



# **Minnesota Early Childhood Longitudinal Data System (ECLDS)**

## **Data Guide**

*Approved by the ECLDS Governing Body  
September 1, 2020*

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## Purpose and Overview

The purpose of this guide is to promote understanding of the integrated data contained in the Early Childhood Longitudinal Data System (ECLDS; [eclds.mn.gov](http://eclds.mn.gov)) by describing how data are to be used, accessed, and kept secure—and to define important terms used in the system.

**Important Note:** *Content in this guide is similar to content presented in the Data Access and Management Policy guide for the Statewide Longitudinal Education Data System (SLEDS) due to the technical structures shared by these two projects. Although originally funded under different sources over different time periods, and while containing different data, ECLDS and SLEDS have always shared IT resources. This requires a set of agreed-upon standards to promote efficiency. Where content is shared with SLEDS, sections are indicated as “[Aligns with SLEDS].”*

The ECLDS integrates existing data on young children and families participating in publicly-funded programs from the Minnesota Departments of Education, Health, and Human Services. Data are reported publicly at an aggregated (grouped) level and individual children are not identified. ECLDS data is available to the public while protecting privacy. These data are integrated so that Minnesota can have a better understanding of children’s growth, achievement, and well-being in relation to their participation in a variety of educational and social programs over time. The ECLDS was built with federal Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge grant funds. More recent enhancements to the site were paid for by SLDS-IES grant dollars issued by the federal Department of Education.<sup>1</sup>

The ECLDS is helpful to Minnesotans in a variety of ways. Research shows that the early years of life are extremely important, and it is vital to know whether the programs that we invest in are effective, both individually and collectively.

### ***P-20W and Statewide Longitudinal Education Data System (SLEDS) Tools***

The ECLDS is part of larger work related to integrating data to study a variety of outcomes for publicly-funded programs in Minnesota. This larger work is referred to as P-20W, or systems that integrate data across the lifespan: “P” refers to early childhood and prekindergarten; “20” represents K-12 education and higher education; and “W” for wages and workforce. Minnesota’s first integrated data system was the Statewide Longitudinal Education Data System, or SLEDS. SLEDS allows for the matching of student data through completion of postsecondary education. SLEDS brings together data from education and workforce to:

1. Identify the most viable pathways for individuals in achieving successful outcomes in education and work;
2. Inform decisions to support and improve education and workforce policy and practice; and
3. Assist in creating a more seamless education and workforce system for all Minnesotans.

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<sup>1</sup> [Abstract](#): Engaging Communities Through Data: Minnesota’s P20W Linkages, Literacy, and Use (R372A150004)

## ***Authority***

State agencies are able to integrate existing data through allowable use articulated under the following authorities:

- 34 C.F.R. Chapter 303 for early intervention program for infants and toddlers with disabilities;
- FERPA, the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act, 20 U.S.C. 1232g;
- Minnesota Statutes, 125B.07, requirement to maintain data on students;
- Minnesota Government Data Practices Act, Minnesota Statutes Chapter 13;
- Minnesota Statutes, 13.05, subdivision 7;
- Minnesota Statutes, 13.3805 and 13.3806; and
- Minnesota Statutes, 13.46, on welfare system data.

There are also additional federal authorities around the construction of longitudinal data systems that support this project.

## **Recommended Citation for Use**

Users of ECLDS data products found at [ecls.mn.gov](http://ecls.mn.gov) are encouraged to use the following citation:

**[Chart Title], [Year] by [Geographic Level]. Minnesota Early Childhood Longitudinal Data System [Date Printed].** This citation format is provided to users who choose to download a PDF of a chart or graph created on the ECLDS.

For more information, email [ecls.support@state.mn.us](mailto:ecls.support@state.mn.us).

## **Governance of the ECLDS**

Decisions about the ECLDS are made through a two-part governance structure. The two bodies are comprised of individuals representing the state and local agencies contributing data to the ECLDS, as well as from professional associations from education, health, and human services practice communities. The following is a brief description of how the governance process works.

### ***ECLDS Governing Body***

The purpose of the Governing Body is to articulate parameters for the Minnesota ECLDS. It is comprised of leadership from participating state agencies and affiliated organizations. Specific duties include:

1. Approve requests for new data elements to be included in the system,
2. Approve data security protocols,
3. Appoint Research and Data Committee members,
4. Approve requests for accessing data,
5. Ensure data access within data privacy laws, and
6. Approve designs for analytics and portal access.

### ***ECLDS Research and Data Committee***

The Research and Data Committee is comprised of program experts, research experts, and data experts knowledgeable about each of the interagency data sets included in ECLDS. The ECLDS Research and Data Committee reports to the ECLDS Governing Body. Duties of the committee include:

1. Advise in the development of and recommend protocols for access to the data system adhering to state and federal laws;
2. Develop, review and approve proposals for research and/or evaluation questions;
3. Provide technical expertise and consultation on research methodologies;
4. Develop, refine, and test new analytics, reports and information features launched on the site;
5. Develop protocols for maximizing validity and reliability of ECLDS data; and
6. Provide technical expertise and consultation on data structure and data linkages for existing and new data.

Members serve three-year terms and decisions are made using consensus methods. A full description of the entire governance process, members, and its decision-making history is maintained in the ECLDS Governance Document, available upon request.

### ***ECLDS Data Coordinators***

ECLDS Data Coordinators are appointed by MDH, MDE, and DHS executive leadership. The Coordinators have the following duties:

1. Represent respective agencies in ECLDS governance. Keep others at agencies informed of ECLDS work; garner input from others at agencies when needed. Actively participate in governance meetings and decisions.
2. Work with MN.IT staff on data security, data transfer, and data file construction issues.
3. Work with the ECLDS Research and Data Committee to coordinate data management including set data standards, define data elements, document data processes, and identify file specifications.
4. Sign off on data security protocols and data transfer procedures based on each agency's data privacy practices. This includes identifying needed data sharing agreements that will incorporate descriptions of the flow and matching of data at the data system level as well as across ECLDS component systems.
5. Maintain awareness and compliance with FERPA, HIPAA, and other relevant laws.
6. Work with the ECLDS Governing Body to identify funding opportunities to support ECLDS work.

### ***ECLDS Contact Information***

The Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) has administrative oversight of the ECLDS.

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## Using the ECLDS

Children's early environments, their families, and communities are complex. Even for children who participate in early care and education programs, their experiences can be widely divergent. The ECLDS has begun to integrate existing information about publicly-funded programs that support children and families. We are working towards inclusion of additional data sources in the ECLDS that will help to build a more comprehensive view of children's developmental experiences. When evaluating information from the ECLDS, it is important to acknowledge the limitations of the data available.

### ***Considerations and Cautions***

The early education and development environment in Minnesota is multi-faceted. Families can use many types of care for their infants and preschoolers and sometimes use more than one form of care simultaneously and over time.

Before the ECLDS was built, understanding of children's participation in and use of early care and development programs was limited to specific programs that were studied through research projects or time-intensive, small-scale studies. This left many gaps in our knowledge about prekindergarten experiences.

With the ECLDS we are starting to fill these gaps in knowledge by linking data on early care and development participation to kindergarten records and by linking data from these early care and development programs to one another at the child level. ***In spite of this, there will likely always be some gaps.*** In particular, the ECLDS does not contain data on children who:

- Participated in private-pay child care and preschool arrangements.
- Go on to attend private or parochial K-12 schools.

- Participated in programs for which data are not committed and integrated into the ECLDS (see [Sources](#), page 23).

The ECLDS has limited information on children who:

- Were not born in Minnesota.
- Were born in Minnesota but leave.

## **Local Contexts**

### **Trends over Single Year/Single Site Situations**

Trends continuing over multiple years and/or multiple sites may reflect broader issues and influences than single year or single site findings. As a result, users are encouraged to interpret results within a single site or single year with caution. For example, a federal grant beginning or ending that influences local services or participation might distort local trends.

