level if participating in a state Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS)*	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Partially <input type="checkbox"/> Unsure



## Application: Disaggregation of data

The three steps I/my team need to do to answer the questions above where we responded no or unsure are...

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

The three people/agencies I need to reach out to for answers to these questions are...

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

What are three concrete actions I/my team can take in the next year to address data disaggregation capabilities?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

## Section II: Choosing a starting point for implementing the Framework

As you begin to implement the STEP Forward with Data Framework, you will need to identify a starting point for implementation. The Framework is designed to be flexible so that you can begin at any of the six steps and with any of the essential questions. Additionally, you could begin with a step or essential question where you already have a lot of the data needed to answer the question or could begin with a step or question where you have little to no data, with the goal of identifying data that you need to collect. Below are different approaches you and your team could take as you work to determine the right starting point for your system.

- **Approach A. Start with a full assessment of your preschool system:** If you are interested in assessing all the Framework systems steps, you can work through each of the essential questions to determine your data and data infrastructure needs. You can refer to your answers in *Activity 1: Defining your preschool system*, to take a holistic look at the system to identify whether there are logical Framework steps that are starting points for implementation or whether it would be best to move through the Framework steps sequentially.
- **Approach B. Start with your data strengths:** If you aim to address questions promptly, start with those for which you have already identified a robust capacity to access and disaggregate data for your focal populations. You can refer to your answers in *Activity 2: Understanding your data landscape* and *Activity 5: Determining data analysis practices* to identify places where you have robust data capacity and look to see which Framework steps and essential questions correspond well to those areas.
- **Approach C. Start with your data needs:** If you aspire to expand beyond your current data capacity and address areas where additional data capacity is desired, consider selecting areas where you may need to establish partnerships or implement additional methodologies to answer essential questions. You can refer to your answers in *Activity 2: Understanding your data landscape*, *Activity 4: Considering data collection practices*, and *Activity 5: Determining data analysis practices* to identify places where additional data capacity is needed and look to see which Framework steps and essential questions correspond well to those areas.
- **Approach D. Start with your priority systems areas:** If there is existing research or policies highlighting specific areas of your system requiring immediate attention, begin with steps that align with those priority areas, using the Framework steps and questions to use data to guide discussions to formulate policies and procedures. You can refer to your answers in *Activity 2: Understanding your data landscape* and *Activity 3: Identifying focal populations of interest* to identify priority areas for making your preschool system more equitable. This may be an area where you are already engaged in an effort or one that is more of a reach but can help guide your decision making for a new initiative or program you are planning to launch.
- **Approach E. Start with your priority focal populations.** If you already have initiatives aimed at enhancing preschool services and outcomes for specific groups, such as multilingual learners or children with disabilities, that you wish to examine from a systemic perspective, follow the steps to answer questions tailored to your priority focal population. You can refer to your answers in *Activity 3: Identifying focal populations of interest* and *Activity 5: Determining data analysis practices* to identify priority focal populations of interest. Additionally, you can search for metrics pertaining to a group of individuals by filtering the [Framework metrics bank](#) for the group of interest (child, family or workforce).

# STEP Forward with Data Framework Preschool System Steps



## STEP Forward with Data Framework 20 Essential Questions

System Step	Essential Question	Answering this question ensures that an equitable preschool system...
<b>Supply</b>	<b>Q1.</b> Does existing supply meet the needs of families from focal populations?	...has an adequate supply of preschool programs whereby families from focal populations have the choice to attend preschool programs they want.
<b>Outreach</b>	<b>Q2.</b> Do outreach methods improve knowledge and understanding of program options among families from focal populations?	...seeks to ensure that families, especially those from focal populations, know and understand the preschool options available to them.
<b>Enrollment</b>	<b>Q3.</b> Do eligibility processes allow families from focal populations to attend programs they want?	...establishes program eligibility criteria that allow children and families from focal populations to attend preschool programs of choice.
	<b>Q4.</b> Do enrollment procedures help families from focal populations attend programs they want?	...aims to make the enrollment process as seamless as possible for families from focal populations.
	<b>Q5.</b> Are children from focal populations enrolled proportionate to or higher than their representation in the community?	...aims to enroll as many children as possible into preschool programs, especially those from focal populations who would benefit from preschool.
	<b>Q6.</b> Are children from focal populations enrolled in programs rated as high-quality proportionate to their representation in the system?	...ensures that children from focal populations can access high-quality preschool options.
	<b>Q7.</b> Do children from focal populations have consistent attendance?	...supports children to attend preschool for the intended duration of the preschool program to maximize the impact of benefits from preschool.
<b>Learning Experiences</b>	<b>Q8.</b> Are identities of children from focal populations and families reflected in programs?	...has children and families from focal populations reflected, appreciated, and celebrated in preschool programs.
	<b>Q9.</b> Do workforce members receive training in supporting the needs of children from focal populations and families?	...builds in and fully supports continued professional development for workforce members that is culturally responsive, developmentally appropriate, and trauma informed and tailored to the needs of children from focal populations and families.
	<b>Q10.</b> Do children from focal populations receive positive behavior supports?	...ensures that children from focal populations receive positive behavior supports and limit their exposure to discipline practices that may cause harm to children.

