

Unified Early Childhood Database Background

The contract between the Collaboration for Early Childhood, Oak Park Elementary School District 97, Oak Park River Forest High School District 200 and the Village of Oak Park requires the Collaboration to begin to establish the efficacy of the local integrated early childhood system it is developing. The contract holds the Collaboration accountable for monitoring progress on 11 accountability measures that include child outcomes, service delivery outcomes and system outcomes. The Unified Early Childhood Database is integral to the success of data collection, management and reporting efforts. In November 2013, the Collaboration entered into a contract with Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago to enable it to meet this contractual obligation. Chapin Hall brings research prowess and a deep understanding of the ways in which policies, communities, systems, and families impact child development.

Chapin Hall is a research and policy center, focused on a mission of improving the well-being of children and youth, families, and their communities. They are experts in policy research—developing and testing new ideas, generating and analyzing information, and examining policies, programs, and practices across a wide range of service systems and organizations. “Chapin Hall’s research agenda looks **within systems**, such as child welfare and education, to learn how various policies, programs, and practices are succeeding or struggling. They also look **across systems** to learn how they do and do not work together on behalf of the children and families that they are designed to serve. Finally, they look **beyond systems** to the communities in which children, youth, and families live and how they support—or thwart— healthy development.”

Robert Goerge, Ph.D., the principal on the contract with the Collaboration, is a Senior Fellow at Chapin Hall and has 25 years of experience turning administrative data into a resource for research, conducting research in multiple domains of child and family services, and working with state human services agencies. He is currently the Principal Investigator of the National Study of Child Care Supply and Demand Design Phase, which highlight the issues facing surveys of government programs use. He has specific day-to-day responsibility for the state advisory group, for facilitating the use of data by state analysts and academic researchers, and the analysis of the integrated data.

The following activities describe the work that will go into developing and maintaining the Unified Early Childhood Database. The data model for the Unified Early Childhood Database is attached.

1. Evaluate current data collection tools used by the Collaboration and its partners (including commercial tools), make recommendations for improvements, change of tool when warranted and best use of the data. Develop capability for multiple-site access for data entry and work continuously to ensure easy user interface with the tools. Develop basic reports for self service by program administrators. Ensure all data is maintained in a secure site and format.
2. Identify data collected by third parties, develop strategies for information sharing and best method for collecting data to be shared with the Collaboration. This is an important distinction from the data above. This category includes student assessment data collected by Oak Park District 97 (which serves Pre-Kindergarten through eighth grade children) state agencies and other nonprofits.
3. Develop a data model to store ALL the data described above — longitudinal data for individuals is anticipated. Develop a methodology to assign a Collaboration identifier, when needed, to each entity that translates back to personally identifiable data from other data sources (and maintain the translation tables). Develop basic reports for self service by program administrators. Ensure all data is maintained in a secure site and format. Populate the database and update tables on a regular basis as refreshed data becomes available.
4. Develop research and evaluation capacity that involves the data components described above. In order for the Collaboration to provide reports and analysis of the system and its services on child outcomes, as required by the contract with our funders, the data model will join together as much data as possible. Ensure compliance with all relevant FERPA and HIPAA regulations.