



Trust for Learning

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November 15, 2019

Director of the Information Collection Clearance Division
U.S. Department of Education
550 12th Street SW, PCP, Room 9089
Washington, DC 20202-0023

Re: Comments on Mandatory Civil Rights Data Collection, Docket Number ED-2019-ICCD-0119

Dear Director of the Information Collection Clearance Division:

Trust for Learning (the Trust) appreciates the opportunity to respond to the request for input on the U.S. Department of Education's proposal to retire the collection of certain data within the Civil Rights Data Collection (CRDC) related to early childhood, preschool, and kindergarten. As an organization committed to measurably advancing equity in early learning, the Trust strongly values the education data provided by the CRDC and believes its value far outweighs any collection and reporting burden on Local Education Agencies (LEAs). Furthermore, the Trust believes this information is essential for documenting the experiences of young children and families served in our public education system, and that it is critical for enforcing applicable civil rights laws.

In particular, the Trust is concerned about the elimination of several data elements (outlined below) that may be used to identify discrimination regarding services provided to or treatment experienced by particular groups with federally protected status. As a result, we offer the following recommendations:

- **Continue to require that the collection and reporting of preschool enrollment data be disaggregated by all current demographic subgroups (e.g. race, ethnicity, sex, EL status, economic status, etc.).** These data are essential for understanding the needs of students being served in public preschool programs, and are critical for illuminating any disparities that might exist based on these factors. Further, recent research shows that early education programs are the most racially segregated years in a child's educational experience.¹ Given the beneficial effects of integrated schools on all children and the harmful effects of segregation on students of color and low-income students,² we must have baseline data that shows the racial composition of school programs for our youngest learners.

¹ Segregated from the Start: Comparing Segregation in Early Childhood and K–12 Education. Urban Institute. (2019). <https://www.urban.org/features/segregated-start>.

² McArdle, Nancy, Acevedo-Garcia, D. (2017) Consequences of Segregation for Children's Opportunity and Wellbeing, originally presented at *A Shared Future: Fostering Communities of Inclusion in an Era of Inequality*, a national symposium hosted by the Harvard Joint Center for Housing Studies. https://www.jchs.harvard.edu/sites/default/files/a_shared_future_consequences_of_segregation_for_children.pdf



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- **Continue to require the collection and reporting of disaggregated data regarding preschool children with one out-of-school suspension and more than one suspension.** Federal data show significant disparities in discipline practices based on young children's gender and race. In fact, black three- and four-year olds are 3.6 times as likely to receive an out-of-school suspension as their white classmates.³ Even more stark disparities exist for young boys of color, who are suspended and expelled much more frequently than their peers.⁴⁵ Students who continually face these types of disciplinary practices lose important instructional time, and are more likely to experience adverse outcomes across development, health, and education.⁶⁷⁸ Without data on single suspension vs. multiple suspensions, there will be no way of determining whether exclusionary discipline continues to fall more harshly on particular student populations. Therefore, it is essential to continue measuring our progress to ensure that all children remain in and benefit from quality early childhood settings.
- **Continue to require the collection and reporting of early childhood data regarding program duration and cost.** Research has shown significant differences in the effects of full-day versus half-day pre-kindergarten programs, with full-day programs producing substantially greater impacts on learning outcomes across developmental domains.⁹ Therefore, it is important to understand these differences in order to effectively evaluate the impact of the publicly-funded services provided. Additionally, it is critical to know whether programs are provided free or charge tuition, as these data reveal potential barriers to access and enrollment that may disproportionately impact low-income children, who are poised to benefit most from these critical public investments. Such information is critical for local, state and federal policymakers and organizations like ours in determining the needs of families and the appropriate level of intervention.
- **Continue to distinguish whether preschool services are provided by LEA- or non-LEA facilities.** These data reveal important information on how preschool services are delivered in communities, and document the relationships or lack thereof between

³ Gilliam, W. S. (2005). Prekindergarteners left behind: Expulsion rates in state prekindergarten systems. New York, NY: Foundation for Child Development.

⁴ U.S Department of Education Office for Civil Rights (2014). Data Snapshot: Early Childhood Education.

⁵ Gilliam, W.S., & Shahrar, G. (2006). Preschool and child care expulsion and suspension: Rates and predictors in one state. *Infants & Young Children*, 19, 228–245.

⁶ Lamont, J. H., Devore, C. D., Allison, M., Ancona, R., Barnett, S. E., Gunther, R., ... & Young, T. (2013). Out-of-school suspension and expulsion. *Pediatrics*, 131(3), e1000-e1007.

⁷ Petras, H., Masyn, K. E., Buckley, J. A., Jalongo, N. S., & Kellam, S. (2011). Who is most at risk for school removal? A multilevel discrete-time survival analysis of individual- and context-level influences. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 103, 223

⁸ American Psychological Association, Zero Tolerance Task Force Report (2008). An evidentiary review and recommendations.

⁹ Atteberry, Allison, Bassok, Daphna, Wong, Vivian C., (2019) The Effects of Full-Day Prekindergarten: Experimental Evidence of Impacts on Children's School Readiness, Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis, Volume: 41 issue: 4, page(s): 537-562.



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school districts and other early childhood providers to meet the needs of children and families. Given the diverse delivery of preschool services within communities and the various structures of state pre-kindergarten programs, services may be provided by a range of facilities. These data are important in identifying potential disparities that may exist among such providers, helping target future investments to improve low-performing programs.

In an early childhood data landscape that is limited and often disconnected given the various programs that provide services to children and families, the consistent benchmark of the CRDC is a critical common resource to document and analyze the status of early childhood services around the country. It is especially valuable to collect data reported by LEAs that span specific state and federal programs (e.g. IDEA, Title I, state-funded pre-k, and Head Start) in order to provide a more comprehensive picture of how our public education system is meeting the needs of its youngest learners. The loss of this data would be substantial for educators, researchers, policymakers, and advocates in their efforts to provide and ensure that children receive equitable early learning opportunities. Furthermore, it would limit the Office of Civil Rights in its efforts to investigate alleged discrimination and violations of civil rights laws.

It is clear that we have a long way to go in building a more equitable education system, and it is important that we understand and address inequities from their earliest beginnings. Thank you for your consideration of our input. For more information or questions about our comments, please contact Chrisanne Gayl at chrisanne@trustforlearning.org.

Sincerely,

Chrisanne L. Gayl
Senior Director of Policy and Programs
Trust for Learning