### **Small Sample Size**

When building charts and graphs on the ECLDS site, the number of selections used may create very small groupings at certain levels of geography. This is an important consideration when using results. While it is true that the smaller the population size the more useful the information may be locally for informing planning and program development, it may not be possible to release that information legally because it risks violating privacy. For example, the number of children in a racial or ethnic group may be reportable at the state level, but when examined by a lower level of geography with a smaller population, the counts will be too small to report. Users with local knowledge may be able to identify individual children if counts are too small.

Another important factor in small sample sizes is trends that are unique to that grouping may not be shared by other areas or the entire state. Small sample sizes may distort multi-year or population-wide trends, similar to trends over single-year/single-site situations above. Users are recommended to seek out multiple people and local experts (e.g. human and health services providers, educators, program directors in school-based programs, etc.) to assist in interpreting results for small sample sizes.

### **Know Local Context**

Many early learning programs and interventions are undertaken at the local level. These local initiatives likely impact local results and can drive trends that are different from regional or state level trends. Whenever possible, users of ECLDS data should have an understanding of the local early childhood context in a given community when querying and using data for that area. For example, if a region has access to a local funder that has provided significant planning or implementation support, their results may be affected by this investment. Some areas may also experience shifts in trends due to changing industry or employment patterns. Find more information about local resources through the ECLDS maps, [Boundaries and Sites](#) and [Comprehensive Services](#).

## Understanding and Talking about ECLDS Data

### *ECLDS Glossary*

Through the construction of the ECLDS it was necessary to define important terminology used throughout the site. Some terms are specific to only one system or program. Others are shared across systems and programs and—in this instance—work groups and ECLDS governance came to agreement on these definitions. The following list will help ECLDS users understand terms when they encounter them on the site or in charts or reports. While every effort was made to come to agreement, some definitions may vary by state agency and program.

- **3rd Grade Proficiency:** Proficiency of students exhibited on the annual [Minnesota Comprehensive Assessment](#) (MCA) in Reading and Mathematics. Proficient results indicate that the student has met state standards.
- **Accredited:** A setting is considered “accredited” if it has earned such accreditation through a nationally recognized body, and that accreditation is current. Accreditation has a start and end date. A list of approved accreditations can be found on the [DHS Child Care website](#).
- **Capacity:** The number of children a care setting is legally allowed to serve at one time. Capacity is an estimate of the size (number of children served) of each setting. DHS licensing determines the legal capacity for a licensed setting.
- **CCAP:** Minnesota’s [Child Care Assistance Program](#) (CCAP) provides financial assistance (subsidies) to help families who have low incomes and/or have recently received assistance through the Minnesota Family Investment Program (MFIP) to pay for child care. Child care costs can be subsidized so that parents may pursue employment or education leading to employment, and so their children are well cared for and prepared to enter school ready to learn. A family may select any licensed or legally non-licensed child care provider. A family and child remain eligible for assistance as long as they continue to meet program requirements. The length of eligibility periods vary. The program serves children 12 or younger or up to age 15 if the child has special needs. Most families pay a portion of their child care costs. In some counties there is a waitlist for child care assistance, for families who have not participated in MFIP in the past year.
- **Children:** Counts of children participating in public early care and education programs.
- **Child Count:** See E-12 Child Count.
- **Child Outcomes Survey:** [Survey](#) administered by the Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE) program at MDE to understand the status of children at entry to and exit from ECSE. This survey meets federally required obligations through the Office of Special Education Programs.
- **Child Welfare:** Child protection involvement means the identified child was in a family where a child protection response was completed after an allegation of child abuse (child maltreatment) by parents/caretakers. The situation is determined to meet statutory guidelines for a child protection response and a family assessment or a family investigation was conducted. Child Protection intervenes with families, according to Minnesota State Statute and the [Minnesota Child Maltreatment Screening Guidelines](#), to address family functioning issues and ensure that child victims of maltreatment are safe.
- **Counts:** Number of children.

- **County:** County jurisdiction within the state of Minnesota. Often refers to county of residence of family or child. May refer to county of school of enrollment (see School County).
- **CTSTR:** An abbreviation for Counts Too Small to Report used to prevent the disclosure of potentially identifying information when dealing with small cell sizes on charts, graphs, or tables. CTSTR suppression rules are customized for each chart in the ECLDS. A full list of these rules is available on page 20.
- **Develop:** A multipurpose data system operated by the Minnesota Department of Human Services (DHS). It contains data about the average education level of teaching staff in certain early learning organizations and also data about quality ratings issued by Parent Aware (Minnesota's Quality Rating and Improvement System). More information can be found on the [Develop website](#).
- **DHS:** [Minnesota Department of Human Services](#) (DHS) is the state department responsible for human services programs in Minnesota.
- **Disability Type:** As identified in Minnesota's K-12 public school system. For kindergarten cohort analyses in the ECLDS, disability type originates in [MDE data](#).
- **District:** School district in state of Minnesota.
- **Dosage:** Related to program participation:  $Intensity \times Duration = Dosage$ .
- **Duplicated:** Refers to counts across programs in which a child participating in multiple programs is counted in each of those programs for reporting purposes.
- **Duration:** Period of time over which services were received or a child or family participated according to program definitions (e.g. end date minus start date.)  $Intensity \times Duration = Dosage$ .
- **E-12 Child Count:** The [child count report](#) is collected each year and represents a count of Minnesota children and youth, ages birth through 21, who are eligible for and receiving special education and related services. (ECSE data is included in this as well.)
- **Early Care and Education (ECE):** Publicly-funded program or service for young children and their families.
- **Early Childhood Screening (ECS):** A free [program](#) required for all children prior to kindergarten. Required screening components include: developmental screening (cognitive, fine and gross motor skills, speech and language, and social-emotional development); vision; hearing; immunization review; height and weight; health care coverage; identification of risk factors which may influence learning; a summary interview with the parent or guardian and referrals and follow-up for assessment; and diagnosis and treatment when potential needs are identified.
- **Early Learning Scholarships:** [State funding](#) that increases access to high-quality early childhood programs for three- and four-year-old children with the highest needs, in order to improve school readiness for all young children.
- **ECFE:** [Early Childhood Family Education](#) (ECFE) works to strengthen families, and its goal is to enhance the ability of all parents and other family members to provide the best possible environment for their child's learning and growth. The family provides a child's first and most significant learning environment and parents are a child's first and most important teachers.
- **ECLDS:** The [Early Childhood Longitudinal Data System](#) (ECLDS) is an information tool that links existing data across multiple state programs and agencies to create a broader picture of children than is possible using just one data source.

