



Online Module 3: Using Data to Support Continuous Website Improvement

This resource was developed by the Child Care State Capacity Building Center (SCBC) with funding and oversight from the Office of Child Care (OCC).

Before We Begin

This is a text version of the Consumer Education Online Module Series, *Using Data to Support Continuous Website Improvement*. View the interactive version of [Module 3: Using Data to Support Continuous Website Improvement](#).

Welcome

Welcome to *Module 3: Using Data to Support Continuous Website Improvement*.

The intended audience for this module is state and territory staff and contractors who are responsible for building and maintaining child care consumer education websites.

Resources are available to support each module. A [resource list](#) can be found on the same page where you accessed this text version of the module.

This course includes hyperlinks to other helpful resources. When you select a hyperlink, a new window will open.

Series Purpose

The Consumer Education Website Online Module Series aims to help Child Care and Development Fund Lead Agency staff develop more effective, accessible, engaging, and family-friendly child care consumer education websites.

This series provides best practices and tips that states and territories can use to support continuous improvements to their website to make sure that families can learn about, understand, and access the full range of child care options and resources available to them.

This series highlights how states and territories can build awareness for their websites and use data to inform continuous improvements and enhancements.

The series includes three modules:

- ◆ *Module 1: Building a Family-Friendly Website*
- ◆ *Module 2: Promoting Your Consumer Education Website*



◆ *Module 3: Using Data to Support Continuous Website Improvement*

For more information on the CCDF consumer education website requirements, please refer to the [CCDF Consumer Education Website Requirements Infographic](#).

Module Purpose

Even before you launch a child care consumer education website, you should begin thinking about how to keep it fresh and relevant for your audience. Continuous quality improvement is essential for a successful, user-friendly website. To make well-informed, thoughtful improvements to your consumer education website, you should leverage the power of data.

The Child Care State Capacity Building Center has developed several products that offer best practices for using data to improve your consumer education website. This module integrates these best practices in one place. This module aims to help you build your understanding of key data strategies that you could use to guide your continuous improvement efforts for your consumer education website.

We will explore two categories of data that can support website growth and continuous improvement: User-level data, and State and provider-level data.

Module Overview

To be successful, getting your consumer education website up and running is just the first step. Once you have launched your website, start shifting your focus to how you can support its growth and improvement so that it may continue to meet the needs of both your audience and your agency. Consider your website a living thing that requires check-ups and nourishment to stay healthy and fresh. Improvements may include adding new pages and content, improving website design and organization, or enhancing your child care search tool.

This module aims to answer the following questions:

Question: How can I support my consumer education website's growth and improvement so that it can continue to meet the needs of both my audience and my agency?

Answer: Use data to inform and guide your improvement planning.

Question: What kind of data should I use?

Answer: Two categories of data can support website growth and continuous improvement:

- ◆ User feedback data and website analytics help identify areas for website improvement and assess how well improvements resonate with your audience.
- ◆ State- and provider-level data support the development and maintenance of web-based tools, such as your child care search tool or a data dashboard.



Section 1: User Data

User-Level Data

User-Level Data Can Support Continuous Improvement

User-level data—which includes user feedback data and website analytics—can help you identify areas for website improvement and assess how well your improvement efforts resonate with your audience.

User feedback and website analytics data can support your continuous website improvement efforts by helping you to do the following:

- ◆ Identify areas for website improvement.
- ◆ Assess how well your improvement efforts resonate with your audience.

User Feedback: What Is It?

Let's first discuss user feedback. User feedback helps you understand what users think about your website. For your consumer education website, users include all segments of your target audience. This should include parents, providers, and other stakeholders. User feedback helps you keep your website improvement efforts connected to the needs of your target audience.

Let's learn more.

- ◆ User feedback keeps you connected to your audience's needs.
- ◆ User feedback is the information—insights, issues, and input—that you collect from your target audience about their experiences with your website.
- ◆ It helps you keep your website improvement efforts connected to the needs of your target audience, especially as those needs evolve.
- ◆ Tip: Embrace a proactive approach to collecting user feedback, integrating it into your improvement planning and implementation processes.

User Feedback: When Does It Help?

