Selecting Indicators for Early Childhood Systems Change Projects
A Reference Guide
Objectives

▲ Provide context for Reference Guide development
▲ Explore Reference Guide features and uses
▲ Define indicators and why they are important
▲ Walk through the steps of identifying and selecting indicators using the Reference Guide
Harnessing Opportunity for Positive, Equitable Early Childhood Development (HOPE) Project

▲ Designed to generate real progress toward equitable outcomes for young children and their families

▲ Builds capacity of communities, state leaders, cross-sector state teams, and coalitions to prevent social adversities and promote child wellbeing

▲ Supported by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation
Goals of Project HOPE

1. **Promote optimal health and wellbeing for children prenatal to age five** and prevent and mitigate early childhood adversities and improve adverse social settings by **reducing racial, ethnic, geographic, and economic inequities.**

2. **Shift or realign systems** (policies, practices, programs, initiatives, funding, governance, data, communications) to **increase access to opportunities for young children and families** in communities with significant racial, ethnic, economic, health and education disparities.

3. **Engage community members** with lived experience and **create feedback loops** to ensure ongoing communication between state and local policy makers, practitioners, community leaders and families.

4. Utilize peer, state, and community mentorship, as well as technical assistance, to **improve state, community, and coalition capacity to improve systems that positively impact child health and wellbeing** by addressing concentrated poverty, institutional or structural racism, or other aspects of early childhood adversity.
Infrastructure Components to Systems Change

▲ Leadership
▲ Communications
▲ Governance
▲ Financing
▲ Data
DATA helped to inform a Project HOPE state pathway to Systems Change

Identify policy/systems level solutions to equity issue

Develop plan to test policy/systems solution at community level

Implement and evaluate community pilot

Finalize 5 year State Action Plan including sustainability informed by community pilot and data

Integrate community voice

Integrate community voice solutions to equity issue

FL, NJ, OK, WA

Technical Assistance; Equity Support, Community Voice/Lived Experience Support as needed; Data collection and storytelling based on community pilot and process to inform five-year state action plan

*Iterative process
Project HOPE works with states to redesign infrastructure components, including leadership, communications, governance, financing and data, to support impactful policy and program changes across sectors (systems change). The end goal is to ensure equitable access to high-quality services and resources for young children, prenatal to age five, and their families.

**SYSTEMS ELEMENTS (WORKED ON BY SOME OR ALL STATES)**
- Governance
- Leadership development
- Financing strategy development
- Data strategy development
- Communications (between organizations & with parents & communities)

**OUTCOMES (ACHIEVED & INTENDED)**
- Increased community & family engagement
- Stronger feedback loops between state initiatives, communities, and families
- More equitable approach to early childhood initiatives

**ACTIVITIES**
- Trainings, pilot initiatives, community & family engagement, long-term planning, and sharing lessons learned

**RESOURCES**
- Funds, expertise, support, and cross-state learning

**COMPLEMENTARY INITIATIVES**
- Community, state, national

**CAPACITY (INPUT & OUTPUT)**
- Knowledge, skills, experience, tools, and partnerships

**NATIONAL, STATE, AND COMMUNITY CONTEXT**
Inception of the Indicator Reference Guide

States were asked to identify data indicators and complete a goal statement.

▲ Signals of change

▲ Systems Change Outcomes

▲ Data Indicators
  ▪ Short-term
  ▪ Intermediate
  ▪ Long-term

▲ Data sources
Purpose of the Reference Guide

Provide a resource for groups working to advance health equity in early childhood to identify, select, and track indicators on young children and families to inform and advance their efforts.
How the Guide Was Developed

▲ Environmental scan to identify datasets related to early childhood
▲ Curated group of datasets featured in the guide (not exhaustive)
▲ Summarized resources by potential usability
▲ Summarized data by geographic level and indicator topic area
Guide Features

▲ Guidelines, steps, tips, and examples on how data indicators can be used

▲ Resource Guides
  ▪ Arranged to help make indicator selection process more efficient
  ▪ Resources organized by applicability
    ▪ Key Early Childhood Datasets
    ▪ Additional Datasets and Tools
    ▪ City and State-Specific Datasets and Resources

▲ Glossary of key terms
How Can This Reference Guide Benefit Me?