- **ECSE:** [Early Childhood Special Education](#) (ECSE), also referred to as Part B or Part C, as part of the [Individuals with Disabilities Education Act](#) (IDEA) is a program that provides supports and services to infants, toddlers, and preschool children with disabilities and their families.
- **EE Student:** The [Early Education Student](#) (EE Student) data system is a mechanism to identify children participating in Early Childhood Family Education, Early Head Start, Head Start, and School Readiness to better understand experiences prior to kindergarten across multiple public funding streams. Children entered into this system are assigned a unique identification number through MDE. Data submissions occur annually from public school districts and Head Start agencies.
- **EHDI:** [Early Hearing Detection and Intervention](#) (EHDI) program. Private data on Minnesota newborns, infants, and children with a hearing loss created, collected, received, or maintained by MDH for purposes of the EHDI program.
- **English Learner:** Child or student learning English, and for whom English is not their first language. This designation begins at kindergarten in K-12 data systems.
- **Factors:** Groupings of various elements from the data sources that could potentially influence or contribute to an educational outcome or could be associated to a child protection occurrence. The following is a list of factors noted by research that, prior to grade three, are associated with negative outcomes.
  - **Instability:**
    - **Education Instability:** Includes children who switch schools more than once.
    - **Homeless:** Students flagged as homeless using the [McKinney-Vento definition](#) anytime in kindergarten through grade 3.
  - **Language:**
    - **English Learner:** A classification for a student whose home language is other than English or American Sign Language and who has been assessed as needing additional English language instruction anytime in kindergarten through grade 3.
    - **Home Language:** A 3rd grade cohort utilizes MDE home language types as defined in the MDE K-12 data set. ECLDS provides the home language types containing 10 or more children.
  - **Low Income:**
    - **CCAP:** [Child Care Assistance Program](#) (CCAP) helps make quality child care affordable by providing financial assistance to help families with low incomes pay for child care.
    - **DWP:** [Diversionary Work Program](#) (DWP) is a four-month program that helps low-income Minnesota families find a job. When families first apply for cash assistance, most will participate in DWP. Counts include children whose families receive DWP anytime.
    - **Free/Reduced Priced Meals:** [Food program](#) offered through public schools for low-income children. Family income must be at 100% of Federal Poverty Guidelines (FPG) or lower for Free Meals and between 101% and 185% FPG for Reduced Price Meals. Students may have participated in the program anytime in kindergarten through 3rd grade.
    - **MFIP:** [Minnesota Family Investment Program](#) (MFIP), Minnesota's Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) program, helps families and pregnant women who have low income

go to work and move toward financial stability. Counts include children receiving MFIP anytime.

- **Scholarships:** [Early learning scholarships](#) are awarded to eligible three- and four-year-old children to support access to quality early education and care programs for Minnesota's low income children by bridging funding gaps and decreasing barriers. Scholarships may be used in eligible Parent Aware-rated early learning programs.
- **SNAP:** [Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program](#) (SNAP), formerly known as Food Stamps, helps Minnesotans with low income get the food they need for nutritious and well-balanced meals. Counts include children receiving SNAP anytime.
- **Parent Characteristics:**
  - **Absence of Father on Birth Record:** The name for the father on the child's birth record was either missing or listed as Unknown. A woman can be listed in the father section.
  - **Late or No PNC:** A birth that occurs to mothers who reported receiving prenatal care only in the third trimester of their pregnancy or reported receiving no prenatal care (PNC). Data is obtained from the child's birth record.
  - **Maternal Education is Less than High School:** A mother having less than a high school education at the time of the child's birth. Data is obtained from the child's birth record.
  - **Teen Mom:** Includes all mothers under the age of 20 at the time of the child's birth. Data is obtained from the child's birth record.
- **Special Health Needs:**
  - **Deaf/Hard of Hearing:** A child with some degree of hearing loss ranging from mild to profound. Data obtained from the MDH [Early Hearing Detection Intervention](#) (EHDI) data.
  - **ECSE:** [Early Childhood Special Education](#) (ECSE) provides supports and services to infants, toddlers, and preschool children with disabilities and their families.
  - **K-3 Special Education:** Kindergarten through Grade 3 [special education](#) services.
  - **Parental Refusal of Special Education Services:** Students were evaluated and need special education services but parents declined the services.
  - **Very Low Birth Weight:** An infant who is born weighing less than 1,500g. Data is obtained from the child's birth record.
- **Family Home Visiting:** [Family Home Visiting](#) (FHV) is a voluntary, home-based service ideally delivered prenatally through the early years of a child's life. It provides social, emotional, health-related, and parenting support and information to families, and links them to appropriate resources.
- **Family Outcome Survey:** Administered by the Early Childhood Special Education program to understand child outcomes in the family context. The goals of the [program](#) are that families know their rights, they can effectively communicate their children's needs, and they can help their child develop and learn.
- **Fiscal School Year, State Fiscal Year, or State School Year:** Time period that runs from July 1 of a given year through June 30 of the following year. The exact timeframe may vary by program.

- **Food Assistance:** Program providing supplemental food and/or nutrition. In ECLDS charts, food assistance pertains to SNAP, the School Nutrition Program, or the Free and Reduced Price Meals program.
- **Free Meals:** [Food program](#) offered through public schools for low-income children. Family income must be at 130% of Federal Poverty Guidelines (FPG) or lower. This program begins in pre-K for ECSE students.
- **Gender:** Sex: male, female. For kindergarten cohort analytics, gender comes from K-12 enrollment data source (MDE).
- **Head Start:** Supports the comprehensive development of children from birth to age 5 to promote school readiness for young children from low-income families. [Head Start](#) services include early learning, health, and family well-being.
- **High Quality:** The [Race to the Top grant](#) defined “high quality” as programs with 3 or 4 stars in [Parent Aware](#) (Minnesota’s Quality Rating and Improvement System).
- **Highest Education Level:** For teachers, the average Career Lattice level of the teachers who lead groups or classrooms within a setting. The Minnesota Center for Professional Development has defined a Career Lattice that puts professional development for early educators on a scale from 0 to 12. Using that scale, it is possible to mathematically average Career Lattice levels. Additional information about the Career Lattice can be found on the [Achieve website](#).
- **Home Language:** Home language types as defined in the MDE K-12 enrollment record. ECLDS provides the home language types containing 10 or more children.
- **IDEA:** The [Individuals with Disabilities Education Act](#) (IDEA) is a federal law that ensures services for children with disabilities throughout the nation.
- **Intensity:** Amount of service received over a defined period of time. Definition of “amount” may be different for different programs (hours, MTSS, dollars, etc.).  $Intensity \times Duration = Dosage$ .
- **K-12 Assessment:** General term referring to any number of a variety of assessments of learning in the public school system in Minnesota.
- **K-12 Enrollment:** Data source containing information on students enrolled in public education programming under MDE oversight.
- **Kindergarten Cohort:** A group of children who participated in public kindergarten in a given school year.
- **Licensed Child Care Center:** Licensed child care centers care for infants, toddlers, preschoolers, and school-age children in a care center, community centers, or place of worship. State law regulates the number of children who may attend based on the number of staff working at the center. Children are typically cared for in groups divided by age.
- **Licensed Family Child Care:** Licensed family child care providers may care for infants, toddlers, preschoolers, and school-age children in their homes. State law limits the number of children a care provider may look after.
- **Low Birth Weight:** An infant who is born weighing less than 2,500g. Data comes from the child’s birth record.

- **MARSS:** [Minnesota's Automated Reporting Student System](#) (MARSS) includes a unique number for each student, assigned to student records in Minnesota's education system.
- **MAXIS:** An automated public assistance [computer system](#) used by county and local agency staff to determine public assistance program eligibility and benefit levels and make payments throughout the state of Minnesota. The MAXIS data system is the source of information on the Minnesota Family Investment Program (MFIP), Diversionary Work Program (DWP), and Supplemental Nutrition and Assistance Program (SNAP).
- **MCCC:** The [Minnesota Common Course Catalogue](#) (MCCC) is a course classification and data collection system intended to provide uniform information about courses that are taught in Minnesota schools.
- **MDE:** The [Minnesota Department of Education](#) (MDE) is the state department responsible for education in Minnesota.
- **MDH:** The [Minnesota Department of Health](#) is the state department responsible for health programs in Minnesota.
- **MEC<sup>2</sup>:** [Minnesota Electronic Child Care System](#) (MEC<sup>2</sup>) is a web-based system used by county and local agency staff to determine Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP) eligibility and make payments to child care providers. The MEC<sup>2</sup> data system is the source of information on CCAP.
- **MFIP/DWP:** The [Minnesota Family Investment Program](#) (MFIP) and [Diversionary Work Program](#) (DWP) provide income assistance to help families with low incomes move to financial stability through work. MFIP is Minnesota's Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) program. The DWP is a short-term economic and employment assistance program for low-income families and pregnant women. The goal is to help parents quickly find work and avoid going onto the MFIP.
- **Minnesota District Preschool:** Districts provide preschool services in a number of formats for children ages three to five years old. School Readiness is one major funding source for these services.
- **MN.IT:** [Minnesota IT Services](#) (MN.IT) is the state department responsible for information technology services to state agencies in Minnesota.
- **No ECE Data Available:** Data are not available for a specific category or attribute of a chart, graph, or report for the early care and education experiences of a group of children. This may be due to the fact that a data source is not committed to the ECLDS or the data do not exist.
- **Outcomes:** Status of children along a variety of measures over time. Can vary by data source.
- **Parent Aware:** Minnesota's Quality Rating and Improvement System, offers tools and resources to help families find quality child care and early education, improve child care program practices, and prepare children for school and life. [Parent Aware](#) is administered by the Minnesota Department of Human Services (DHS).
- **Part B or Part C:** The [Individuals with Disabilities Education Act](#) (IDEA) is the federal law that governs special education services. There are four different parts to IDEA: Parts A through D. Part A lays out the basic foundation and covers general provisions, and Part D covers national activities to improve education of children with disabilities. Parts B and C govern the provision of services for children with disabilities. Part C applies specifically to infants and toddlers, ages birth through age 2, while Part B is for children ages 3 to 21 years of age.

