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Integrated Administrative Data for Early Childhood Iowa: A Governance Model to Inform Policy and Program Collaboration

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In response to demands on public systems to do more, do better, and cost less, the value of integrated administrative data systems (IDS) for social policy is increasing (Fantuzzo & Culhane, 2016). This is particularly relevant in programming for young children where services are historically fragmented, disconnected from systems serving school-aged children, and siloed among health, human services, and education agencies. Guided by the vision that Iowa's early childhood system will be effectively and efficiently coordinated to support healthy families, we are developing an early childhood IDS to address this disconnection and facilitate relevant and actionable social policy research.

Iowa's IDS is a state-university partnership that acknowledges the need for agencies to retain control of their data while enabling it to be integrated across systems for social policy research. The innovative governance model deliberately incorporates procedures for stakeholder engagement at critical tension points between executive leaders, program managers, researchers, and practitioners. Standing committees (Governance Board, Data Stewardship, and Core team) authorize and implement the work of the IDS, while ad-hoc committees are solicited for specific projects to advise and translate research into practice.

This paper will articulate the Iowa IDS governance model that was informed by means tested principles articulated by the Actionable Intelligence for Social Policy Network. It will include our collaborative development process; articulated mission and principles that guided discussions about legal authorization, governance, and use cases; and the establishment of governance committees to implement our vision for ethical and efficient use of administrative data for social policy.

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