▲ Provides a starting point and steps for defining measurement strategy

▲ Save time by quickly referencing relevant datasets and indicators at your geographic level and category of interest

▲ Template and examples to use to describe the indicators chosen
Indicators—What are They?

▲ Measurable information used to approximate (“indicate”) conditions.

▲ Example

- Goal: Reduce disparities in access to early childhood education
- Indicators: number of early childhood education centers, percentage of Head Start-eligible children with a Head Start Preschool in their neighborhood
How Are Indicators Useful?

- Inform efforts to make systems-level changes to improve early childhood outcomes
- Identify and track inequities in your community
- Communicate with others about what you are doing and how it will make a difference
Guidelines for Indicator Selection

▲ Coordinate with other groups that have a similar focus
▲ Obtain community input and buy-in
▲ Keep equity at the forefront
▲ Use more direct measures to track project work, and more broad indicators to communicate about long-term goals and potential impact
▲ If you identify data that are missing, consider how your initiative can improve data collection and reporting
Steps in Selecting Indicators

1. Articulate what you want to accomplish
2. Determine how you will measure success
3. Review list of indicators for measuring success
4. Obtain community input
5. Develop a goals statement

Steps do not need to be sequential
Articulate What You Want to Accomplish

▲ Determine what it is that you are setting out to do

▲ This may be pre-determined based by a funder, existing plan, or group
Determine How You Will Measure Success

▲ Think about the trajectory of the project. What will the project accomplish in the

- Short-term (6 months- 2 years)
- Mid-term (2-5 years)
- Long-term (5+ years)
### Review List of Indicators for Measuring Success

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Resource</th>
<th>City</th>
<th>County</th>
<th>Congressional District</th>
<th>State</th>
<th>National</th>
<th>Other</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>American Community Survey</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td></td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>America's Health Rankings</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Atlas of Rural and Small-Town America</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td></td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child Care Development Fund-Administrative</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child Opportunity Index</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td></td>
<td>✔</td>
<td></td>
<td>✔</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child Opportunity Index</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>✔</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child Trends DataBank</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td></td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City Health Dashboard</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td></td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Opportunity Map</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td></td>
<td>✔</td>
<td></td>
<td>✔</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>County Health Rankings</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td></td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Healthy People</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td></td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HOPE Initiative</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td></td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KIDS COUNT</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td></td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- **Part I: Select indicators by geography**—Indicators may be available at city, county, congressional district, national and other (e.g., school district)

- **See Table 1 in Reference Guide**
Review List of Indicators for Measuring Success

▲ Part I: Select indicators by topic area
▲ See Table 2 in Reference Guide
## Reference Guide Table 2 Example

### Table 2D: Women and Infant Health

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WOMEN AND INFANT HEALTH INDICATOR</th>
<th>DATA SOURCE(S)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Women's Health</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adequate prenatal care</td>
<td>KIDS COUNT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adequate prenatal care, by race</td>
<td>KIDS COUNT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prenatal care</td>
<td>City Health Dashboard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prenatal care before third trimester</td>
<td>America’s Health Rankings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maternity Practices in Infant and Nutrition Care (mPINC) survey score</td>
<td>America’s Health Rankings</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Birth Outcomes</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Births of low birthweight as a percentage of all births, by race/ethnicity</td>
<td>State Health Facts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Births to mothers who smoked during pregnancy</td>
<td>KIDS COUNT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Births to mothers with less than 12 years of education</td>
<td>KIDS COUNT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Births to women receiving late or no prenatal care (by race and ethnicity)</td>
<td>KIDS COUNT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low birth weight (by race, ethnicity, and education)</td>
<td>America’s Health Rankings, Child Trends Databank, City Health Dashboard, County Health Ratings, Healthy People, HOPE Initiative, KIDS COUNT, National Survey of Children’s Health, State Health Facts</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Review List of Indicators for Measuring Success

▲ Consider frequency that data are collected and how this may impact your ability to track during the project period

▲ Once indicators are identified, review the dataset/tools they are available from and how they can be used
The KIDS COUNT project tracks the well-being of children in the United States by providing high-quality data and trend analysis. The KIDS COUNT Data Center draws from more than 30 KIDS COUNT state organizations that provide state and local data, as well as publications providing insights into trends affecting family and child well-being.