User feedback will help you maximize engagement through your consumer education website in an actionable way. It can be used at different points in the website improvement process—from planning to implementation. For instance, you can collect user feedback to obtain specific data on your current website or child care search tool to identify opportunities for improvement. User feedback may also help you assess how improvements you have made to your website resonate with your audience.

User feedback can be helpful for the following activities:

- ◆ Planning website improvements

User feedback can help you:

- Identify key areas for improvement.



- Prioritize identified improvements.
 - ◆ Implementing website improvements
- User feedback can help you:
- Validate that improvements are useful.
 - Identify follow-up refinements to better meet audience needs.

- ◆ Staying connected to user needs

User feedback can help you:

- Develop intentional questions to solicit general user feedback:
 - Would you recommend this website to other families?
 - How likely are you use this website again on a scale of 1–10, with 10 being very likely?
 - What would you change about the website if you could?

Methods for Collecting User Feedback

There are many ways to collect user feedback on your consumer education website. Here are some widely used methods to consider.

Consider the various methods for collecting user feedback:

- ◆ **Moderated User Testing:** This kind of testing is carried out by user researchers in person, through virtual tools, or via telephone. This may include interviews and focus groups.
- ◆ **Unmoderated User Testing:** This kind of testing is typically delivered to users via a link online and is not moderated in real-time by the researcher. This may include online surveys.

See SCBC's [Improving Consumer Education Websites with User Research](#) (2019) for more information about the range of user testing methods that are available.

Web Analytics: What Are They?

Web analytics allow you to access in-depth information about the visitors to your website. Web analytics software provides opportunities to measure, collect, analyze, and report users' web data to understand and optimize website usage. When you use web analytics, you can take an evidence-based approach to gain insight into your website's user experience with data from actual user behaviors. Web analytics not only provide a process for measuring web traffic—they can also work as a tool for conducting user research and assessing and improving a website's effectiveness.

What Do Web Analytics Measure?

Let's take a look at the types of information that web analytics can provide.

Web analytics can measure the following:



- ◆ Sources of web traffic
 - How are users coming to your consumer education website?
 - For example, are they coming to your website through social media, direct traffic (through bookmarking the consumer education website, for instance), an email campaign, another website, or an online search?
- ◆ Visitor traffic (overall and by page)
 - How many total views and unique visitors did your website have?
 - Which pages did users visit while on your consumer education website?
 - Which web pages on your site does your audience visit the most?
- ◆ Search engine keywords and phrases
 - Which words or phrases are driving users to your consumer education website when they perform a search (for example, “quality child care”)?
 - This information can be found by integrating Google Search Console with your analytics account.
- ◆ Track specific goals and events
 - Track specific data that are tied to your website goals.
 - For example, if your goal is to increase the use of your child care search tool, you can configure tracking events to see how many people are using it.
- ◆ Bounce rate
 - A bounce rate measures the percentage of single-page visits on your site. It tells you whether your visitors continue looking at different pages on your website or leave after their first visit to a web page.
 - Generally, the lower your website bounce rate, the more engaging your website is because users visit more than one page. However, a high bounce rate isn't always bad—it may just indicate that the user found exactly what they needed on the first try.

Web Analytics: How Can They Help?

You want to make it possible for stakeholders to come to your consumer education website and get what they need from it—quickly and easily. Web analytics provide web traffic and engagement data to help you understand how users are getting to your website and which pages they are visiting. This information can be incredibly helpful for your website improvement planning.

Let's learn more about how web analytics can help you.

- ◆ Web analytics provide answers.

Which questions can web analytics help you answer?

Web analytics can help your team answer the following important questions about your consumer education website:

- How is your audience getting to your consumer education website?
- Where are opportunities to optimize user experience?



- Are there ways to generate better website outcomes that align with your digital goals?
- Have your improvement efforts achieved the desired results?
- ◆ Web analytics support success.

What can web analytics help you accomplish?

You can use the results of web analytics to accomplish the following:

- Identify successes and failures.
- Inform design and development.
- Validate design decisions and test new ideas.
- Spend resources smartly and appropriately.

Maximize Your Web Analytics: Set Goals

To get the most from your web analytics, you should track metrics that support your website improvement goals. This will allow you to assess your progress and determine if your website improvement efforts have been successful.

