Accessing Data Across Systems is Critical

How do we **allocate resources** to better serve **vulnerable children** without data?

To affect policy for children who interact with both Early Childhood Education (ECE) and Child Welfare systems, access to data across agencies is the key component to success.

Although we know that children are served by many different public systems, there is little information currently available on the timing or nature of the services a child receives across these systems. Child Care Resource Center (CCRC) and the Children's Data Network (CDN) are conducting a pilot for how ECE records can be integrated across multiple funding streams as **linking external data systems will generate a more complete picture of those children and families served by multiple systems as well as their outcomes**.

The challenge we face is clear as illustrated below.

Early Care & Education Contract/Program	Number of Agencies in Los Angeles County	Total Children Served in Los Angeles County	Children Served by CCRC	% of Los Angeles County Children Served by CCRC
	100+	153,661*	18,058	11.8%

* This is a duplicated count for children in multiple programs

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The integration and sharing of data across thousands of statewide agencies is a daunting challenge, but it is possible. Standardized data on many of the children served by California's ECE programs already exists in one place. **The California Department of Education's (CDE) Early Education and Support Division has developed an efficient and effective method for collecting standardized data on the children served by all of their contracted agencies**. Rather than attempting to gather data one agency at a time, access can be given to this set of data that is already standardized and collected in one location.

And, while the pilot is a groundbreaking demonstration of the research and policy questions that can be posed and answered, the picture of LA County is incomplete because CCRC is only one of over 100 agencies serving children. Access and analysis of CDE's existing data would help us understand service gaps, identify the quality of child care settings these children are in, and ensure children and families receive the support they need. We believe that sharing results of these analyses will also help build stronger connections between the ECE and Child Welfare systems.

What does this mean?

The bottom line is that we need to work together to securely connect standardized data that is already in one location to better meet the needs of the vulnerable children we serve.

Children's Data Network

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