



Resultant

**Clearing a Way Forward
to Insight from Integrated Data**

SETTING THE STAGE

An early childhood integrated data system (ECIDS) wasn't performing as expected, and state leaders were eager to pinpoint why good intentions and a major investment hadn't yielded the insights that would improve programs for children and families.

Based on our unique combination of early childhood education experience, data integration expertise, and management and organizational health insight, the state partnered with Resultant to uncover what had gone awry and devise a strategy for fully utilizing the system.

THE PROBLEM

By developing a system that integrates critical data from programs and services for children age five and under and their families, state leaders hoped to leverage new opportunities for analysis and research and find greater insight into how these agencies meet the needs of young learners.

But the system hadn't yet delivered its expected value. Few requests for data were being made, and what had been integrated was gathering digital dust. Other issues included the following:

- Establishing a new dataset required a long, complicated process, including governance agreements that were written and reviewed on a case-by-case basis.
- Acquiring datasets from other agencies was difficult; agencies lacked confidence in their own and others' data, and they were reluctant to onboard more data before seeing the benefits of the system.
- Among relevant program and service providers, awareness of the system was low, which kept usage down and a lot of meaningful data from being collected or utilized.
- An incomprehensive strategy meant development moved forward in fits and starts, without a clear, prioritized plan that would enable the state to get the most out of the data.
- Without defined expectations for the system, data collection was hazy, and pinpointing issues without a standard to measure against inhibited problem resolution.



THE APPROACH

To provide a clear, actionable evaluation of the strengths and challenges of the system, our team started with an extensive discovery phase. We engaged a broad range of stakeholders that included end users, management, IT representatives, researchers, community leaders, and agency and program leaders in focus groups and empathy interviews to unearth their frustrations and needs.

Our team also delved into the agencies' policies, observed how their current system functioned and was utilized, and conducted research similar challenges throughout the country. Our immediate objective was to uncover opportunities for quick wins that would show the value of the system and therefore encourage greater utilization. Those wins needed to serve a larger strategy of technical and cultural shifts, however, and we concurrently developed a prioritized roadmap of recommended steps toward full utilization.

THE OUTCOME

With a plan in place to address technical and operational challenges, the state had a clear strategy for integrating phased projects over the next several years. Our work in partnership with the Executive Governance Committee helped the state coalesce around a detailed vision for its system.

We used that vision as a jumping-off point for directing our findings into

- A policy brief that examined the process and outcomes of the implementation of the ECIDS and provided recommendations for refining the system for greater accessibility and utilization.
- A technical brief documenting the technology, data, and process challenges inherent in the system and detailing plans for overcoming them.
- A comprehensive strategic plan that turns findings into action steps, prioritizing and outlining solutions to the state's issues with ECIDS through its people, processes, and technology.





THE IMPACT

The fact-finding and strategy elements of our work with the state drew from our collaborative approach, which typically brings a shift in agency collaboration and participation. We've heard from the client (and seen firsthand) that the stakeholders enjoyed that result here, too. Inclusion in a process alone tends to raise enthusiasm, and seeing that process develop strategies for meaningful change brought a new level of engagement, one that will prove critical as the state begins implementing its next steps for full ECIDS utilization.

The state now has a much more explicit evaluation of where its system and processes stand, the challenges it will work to overcome, and the steps that will bring the insight it needs from its essential integrated data system.