

Ten Essential Early Childhood Policy Questions

- 1. Do high-need children from birth to age five in Connecticut have access to high-quality early childhood programs and services? What impact are those programs having?**
 - What indicators are being used to measure children's developmental progress: And what are the trends?
 - What results have been obtained for children on validated instruments measuring all developmental domains?
 - What impact are early childhood programs having on social-emotional development?
 - Are those high-need children ready for Kindergarten? Are they on track at 3rd grade?
 - Do assessment trends over time indicate a closing of the achievement gap?

- 2. Which children have access to high-quality early childhood programs and services?**
 - Which programs/services are high-quality? Which are most effective?
 - What are the demographics of children and families in the state? What are the demographics of children and families enrolled in early childhood programs or services?
 - What is the attendance pattern for each child?
 - What gaps in services exist for early childhood programs and services? (across age, geographic region, and types of programs)
 - Which children are enrolled in multiple programs or services? Which children are served through which funding source(s)? Are services across agencies being coordinated efficiently?

- 3. Is the quality of programs improving?**
 - How will the QRIS be used to measure program quality?
 - Are an increasing number of programs meeting established quality standards?
 - Is the number of programs at the highest level of quality increasing?
 - What technical assistance is being provided to programs?

- 4. What are the characteristics of programs?**
 - What curricula are used by programs?
 - What are the qualifications for program staff?
 - In what setting are the services delivered?
 - Which programs are exempt from state licensing?
 - What are the costs associated with the programs? Are they cost effective?
 - What are the funding sources for the programs?
 - What are the staff-to-child ratios?
 - How are programs engaging parents and caregivers, especially fathers?
 - What "dosage" does it require for a high-quality program to have maximum impact?

- 5. How prepared is the early childhood workforce to provide effective education and care for all children?**
 - What are the qualifications for program staff and directors?
 - What education, preparation, and training have program staff and directors received?
 - What credentials do program staff and directors have?
 - What are the demographics of program staff and directors and do they reflect the families they serve?
 - What languages do program staff and directors speak?
 - Do current standards result in a better workforce?

- 6. What policies and investments lead to a skilled and stable early childhood workforce?**
- At what rate and for what reason does turnover occur? Which programs experience the most/least turnover?
 - What are the characteristics of those staff who persist? Of those who leave the field?
 - What salaries and benefits do the programs provide staff?
 - What technical assistance is provided for workforce development?
- 7. What child health and development services are being provided to children?**
- What percentage of birth mothers receive prenatal care?
 - What percentage of children have medical homes?
 - What medical and dental services have the child received?
 - Where are services being provided? Are services connected to an early childhood program?
 - What developmental screenings has the child received? What were the outcomes?
 - Which children have been enrolled in early intervention programs?
- 8. What are the family circumstances of children in early childhood programs and services?**
- What percentage of enrolled children are in foster care?
 - What percentage of children in early childhood programs live with a relative other than their birth parents? (non-foster care placement)
 - What percentage of children have moved within the last six months? How frequently are they moving?
- 9. What longitudinal information do we know about children enrolled in early childhood programs and services over time?**
- How do children enrolled in early childhood programs and services fair in K-12?
 - Do children receive special education services in public schools? Do children from high-quality early childhood programs and services have a reduced need for special education?
 - Are children enrolled in early childhood programs and services less likely to end up in the juvenile justice system? In the child welfare system? In the child mental health system?
 - What are the cost savings associated with early childhood programs and services?
- 10. How is data used to align, prioritize, and mobilize resources?**
- How are the needs of children being identified in programs? When needs are identified, what follow-up occurs to ensure those needs are met? Are caregivers being provided with information about what services are available to address needs?
 - Have children been referred for medical and social services needs? Did they receive the services? How much time passed between referral and receipt of services? Which agencies provided the services?