

**Report to Governor Greg Abbott and
the 89th Texas Legislature**
on Progress in Developing, Establishing, and Operating the
Early Childhood Integrated Data System (ECIDS)

As Required by House Bill 3963

Texas Education Agency

September 1, 2026

Background

House Bill (HB) 3963 requires the Texas Early Childhood Interagency Work Group to develop an early childhood integrated data system (ECIDS). HB 3963 requires that the data system:

- Allow for the integration of existing state and federal data systems that are accessible to the cooperating entities and that contain data derived from early childhood services and programs
- Allow for the identification of and reporting on:
 - Aggregated data focusing on outcomes that do not include personally identifiable information (as allowable by state and federal law)
 - Service gaps and underserved populations
 - Service and program alignment opportunities
 - Service and program coordination needs
- Comply with state and federal laws related to privacy, cyber-security, and data collection

A work group made up of [Texas Early Learning Council](#) members collaborated with stakeholders and the state's Early Childhood Interagency Work Group to create the [Texas Early Childhood Integrated Data System Roadmap](#), published in April 2023, with recommendations and considerations for the development of an ECIDS.

The roadmap includes an overview of the current early childhood data landscape in Texas, including current early childhood data initiatives and other data integration efforts in the state, and outlines lessons learned from other states who have pursued the development of an ECIDS. It also identifies policy questions that an ECIDS could help to inform and includes recommended next steps.

Purpose and Goals

Through collaboration across and within agencies and programs, a Texas ECIDS will provide an integrated and aligned approach to enable Texas to make informed decisions about programs and policies that promote positive outcomes for young children and their families.

The ECIDS is expected to lead to:

- Better insight into how early childhood services are utilized across Texas
- Improved decisions regarding use and refinement of early childhood programs
- Clearer information for stakeholders and policymakers
- Better outcomes for the children and families of Texas

Interagency Data Governance Plan

The objectives for the Early Childhood Integrated Data System (ECIDS) include the following:

- Identify bright spots
- Identify gaps in services
- Identify underserved populations
- Identify opportunities to align programs and services
- Identify where early childhood services correlate with child progress in key metrics
- Inform coordination across programs
- Tell Texas's story of collective investment in early childhood programs

ECIDS advances these objectives through a staged analytic framework. Each stage establishes the foundation required by the stage that follows.

Establish the population baseline: ECIDS first establishes a consistent, statewide view of children birth through age five, including where they live and their demographic and risk characteristics. This baseline provides the denominator against which every subsequent question is measured. Without a common population definition shared across agencies, service counts cannot be interpreted and comparisons across regions or programs are not reliable.

Compare eligibility with enrollment: ECIDS then compares the eligible population for a given program with the population actually enrolled in it, using a consistent geographic unit. This comparison produces the state's view of service gaps and identifies the populations and communities that are underserved relative to their eligibility. The framework distinguishes between gaps that reflect the absence of an available service and gaps that reflect eligible children not enrolling in a service that is available, because the two require different responses from the state.

Connect children across programs: ECIDS links a child who is served across participating agencies and programs to show where children receive multiple services, where they transition between programs, and where providers and programs serve the same communities. This view identifies opportunities to align programs and services, by showing duplication, missed referrals, and partnership opportunities that are not visible within any single agency's data.

Relate services to child progress: ECIDS associates service receipt with progress measures collected as children enter and move through the public education system, including prekindergarten progress monitoring and kindergarten readiness results, to establish where early childhood services correlate with child progress in key metrics.

For the purposes of this framework, a bright spot is defined as a community, program, or provider that serves a higher share of its eligible population, or shows stronger progress on key metrics, than comparable communities with similar demographic and risk profiles. This definition ensures that bright spots are identified through consistent comparison rather than through anecdotal reporting, and that the practices behind them can be examined and applied elsewhere.

Report findings: ECIDS will deliver findings through public dashboards, secure agency reporting, and periodic reporting to state leadership. Public reporting will present aggregate results only and applies minimum reporting thresholds to protect the privacy of individual children. Agency staff will receive access to reporting relevant to their programs through authenticated roles. This reporting layer is what allows ECIDS to inform coordination across programs and to tell the story of Texas's collective investment in early childhood programs.

The framework depends on three governance conditions maintained through the bodies described in this plan. First, the participating agencies must agree on common data elements, definitions, and matching rules so that a child is counted consistently across systems. Second, the interagency data sharing agreement, executed in August 2026, permits the child-level linkage required to connect services across agencies and relate them to child progress. Third, each analysis must specify its unit of analysis, whether county, school district, education service center (ESC) region, local workforce development area (LWDA), or Health and Human Services (HHSC) service region, so that findings are interpreted correctly and compared appropriately. The Data Workgroup maintains the first condition, the Legal Workgroup supports the second, and the Steering Committee approves the third as part of prioritizing data needs and system enhancements.

