

South Carolina Early Childhood Integrated Data System

Data Governance Charter

SC ECIDS Data Governance Charter

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SC ECIDS Data Governance Charter

I. Overview

The Data Governance Charter establishes the framework for data governance for all early childhood data participating in any initiatives of the South Carolina (SC) Early Childhood Integrated Data System (ECIDS). The governing body for this work is the Early Childhood Advisory Council (ECAC). The ECAC acknowledges that data is a critical asset as it supports evidence-based decision-making and drives informed action. The ECAC is committed to implementing an inter-agency data governance structure and processes to support the SC ECIDS and its linkage to future longitudinal data systems.

SC ECIDS data governance will safeguard program and outcome data and its accessibility. The work of SC ECIDS is not an infringement on privacy or confidentiality of young children and their families. Rather, the goal of data governance is to ensure that the privacy and confidentiality offered to young children and their families through early childhood programs are maintained while allowing leaders and stakeholders to use data to make informed decisions about early childhood programs and policies in the state.

SC ECIDS will follow the stipulations of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), 20 U.S.C. § 1232g *et seq.*; and the FERPA regulations, 34 CFR 99 *et seq.*; which govern the use and disclosure of education records. Under 34 CFR 99.35, educational entities may disclose personally identifiable information for the purpose of audit or evaluation, under certain specific conditions. The SC ECIDS will establish and maintain procedures and controls, pursuant to the FERPA and other relevant laws, to protect the confidentiality and security of the data that it receives. These procedures will mandate that no personally identifiable data that is shared pursuant to this agreement be further released to any party or agency without express written agreement between the relevant parties. Confidential data of any form, paper or electronic medium, can only be accessed and/or otherwise disclosed with express written approval from the relevant parties.

In South Carolina, early childhood data from multiple agencies and programs are housed and secured by the South Carolina Revenue and Fiscal Affairs Office (RFA). However, RFA needs SC ECIDS data governance to inform how these data can be used and accessed for answering routine questions and for fielding *ad hoc* data requests. Currently, there are two initiatives under ECIDS that integrate early childhood data across programs and agencies. The Palmetto Drive to Five (Pdt5) initiative is housed and maintained by RFA; while the Early Learning Extension (ELE) that connects to the State Longitudinal Data System (SLDS) for K-12 data resides with the SC Department of Education (SCDE). In the case of the Early Learning Extension, early childhood data is collected and secured at RFA; then exported to SCDE for use in reporting and visualization. There are other distinct differences in these initiatives that are discussed later in the charter.

Participating programs in the SC ECIDS' initiatives seek to develop a common understanding of early childhood data that is collected across South Carolina and will work to resolve data issues to achieve higher data quality. These programs will provide members from their agencies to serve on the Data Governance Work Group (DGWG; one per initiative) that are facilitated and supported by a Data Governance Coordinator. Some data governance procedures, processes, and standards will apply to all current and future SC ECIDS initiatives, while some will be initiative specific. The Data Governance Coordinator will be responsible for getting input from all relevant DGWG members and escalating recommendations to the ECAC for consideration.

Mission of SC ECIDS: Establish and maintain a comprehensive infrastructure for integrated, accurate, and actionable data to support children, families, and communities in South Carolina.

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Vision of SC ECIDS: We will be successful when all children reach their highest potential.

Goals of SC ECIDS

1. Create standard definitions and reports for evidence-based decision making.
2. Achieve equity by supporting stakeholders in identifying and resolving disparities.
3. Inform policies and practices to support children, families, and communities.
4. Connect early childhood data into longitudinal data systems.
5. Understand the impacts of investment from Birth through Workforce.
6. Improve the quality of life for all South Carolinians.

Purpose of SC ECIDS Data Governance: To develop recommendations to the South Carolina Early Childhood Advisory Council for data governance and to operationalize the South Carolina Early Childhood Integrated Data System.

