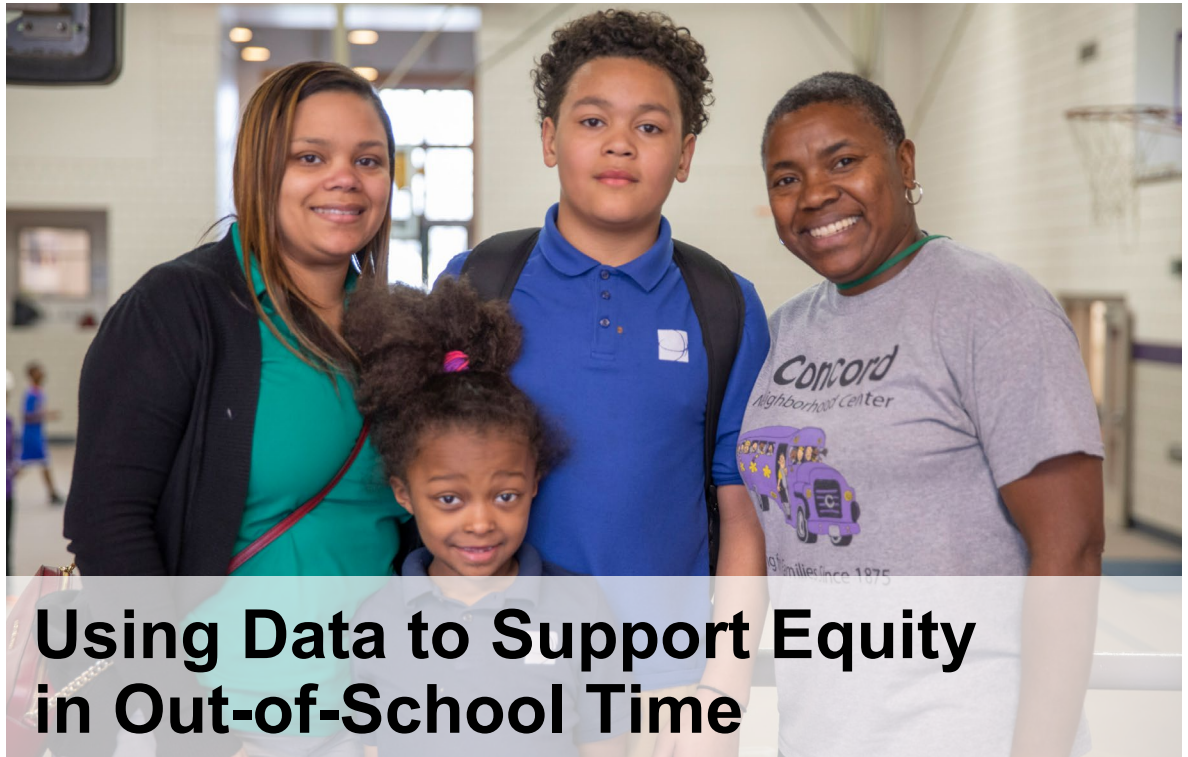


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This Practice Brief is the twelfth in a periodic series published by the National Center on Afterschool and Summer Enrichment (NCASE) to build awareness of research and promising practices in the field of school-age child care.

The goal of NCASE is to ensure that school-age children in families of low income have increased access to quality afterschool and summer learning experiences that contribute to their overall development and academic achievement. For more information, contact us at ncase@ecetta.info.

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Using Data to Support Equity in Out-of-School Time

In 2018, the National Center on Afterschool and Summer Enrichment (NCASE) published its first batch of data profiles, including a [national profile](#), and [separate state and territory profiles](#), with the purpose of informing the child care and out-of-school time (OST) communities about federal investments in school-age child care.

Representation of OST/school-age child care in data ensures funding, quality initiatives, licensing, monitoring, and other child care practices/processes are recognized and delivered to the appropriate programs. To ensure equitable access, experiences, and positive outcomes for all children in child care, there must be applicable data collection, with an opportunity to address identified disparities and obstacles. Data should be inclusive of all settings, age groups, program service times, and care characteristics. Input that requires further attention includes data on children and families of color, concentrated poverty

areas, and equitable child care support for rural communities. This brief will share strategies to ensure that OST/school-age child care programs, their workforce, children, and families receive equitably representation.

Child care system leaders and programs are responsible for providing quality child care experiences for families throughout their service areas. Decisions that directly affect this care must be made based on relevant and accessible information. Guidance derived from needs assessments and other information collection processes



should yield accurate data that provide insight into the amount and types of child care support families need and prefer. Equitable collection, analysis, application, and access of data reflects current federal recommendations from the **White House’s Equitable Data Working Group**.

President Biden’s [Executive Order On Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities Through the Federal Government](#) led to the formation of an Equitable Data Working Group to identify ways to improve federal data and strategies to collect data to measure equity and represent the diversity of Americans and their experiences.¹ This working group made recommendations in a report, [A Vision for Equitable Data: Recommendations from the Equitable Data Working Group](#). The key recommendations from this report are the following:

- » Make Disaggregated Data the Norm While Protecting Privacy
- » Catalyze Existing Federal Infrastructure to Leverage Underused Data
- » Build Capacity for Robust Equity Assessment for Policymaking and Program Implementation
- » Galvanize Diverse Partnerships Across Levels of Government and the Research Community
- » Be Accountable to the American Public

State, territory, and Tribal nation leaders are obligated to meet their population’s needs, which starts with using available data to determine and meet their existing and future needs. These recommendations reflect best practices in equitable data collection and use.