- **Participation:** Child meets program-specific requirements to be considered engaged or participating in the target public early care and education program.
- **Percentage:** Number of children in relation to a denominator. Some denominators will vary and some will be universal.
- **Premature:** An infant who is born before 37 weeks gestational age as calculated from the imputed (estimated) gestational age based on mother’s last menstrual period from the child’s birth record.
- **Program:** The programmatic funding stream or “umbrella” program under which a service is administered and paid—typically a public funding source with eligibility criteria—targeted to young children.
- **Publicly-funded:** Program or service funded all, or in part, with tax dollars.
- **Public Schools:** Schools in Minnesota that are funded with public dollars. This includes charter schools.
- **Quality:** The extent to which the setting has demonstrated use of kindergarten-readiness best practices, as defined by [Parent Aware](#) (Minnesota’s Quality Rating and Improvement System).
- **Quality Rating:** Designation given to programs through Parent Aware. Programs that participate in Parent Aware submit evidence of their use of kindergarten-readiness best practices. Evidence is reviewed and programs earn a Star Rating of One, Two, Three, or Four Stars. For more information, visit the [Parent Aware website](#).
- **Race/Ethnicity:** Race or ethnic identification present in a given data source.
- **Reduced Price Meals:** [Food program](#) offered through public schools for moderately low-income children. Family income must be between 131% and 185% Federal Poverty Guidelines (FPG). Eligibility can begin before kindergarten.
- **Resiliency Factors:** Protective factors noted by research that, prior to grade 3, are associated with positive outcomes for children with high needs.
- **School-based Pre-K:** See Minnesota District Preschool.
- **School County:** County of the location of public school of enrollment.
- **School Year:** Period of time that covers July 1 of one year through June 30 of the following year.
- **Setting or Site:** Location (physical address) where early learning is provided (or smaller unit when multiple programs operate at one location).
- **Small cell size:** Refers to a very small count of children in a given table or graph. Small cell sizes are usually suppressed in some way to prevent the identity of an individual to be discernible. See rules on Counts Too Small to Report (CTSTR) on page 20.
- **SNAP:** [Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program](#) (SNAP) formerly known as Food Stamps. Helps Minnesotans with low incomes get the food they need for nutritious and well-balanced meals. The program provides financial assistance to purchase food as a supplement to a household food budget for families with incomes up to 165% of Federal Poverty Guidelines (FPG).
- **Staff:** Individuals working in programs to provide early care and education to children.
- **WIC:** [Women, Infants and Children](#) (WIC) provides federal grants to states for supplemental foods, health care referrals, and nutrition education for low-income pregnant, breastfeeding, and non-

breastfeeding postpartum women, and to infants and children who are found to be at nutritional risk.

## ECLDS Data Sources

The following information provides details on which data sources are included in the ECLDS and over which time periods. For the most up-to-date view of data sources, see the [data source matrix](#) on the ECLDS website.

### ***Birth Records***

**Description:** Birth certificate data.

**Data System:** Minnesota Center for Health Statistics (MCHS) maintains a research file of birth records for all births occurring in Minnesota as well as births occurring out-of-state to Minnesota residents.

Computerized records are available from 1980 to present and paper records are available back to 1900.

The birth record includes information on the mother and father (e.g. age, race, and education), medical information on the mother prenatally and at delivery (e.g. risk factors, prenatal care usage, characteristics of labor), and medical description of the infant (e.g. gestational age, birth weight, congenital anomalies).

In March of 2011, the birth record went through a significant overhaul including expanding race categories, changing education, and adding mother's height and weight pre-pregnancy and at delivery. Previous year's birth data are available about 9 months after the beginning of the next year (e.g. 2013 birth data was ready in September 2014).

**Provided By:** MDH

**Beginning Year:** 1999

**Information:** Updated annually.

### ***Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP)***

**Description:** Program providing financial assistance (subsidies) to help families who have low incomes and/or have recently received assistance through the Minnesota Family Investment Program (MFIP) to pay for child care.

**Data System:** MEC<sup>2</sup>

**Provided By:** DHS

**Beginning Year:** 2009

**Information:** Daily information is aggregated at the monthly level and submitted to ECLDS semi-annually.

### ***Child Outcomes***

**Description:** The ECSE Child Outcomes data source collects survey data from the child care professionals who serve children with special needs. Data is collected at the starting and ending periods of the child's involvement in the ECSE program where they enrolled.

**Data System:** Collected throughout the ECSE Outcomes portal on the MDE website.

**Provided By:** MDE

**Beginning Year:** 2011

**Information:** Updated annually.

### ***Child Welfare***

**Description:** Child Welfare (CW) denotes the continuum of intervention with children and families due to concerns of child maltreatment; also commonly referred to as Child Protection. This includes service provision to children and families in which a child or children are alleged victims of child maltreatment as well as children who have been placed in out-of-home care. CW provides case management services to families to address family functioning issues and ensures that determined child victims of maltreatment are safe. These services may include out-of-home-placement when placement is necessary to ensure safety. For children who cannot return safely to their parent/caretaker, CW ensures that these children find an alternative permanency family, through adoption or a Transfer of Permanent Legal and Physical Custody (TPLPC) to a relative.

**Data System:** SSIS

**Provided By:** DHS

**Beginning Year:** 2013

**Information:** Updated twice annually.

### ***Develop – Parent Aware***

**Description:** A multipurpose data system that contains data about the average education level of teaching staff in certain early learning organizations, and also data about Quality Ratings issued by Parent Aware.

**Data System:** Develop

**Provided By:** DHS

**Beginning Year:** 2012

**Information:** Updated annually.

### ***E-12 Child Count***

**Description:** Special Education children are reported to the federal government once each year. MARSS data changes during the school year as children go on and off special education services after the Dec. 2nd reporting date. The Child Count accounts for all students officially reported to the federal government as participating.

**Data System:** MARSS

**Provided By:** MDE

**Beginning Year:** 2005

**Information:** Updated annually.

### ***Early Childhood Screening***

**Description:** Early Childhood Screening is offered by school districts to children aged three to the start of kindergarten. It is used to identify potential health or developmental problems in children who may need a health, mental health, or educational evaluation. Screening supports children's readiness for kindergarten and promotes healthy development by providing referrals to families. Screening links families to Head Start, ECFE, prekindergarten programs, Early Learning Scholarships, home visiting programs, WIC, and other resources.

**Data System:** MARSS

**Provided By:** MDE

**Beginning Year:** 2009

**Information:** Data loaded into ECLDS annually.

### ***Early Education***

**Description:** Early Education records information on children and families registering for classes set to meet six or more times during the school year for either ECFE and/or School Readiness. This information allows us to understand more about program participation prior to the kindergarten year.