II. Relevant State Legislation

SC ECIDS enables the ECAC to fulfill its goals codified in S.C. Code Ann. §63-11-1725 (2023), effective June 19, 2023, particularly:

“(1) conduct a periodic statewide needs assessment concerning the quality and availability of early childhood education and development programs and services for children from birth to the age of school entry, including an assessment of the availability of high-quality prekindergarten services for low income children in the State;”

“(2) identify opportunities for, and barriers to, collaboration and coordination among federally funded and state-funded child development, child care, and early childhood education programs and services, including collaboration and coordination among state agencies responsible for administering these programs;”

“(3) develop recommendations for increasing the overall participation of children in existing federal, state, and local child care and early childhood education programs, including outreach to underrepresented and special populations;”

“(4) develop, maintain, and serve as the governing body for a unified and integrated data collection system, implement sound data governance policies that protect privacy, and maintain a comprehensive infrastructure for integrated, and when applicable, longitudinal data for public early childhood education and development programs, and services, and state, local, and federal funding sources throughout the State;”

“(8) prepare an overall strategic plan at least once every five years that establishes clearly defined goals, objectives, strategies, and key measures of progress for optimizing the state's early childhood system. Following creation of such plan, the council shall periodically review the implementation of the plan and review any changes in the state's needs;”

“(10) develop and publish, using available demographic data, an indicators-based measure of school readiness at the state and community level.”

“(11) incorporate, within the periodic statewide needs assessments required in 42 U.S.C. Section 9837b, any data related to the capacity and efforts of private sector providers, Head Start providers, and local school districts to serve children from birth to age five, including fiscal, enrollment, and capacity data;”

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SC ECIDS enables the ECAC and all early childhood serving agencies and entities to fulfill the provisions of S.C. Code Ann. §63-11-1726 (2023), effective June 19, 2023:

“All publicly funded early childhood-serving agencies and entities shall participate in data-sharing initiatives supported by the advisory council in furtherance of the requirements listed in Section 63-11-1725.”

Access to early childhood data helps inform decisions related to early childhood education as outlined in the Education Accountability Act, S.C. Code Ann. §59-18-1950 (2017), effective June 10, 2017:

“(A) The General Assembly recognizes the importance of having a state longitudinal data system to inform policy and fiscal decisions related to early childhood education, public education, postsecondary preparedness and success, and workforce development.”

“(B)(1) The Revenue and Fiscal Affairs Office, working with the Office of First Steps to School Readiness, the South Carolina Department of Education, the South Carolina Commission on Higher Education, the Department of Social Services, the South Carolina Technical College System, the Department of Commerce, the Department of Employment and Workforce, and other state agencies or institutions of higher education, shall develop, implement, and maintain a universal identification system that includes, at a minimum, the following information for measuring the continuous improvement of the state public education system and the college and career readiness and success of its graduates:...”

“(2) All information disseminated will conform to state and federal privacy laws.”

III. Authority

The ECAC will serve as the governing body and venue for collective decision making of the ECIDS Data Governance. The ECAC has the authority to formally adopt high level strategic direction and policies for the ECIDS. The ECAC operates under the Freedom of Information Act guidelines as outlined in S.C. Code Ann. §30-4-15, *et seq.*

The DGWG is not a formal committee of the ECAC and therefore does not take votes or spend public money. Each DGWG is accountable to the ECAC and will follow an agreed upon decision-making process related to procedures, policies, and standards to operationalize the ECIDS. When necessary, these will be submitted as recommendations to the ECAC for consideration via appropriate channels.

IV. Scope

This charter is applicable to all data assets shared for the purposes of program participation in the SC ECIDS. Program participation is official upon signing an agreement with the Early Childhood Advisory Council acknowledging this charter, an agreement with the Office of Revenue and Fiscal Affairs regarding sharing data for storage in the Integrated State Data System, and agreements for data sharing, dependent on the ECIDS initiatives the program is participating in. Data assets include, but are not limited to, all data collected, analyzed, used, and/or reported for SC ECIDS and its initiatives, including the data in any various instances and formats for staging, validating, analyzing, warehousing, reporting, and archiving. This Charter covers, but is not limited to, data in any form including print, electronic, audio, visual, backup, and archived data.

On August 19, 2021, the ECAC adopted the below key questions to be answered by the ECIDS. These questions will be revisited quarterly by each DGWG to ensure continued alignment with the ECIDS

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mission. The participating programs will agree upon standard data elements (child, family, classroom, and workforce levels) to answer the adopted key questions. The questions will be tailored based on the goals of each initiative.