Roles and Responsibilities

An ECIDS steering committee comprised of representation from all participating state agencies has been established to provide strategic oversight and decision-making authority for the project. An ECIDS steering committee charter establishes the formal governance structure, roles, responsibilities, and decision-making authority across partner agencies. The charter introduces a multi-level committee structure including an executive board for strategic oversight, a steering committee for coordination, a data workgroup for technical implementation, and a legal committee for compliance oversight.

The ECIDS Executive Board is responsible for strategic oversight and commitment. Membership includes executive leadership from each partner agency.

Key responsibilities include the following:

- Endorse governance charter
- Approve high-level data sharing policies
- Secure resources and alignment with agency priorities

The ECIDS Steering Committee serves as the central coordinating body to develop shared policies, resolve cross-agency issues, prioritize data needs and system enhancements, track implementation progress, and engage external stakeholders to ensure successful development and deployment of the Texas ECIDS. Membership includes each agency's Early Childhood Interagency Workgroup (ECIW) lead and/or designated representative.

Key responsibilities include the following:

- Develop shared policies
- Resolve cross-agency issues
- Prioritize data needs and system enhancements
- Track implementation progress

The Steering Committee has authority to make operational decisions including:

- Technical specifications and system requirements
- Data governance policies and procedures
- Implementation timelines and milestones
- Stakeholder engagement strategies and protocols
- Resource allocation for approved activities
- Quality assurance and testing protocols

The ECIDS Data Workgroup is responsible for technical alignment and implementation support. Membership includes the designated data lead for each agency and program, where needed.

Key responsibilities include the following:

- Define common data elements and formats
- Validate metadata
- Monitor data quality and submission
- Flag issues for escalation

The Legal Workgroup ensures regulatory alignment and completes legal review of all relevant agreements. Membership includes the designated legal point of contact for each agency and for specific programs where needed.

Key responsibilities include the following:

- Review and support data sharing agreements (DSAs), memoranda of understanding (MOUs), privacy policies
- Monitor Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA), Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) compliance

Relevant Laws and Rules

ECIDS is established under Chapter 10 of the Texas Education Code, which authorizes the integration of existing state and federal data systems accessible to the participating agencies and containing data derived from early childhood services and programs. The statute directs that the system comply with state and federal laws relating to privacy, cybersecurity, and data collection, including rules establishing procedures to ensure there is no unauthorized duplication or removal of confidential information.

The Legal Workgroup reviews all agreements and privacy policies against the authorities below. Each participating agency has appointed a Data Steward, an Information Security Officer, and a Privacy Officer responsible for compliance.

Laws Governing the Interagency Data Sharing Agreement

Texas Education Code (TEC), Chapter 10, §10.002 limits the use of HHSC and Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) data shared through ECIDS to the production of aggregate, de-identified, and masked statistical data in reports and research. That data may not be used to make decisions concerning the rights, benefits, or privileges of specific individuals.

Texas Government Code (TGC), Chapter 771, the Interagency Cooperation Act, is the statute under which the data sharing agreement is entered.

Texas Government Code (TGC), Chapter 552, §552.114 the Public Information Act, establishes that, in conjunction with FERPA, education records are confidential and must be withheld from disclosure. Public information requests received by any party are forwarded to the relevant data owner within five business days.

Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), 20 U.S.C. § 1232g and 34 C.F.R. Part 99 establishes that data is shared among the agencies under the audit and evaluation exception at 20 U.S.C. § 1232g(b)(1)(C), (b)(3), and (b)(5) and 34 C.F.R. §§ 99.31(a)(3) and 99.35, for the purpose of evaluating federal and state supported education programs. Each agency designates the other two as Authorized Representatives performing an evaluation function at the direction and control of the data owner.

Cybersecurity Standards

The ECIDS environment is maintained by the Texas Education Agency (TEA) and is subject to the following standards, which are incorporated into the interagency data sharing agreement:

- 1 Texas Administrative Code, Chapter 202, and the Department of Information Resources Security Control Standards Catalog
- NIST Special Publication 800-53 Revision 5, Moderate Baseline, or its equivalent
- FIPS 140-2 certified encryption for confidential information at rest and in transmission
- Storage and access restricted to the geographic boundaries of the contiguous forty-eight states
- Annual review of user accounts to validate continued need for access, and immediate removal of access upon termination or change in job function
- Notification of the data owner's Data Steward, Information Security Officer, and Privacy Officer within twenty-four hours of discovery of a security incident or suspected breach
- Data destruction using methods consistent with NSA/CSS Policy Manual 9-12, with written sworn verification provided to each data owner

Data Masking

Reports produced from ECIDS data apply small cell suppression and related disclosure avoidance methods. Data cells containing fewer than five individuals are masked for internal sharing among the parties, and data cells containing fewer than ten individuals are masked for any public disclosure.