**Data System:** EE Student

**Provided By:** MDE

**Beginning Year:** 2014

**Information:** Updated throughout the year, summarized annually.

### ***Early Hearing Detection and Intervention***

**Description:** Early Hearing Detection and Intervention (EHDI) works to improve access to and quality of services for children who are deaf or hard of hearing. The EHDI program works with birth hospitals and midwives to make sure that all newborns have access to hearing screening. It also helps families of children who are deaf or hard of hearing connect with educational, social, and community resources. The population represented in EHDI data is quite small. Three-year cohorts at a strictly statewide level are utilized in the ECLDS to avoid suppression.

**Data System:** MEDSS

**Provided By:** MDH

**Beginning Year:** 2007

**Information:** Data loaded into ECLDS annually.

### ***Early Learning Scholarship***

**Description:** The Early Learning Scholarship program supports access to high-quality early learning programs by bridging funding gaps and decreasing barriers for young children with the highest needs.

**Data System:** ELSA

**Provided By:** MDE

**Beginning Year:** 2016

**Information:** Updated every six months, or twice annually.

### ***Family Home Visiting***

**Description:** Family home visiting (FHV) is a voluntary, home-based service for pregnant and parenting families. FHV provides social, emotional, health-related and parenting support and information to families, and links them to appropriate resources. Depending on the goals identified by a family and based on developmental and risk assessments, a family may work with a home visitor from the prenatal period through age three; some FHV programs extend to age five. FHV in Minnesota is provided by local public agencies, non-profit agencies, and tribal governments. Data are only available from Saint Paul-Ramsey County Public Health (SPRCPH) at this time.

**Data System:** SPRCPH uses an electronic health record for data collection and visit documentation.

**Provided By:** Saint Paul-Ramsey County Public Health

**Beginning Year:** 2019

**Information:** Updated semi-annually.

### ***Family Outcomes Survey***

**Description:** The ECSE Family Outcomes data source collects survey data from families who have a child with special needs, were served in a program at a district, and the child has now turned three. The district gives the family a survey to complete and return to MDE.

**Data System:** Survey responses from families are either emailed or postal-mailed back to MDE. Results are entered into a centralized database.

**Provided By:** MDE

**Beginning Year:** 2011

**Information:** Updated annually.

### ***Head Start/Early Head Start***

**Description:** Head Start/Early Head Start supports the comprehensive development of children from birth to age 5 to promote school readiness for young children from low-income families. Head Start services include early learning, health, and family well-being.

**Data System:** Locally determined

**Provided By:** Individual Head Start agencies

**Beginning Year:** Yet to be determined; in planning.

**Information:** Data loaded into ECLDS annually.

### ***K-12 Assessment***

**Description:** Standardized assessment data from students attending publicly-funded schools. Includes ACCESS for English Learners, MCA, and spans grades kindergarten through grade 12. Includes selected pre-K information.

**Data System:** Data source includes multiple tables

**Provided By:** MDE

**Beginning Year:** 2006

**Information:** Updated annually.

### ***K-12 Enrollment***

**Description:** Enrollment records of students attending publicly-funded schools, including charter schools, in grades kindergarten through 12<sup>th</sup> grade. Includes selected pre-K information.

**Data System:** MARSS

**Provided By:** MDE

**Beginning Year:** 2005

**Information:** Updated annually.

### ***MCIS Student***

**Description:** Student personal learning plan data from high schools volunteering to be part of a pilot study on college and career planning.

**Data System:** MCIS

**Provided By:** MDE

**Beginning Year:** 2018

**Information:** Pilot data only. Used in MCIS school feedback reports. Data is loaded after completion of 12th grade.

### ***MDE-ORG***

**Description:** MDE-Org is a data source that tracks the organizations used to educate children in Minnesota and accept payments from MDE. This collection tracks changes over time for some data versus the old OrgUnit which created yearly records for each organization and school. It is the Client Relationship Management Tool for MDE to track its districts, schools, and other related organizations.

**Data System:** ORG

**Provided By:** MDE

**Beginning Year:** 2005

**Information:** Updated annually.

### ***MFIP/DWP***

**Description:** Minnesota Family Investment Program/Diversions Work Program data, the state's income assistance program for families.

**Data System:** MAXIS

**Provided By:** DHS

**Beginning Year:** 2002

**Information:** Daily information is aggregated at the monthly level and submitted to ECLDS.

### ***Post-secondary Completer***

**Description:** The Degrees and Other Awards Conferred Database contains data and other formal awards (diplomas or certificates) conferred to students upon successful completion of a program of study from Minnesota private and public postsecondary institutions participating in state student financial aid programs.

**Data System:** Degrees and Other Awards Conferred Database

**Provided By:** OHE

**Beginning Year:** 2007

**Information:** Records updated during academic year using the twelve-month period that begins July 1 through June 30.

### ***PSEO Student***

**Description:** Course-level data provided by colleges for students participating in PSEO for use in SLEDS. Data System: college student record systems

**Provided By:** OHE under agreement with colleges

**Beginning Year:** 2016

**Information:** Data currently only provided by the University of Minnesota and Minnesota State Colleges and Universities. Data is formatted to match MCCC data and loaded into SLEDS for use in the Rigorous Course-taking Reports.

### **SNAP**

**Description:** Data on families receiving Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program benefits.

**Data System:** MAXIS

**Provided By:** DHS

**Beginning Year:** 2002

**Information:** Daily information is aggregated at the monthly level and submitted to ECLDS.

### **STAR (Staffing)**

**Description:** Staff Automated Reporting (STAR) is a web-based system used by school districts to report employment and assignment information to MDE. This system is also used by districts to access the licensure/assignment discrepancy report and to complete "highly qualified" reporting.

**Data System:** STAR

**Provided By:** PELSB

**Beginning Year:** 2010

**Information:** Updated annually.

## **Definitions**

The following definitions are used commonly throughout the ECLDS site and its documentation. Definitions that are shared with SLEDS are notated with "[Aligns with SLEDS]". Shared definitions on some terminology are an efficiency intended to support technical staff as the projects share infrastructure.

**Analytics:** The charts, graphs, and reports that come from data in the ECLDS.

**Contributing state agencies:** Refers to the agencies contributing data to the ECLDS. [Similar to "Partner Data Providers" in SLEDS.]

**Counts Too Small to Report (CTSTR) Rules (see also Suppression Rules):** The following rules are employed on the ECLDS site to prevent the disclosure of identity on interactive charts. Rules are applied to specific chart groups displayed on the ECLDS site. Application of specific rules in relation to specific charts available upon request.

- **CTS1.** When counts range from 0-9.
- **CTS2.** Do not show CTSTR in percent area.
- **CTS3.** Small counts okay to show and not use CTSTR.
- **CTS4.** If CTSTR appears in a row, the row total must change to CTSTR.
- **CTS5.** If one cell in a chart is CTSTR, mask the next smallest cell also as CTSTR to avoid calculating the number (pie charts see CTS8).

- **CTS6.** If everything in the chart is under 10, do not use CTSTR, use message: “The selected criteria results in counts too small to report.”
- **CTS7.** If counts are too large to report (total percent more than 95%), use CTLTR and display the percent as “>95%.” [This rule is not applied in the current release and is withheld until further notice.]
- **CTS8.** Pie chart: If one section is CTSTR, apply CTSTR to the next smallest section and display message CTSTR for each section keeping sections visible. Hover over pie slices displays label only and no counts or percentages. Table sections will show CTSTR.
- **CTS9.** If chart results in no data at all, display “no data available.”
- **CTS10.** If one section is CTSTR include the Unknown category (age/education) as CTSTR and display message CTSTR for each section keeping sections visible. Hover over pie slices displays label only and no counts or percentages. Table sections will show CTSTR.