A. Key Questions for the SC ECIDS

1. What early childhood programs, statewide, are available for eligible young children?
2. How many young children are there?
3. How many young children are eligible for early childhood programs?
4. How many young children are enrolled in early childhood programs?
5. Are those enrolled in early childhood programs on track to succeed?
6. What is the return on investment for early childhood programs?

B. Definitions for the SC ECIDS Key Questions

- Young children is defined as children under age six in South Carolina.
- Early childhood programs is defined broadly, beyond state and federally funded programs.
- Counts (i.e., “how many”) seek to identify an unduplicated number.

V. Foundational Documents

The following documents will serve as a standing reference to the operations and functions of the SC ECIDS and Data Governance. The documents will be available to participating entities and utilized to support on-boarding of new participating entities. The most current versions are available at www.earlychildhoodsc.org/what-we-do/sc-early-childhood-integrated-data-system/ or by request of the Data Governance Coordinator.

Currently Available:

- [Data Governance Charter](#) – Defines the framework for the ECIDS and establishes the foundations by which it operates, including roles and responsibilities and escalation path
- [ECIDS One Pager](#) – Defines the strategic direction for the ECIDS and is a resource for key stakeholders
- [ECIDS Brand Guide](#) – Articulates the what, when, and how ECIDS information should be shared with stakeholders and defines brand identity and collateral
- [DGWG Member List](#) – Identifies participating programs and their members per initiative

Forthcoming:

- [SC ECIDS Data Governance Manual](#) – Detailed explanation of the SC ECIDS data governance policies, processes, and procedures, including, but not limited to:
 - [Data Governance Decision-Making Process](#) – Defines the process by which each Data Governance Work Group makes decisions and prepares recommendations
 - [Critical Data Issues Process and Index](#) – Process by which critical issues are addressed and catalogued by each Data Governance Work Group
 - [Data and Research Request Procedure](#) – Process by which any individual or entity may request data from a participating partner within the ECIDS or for a specific collaboration of data from multiple programs within each initiative.
 - [Participating Partner Onboarding Process](#) – Describes how new partners can join ECIDS and contribute their data as a source. This is both a document and a flowchart. There is also a technical onboarding checklist maintained by SCDE.
 - [Glossary](#) – Defines all terms relevant to SC ECIDS
- [ECIDS Data Dictionary](#) – Defines the official set of data elements that the ECIDS collects and reports broken down by initiative
- [ECIDS Data Schema](#) – Maps the flow of information for each of the ECIDS initiatives.

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- [ECAC ECIDS History](#) – Running list of all ECIDS-related actions taken by the ECAC
- [PDt5 One Pager](#) – High-level overview of PDt5 as a resource for key stakeholders
- [ELE One Pager](#) – High-level overview of ELE as a resource for key stakeholders

VI. Current SC ECIDS Initiatives

Initiatives of the ECIDS have their own DGWG, discrete deliverables, one agency as the technical lead, and a clear funding source. All initiatives that include early childhood data should follow the SC ECIDS Data Governance Charter and other foundational documents.

A. SC Early Learning Extension (ELE)

The ELE will be able to answer key questions about children while they were enrolled in early childhood care and education programs and link those experiences with K-12 outcomes. The technical lead on the ELE is the SCDE. This initial work for the ELE is funded by the Statewide Longitudinal Data Systems Grant Program, Grant Number R372A200048, from the U.S. Department of Education through February 2024, with a likely one-year no cost extension through February 2025. The defining characteristic of ELE is that children from participating early childhood programs will receive a unique ID (i.e., SUNS ID) that will remain with them as they matriculate through public school in South Carolina. This will allow for integration of data across multiple programs at the child-level and for longitudinal study.

B. Palmetto Drive to Five (PDt5)

The PDt5 will be built for early childhood data, including new data inputs into the SC Integrated Data System and leverage existing data inputs for evidence-based decision-making. The technical lead on this initiative is RFA. The initial work was funded by the Preschool Development Grant Birth through Five Initiative (PDG B-5), Grant Number 90TP0080-01-00, from the Office of Child Care, Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, which ended in April 2023. Data for the PDt5 are integrated at the child-level using RFA's probabilistic algorithm to identify the same child across data from multiple programs.