Set Your Goals

Create some general goals first, which should guide your specific objectives and metrics.

These overall goals are often the prime motivation behind an enhancement, such as the following:

- ◆ Increase web traffic.
- ◆ Achieve a better online search ranking.
- ◆ Improve user satisfaction.

Maximize Your Web Analytics: SMART Objectives

Once you have identified your broad improvement goals, set more specific, short-term objectives to measure progress and maintain momentum toward full goal achievement. Link these objectives to measurable metrics by using a specific, measurable, attainable, relevant, and time-based (SMART) approach.

- ◆ SMART objectives are
 - specific,
 - measurable,
 - attainable,
 - relevant, and
 - time-based.



◆ Examples

Below are a few examples of continuous website improvement goals with SMART objectives.

■ Example 1

- **General goal:** Increase web traffic.
- **Objective:** Increase web traffic to our updated child care search tool by 10 percent in the next quarter by creating a variety of weekly posts via social media that promote the new features of the search.

■ Example 2

- **General goal:** Achieve a better online search ranking and increase web traffic.
- **Objective:** Increase web traffic from search engines to our consumer education website by 15 percent within the 3 months following implementation of Search Engine Optimization techniques for improving our online search ranking.

◆ Tips

Take the time to set SMART objectives that are tied to specific efforts upfront; this will make tracking and assessing your improvement activities much easier and less time consuming.

Here are some tips to help you set up effective SMART objectives.

- Consider the range of data that web analytics can provide.
- Determine which metrics, sometimes called key performance indicators (KPIs), could best measure success toward achieving your goals.
- Determine which steps the user must take to achieve or make progress toward an objective.
 - This will help you determine which metrics may be helpful to track, so you can measure progress for that specific objective. Remember, not all metrics are created equal—some may be better for indicating success, depending on your specific goals.
 - For example, for users to access a new resource, they must land on the homepage, click on the resources button, select the resource, and download the document. The download metric may be the best KPI if your goal was to increase user engagement with resources.

Components of a Web Analytics Program

Measuring your return on digital outreach investments and website improvements is critical to understanding where it may be best to focus your energy and agency resources in the future. Setting up an effective web analytics program will help you do this.

A digital analytics program should have these three components:

- ◆ Configuring
- ◆ Measuring and monitoring
- ◆ Analyzing and action planning

Web Analytics: Configuring

The first important step in building an effective web analytics program is to select a web analytics software and configure it to capture your preferred metrics.

- ◆ Work with your agency's information technology (IT) team to choose, install, and configure web analytics software.
 - Google Analytics is one of the most frequently used web analytics software options and is available for free.
 - Google Data Studio allows visualization of web analytics through custom reporting dashboards. This tool can also pull in data from other sources in addition to Google Analytics.
 - Google Optimize runs tests on your website's content to learn what works best for your visitors, including A/B, multivariate, and redirect tests.
 - Google Search Console offers tools and reports to help measure a site's traffic and performance. It also helps fix issues related to search rankings. This tool offers a way to understand organic search terms and queries that drive traffic to websites.
 - Work with your IT team to make sure you have the right configuration to support your web analytics program.
- ◆ Use Automated Reporting Features

To ensure you can continuously capture the key metrics you need to support effective tracking and assessment, consider setting up automated web analytics reports. Automated reports facilitate ongoing analysis and support thoughtful and strategic continuous website improvement planning and implementation. They ensure that you are reviewing the same data elements regularly, investigating the reasons behind data trends, and informing recommendations to support your continuous improvement efforts.

When setting up automated web analytics reports, consider the following:

- Ensure that you capture the key metrics that will let you assess progress toward your website goals
- Make your metric-review process easier and more efficient
- Allow you to view metrics in a consistent way, which allows you to spend more time on analysis
- Allow you to review the same data consistently at different time intervals, allowing for an apples-to-apples comparison over time to assess progress.

Web Analytics: Measuring and Monitoring

An effective web analytics program should also measure your key performance indicators and support easy monitoring. For instance, make sure your web analytics program is tracking the metrics that support your SMART objectives. At a minimum, you may find it helpful to track visitors to the key parts of your consumer education website, such as your child care search tool, online inspection reports, and pages that provide information on child care health and safety requirements and how to choose quality child care.