State, territory, and tribal system leaders, like Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) Lead Agency administrators, must have access to data that allow them to make informed decisions around policies, funding, and special initiatives that affect child care providers and families. The infor-

mation collected by the CCDF Lead Agency is mainly from licensed programs and families engaged with childcare subsidies. Input from a range of stakeholders (see Figure 1) can provide additional perspectives to support decision making.

Figure 1. Types of data



State, territory, or local child care administrative data provide a wealth of information on authorized child care programs, such as baseline data like geographic location of programs, and more specific data such as health and safety standing, ages of children served, curricula implementation, state funding support (e.g., program subsidy recipients), quality initiatives (e.g., quality rating system /quality rating improvement system participants), and qualifications of the staff. When families participate in the subsidy program, there is additional administrative data collected at the family level.

A key requirement of CCDF is that Lead Agencies need to ensure that families eligible for subsidies have “equal access” to the same type of care as families not eligible for subsidy. Once every three years, Lead Agencies must use data on the price or cost of child care, including OST care, to inform their child care rates. Every agency must also analyze the cost of operating child care programs and consider staffing costs. Agencies may use higher staff sala-

¹ Whitehouse.gov. (2021). The White House. *Executive Order on Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities Through the Federal Government*. <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/presidential-actions/2021/01/20/executive-order-advancing-racial-equity-and-support-for-underserved-communities-through-the-federal-government/>

ries in an analysis to determine what costs might be if programs were paying those wages.

In addition, other data collection and analysis demonstrate that child care providers are willing to serve families receiving a child care subsidy and that there are no barriers to their participation. Lead Agencies must also analyze the supply of care to ensure that there is an adequate supply to meet parents' needs based on demographic data about the needs of families eligible for child care subsidies. This may include assessing whether providers sharing the culture and primary language of the family are available.

Community-level data collection, especially at the township or neighborhood level, in the form of census data sets, can be useful for examining the infrastructure and service availability. In addition, survey data on this level can reveal population attitudes and concerns that can assist in planning. In the planning and implementation of child care programming, these data provide the existing and potential demand for services. The data can yield information like the age of children, family income, and parental work status.

When collecting community-level data, it is important for system and community leaders to engage diverse stakeholders to provide insights and new perspectives and reveal opportunity gaps in the data collection process. Data collection from OST child care programs can determine how characteristics of care, especially the cost of care, can create racial inequities that could increase the opportunity gap to access OST services. Data collection from an equity lens means intentionally embedding it within each step of the data collection process. The use of several methods to engage stakeholders in the data collection process, such as surveys, focus groups, in-

terviews, and virtual meetings. Each method creates an opportunity for stakeholders to engage and share important cost-of-care data. Below are tips to consider when performing community-level data collection.

1. Clarify the purpose, vision, and potential outcomes for the cost-of-care data collection.
 - Explain why data gathering is important.
 - What are you trying to accomplish?
 - How does collecting the OST cost impact payment rates?
2. Engage stakeholders with an equity lens by collecting OST data on diverse children, families, and communities. Closely examine what you collect, and how you analyze, interpret, and disaggregate the data. How you analyze the data affects decision-making.
3. Analyze the OST data and identify gaps and opportunities for further input.
4. Once the data collection is complete from OST providers/stakeholders, inform them of what comes next.
5. Keep OST stakeholder engagement going. Lead Agencies' communications plans should include intentional check-ins and updates with OST stakeholders.

The National Workforce Registry Alliance (2022) indicates that **workforce data** should capture demographics, employment, compensation, education/training, credentials, competencies, career goals, and equity-informing variables, such as languages spoken, race, and benefits.² Why are workforce data important? The child care workforce's critical role of providing care and education for children while supporting working parents is invaluable. The workforce should mirror the culture and address the needs of the children and families it serves, reflecting the community at every level of the workforce's education, training,

² Registryalliance.org. (2023). <https://www.registryalliance.org/our-work/data/>

and competencies. And the workforce deserves just compensation. This information is typically secured by a state or local child care workforce registry, normally attached to state agencies or institutions of higher education.

The [National Workforce Registry Alliance \(NWRA\)](#) serves as the central hub collecting data from state child care workforce registries that reflect the realities and needs of the early care and education, and OST workforce. Since 2012, the NWRA has sponsored the creation of pooled national workforce data sets, including school-age child care providers. Through NWRA, registries can undergo a self-study, which includes a peer review, and contribute their registry's workforce data to the growing national data set. State child care workforce registries are repositories of workforce data that can support Lead Agencies in the child care system's planning.

