

Project 6: Early Learning Data System

The goal of the Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge Data project is to build an early learning data system that provides information on children across departments and programs. These efforts will enable the state to better understand the quality of care and education experiences of our youngest learners. Michigan will ensure that these data are also available to families, educators, researchers, and others needing access to data to support early learning improvements. Strategies include:

- Creating a management structure that will plan, organize, regulate, and guide the collection of, access to, and use of MSLDS data;
- Improving the existing Statewide Longitudinal Data System (MSLDS) to create links to all of the essential data elements;
- Increasing access to data to improve program delivery and effectiveness, to inform resource investment and policy decisions, and to empower families to make better decisions for their children; and
- Improving data collection about early childhood educators to help improve policies that impact Michigan's early childhood educators.

This document contains frequently asked questions related to the project, information on current project progress, and a section with key terms.

Frequently Asked Questions

[What is the Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge grant? What happens after the grant?](#)

The purpose of the Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge (RTT-ELC) grant is to support States' efforts in improving learning and development programs for young children. Project 6 of the grant is specifically tied to improving Michigan's coordinated early learning data system. Michigan is also committed to ensuring the work accomplished during the RTT-ELC grant continues after the grant period ends, and is in the process of developing a sustainability plan.

[What will collected data be used for? Alternatively, what are impermissible uses of the data, or limitations on the sharing of information?](#)

Data submitted by early childhood programs to the Michigan Statewide Longitudinal Data System (MSLDS) will connect student-level data to inform funding and practices with the goal of improving student outcomes. Inclusion of data from publicly-funded early learning programs, such as Head Start, will enable the state to more efficiently analyze the quality of care and education provided to our youngest learners. Additionally, programs will receive information

about the children they serve, such as their third grade reading assessment performance, that will allow them to determine whether they are meeting their program goals.

Information is shared in very limited ways to protect student privacy. For public reporting, only aggregated information is shared with additional data protections employed to ensure that students cannot be identified. Student-level information is only shared back via secure mechanisms with entities that provided services to that student. This means that the MSLDS is not and could not ever be used for activities such as college admissions purposes. Further, the [Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act \(FERPA\)](#) governs all data disclosures. For more information on CEPI data collection practices, please visit: [How CEPI Protects Education Data](#).

How will early childhood programs and providers benefit from a coordinated early child data system?

In the future, a coordinated early childhood data system will bring numerous benefits to Michigan, some of which include:

- Teachers will be able to access data on children’s prior early learning experiences and outcomes, to inform their work with children and their parents.
- Families could be spared some of the burden of providing the same information to multiple agencies to establish their eligibility for varied early childhood, health, and family support services.

Current Project Activities

This section summarizes current Project 6 activities, and updates will follow as the work progresses.

Head Start Unique Identification Code Pilot Overview

An essential step in meeting the Office of Great Start’s goal of ensuring that all children are developmentally ready to succeed in school and are reading proficiently by the end of third grade is understanding the performance of children in our current early childhood programs. Building this capacity is a key outcome with our RTT-ELC work, and Head Start is a primary focus area.

The pilot is the first phase of a larger project to eventually allow all Head Start grantees to voluntarily include their data in the Michigan Statewide Longitudinal Data System (MSLDS). Head Start grantees who submit their data to the MSLDS will be able to receive valuable insight into how their children perform on state indicators of achievement. Some of the benefits of reporting data are understanding how children in Head Start perform on the third grade reading assessment and providing State policymakers with a detailed picture of the quality of all early childhood programs.

This pilot will be conducted in two stages, both of which utilize the Michigan Student Data System (MSDS):

- Stage One: Assign Unique Identification Codes (UIC) to the children serviced in Head Start programs. The UIC is a unique ten-digit code assigned to each student enrolled in Michigan schools. The purpose of this code is to provide the student with an exclusive single identifier for their entire education in Michigan. The UIC is a means to ensure the privacy and security of the data.
- Stage Two: Submit basic program information such as entry and exit dates from Head Start and whether children are enrolled full or part time in the program. This information will identify children as Head Start participants for subsequent analysis and reporting.

Key Terms

What is the [Center for Educational Performance and Information \(CEPI\)](#)?

The [Center for Educational Performance and Information \(CEPI\)](#), a part of the [Michigan Department of Technology, Management, and Budget \(DTMB\)](#), is the unit responsible for collecting, securely managing, and reporting education data in Michigan. [\(CEPI\)](#) is a partner in the Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge's [Early Learning Data System Project](#).

What is the [Michigan Student Data System \(MSDS\)](#)?

The [Michigan Student Data System \(MSDS\)](#) is an online application that allows the [Center for Educational Performance and Information \(CEPI\)](#) to securely collect student data from public and nonpublic schools. The [MSDS](#) is also where Unique Identification Codes (UIC) are assigned to students.

What is a UIC?

A Unique Identification Code (UIC) is a 10-digit code assigned by the state to each PK-12 student at all public school and some private schools. Public schools are required to have UICs. The UIC enables powerful analysis of student success factors as they go from level to level and school to school, but the analysis can be done without personal information about the student because of UICs.

What is the [Michigan Statewide Longitudinal Data System \(MSLDS\)](#)?

The [Michigan Statewide Longitudinal Data System \(MSLDS\)](#), is the system that the [Center for Educational Performance and Information \(CEPI\)](#) uses to follow education inputs and outputs, connecting student records over time, while protecting student privacy.