Providers and ECI Stakeholders Data Collection Awareness: Talking Points

What's being built and why should anyone care?

- Iowa State University is working with the Iowa Department of Health and Human Services to build an Operational Data Store (ODS) to provide real-time information about the availability of child care by child age to support families to find child care that meets their children's needs.
- Building an ODS will benefit providers, families, and Iowa.
- Providers will be able to fill available child care slots quicker, which will help support their businesses' sustainability.
- Families will be able to find child care appropriate for their needs and circumstances, and be able to enter the workforce, retain their jobs, or pursue further education.
- Iowa administrators will be able to make better decisions about child care supply and demand issues and maximize the number of children in care across Iowa.

What information is being added into the ODS?

- The ODS will add information from multiple sources including KinderTrack (KT), Child Care Management System vendors, the Childcare Regulatory Information System (CRIS), and NDS 2.0/CCR&R's data system.

Why does the state need to ask providers more questions if they already have all these data sources?

- Even with all these data sources there are gaps in data and some of the data is not up to date. The ODS isn't able to provide helpful information about child care supply and demand if we don't fill the gaps and ensure up-to-date data.
- One way to fill the data gaps and ensure the data is up-to-date is to regularly ask providers—including licensed, registered, and 'non-registered and accept CCA' providers—questions about their desired capacity (i.e., how many children they want to care for at their child care program, which may be less than their licensed/registered capacity) and vacancies (i.e., how many slots they have open at their child care program).
- Providers will receive a link once a month to provide their current desired capacity and vacancy information. Providers will also be asked once to share the rates they charge families for child care. The answers they provide will be automatically entered into the ODS to get as near real-time child care availability information as possible.

I thought that Child Care Resource & Referral's (CCR&R) data system already has this provider information? Why do you need to ask providers again?

- CCR&R sends providers a Program Information Form (PIF) on a quarterly basis to update all information about their child care business. Desired capacity and vacancy information is one of the pieces of information that providers are prompted to update on the PIF.
- Sending a link to providers to answer questions allows for quick gathering of information that changes frequently. Not all providers respond to the PIF by logging into NDS to make updates and providing a link to questions gives them a quicker way to provide information about desired capacity and vacancies.
- Sending desired capacity and vacancy questions to providers monthly…
    - Does not replace the PIF. In fact, providers will be provided a link to the PIF when the questions are sent to them so they can make updates beyond desired capacity and vacancies, if needed.
    - Does allow providers to quickly provide, either by cell phone, tablet, or computer, this critical information for the ODS to provide close to real-time information about child care availability in a community and across the state.