



Early Childhood Data Partnership Project

Building Capacity for Data-Informed Strategies that Strengthen Early Childhood

Why are we doing this Project?

The Colorado Evaluation and Action Lab (Colorado Lab) is a strategic research partner for government and non-profit organizations interested in strengthening coordinated and efficient person-centered services. The Colorado Lab and the Governor's Office of Information Technology (OIT) joined forces to create the Linked Information Network of Colorado (LINC), a collaborative that supports timely, secure, and cost-efficient linkage of data across organizations to help answer questions that any one organization cannot answer on their own.

A Shared Vision

The Colorado Lab has partnered with the Colorado Department of Human Services Office of Early Childhood (OEC) to use LINC to answer pressing questions that can help strengthen early childhood programs. This project aims to understand engagement in early childhood programs and pathways that promote Kindergarten readiness so each child receives the early supports they need to thrive.

By linking data across early childhood programs, we hope to answer questions such as:

- Which children attended early childhood programs prior to kindergarten entry?
- What programs did children participate in? Did children participate in multiple programs?
- What are children's kindergarten readiness skill levels and attendance rates?
- How do early intervention and special need services unfold for children and families? Who is referred? Who receives services? When in the child's life is the need identified?

We are starting this project by engaging five program partners in the early childhood education space: Colorado Child Care Assistance Program, Colorado Shines QRIS, Denver Head Start, Denver Preschool Program, Denver Public Schools, and Early Intervention Colorado. In the future, we anticipate inviting additional data partners into the project as long-term strategic goals are identified by stakeholders.

What are the Benefits?

Impact to Families and Programs: A student's ability to learn, grow and be successful in school requires a whole child approach. Linked data from this project will create a more cohesive picture of school readiness and how children and families engage in early childhood programs. In doing so, results can provide data-informed guidance on areas where early childhood programs and service pathways can be strengthened to ensure all children and families receive the supports needed for Kindergarten readiness and educational success.

Impacts to Communities and Systems: This project also serves to create the infrastructure necessary for data sharing practices that can enhance service coordination and guide cross-program investments. This project will share back to each program a unique identifier they can use to directly partner with the other programs involved in the project in the future. By working together to establish high-priority questions and mobilize findings, this sustainable LINC model of partnership can be used again in the future with additional partners to strengthen programs and support more Colorado families.