**Data Indicators**

Data are categorized into five topic areas:

1. Overall child well-being
2. Economic well-being
3. Education
4. Health
5. Family and community

**Strategies for Using the Data**

Users can select from the topics of interest and access all available data for the subject. Additionally, users can select a specific geography and create custom data reports, rankings, maps, and graphs. With these data, organizations can provide policy analysis based on evidence and shine a spotlight on pressing issues to improve programs and policies for children and families. The 2019 KIDS COUNT Data Book ranks states on overall child well-being, as well as in specific domains of well-being including economic, educational, health, and family and community.

**Ideas for how to use data**
e.g., create custom reports, rankings, maps, charts
Strategies for Using the Data

State Progress Toward HOPE Goal

INFANT MORTALITY RATE PER 1,000 LIVE BIRTHS

By Race and Ethnicity

By Education
Data and Intersectionality

Intersectionality
The interconnected nature of social categorizations such as race, class, gender, ability, religion, sexuality, and citizenship as they apply to a given individual or group, regarded as creating overlapping and interdependent systems of discrimination or disadvantage.

▲ Much of our data looks at people one category at a time
▲ Intersectionality reminds us that people’s lives are shaped by multiple categories
Review List of Indicators for Measuring Success

▲ Look at how data are being used in your community or state, or look to other communities and states for examples

▲ See Part IV Resource Guide for state and community examples
Obtain Community Input

▲ Gather feedback from those involved in designing and implementing the project AND those impacted

▲ Don’t assume people know where there are disparities and inequities, be ready to share data

▲ Discuss how to reduce disparities and inequities related to your project
Explore Data Visualization Strategies

Child opportunity maps

Percentage of children in the Nashville-Davidson--Murfreesboro--Franklin, TN metropolitan area at each neighborhood opportunity level, by race/ethnicity

Neighborhood opportunity levels
- Very low
- Low
- Moderate
- High
- Very High
Explore Data Visualization Strategies

Child opportunity maps

Nashville-Davidson--Murfreesboro--Franklin, TN

Percentage of children in the Nashville-Davidson--Murfreesboro--Franklin, TN metropolitan area at each neighborhood opportunity level, by race/ethnicity

Neighborhood opportunity levels

Very low, Low, Moderate, High, Very high
Create a Goal Statement

A goal statement succinctly communicates to stakeholders about your project focus

- What you will do
- Who you will impact
- How you will track progress in the short-term
- How you will track progress in the long-term
- Data sources for your indicators
Infant and Maternal Health Goal Statement Example

The Infant and Maternal Health State and Community Partnership has decided to focus on improving birth outcomes for the purposes of the Healthy Mothers and Babies Project, because we believe it will improve health and well-being outcomes for women of childbearing age, infants, and very young children as well as decrease inequities.

In order to track our progress in the short term (one to three years), we will track short-term indicators such as adequate prenatal care and births to women receiving late or no prenatal care.

In the intermediate (three to five years) to long term (beyond five years), we will also track the following indicators: infant and maternal mortality, low and very low birth weights, and pre-term births.

These indicators will be tracked on an ongoing basis using State Kids Count data.

These indicators will be available at the state and county level and can be tracked by specific areas of inequity, such as race and ethnicity.
Thank You.

https://www.movinghealthcareupstream.org/nemours-project-hope/

PROJECTHOPE@NEMOURS.ORG

Nemours.org
Georgia.Thompson@Nemours.org

Altarum.org
Karah.Mantinan@altarum.org