**Data:** Categories of ECLDS data are listed here from most, to least sensitive.

- **Anonymized Data:** Anonymized data are individual-level data that have been de-identified and cannot be linked back to the original record system or other data. [Aligns with SLEDS.]
- **De-identified Data:** Individual-level data that have enough personally identifiable information removed or obscured so that the remaining information does not identify an individual and there is no reasonable basis to believe that the information can be used to identify the individual. [Aligns with SLEDS.]
- **Identifiable Linked data:** Original data from the contributing state agencies or partner data providers which are linked using personally identifiable information. [Aligns with SLEDS.]
- **Individual-Level Data:** Data on unique individuals. [Aligns with SLEDS.]
- **Personally Identifiable Information (PII):** Data that identifies the individual. For the purpose of education records, PII is defined by federal law as information that includes, but is not limited to a student’s name; the name of the student’s parent or other family members; the address of the student or student’s family; a personal identifier, such as the student’s Social Security Number, student number, or biometric record; other indirect identifiers, such as the student’s date of birth, place of birth, and mother’s maiden name; other information that, alone or in combination, is linked or linkable to a specific student that would allow a reasonable person in the community, who does not have personal knowledge of the relevant circumstances, to identify the student with reasonable certainty; and information requested by a person who the educational agency or institution reasonably believes knows the identity of the student to whom the education record relates. [Aligns with SLEDS.]
- **Summary Data:** Statistical records and reports aggregated from data on individuals in a way that individuals are not identified and from which neither their identities nor any other characteristic that could uniquely identify an individual is ascertainable. [Aligns with SLEDS.]

**Data Mart:** Prepackaged data sets and reports that are more efficient than working directly with the entire warehouse for running analytics (charts and graphs). [Aligns with SLEDS.]

**Data Sharing Agreement:** Statement signed by the contributing state agencies seeking to share data that outlines the purposes of the data sharing, legal restrictions, and violations. [Aligns with SLEDS.]

**Data Usage Agreement:** (Also referred to as Data Sharing Agreement.) Statement outlining the appropriate uses of the data, which requires each user with access to the ECLDS data to accept the conditions of use before being granted access. [Aligns with SLEDS.]

**Directory Information:** For the purposes of education records, federal law defines directory information as information contained in an education record of a student that would not generally be considered harmful or an invasion of privacy if disclosed. Directory information includes, but is not limited to, the student's name; address; telephone listing; electronic mail address; photograph; date and place of birth; major field of study; grade level; enrollment status (e.g. undergraduate or graduate, full-time or part-time); dates of attendance; participation in officially recognized activities and sports; weight and height of members of athletic teams; degrees; honors and awards received; and the most recent educational agency or institution attended. [Aligns with SLEDS.]

**Education Records:** Records that are (1) directly related to a student and (2) maintained by an educational agency or institution or by a party acting for the agency or institution. [Aligns with SLEDS.]

**MARSS Number:** Minnesota Automated Reporting Student System, the unique K-12 identification number assigned by MDE to each K-12 student. [Aligns with SLEDS.]

**MN.IT Services:** The state agency responsible for setting information technology (IT) direction, standards and policies for the state of Minnesota, managing oversight and compliance of those standards, and providing IT services to all Minnesota state agencies. [Aligns with SLEDS.]

**P-20W:** Refers to the overarching IT system of linked data serving Minnesota's three data initiatives including Early Childhood Longitudinal Data System (ECLDS), Statewide Longitudinal Education Data System (SLEDS), and Graduate Employment Outcomes (GEO). [Aligns with SLEDS.]

**SLEDS:** Statewide Longitudinal Education Data System, the data system specifically using linked data from P20W about prekindergarten (limited to Kindergarten Entry Profile, or KEP) to K-12 education to higher education to workforce for informing education and workforce policy. [Aligns with SLEDS.]

**Source System ID:** Refers to the ID used on individual person records by the data provider, contributing state agency, or state agency when submitting data to P20 systems.

**Suppression Rules:** Analytic techniques used for appropriately protecting private or confidential data. Methods involve removing data (e.g. from a cell or row in a table) to prevent the identification of individuals in small groups or those with unique characteristics. This method may result in very little data being produced for small populations, and it usually requires additional suppression of non-sensitive data to ensure adequate protection of personally identifiable information. Suppression rules may apply to all

summary reports or may apply to specific reports based on the combination of data elements included. The ECLDS and SLEDS Research and Data Advisory Committees have agreed that suppression of cell sizes less than 10 individuals be used for public reporting. Best practices for data suppression for the purposes of appropriately protecting private or confidential data were issues by the U.S. Department of Education in 2011 (NCES 2011-603) and are referred to in reporting work. [Aligns with SLEDS due to shared analytic tools and rules.]

## Maintaining Privacy

There are multiple methods to ensuring the privacy of individual-level data in ECLDS.

**MN.IT Services** uses various procedures and security measures to ensure the confidentiality of an individual's records collected and maintained by ECLDS, including but not limited to:

- Assigning a unique ECLDS identification number to each individual;
- Managing levels of access that limit who may have access to data and for what purposes;
- Masking data to ensure that the confidentiality of personally identifiable information (PII) from individual records is maintained in all public reporting;
- Developing and maintaining a list of personnel who have access to personally identifiable child and student information through authentication and internal links;
- Implementing and maintaining appropriate administrative, technical, and physical safeguards that prevent any collection, use or disclosure of, or access to electronically maintained or transmitted individual records in SLEDS; and
- Ensuring that all staff with access to ECLDS data understand the sensitivity and classification of the data and follow all requirements to protect the data from unwanted disclosure. [Aligns with SLEDS.]

**Contributing state agencies** use various procedures and security measures to ensure the confidentiality of an individual's records collected and maintained by ECLDS including but not limited to:

- Training of any state agency and affiliated MN.IT personnel collecting and/or using personally identifiable information about the proper use of that information in accordance with this policy, Minnesota Government Data Practices Act (MGDPA), Family Educational Rights and Protection Act (FERPA), and all applicable state and federal laws and policies;
- Enforcing a code of conduct for state employees; and
- Overseeing and managing all ECLDS-related work, policies and procedures to ensure complies with data security standards, best practices, and federal and state laws. [Aligns with SLEDS.]

