CCEEPRA
Child Care and Early Education Policy and Research Analysis

Measuring and Tracking Improvements in Early Care and Education (ECE) Access Across Settings

Welcome

ECE ACCESS AND CHOICES

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Acknowledgement

This presentation draws from work that is currently underway and funded by the Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation (OPRE) in the Administration for Children and Families, under the Child Care and Early Education Policy and Research Analysis (CCEEPRA) Project.

What is ECE "access"?

Access to early care and education means that parents, with ***reasonable effort*** and ***affordability***, can enroll their child in an arrangement that ***supports the child's development*** and ***meets the parents' needs.***

-ECE Access Expert Workgroup

Why measure and track access to high-quality ECE?

- To identify areas of need and inform the development of initiatives to improve ECE access

- To monitor initiatives once implemented, particularly for high-priority populations

- To understand how ECE is meeting both parents' and children's needs

- *To unify the tracking and measurement of access across settings*

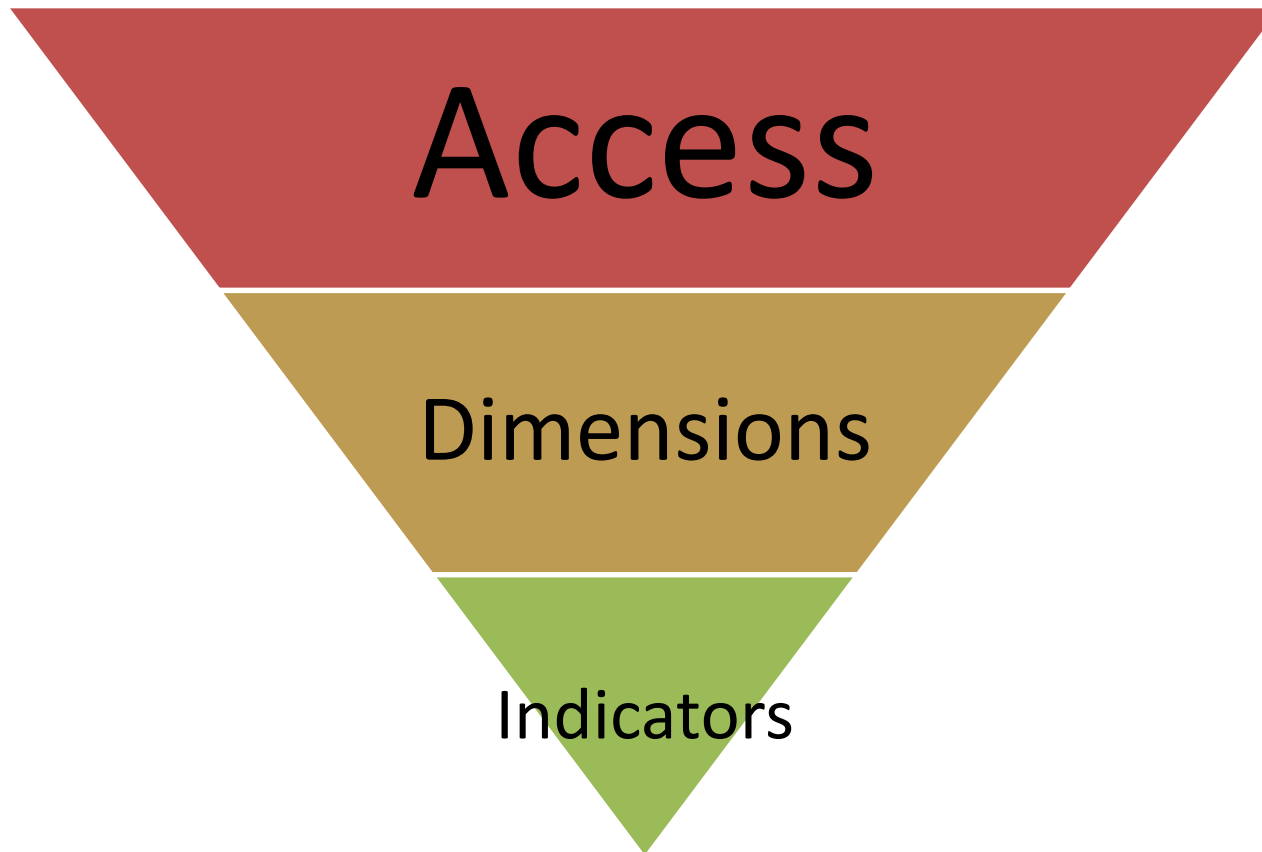# What access issues are important to understand across settings?

Availability and quality of different program types

- Licensed child care centers; licensed family child care programs; Head Start/Early Head Start programs; state pre-kindergarten programs

Characteristics of programs that meet parents' needs

- Ages served; location; hours of operation; languages spoken; affordability for parents

Indicators: The Measurable Components of Access

Example Indicators by Dimension

Dimensions

Reasonable Effort	Affordability	Supports the Child's Development	Meets the Parents' Needs	Child, Family, Community Characteristics

Indicators

Reasonable Effort	Affordability	Supports the Child's Development	Meets the Parents' Needs	Child, Family, Community Characteristics
• Supply of ECE programs • Geographic location • Desired capacity	• Portion of parents' income to pay for ECE • Subsidy or scholarship contribution • Program fundraising	• Programs' designation of quality • Language of instruction • Supportive services for high-needs children	• Program type • Hours of operation • Age groups served	• Community income level • Household income • Household structure

Tracking Access across Settings:
Example Question

What is the availability of high-quality, affordable ECE by program type in low-income areas?