The measurement and monitoring component of web analytics should do the following:

- ◆ Establish baselines for improvement efforts that you can use as a point of comparison over time.



- ◆ Allow you to continuously monitor data to track what users are doing in relation to baselines and goals over time. Give you time for data collection to occur—typically, one month’s worth of data is a good starting point for initial analysis.
- ◆ Allow you to create ongoing (at least monthly) reports highlighting metrics that align with your website goals and track progress toward those goals.

Web Analytics: Monitoring Best Practices

Next, to get the most out of your web analytics program, you should consider and apply best practices for monitoring web analytics. For instance, designate a staff person to be responsible for web analytics work. This may be a challenge in states and territories that do not have a dedicated analyst for this purpose. However, even if you do not have a dedicated staff person for this work, consider distributing the responsibility among team members to ensure you can stay on top of the work. Determine a process that works best for your organization and stick with it.

Let’s take a look at other best practices for monitoring web analytics.

Monitoring Best Practices

Review “metrics that matter” at least weekly (if not daily).

- ◆ Take 30 to 60 minutes every Monday morning to review data for a week-by-week comparison.
- ◆ If you have a large audience, it may be helpful to open your automated report each day and compare numbers with the day before to see how the website is performing day-to-day.
- ◆ Make note of any interesting or significant changes.

Formally review all website metrics at a prescribed interval (at least monthly).

- ◆ Recognize that metrics review must be integrated into your routine.
- ◆ Schedule metrics reviews as recurring items on your calendar.

Schedule monthly review meetings.

- ◆ Use the data and trends from daily and weekly assessments to develop your agendas.
- ◆ Highlight successes and areas for improvement.
- ◆ Discuss any trends in the data, determine why changes may have occurred to help identify successful outreach strategies, and determine how you can use this information to improve your website.

Web Analytics: Analysis

By collecting, contextualizing, and analyzing digital metrics, you can determine how to improve the online experience and outcomes for your users.

To support an effective web analytics program, ensure your analysis component includes the following:

- ◆ Analyze data and convey findings in an understandable, contextualized way, and use the data to help inform actionable recommendations for improvements.



- ◆ Generate analytics reports as an ongoing as part of monitoring.
- ◆ Regularly conduct more in-depth analyses to support your understanding of trends and data anomalies.
- ◆ Analyze and contextualize the data to measure progress toward identified goals and SMART objectives.
- ◆ Compare the data to benchmarks over time and create more content that performs well and less content that does not perform as well.
- ◆ Determine how you can use these metrics to improve the consumer education website.
- ◆ Use your data to inform content development for your site and create more content that reflects what your users are seeking.
- ◆ Use data to inform outreach strategies that drive traffic to aspects of your site that do not currently have high traffic.
- ◆ See SCBC's [Using Data to Inform Your Website](#) (2019) for more information on how to interpret data and apply that information to improve user experience.

Web Analytics: Action Planning

Analysis of your web analytics should include an action planning component. Action Planning is the process of turning your analysis and recommendations into action that results in continuous website improvements that maintain progress toward your digital goals.

- ◆ Use your analysis to make strategic recommendations that lead to action planning for future content, design, and development sprints.
 - For instance, web traffic often increases because of outreach efforts:
 - A social media post promoted your emergency preparedness, response, and recovery web page.
 - An e-newsletter included a link to your enhanced child care search tool.
 - You shared your new web page on child development resources for parents at your latest stakeholder meeting.
- ◆ If you can determine which efforts were successful and what contributed to that success, you can use that information to inform additional improvements or outreach efforts.
- ◆ Identifying these trends in the data can help you decide if you should do more or less of a particular action to improve outcomes for users and further your goals.
- ◆ A digital team should include an expert who can explain what the analytics data show and how they relate to the web development work needed to optimize your website's usefulness.
 - Consider the following example:
 - Analytics may show that no users are using a search tool that is located on the home page, but many users are downloading resources from interior pages.
 - Upon further analysis, an analytics expert finds that users are primarily entering the website through Google searches, which point them to pages within the website, bypassing the home page altogether. They therefore never see the search tool.
 - If you measure success based on the use of the search tool you built, it would make sense to test making the search bar persistent across the header for the whole website, so users entering on interior pages will know the tool is available.