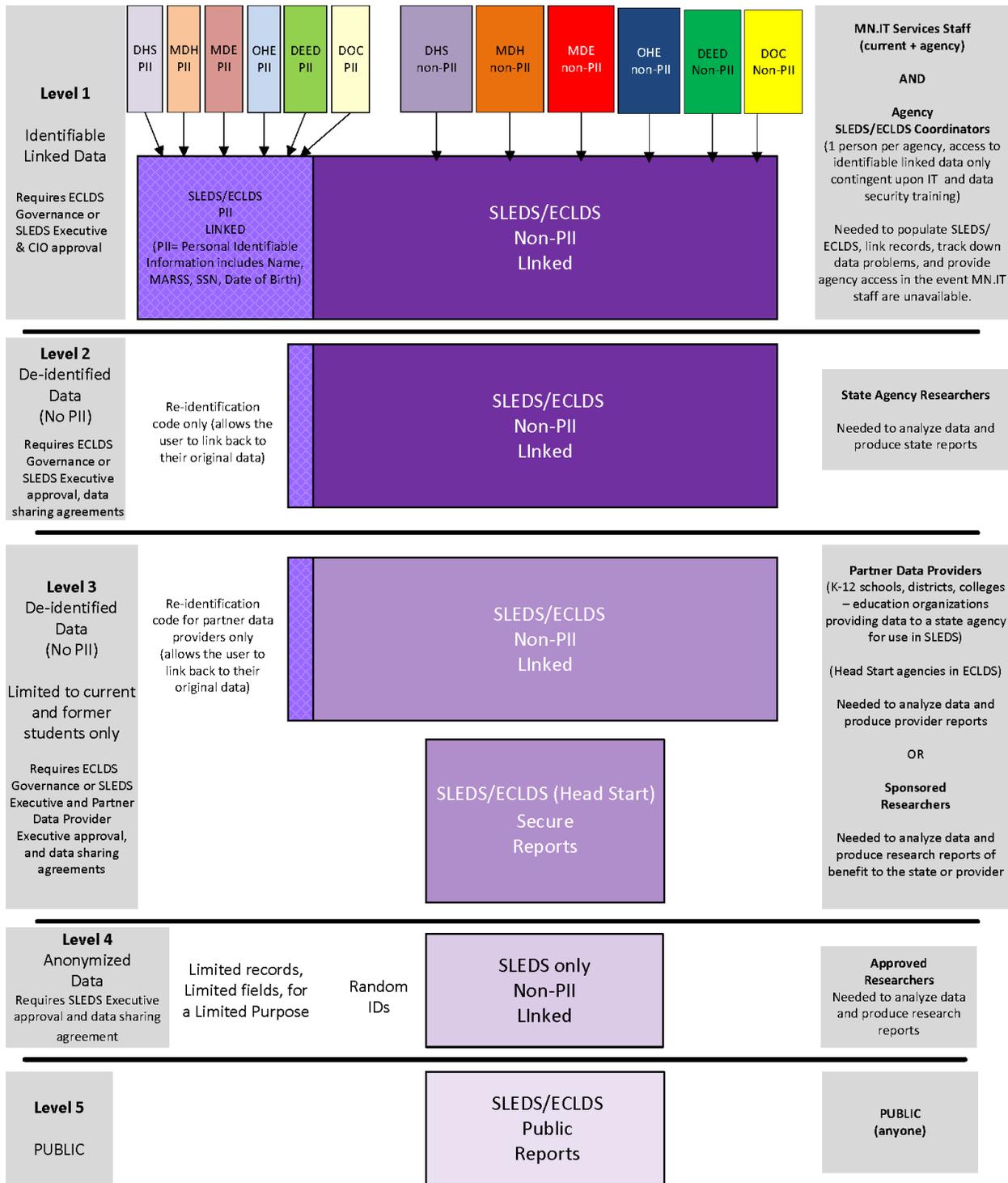
## *Levels of Access*

ECLDS data must be consistently protected in a manner commensurate with its sensitivity and critical nature. The following levels of access describe the data available and have been developed to protect the privacy of individuals. A complete list of individuals with access to ECLDS data by level will be maintained

by MN.IT services and the contributing state agencies. Access is approved by appropriate leadership as defined for each access level. For each access level, approved staff must fulfill training requirements established by MN.IT and the ECLDS Governing Body. The access levels listed below are in the order of the most restrictive to the least restrictive. Note that while all access levels align with SLEDS, some access levels do not pertain to the ECLDS: Levels 1B and 4.

- **Level 1A** – allows specific MN.IT staff, including those housed at contributing state agencies, to read and write to all records and fields in the P20W database. This access level is only permitted to a minimal number of authorized staff members who operate or manage the ECLDS data system or are responsible for maintaining the accuracy and security of the data in the performance of their duties. Approval of access is granted by the appropriate contributing state agency commissioner or his/her designee and the MDE Chief Information Officer upon signing the appropriate data sharing agreements.
- **Level 1B** – [DOES NOT APPLY TO THE ECLDS] allows one agency staff person (non MN.IT) access to all records and fields within the identifiable linked data in order to manage the P20W data system, manage reporting from the data system or maintain the accuracy and security of the data in the performance of their duties. The agency agency’s commissioner or designee approves access for the designated individual and signs the appropriate data sharing agreements before access is granted. Approval by the MDE Chief Information Officer is also required.
- **Level 2** – allows a minimal number of authorized contributing state agency staff to access all records and fields of the ECLDS de-identified data. The requesting agency’s commissioner or designee approves access for designated individuals and signs the appropriate data sharing agreements before access is granted.
- **Level 3** –allows access for designated staff to de-identified data and secured reports consistent with best practices, state and federal law. For approved research projects (partner data provider and sponsored researchers) access to data will be provided by data marts. Approval of access is granted by the contributing state agencies upon consensus of ECLDS governance. Staff from partner data providers must also have approval from their organization’s executive and sign the appropriate data sharing agreements before access is granted. Suppression rules must be utilized by the researcher in production of public reports.
- **Level 4** – [DOES NOT APPLY TO THE ECLDS] allows for access to anonymized data in data marts to produce public reports. Suppression rules will be utilized with the use of data marts so that information is not revealed about individuals in a particular group. Approval of access is granted by the contributing state agencies upon recommendation of the governance research group. Users must be approved by the contributing state agencies and sign a data sharing agreement or data usage agreement before access is granted. Suppression rules must also be utilized by the researcher in production of summary level reports.
- **Level 5** – allows access to the general public for viewing standard summary ECLDS data. Requests for new public reports move through the ECLDS governance process.

**Figure 1. Levels of Access Diagram**



# MN P-20W+ DATA ACCESS DIAGRAM

### ***Record of Access***

Data security standards and requirements of state and federal law mandate that contributing state agencies maintain a record of each request to and each disclosure of personally identifiable information from ECLDS. Such records must be maintained as long as the data are maintained, include the parties who have requested or received the information, and include the legitimate interests of the parties in receiving the information. [Aligns with SLEDS.]

### ***Unauthorized Access***

A state agency that collects, creates, receives, maintains, or disseminates private or confidential data on individuals must disclose any breach of the security of the data following discovery or notification of the breach.

A “Breach of the Security of the Data” means unauthorized acquisition of data maintained by ECLDS. Good faith acquisition of government data by an employee, contractor, or agent of a state agency for the purposes of the state agency is not a Break of the Security of the Data, if the government data are not provided to an unauthorized person.

“Unauthorized acquisition” means that a person has obtained data without the informed consent of the individuals who are subjects of the data or statutory authority and with the intent to use the data for nongovernmental purposes.

In the event of a “Breach of the Security of the Data” or possible “Breach of the Security of the Data” involving individual records or aggregate and distributional reporting of individual records disclosed for purposes of ECLDS, contributing state agencies will notify MN.IT Services as described in the standard (Enterprise Information Security Incident Management Standard 2010-01); notify the duly authorized representative of state agencies; notify the ECLDS Governing Body; and notify any individual whose private or confidential information was, or is reasonably believed to have been, acquired by an unauthorized individual as required by Minn. Stat. §13.055. The contributing state agencies and MN.IT will work together to monitor and respond to privacy and security incidents that do not rise to the level of a breach of security, in order to improve systems and prevent breaches. [Aligns with SLEDS.]

### ***Rights of Subjects of Data to Inspect and Review Data and Records***

In compliance with state law, an individual who is the subject of stored private or public data on individuals may request to be shown the data without any charge and, if desired, be informed of the content and meaning of that data. In compliance with federal law, parents and eligible students have the rights to inspect and review education records. All records within ECLDS are managed by MDE, MDH, Head Start grantee agencies, Saint Paul Ramsey County Public Health, and DHS and as such those agencies are jointly responsible for developing a policy for responding to all requests for access to data and records in accordance with federal and state law. [Aligns with SLEDS.]

## ***Legislation Governing Data Sharing and Data Privacy***

The majority of data in ECLDS is classified as private data by Minnesota statute. Private data can be used as necessary by the agencies that collect the data or have statutory authority to use the data. Private data cannot be disclosed except in specific situations. Federal regulations provide additional limitations to the use of certain data. Individuals found in violation of federal or state law or resultant policies and procedures are subject to consequences as documented in the Minnesota Government Data Practices Act (MGDPA), Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), and all data sharing and usage agreements for ECLDS. [Aligns with SLEDS.]