Availability of high-quality, affordable ECE by program type in low-income areas
Dimensions, Indicators and Datasets

Dimensions

Reasonable Effort	Affordability	Supports the Child's Development	Meets the Parents' Needs	Child, Family, Community Characteristics

Indicators

Reasonable Effort	Affordability	Supports the Child's Development	Meets the Parents' Needs	Child, Family, Community Characteristics
• Supply of ECE programs • Geographic location	• Portion of parents' income to pay for ECE	• Programs' designation of quality	• Program type	• Community income level

Datasets

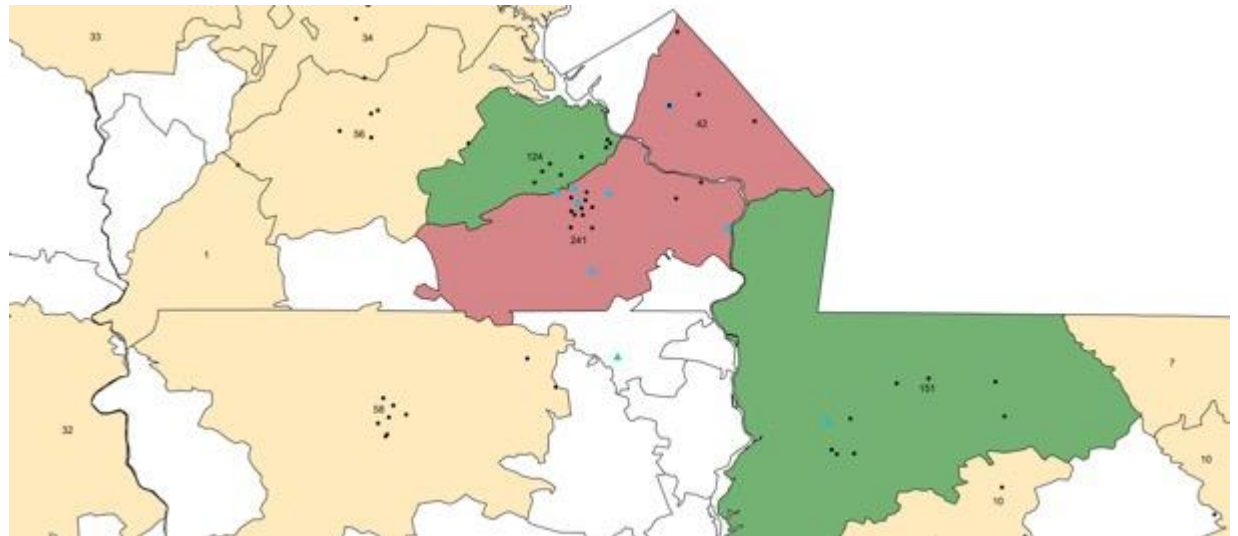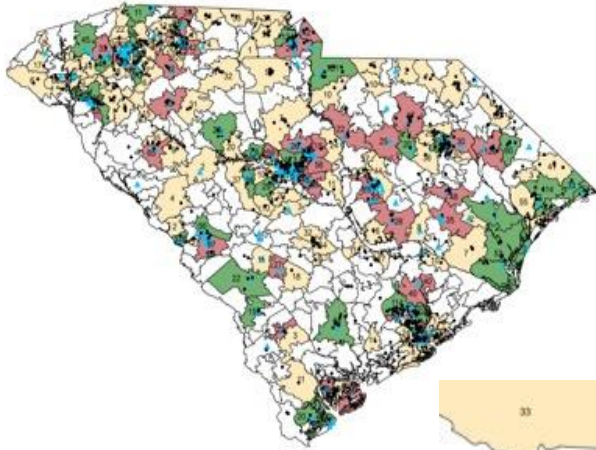| Reasonable Effort	Affordability	Supports the Child's Development	Meets the Parents' Needs	Child, Family, Community Characteristics
• Child Care Resource and Referral • Licensing	• Administrative dataset state pre-k programs	• QRIS • Program Information Report • Administrative dataset state pre-k programs	• Child Care Resource and Referral • Licensing	• American Community Survey

Considering the Context

Affordability can be assessed through the portion of parents' income used to pay for ECE

  - Assessing income portions for certain program types, like Head Start or state pre-K, is facilitated by those programs being "free" to parents

Mapping the availability of affordable, high-quality programs in low-income areas can be used to identify gaps where parents struggle to identify and secure ECE with reasonable effort

Mapping Availability and Utilization

Source: Herman Knopf Ph.D. and Vasanthi Rao Ph.D., University of South Carolina, Child Development Research Center

Implications for States, Localities and Programs

- States, localities and programs benefit when currently collected data is merged and mined

- Processes need to be developed to ensure that new and existing datasets can be analyzed on an ongoing basis

- Once existing data is mined, new data may need to be collected to answer additional policy questions of interest

- Findings should be utilized to affect continuous improvement of efforts to expand access