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Refining Estimates to Child Care Demand to inform strategic planning: An Integrated Data System Approach

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Estimating childcare supply and demand is crucial for local communities to ensure families have access to care when they need it, and businesses have a sustainable workforce that is not threatened by unstable childcare. This presentation showcases an integrated data system approach to estimating childcare demand that addresses limitations in national estimates that undercount young children, particularly in rural areas. Iowa Child Care Connect (C3) includes technology solutions for real-time data sharing from providers and public-facing applications that include aggregated data for strategic decision-making. Estimating childcare demand by age group and geography capitalizes on integrated data from public health and human services using birth records and workforce estimates to more precisely measure demand in rural areas. Recent longitudinal analyses using geographic data contained within birth

records and kindergarten enrollment files for four cohorts of children enabled more refined estimates of child mobility in, out, and across the state between birth to age five. Additionally, it identified child and family characteristics that predict mobility. Combined, these estimates are currently used to predict demand for child care by age and geography to support strategic local planning that advances workforce investments and expands the quality of childcare. In summary, this presentation will showcase the C3 approach to estimating childcare demand while discussing challenges in cross-sector data linkage. It will provide recommendations and next steps for additional data integration to support increasing accuracy in supply and demand estimation using administrative data from other sectors including workforce and economic development.