All data sets, regardless of origin should be accessible, timely, user-friendly, and at minimal or no cost to state system leaders and the public.³ But it is important to acknowledge that regardless of the type or source, all data may come with drawbacks due to data systems and quality limitations. Best practices for data quality management involve identifying the proposed uses, designing criteria suitable for identified data uses, and implementing practices to ensure data meets those criteria. Data quality management maximizes the usefulness of data for organizations.

Examples of Equitable Data Strategies to Support OST

While access to data is important, analyzing and managing it to equitably address OST/school-age child care needs is the fundamental goal. Supporting families' access to affordable, high-quality child care

services is of primary importance to child care system leaders. Having accurate data is essential, and tools to aid in this process are paramount. In 2009, The Wallace Foundation published *The Cost of Quality OST Programs*, which addressed the need for program managers, policymakers, and funders to understand the range of costs associated with diverse types of OST programs.⁴ Out of this came the [Out-of-School Time Cost Calculator](#) (Updated in 2021), which provides a starting point for system leaders to decipher what they need to consider and leverage when developing quality OST programs. Below are strategies to equitably collect, analyze, and use data.

Data Landscape Scan

State, territory, and Tribal system leaders must start by understanding what data are available throughout their service area. This means completing a data landscape scan, which funders use to look at a given field or issue area to identify the needs, opportunities, and gaps in funding.

The [Michigan Afterschool Partnership](#) conducted a data landscape scan of OST programs in 2021. Documentation of the outcome of the scan is in the [Out-of-School Time Data Project report](#), which spotlights the state's lack of OST programming that disproportionately affected minority and low-income youth.⁵ In addition, MASP developed an [interactive map](#) to illustrate where program gaps exist and where minority populations reside, as well as where poverty rates are high.⁶

Data Mapping

Data mapping is a process by which different data models are linked to one another using a distinct set of methods to illustrate the data. This data linking follows a set of

3 Child Trends. (n.d.). *About Integrated Early Childhood Data*. <https://www.childtrends.org/about-integrated-early-childhood-data>

4 The Wallace Foundation. (2009). *The Cost of Quality Out-of-School Time Programs* <https://www.wallacefoundation.org/knowledge-center/pages/the-cost-of-quality-of-out-of-school-time-programs.aspx>

5 McCombs, J., Whitaker, A., & Yoo, P. (2017). The Value of Out-of-School Time Programs. <https://www.rand.org/pubs/perspectives/PE267.html>

6 Michigan Afterschool Partnership. (n.d.). <https://www.miafterschool.org/data-research>

standards, which depends on the value of the data model used. It is a powerful tool for data visualization to increase understanding and spatial analysis to represent and address issues of supply and demand, gaps in service areas, service types, etc. Furthermore, mapping can help researchers inform broad and diverse audiences, including policymakers and providers.

The [Mississippi Statewide Afterschool Network](#) developed a searchable OST [mapping database](#). This process revealed that half of Mississippi afterschool programs provide transportation and at least 141 of the 242 identified programs offer STEM learning.⁷ Policymakers and others can use this mapping database to view program density and therefore determine the program needs of their communities.

Cost Modeling Estimation

Cost modeling estimation is the process through which state/territory departments, like CCDF Lead Agencies, can better understand the actual cost of child care services, because it includes all potential costs (rent, supplies, food, staff wages, staff benefits, training, transportation, insurance, etc.)⁸ It enables and empowers Lead Agencies and child care providers to understand what it takes to deliver quality child care services. Many Lead Agencies use market rate surveys to determine the price that parents pay for child care, and they use that information to set child care subsidy rates. Market rate surveys document the predominant prices charged to families in the private market across variations in the

geographic area, provider type, and age. Cost modeling estimation determines the cost to provide care to children. Often the cost to provide care exceeds the price that parents can afford to pay. Cost modeling can also estimate costs at various levels of quality.

In the District of Columbia, the Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE) uses a cost modeling approach to analyze the costs of delivering child care to inform policy and practice. Using this approach, OSSE can explore the costs of delivering services at each level of the District's QRIS, Capital Quality, in center- and home-based settings that serve children of mixed ages and needs.⁹ OSSE adapted the [Provider Cost of Quality Calculator](#) to create an Excel-based modeling tool customized to reflect the district's licensing and quality standards and other relevant factors.

To conclude, child care system leaders need to collect data on active OST/school-age child care programs and acknowledge the programming gaps based on families' needs. To support the needs of these programs and address gaps in services and quality, Lead Agencies can work with their State Afterschool Networks and other OST/summer programming-related organizations to get access to needed data. Data landscape scans, data mapping, and cost model estimation are strategies to analyze relevant data and identify needs in the quest for equitable results for OST/school-age child care programming.

⁷ Mississippi Statewide Afterschool Network. (n.d.). Mississippi's First Searchable Map of Afterschool. <https://msafterschool.org/state-of-afterschool/>

⁸ Office of Child Care. (2022). *Child Care Cost Estimation Modeling to Inform Decisionmaking* https://childcareta.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/public/cost_modeling_to_inform_policy.pdf

⁹ dc.gov. (n.d.). <https://osse.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/osse/publication/attachments/Modeling%20the%20Cost%20of%20Child%20Care%20in%20the%20District%20of%20Columbia%202021.pdf>

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