VII. Data Governance Structure

A. Early Childhood Advisory Council (ECAC)

The ECAC serves as the governing body and venue for collective decision making of the ECIDS Data Governance. A Data Governance Coordinator will be housed at the ECAC to facilitate each Data Governance Work Group for early childhood program data contributions to the ECIDS, including any initiatives and the ECIDS.

To support ECIDS data governance, the ECAC is responsible for:

- Setting the strategic direction, for the SC ECIDS and ensuring alignment with the best interest of the early childhood system in South Carolina and the ECAC vision
- Reviewing and considering for adoption the recommendations prepared by each Data Governance Work Group regarding policies, procedures, processes, and standards when appropriate
- Voting on recommendations and policies developed by each Data Governance Work Group on topics like data sharing, data access, and reports
- Being a champion for their SC ECIDS within their agencies and promoting program participation

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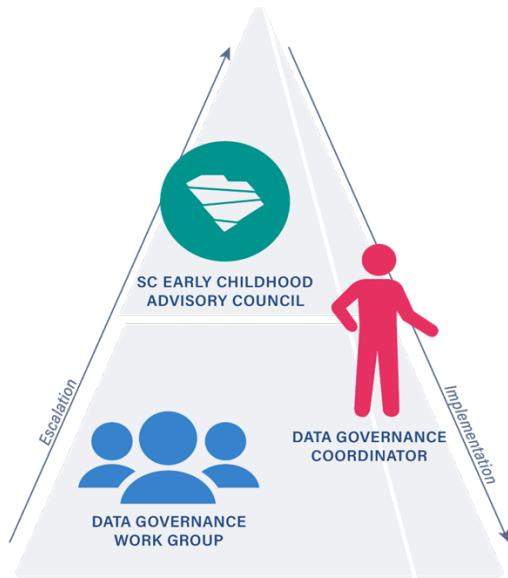


Figure 1: SC ECIDS Data Governance Structure

B. Data Governance Coordinator

The Data Governance Coordinator is responsible for coordinating statewide data governance efforts of early childhood data to ensure a system is built that protects young children and their families, while promoting the use of these data to inform decision-making and program improvement. It is the responsibility of the Data Governance Coordinator to facilitate and manage decisions and recommendations of each DGWG, to enable discussion, and aid in issue resolution.

C. Data Governance Work Groups

The DGWGs operate with the support and facilitation of the Data Governance Coordinator. They are not formal public committees of the ECAC and therefore do not take votes or authorize the expenditure of public money. Each DGWG will operationalize the ECIDS and

develop recommendations to the ECAC for their consideration to support South Carolina’s early childhood system in being aligned, coordinated, and family centered. Each DGWG promotes data quality, availability, data usage privacy, and security.

To support ECIDS data governance, each DGWG is responsible for:

- Establishing procedures, processes, and standards for operationalizing the ECIDS, including but not limited to, effective data usage, sharing, access, security, and storage; future data integration; changes to standard reports; changes to data collection
- Selecting data elements to be included in the ECIDS
- Establishing standard definitions and reports
- Defining meta-data and data quality standards
- Supporting data literacy and maximizing appropriate data use, including supporting data and research request processes

i. Data Governance Work Group Membership

Each DGWG can effectively fulfill its purpose only when members collaborate and act under a shared mission and supporting goals. Members who are selected to participate in meetings, discussions, and decisions serve on behalf of their agency/program because of their understanding, familiarity, and/or ownership of the data to be discussed within the work group.

Members are selected by agency and/or program leadership, who sign off on the agreement between the participating program and the ECAC. It is the responsibility of programs to select the most appropriate members to serve on each DGWG. It is the member’s responsibility to communicate all Data Governance policies, procedures, processes, and standards with their agency/program.