System Step	Essential Question	Answering this question ensures that an equitable preschool system...
	<b>Q11.</b> Do children from focal populations have the learning accommodations they need?	...ensures that children from focal populations have the learning accommodations they need to fully participate in activities with their peers.
	<b>Q12.</b> Does the program offer or connect families from focal populations with whole family services?	...supports the whole family, by connecting families to services they need, such as housing supports or nutrition assistance programs.
	<b>Q13.</b> Are multiple forms of evidence used to understand the developmental progress, strengths, and needs—across domains of development—of children from focal populations?	...gathers information from a variety of sources (and does not lean on one source) to understand a child’s development.
	<b>Q14.</b> Are facilities structured and maintained to support the well-being of children from focal populations?	...maintains facilities that meet basic health and safety requirements to support learning for children from focal populations.
<b>Transitions</b>	<b>Q15.</b> Do transition activities meet the needs of families from focal populations?	...facilitates the transition between learning accommodations, services, classrooms, and/or schools for children and families from focal populations.
	<b>Q16.</b> Are children from focal populations reaching developmental and learning milestones when transitioning to kindergarten?	...supports children from focal populations to reach developmentally appropriate milestones across developmental domains (i.e., language/literacy; cognition; social emotional development; approaches to learning; and physical development) upon kindergarten entry.
<b>Administration</b>	<b>Q17.</b> Are families from focal populations and workforce members engaged in shared leadership?	...is co-created with families, especially from focal populations, to ensure that the system is operated in a way that best meets the needs of families.
	<b>Q18.</b> Are there funding mechanisms to support equitable experiences for children, families, and workforce members?	...has sufficient and sustainable funding to ensure that children and families from focal populations have their needs met.
	<b>Q19.</b> Is there system-level guidance for how to support equitable experiences for children, families, and workforce members?	...is made stronger when preschool system leaders provide accessible guidance and expectations for how to support equitable experiences for children, families, and workforce members.

System Step	Essential Question	Answering this question ensures that an equitable preschool system...
	<b>Q20.</b> Are there mechanisms to support equitable experiences for workforce members from focal populations?	...supports its workforce, especially those from focal populations, by ensuring that they are provided access to supports and resources to enter and continue to thrive in the system

## Assessment Exercise

The following exercise can be used to help you and your partners determine a starting point for implementing the Framework. First, review the five suggested approaches above and discuss which approach or strategy best meets the needs for your preschool system. Next, review the Framework’s six steps and associated 20 essential questions to determine which step(s) and/or questions align with the approach you have selected.

1. The approach that most aligns with our preschool system’s current needs is:
  - Approach A: Start with a full assessment of your preschool system
  - Approach B: Start with your data strengths
  - Approach C: Start with your data needs
  - Approach D: Start with your priority systems areas
  - Approach E: Start with your priority focal populations

2. Review the STEP Forward with Data Preschool System Steps and Essential Questions. List the step and/or essential questions that best align with the approach you have selected above.

3. Describe why you have selected this step and/or essential questions as a starting point for implementing the Framework.

4. What are three concrete next steps you and your partners will take in the next six months to begin implementing this step or set of essential questions in the Framework to make your preschool system more equitable?
  - a.
  - b.
  - c.

A list of external data resources can be found in the Appendix. Additional implementation resources to supplement this Guide and support the use of the Framework will be posted to the website. If you have recommendations for additional guidance, please reach out to our project team at [prekdata@childtrends.org](mailto:prekdata@childtrends.org).



## Appendix. External Data Resources

### Population Data Resources:

#### [American Community Survey:](#)

[File S1401 – School Enrollment](#) – Estimated population 3 and over enrolled in nursery school/preschool

[File DP03 – Selected Demographic Characteristics](#) – Estimated families with children under 6 with both parents in the workforce

[Kids Count Education Indicators – Early Childhood Estimates:](#) Data tables on a variety of early childhood data including population estimates, preschool and Head Start enrollment, child care and developmental screenings

### Preschool Program Data Resources:

[NIEER Preschool Yearbook](#) – Enrolled 3- and 4-year-olds, workforce information, and per child spending for state funded preschool programs by state

[Data Capacity of State Funded Pre-K Programs Across the United States](#) – State by state results of survey on state level data capacity for state funded preschool programs. Includes information on specific types of data collected and data linkages.

[US Department of Education Civil Rights Data Collection](#) – Public school preschool enrollment by race/ethnicity, and preschool discipline by state

[Child Care Development Fund \(CCDF\) Statistics](#) – Data tables on families served with CCDF subsidies by state

[First Five Years Fund State Early Learning Fact Sheets](#) – Compilation of statewide data on early learning programs, participation, funding, and workforce.

[Head Start Program Information Report \(PIR\)](#) – Reporting requirement for all Head Start grantees that includes information on children served, services provided, and workforce members.

[Individuals with Disabilities Act \(IDEA\) section 618 State Data Profiles](#) – Aggregate information on children who receive IDEA Part C (ages 0-2) and Part B (ages 3-21) services.

[QRIS Compendium Data Sets](#) – Provide detailed information about early learning quality initiatives nationwide

### Workforce Data Resources:

[Early Childhood Workforce Index](#) – Information on early childhood workforce policies and workforce registry data collection by state

[Bureau of Labor Statistics](#) – Employment and wage estimates for preschool teachers by state, excluding special education teachers.

## Data Standards

[Common Education Data Standards \(CEDS\)](#) – Standardized set of data elements and vocabulary established for State Longitudinal Data Systems that includes early learning data elements.

[National Workforce Registry Alliance](#) – Standardized data elements established by the National Workforce Registry Alliance pertaining to the early learning workforce.

[INQUIRE Data Toolkit](#) – Standardized set of data elements and vocabulary for child care and early learning aligned with federal reporting requirements and the Common Education Data Standards.

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