

# Early Childhood Administrators Value Data for Decisionmaking

## STATE LEADERS CAN EASE DATA COLLECTION AND REPORTING BURDENS AND PROVIDE BETTER ACCESS TO DATA

A national poll from the Data Quality Campaign (DQC), conducted by The Harris Poll, surveyed early childhood administrators—educational or child care professionals in program director or general manager roles serving children from birth through age four—to find out how they are collecting, using, and reporting data.<sup>1</sup> Early childhood administrators clearly voiced that while data is essential for their work, they lack access to data that is presented in ways that are most useful and find that the collecting and reporting of that data tends to be inefficient, if not overwhelming. As states enhance their own data infrastructure—through an early childhood integrated data system, a statewide longitudinal data system, or both—state leaders must ensure that those enhancements benefit early childhood administrators as well as other local data users.




**Early childhood administrators have long relied on data to better understand the children and families they serve. They need better access to data and tools that facilitate and ease their use of data to support children.**


Essentially all early childhood administrators view data as vital for success and continuous improvement.


**99%** collect data—primarily, for administrative and program-related needs.

**97%** view data collection as essential for success.

Administrators agree that using data improves:

 Teaching or care (99%)

 Program quality (97%)

 Individualized child support (97%)

 Child outcomes (95%)

Early childhood administrators want to improve their use of data and need better data training and tools to do so.

**94%** use data for decisionmaking, with 69% doing so daily or up to several times a week.

**97%** say using data has significantly improved their decisionmaking processes and leads to better outcomes.

**95%** need more training on how to effectively use data.

**88%** say their organization lacks the necessary tools to properly analyze data.

<sup>1</sup> This survey was conducted online within the United States by The Harris Poll on behalf of the Data Quality Campaign July 25–30, 2024, among 260 early childhood administrators. This group was defined as educational or child care professionals in director or general manager roles who work with children ages zero to four (infant through prekindergarten).

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## Early childhood administrators face a number of challenges that complicate the reporting process. State leaders can provide solutions.

Early childhood administrators want better technology to make reporting more streamlined.

- 90%** report that technology makes data collection a burden because of issues such as:
- Managing multiple data collection sources (42%);
  - Duplicative reporting requirements (38%);
  - Outdated technology interfaces (37%); and
  - Incompatible record formats (30%).

Early childhood administrators also face challenges related to time, support, and training.



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## States can prioritize more streamlined reporting to ensure that these processes take less of administrators' time while increasing the data's value to them.

Many early childhood administrators feel burdened by data collection and reporting. Of the administrators who collect data:

**77%** feel overwhelmed by the amount of data they collect.

**84%** say reporting data to government agencies is a burden.

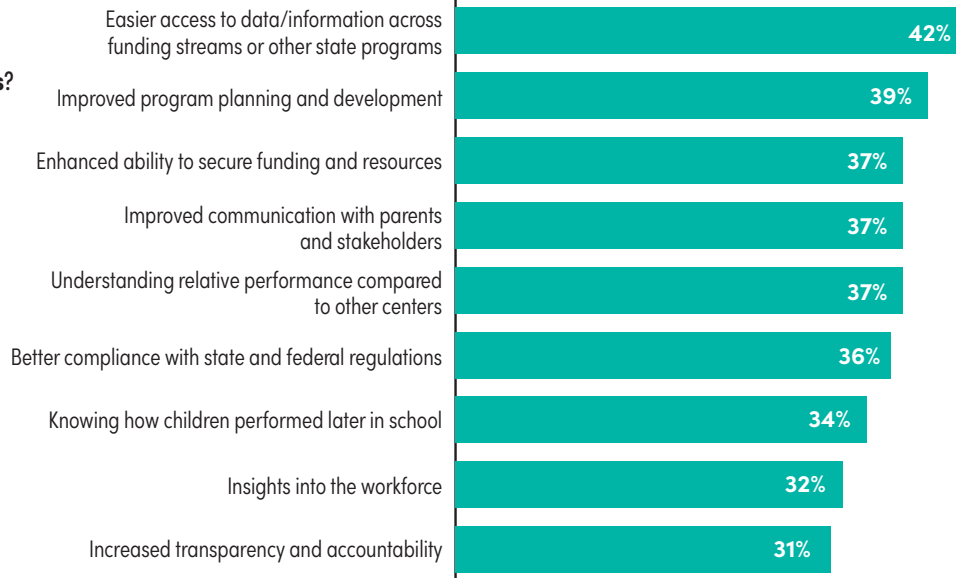
**96%** wish their collection methods were more efficient.

Early childhood administrators seek greater value from data reporting.

**71%** indicate being required to report data to state or federal agencies.

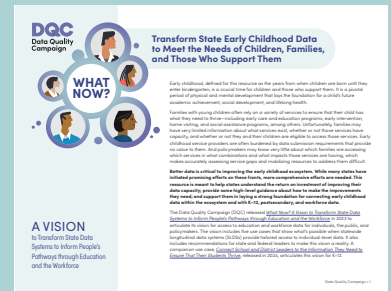
**81%** of data-reporting administrators receive data back from agencies, but that data isn't necessarily useful to them.

What kinds of data do you or would you find most valuable from the state/federal agencies?



Early childhood administrators value data and use it, but they face challenges that make the process of collecting and reporting the data burdensome and make the data less useful than it could be. State leaders can support early childhood administrators by streamlining reporting and removing technology hurdles to make the process of collecting and reporting data simpler. Data systems that enable access to robust information, streamline reporting requirements, and provide useful and usable data are key to ensuring that early childhood data can drive decisions—and ultimately, benefit children.

**DQC's use cases for early childhood education data highlight how better early childhood data and data systems could help reduce the collection and reporting burden for care providers.**



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