

Strengthening Child Care:

UNDERSTANDING IOWA'S OPERATIONAL DATA STORE

Iowa needs real-time information about the availability of child care by child age categories to support families and empower data driven decision-making.

To make this happen, we are building a comprehensive data system that integrates relevant information from multiple sources to assist stakeholders in determining real-time child care supply and demand within their community.

WHAT IS AN OPERATIONAL DATA STORE (ODS)?

An ODS is a secure, centralized data exchange that moves specific data in and out of multiple sources to provide comprehensive data that will help drive decision-making. By developing an ODS that integrates real-time child care availability data from providers across the State, stakeholders can:

- Identify where child care vacancies exist by child age categories.
- Match open child care slots to families needing care for their children.
- Guide decision-making to ensure that child care supply meets the demand.

HOW WILL IT WORK?

Local child care providers, agencies that support child care providers, and state agencies own and operate their own data systems. Iowa State University will maintain the ODS. Through the secure, centralized ODS, data from these systems are imported, cleaned, and processed. Relevant information, such as child care vacancies, is shared back with stakeholders in real-time.

IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY

HOW WILL THIS HELP FAMILIES AND CHILDREN?

Having real-time data securely exchanged between systems can help in the following ways:

- Families will have enhanced search options to find child care.
- Providers will fill open child care slots quicker, which will help support their businesses' sustainability.
- State administrators will be able to assess the supply and demand of child care by child age categories.

WHEN WILL THIS HAPPEN?

The design and build of the ODS is already underway and anticipated to roll out in 2024.