### ***Minnesota Government Data Practices Act (MGDPA)***

The Minnesota Government Data Practices Act (MGDPA), Minnesota Statutes Chapter 13, asserts that all government data are public data unless classified otherwise. Public data can be disclosed to anyone for any reason. Private data, as designated under Minnesota law, may be collected, stored, used, or disseminated by government entities if the government entity is authorized to do so by state, local, or federal law (Minn. Stat. § 13.05 sub.4(b); the individual subject or subjects of the data have given their informed consent; the data are being discussed at a meeting open to the public (see Minn. Stat. §13D.05). The majority of data in ECLDS are classified as private data, meaning their disclosure is limited to that authorized in statute. The use and preparation of summary data is permitted under Minn. Stat. § 13.05 sub.7. [Aligns with SLEDS.]

### ***Education Data***

In general, education data are classified as private under state law in Minnesota Statutes, section 13.32, subdivision 1. "Educational data" means data on individuals maintained by a public educational agency or institution or by a person acting for the agency or institution which relates to a student. Pursuant to Minnesota Statutes, section 13.32, subdivision 11 the Minnesota Department of Education and the Minnesota Office of Higher Education have the authority to share educational data in order to analyze instruction in school districts for the purposes of improvement. [Aligns with SLEDS.]

### ***Head Start Data***

Head Start agencies are authorized to collect and utilize educational and related data from enrolled children and families (Head Start data) to inform program improvements in accordance with the federal Improving Head Start Readiness Act of 2007, Pub. L. 110-134, § 641A(g)(1) and (2), codified at 42 U.S.C. § 9836a(g). Head Start data is classified as private data pursuant to the federal Improving Head Start Readiness Act of 2007, 42 U.S.C. § 9836a(b)(4), and by Minn. Stat. § 119.50, subd. 2.

Head Start agencies are authorized to delegate the authority to create summary data from private data to another entity pursuant to Minn. Stat. § 13.05, subd. 7. MDE is authorized—through data sharing agreements—to create summary data from private Head Start data via the ECLDS to inform continuous improvement approaches based on the long-term success of Head Start-participating children and families.

## ***Health Data***

As part of MDH's duties, MDH collects and compiles data necessary for reporting Minnesota births pursuant to Minnesota Statutes, section 144.213.

- Minnesota Statutes, section 144.225, subdivision 1, designates the information in birth records as public information with the following exceptions.
- Minnesota Statutes, section 144.225, subdivision 2, designates demographic data in a birth record (including the original record of birth and the certified vital record) as confidential when the birth of a child is to a woman who was not married to the child's father when the child was conceived or when the child was born, unless the mother designates the data as public.
- Minnesota Statutes, section 144.225, subdivision 2a, designates as private data the health data associated with birth registrations from which an identification of risk for disease, disability, or developmental delay in a mother or child can be made.
- Minnesota Statutes, section 144.225, subdivision 4, allows MDH to give access to restricted birth information to persons performing medical research who agree in writing not to disclose private or confidential data on individuals.

As part of MDH's duties, MDH administers and operates the Early Hearing Detection and Intervention (EHDI) program pursuant to Minnesota Statutes, section 144.966. EHDI Data created, collected, received, and maintained by MDH are classified as private by Minnesota Statutes, section 13.3805. MDH and MDE may use EHDI Data to implement and evaluate a system of following-up with and tracking children from birth through age three who are at risk for delayed or late onset of permanent hearing loss under Minnesota Statutes, section 144.966, subdivision 2. The statute also allows for evaluating program outcomes to increase effectiveness and efficiency and ensure culturally-appropriate services for children with a confirmed hearing loss and their families.

## ***Human Services Data***

DHS is permitted to share the Protected Information with MDE pursuant to Minnesota Statutes, section 13.05, subdivision 7, which allows DHS to delegate the preparation of summary data to others under contract and it is the intent that MDE will use and aggregate DHS data for use in ECLDS.

- Minnesota Statutes, section 13.46, subdivision 1(c) allows DHS to enter into contracts to make other entities part of the welfare system and both parties agree it is their intention to make MDE a part of the welfare system for the limited purposes described in this Agreement.
- Minnesota Statutes, section 13.46, subdivision 2(a)(5) allows the disclosure of private data on individuals collected, maintained, used, or disseminated by the welfare system to personnel of the welfare system who require the data to verify an individual's identity; determine eligibility, amount of assistance, and the need to provide services to an individual or family across programs; and evaluate the effectiveness of programs.
- Minnesota Statutes, section 13.46, subdivision 2(a)(9)(iii) allows the disclosure of private data on individuals between DHS and MDH to monitor and evaluate the Minnesota family investment

program or the child care assistance program by exchanging data on recipients and former recipients of food support, cash assistance under chapter 256, 256D, 256J, 256K, child care assistance under chapter 119B, or medical programs under chapter 256B, 256D, or 256L.

- Minnesota Statutes, section 13.46, subdivision 2(a)(29)) provides that data on individuals collected, maintained, used or disseminated by the welfare system are private data on individuals and shall not be disclosed except...“counties and the Department of Human Services operating child care assistance programs under chapter 119B may disseminate data on program participants, applicants, and providers to the commissioner of education.

### ***Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)***

In compliance with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, data for use in P-20W data systems such as ECLDS and SLEDS, requires that state agencies and partner data providers specify the conditions of use of data prior to inclusion. The conditions of use must include an anticipated data destruction date.

FERPA generally requires written consent of a parent or eligible student before an educational agency or institution discloses personally identifiable information. However, there are certain limited conditions in which prior consent is not required to disclose information (34 CFR Part 99.31).

These conditions include, but are not limited to, certain disclosures:

- To other school officials within the agency or institution determined to have legitimate educational interests
- To officials of another school, school system, or postsecondary institution where the student seeks or intends to enroll or is enrolled for purposes of the student’s enrollment or transfer
- To authorized representatives of: 1) the Comptroller General of the United States; 2) the Attorney General of the United States; 3) the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Education; or 4) state and local educational authorities
- In connection with financial aid for which the student has applied or received
- To organizations conducting certain types of studies for, or on behalf of, educational agencies or institutions
- If the information disclosed is designated as “directory information”, or
- If the information disclosed has been stripped of all personally identifiable information and determined that a student’s identity is not personally identifiable after taking into account other reasonably available information

For more information on the conditions under which prior consent is not required to disclose information, please see Title 34, §99.31, of the Code of Federal Regulations for FERPA. Organizations and individuals found to be in violation of FERPA shall be prohibited from accessing information from ECLDS for a period of five (5) years. [Aligns with SLEDS.]

### ***Destruction of Data***

Any entity receiving ECLDS de-identified or anonymized data must destroy such data when it is no longer needed within the specified study time period or for the purpose for which the study was conducted. The manner of destruction shall protect the confidentiality of the information, and include the purging of all copies from computer systems. The ECLDS Coordinators must receive written confirmation of the method and date of destruction of data disclosed from ECLDS. [Aligns with SLEDS.]

### ***Requesting Access to ECLDS Data***

Current Data Share Agreements between the state agencies prohibit researcher or others access or access to individual student level records at this time. One-time research use may be granted to partner data contributing agencies through a formal ECLDS governance request process. Contact the ECLDS Lead at [ecls.support@state.mn.us](mailto:ecls.support@state.mn.us) with questions.

### **References and Resources**

Minnesota Departments of Education, Health, and Human Services. (2012). Minnesota Race to the Top Early Learning Data Linkage Charter. Government document.

SLEDS Governance. (2018). Minnesota Statewide Longitudinal Education Data System (SLEDS) Data Access and Management Policy. Government document.

SLEDS. (2014). SLEDS Data Interpretation Guide. Available at <http://sleds.mn.gov/#research>.