- Without the additional contextualization and analysis of two separate data points in relation to each other, the state or territory may never have understood the root cause of its issue and deemed the search tool a failure when, in fact, not enough people knew of its existence.

Campaign URLs Can Strengthen Your Analytics Capacity

Understanding which outreach and promotion methods help drive people to your consumer education website is important for sustaining ongoing success. This understanding will help you target your outreach and communications efforts more effectively. Campaign tracking codes (also called tracking tags or “UTMs”) can help you build this understanding. Instead of embedding a standard link to your website in an email newsletter or social media post, you can add campaign tracking codes to the embedded link to track how many “clicks” the link generates.

Campaign URLs are an incredible tool that can strengthen your website promotion efforts because they help you determine which digital promotional tactics are most effective at driving users to your website through targeted user-behavior analysis.

◆ What are campaign URLs and what do they do?

- Campaign tracking codes are bits of computer code that you can add to a hyperlink so that you can track what kind of web traffic it creates.
- Campaign URLs
 - allow you to add custom campaign parameters to a URL, making it possible to track campaign performance;
 - capture valuable information about who clicks on the link;
 - help you assess the performance of specific digital outreach activities;
 - push campaign tracking data directly to your web analytics software so that you can easily monitor the results; and
 - are called Urchin Tracking Module codes—or UTMs—in Google Analytics.

◆ Here is a campaign URL example.

In this example, the outreach activity that needs to be tracked is a September 2nd Facebook social media post to promote new enhancements to a child care search tool.

- The example standard URL simply displays the link to the child care search tool.
- In contrast, the example campaign URL includes a series of tracking codes after the standard URL. Each segment of tracking code (separated by an “&”) conveys aspects of the example outreach activity. These tracking codes will tell your web analytics software which outreach activity this campaign URL relates to, which then allows you to track the web traffic it creates.
- Here is an example of a campaign URL:
 - **Outreach activity:** You use a campaign URL for a Facebook social media post on September 2, 2020 that promotes new enhancements to your child care search tool.
 - **Standard URL:** <https://www.example.com/find-child-care>.
 - **Campaign URL:** https://www.example.com/find-child-care/utm_source=social_media&utm_medium=facebook&utm_campaign=2Sept20_post&utm_term=child_care_search&utm_content=design_enhancements.



Campaign URLs: Tips

Work with your web management or information technology team to determine how to incorporate campaign trackers into your outreach efforts and apply best practices to maximize their effectiveness.

Here are some tips to consider when using campaign URLs:

- ◆ Use a Campaign URL Builder: There are free campaign URL builders available online to help you build a campaign URL with the proper characters and spacing.
 - Google has developed this free Campaign URL Builder.
- ◆ Keep Track: Keep a spreadsheet of all campaign URLs you generate for reference, tracking, and reporting.
- ◆ Use Underscores: Always use an underscore between words for easy identification.
- ◆ For example, `utm_campaign=consumer_education_series`.
- ◆ Use Consistent Capitalization: Keep capitalization consistent. Best practice is to use lowercase.
- ◆ Create Secure Links: Use Secure Sockets Layer to ensure that your link is secure.
 - In other words, start your link with `https://` rather than `http://`.

Using Web Analytics for Social Media

- ◆ Use Tools to Track and Assess

Web analytics can also be used to track and assess your social media campaigns.

Here are some web analytic tools for social media:

- Native social media analytics
 - Most platforms (such as Facebook and Twitter) offer analytics tools that provide administrators with “built-in” social media analytics data on link clicks and shares.
- Other social media tools
 - Some tools can manage social media content and may also provide metrics data and social media listening (conversations) data.
 - Sometimes multiple tools are used for the best results, such as a tool that focuses on content management and others that focus on metrics or listening.
- Campaign URLs
 - Campaign URLs can also be used with social media platforms.
 - Use campaign URLs to track how many users select a specific link on a social media post and understand how much web traffic it generates.
- ◆ Learn About Your Target Audience

Web analytics can provide useful information about how your target audience engages with your social media efforts.

Here are some tips to keep in mind when using web analytics to strengthen your social media program.