To support ECIDS data governance, the members are responsible for:

- Meeting regularly to operationalize the ECIDS
- Ensuring that their agency leaders and organization are informed and brought into decision-making processes when appropriate

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- Assigning an interim DGWG member if out for an extended period of time
- Being a champion for ECIDS within their agencies and programs

ii. Frequency and Nature of Meetings

To aid in the successful implementation of each Data Governance Work Group, the following outlines the mode and frequency of meetings:

- Monthly Meetings: Each Data Governance Work Group will initially meet once a month for an hour and an ad-hoc basis, as required.
- Virtual Meetings: Each Data Governance Work Group will meet virtually to ensure all members have an opportunity to participate.
- Periodic Review: Periodically, each Data Governance Work Group will review the frequency and duration of meetings based on current needs.

iii. DGWG Member Roles and Responsibilities

The different types of program staff members on each DGWG are outlined below.

1. Program Experts

- Individual(s) from the participating program that have a rich understanding of the early childhood program and agency they are a part of, as well as the early childhood landscape in South Carolina.
- Research staff within or contracted partners of participating programs.
- Typical job titles include: program manager, director, or coordinator.

2. Data Stewards

- Individual(s) from the participating program that develop and protect the information resources and ensure the integrity of the data.
- Typical job titles include: data analyst or research and planning administrator.

3. Technical Data Stewards/Technical Experts

- Individual(s) with expertise with the technical aspects of systems and models and ensure data security and governance and that Data Governance decisions are feasible from a technical perspective. Including:
 - Representatives from the Revenue and Fiscal Affairs Office, SC Integrated Data System
 - Representatives from the South Carolina Department of Education, Office of Research and Data Analysis and Chief Information Office

4. Advisory Member

- Individual(s) serve in an advisory capacity and share suggestions with the participating programs for the purpose of the decision-making process. Their agreement is not needed to reach consensus in the decision-making process.
- Representatives may include members of the Education Oversight Committee or the Early Childhood Advisory Council (outside of those who are a participating program)

VIII. Program Responsibilities

Participating programs will adopt, communicate, and enforce the established data governance policies, procedures, processes, and standards at all levels of their program as data is an inter and intra-agency asset. Participating programs need to assign members to participate in each Data Governance Work Group. Within each DGWG, a consensus-based decision-making process will be utilized. Each participating program will have one unified voice in the decision-making process.

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1. Accountability to the ECAC

A participating program is accountable to the ECAC for the following:

- Maintaining an agreement with the Revenue and Fiscal Affairs Office for data sharing and integration into the SC Integrated Data System
- Attending regular project meetings, including annual on-site meetings and monthly meetings by member(s) designated by individual programs as their representatives
- Collecting and sharing data elements as agreed upon by the programs via each Data Governance Work Group
- Timely review of research requests
- Requiring relevant staff be trained in data quality and system use and hosting trainings for staff and other stakeholders when necessary
- Providing accurate technical documentation

2. How to Participate

To participate, programs are required to complete an application, pending approval, complete the SC ECIDS On-boarding process. That includes, but is not limited to, completing the three required agreements below.

- Sign a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) with the ECAC to confirm agreement and adherence to the ECIDS Data Governance Charter and selecting members from the program to participate in each DGWG. This MOA is a 5-year agreement that can be amended and terminated.
- Execute an agreement with the Revenue and Fiscal Affairs Office to contribute agreed upon data to the State Integrated Data System.
- Execute the appropriate data sharing agreement based upon which initiatives a program is participating in.

3. Data Ownership

Programs retain ownership of their data and will ultimately decide the rules for the use of and access to their data.

IX. Key Terms and Definitions

- Agency - organization that houses a program
- Program - early childhood program serving children birth through five
- Member - individuals from the participating program and ancillary support in each Data Governance Work Group
- ECAC - South Carolina Early Childhood Advisory Council as codified in SC Code § 63-11-1725
- ECIDS - South Carolina Early Childhood Integrated Data System Framework
- Initiatives - funded projects with discrete deliverables
- DGWG - Data Governance Work Group

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X. Version Control

Version	Date	Summary of Changes Made
1.0	December 3, 2021	Adopted by the ECAC
2.0	April 21, 2022	Revisions adopted by the ECAC
2.1	September 15, 2022	Revisions and updates to processes based on August vote.
3.0	March 6, 2024	Updated to include language from Act 81 (2023), which revised the goals of the ECAC, moved sections around, and updated to current state