- Review key metrics.
 - Track and review the number of likes, shares, views, and comments.
- Consider engagement rate.
 - The engagement rate measures how frequently users took an action after seeing the content (whether it be a low effort action, such as a “like,” or a higher-effort action, such as a “share” or link click).
 - It can be a useful metric in assessing the success of your efforts because it demonstrates users’ degree of interest.
 - Please note that low engagement rates are not uncommon for nonpaid social media posts; most posts will generate no higher than 5 percent engagement.
- Tie efforts to goals.
 - Based on your website improvement and promotion goals, you may consider certain types of engagement to be more important to goal achievement than others.
 - For example, a click-through to the website using a shared link may be more important than generating a comment on a post, depending on your goal.

Section 2: State- and Provider-Level Data to Support Improvements

State and Provider-Level Data

Now that we have discussed how user-level data can support your website’s growth and continuous improvement, let’s learn about how state and provider-level data can do the same.

If you would like to create a new data tool—like a data dashboard—or enhance the tools you already have—like your child care search tool—you will need state or provider-level data to do so. These data are likely to come from many sources, often outside of your organization. Oftentimes, to access the data you need to support these features, you must collaborate with state partners.

Data governance makes this possible. Let’s explore how.

What Is Data Governance?

Many find the term “data governance” to be a little daunting, but the concept itself is not. Data governance is simply the means by which organizations or groups of organizations share data and make decisions about those shared data.

Data governance works as both an organizational structure and a process.

Structure: Data governance brings data partners together in a formal, sustained way.

Example: Data governance provides the structure to bring together data partners from child care, public school prekindergarten, summer camps, and statewide child care resource and referral agencies to discuss, coordinate, and align efforts to support data enhancements to your jurisdiction’s child care search tool.



Process: Through the creation and enforcement of policies, roles, responsibilities, and procedures, a data governance agreement establishes responsibility for shared data and allows agency staff and data partners to improve data quality collaboratively and continuously.

Example: You and your data partners could discuss which new data elements to include in an enhanced child care search tool and how to access or collect these data. As a data governance body, you and your partners could also discuss how to improve data collection methods to ensure the most accurate and reliable data are used to enhance your child care search.

Why Is Data Governance Important, and How Can It Help?

When creating a new system or product that requires data collaboration with other organizations, you must set clear roles, responsibilities, and processes to start, guide, and maintain the work. Data governance is the mechanism by which you do this.

Let's learn about how data governance can support your continuous improvement efforts.

- ◆ Why is data governance important?
 - Data governance is essential for successfully planning, developing, and maintaining a data tool in which several partners contribute data—such as a new data dashboard or your online child care search tool.
 - Data governance is important to continuous improvement for the following reasons:
 - It provides a structure and process for all data partners to participate in the decision-making process at both the strategic and implementation levels.
 - It ensures that those who use and contribute the data to a shared tool or product can communicate and collaborate in an ongoing manner.
- ◆ How can data governance help?

Data governance makes sustained data sharing possible in the following ways:

- It improves communication, collaboration, and relationships among partner agencies.
- It creates a shared vision for strategic and more effective data use.
- It aligns policy and research questions with agency or state priorities and initiatives.
- It improves data quality and protects data privacy.
- It helps you develop well-defined, documented data policies and priorities.
- It supports coordination among partner agencies on data integration and use.
- It improves understanding of data collected, reported, and used.

Source: Institute of Education Sciences. (n.d.). *Data governance overview*.
<https://slds.grads360.org/#program/data-governance-overview>

How Does Data Governance Relate to Data Integration?

Data governance facilitates cross-agency data sharing in which you bring together otherwise disconnected datasets.



Data integration is the process by which you bring these disconnected datasets together in one place.

Let's learn more about how data governance supports effective data integration efforts.

- ◆ Data governance facilitates cross-agency data sharing in which you bring together otherwise disconnected datasets. Data governance facilitates effective data integration.
- ◆ Data integration is the process by which you bring these disconnected datasets together in one place.
- ◆ Once you have established a formal data governance process for maintaining and sharing data, your team will need to determine how to actually combine—or integrate—data from different sources in a way that gives users a cohesive view of the data.
- ◆ Sharing and integrating data from multiple sources to support a shared product requires ongoing coordination about how data will be defined, matched, stored, updated, reported, and protected.
- ◆ A solid data governance plan allows these decisions to be made consistently, with input and buy-in from all partners.

Where Should I Start?

Getting a data governance process up and running does not need to be arduous or overwhelming.

Use these tips to help jump start your data governance process:

- ◆ Coordinate internally.
 - Reach out to your information technology department, legal department, or jurisdiction's Chief Information Officer to determine if your agency or jurisdiction has some basic data governance structures and policies already in place.
 - Make sure you align your work around consumer education data with these established policies.
- ◆ Get help from experts.
 - If your jurisdiction does not already have formal data governance structures and policies in place, consult with experts about how you can incorporate recommended best practices into your data governance efforts.
 - Experts could include business analysts, information technology staff, data management specialists, or consultants.
- ◆ Document your efforts.
 - Recognize the importance of supporting data documentation in data governance work.
 - Data governance policies should require that supporting documentation be available to ensure interoperability (processes that allow different software to share and transfer data) when transferring state data to other programs or agencies.
 - Supporting documentation may include data dictionaries or data validation checks.
- ◆ Sustain the work.
 - To be successful and nourish collaboration, data governance should be an ongoing, sustained process.



- For example, have your data committee meet quarterly to discuss updates, talk about how sharing processes are going, determine what challenges you are facing or anticipating, identify emerging needs, and coordinate efforts toward shared goals.

Data Governance Planning and Implementation Tips

Here are some tips to guide data governance planning and help support efficient and effective data governance implementation.

- ◆ Do your research.
 - Leverage experts to shepherd the work.
 - Learn about your state processes and requirements for data sharing agreements.
 - Reach out to other states that have created successful data governance structures.
- ◆ Embrace an incremental approach.
 - Focus on the most compelling data needs first.
 - Consider how to adapt the current process to first support work on the consumer education website and then support broader work.
 - Prepare to move forward incrementally when carrying out your vision using data that is required and easily accessible at first and expanding the data available from other sources over time (see [Tip Sheet: How to Implement Child Care Search Tool Enhancements](#) for best practices).
- ◆ Start small and then expand.
 - Consider shoring up your data governance process to first support work on the consumer education website.
 - Refine and strengthen your process based on lessons learned.
 - Then consider pursuing broader, more extensive data sharing initiatives.

Data Integration Tips

Data governance facilitates cross-agency data sharing, bringing together otherwise disconnected and siloed datasets.

Here are some tips that can maximize your data sharing efforts:

- ◆ Develop a data dictionary that establishes a common set of definitions for required data as well as priorities for implementation.
- ◆ Use a common primary key to facilitate data merging and alignment.
 - For example, data partners could use child care licensing numbers or license-exempt identification numbers issued by the relevant oversight agency to support data matching and avoid duplicate records.
- ◆ Consider an incremental approach to data integration.
 - Approach incremental integration as a pilot phase.



- Learn from any challenges or policy barriers that arise.
- Apply that knowledge when scaling up to integrate other data.

Conclusion

- ◆ You have reached the conclusion of Module 3.
- ◆ The information presented in this module was designed to help you build your understanding of key data strategies that you could use to guide your continuous improvement efforts for your consumer education website.
- ◆ For more information on any of the topics presented in this module, please visit the Resources document on the same page where you accessed the text-based version of the modules: If you would like technical assistance on developing and enhancing your consumer education website, contact the Child Care State Capacity Building Center (CapacityBuildingCenter@ecetta.info).
- ◆ *This resource was developed with funds from Contract #HHSP2332015000711 for the U.S Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Office of Child Care, by the Child Care State Capacity Building Center. This resource may be duplicated for noncommercial uses without permission.*

Resources

- ◆ SCBC has published a series of guides, tools, and webinars to help CCDF Lead Agencies create and maintain effective and family-friendly child care consumer education websites. A [resource list](#) can be found on the same page where you accessed the text version of this module.

The State Capacity Building Center (SCBC) works with state and territory leaders and their partners to create innovative early childhood systems and programs that improve results for children and families. The SCBC is funded by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Office of Child Care.

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