Design Plan

The ECIDS data workgroup brought together data owners and stewards from participating agencies to collaboratively define data sharing processes, security protocols, and technical specifications necessary for interagency data exchange. In parallel, the legal workgroup completed and executed the DSA to support secure and compliant data sharing across partner agencies.

The team developed a comprehensive Product Requirements Document (PRD) defining the system vision, scope, stakeholder needs, and technical architecture for the ECIDS minimum viable product.

All three participating agencies (TEA, TWC, and HHSC) exchanged detailed specifications including data file structures, data headers, and data definitions to support future data integration. The TEA IT team completed system architecture for data ETL (Extract, Transform, Load) processes and finalized data models and databases for three use cases. Data modeling commenced for the next two priority use cases, and wireframes and requirements have been approved for continued progression through all must-have use cases.

The ECIDS website is a custom .NET web application hosted by TEA. It supports a tiered access model. The public-facing portion of the site will provide approved, aggregated, and masked dashboard content. Restricted functionality is accessed through the Texas Education Agency Login (TEAL), through which authorized users from TEA, HHSC, and TWC access additional views based on assigned permissions, agency affiliation, and approved use cases.

An automated extract, transform, and load process ingests, transforms, stores, and prepares data for the ECIDS dashboards. The platform integrates approved public and agency-supported sources, including the Texas Demographic Center, Texas Open Data Portal, and American Community Survey data, together with data from TEA, HHSC, and TWC approved for the current implementation. The database and integration infrastructure has been built to receive restricted cross-agency data, and encryption and secure handling controls are already in place. The project is also capturing data from 2022 through the current quarter, organized by quarter, to support longitudinal and trend analysis.

ECIDS applies a layered security model consisting of TEAL authentication, permission-based access, encryption of data at rest and in transmission, secure TEA-hosted infrastructure, and masking and suppression rules applied to published content. The environment complies with 1 Texas Administrative Code, Chapter 202, and the Department of Information Resources (DIR) Security Control Standards Catalog, and with NIST Special Publication 800-53 Revision 5, Moderate Baseline, or equivalent. Confidential information is encrypted at rest and in transmission using FIPS 140-2 certified algorithms, modules, and ciphers. Data received from participating agencies remains encrypted through transfer and is decrypted only in memory during ingestion. Decrypted data is never written to storage. All data is stored within the geographic boundaries of the contiguous forty-eight states and is secured so that it cannot be viewed, used, downloaded, or otherwise accessed from outside those boundaries.

Access is limited to authorized personnel. User accounts are reviewed annually to validate continued need for access, and access is removed upon termination of employment or contract or upon a change in job function. In the event of a security incident or suspected

breach, TEA notifies each data owner's Data Steward, Information Security Officer, and Privacy Officer within twenty-four hours of discovery. Public-facing content is limited to approved, aggregated, and masked views. Data cells containing fewer than five individuals are masked for sharing among the participating agencies, and data cells containing fewer than ten individuals are masked for public disclosure.

ECIDS data is stored within TEA-hosted infrastructure, including a secure on-premises database environment. The storage environment supports dashboarding, mapping, analytics, administrative data management, and quarter-by-quarter historical data capture, and has been built to accommodate restricted-data use cases as they are activated. Retention is applied at two levels. Source data files received from participating agencies are destroyed in accordance with the terms of the interagency data sharing agreement following ingestion. Data integrated into the ECIDS database and supporting the dashboards will be retained for ten years to enable longitudinal analysis, quarter-by-quarter trend reporting, and historical review of early childhood program and service data.

Analytics are delivered through Power BI dashboards embedded within the web application, supported by ArcGIS mapping and metric widgets. The analytics layer supports interactive analysis of population and demographic characteristics, service locations and availability, provider overlap, risk indicators, and service gaps. Public analytics use approved, aggregated, and masked data. Restricted analytics are available through TEAL according to user permissions and approved use cases and will expand as additional use cases are developed.

TEA created and maintains the secure system housing ECIDS data. The TEA IT team is responsible for the extract, transform, and load processes, the data models and database environment, the web application, and the security controls described above. TEA performs the cross-agency matching that identifies children engaged in multiple programs.

HHSC and TWC retain ownership of the data they contribute and are responsible for preparing, validating, and transmitting their submissions on the agreed upon schedule. Under the interagency data sharing agreement, HHSC submits Early Childhood Intervention and Family Support Services data quarterly, and TWC submits Child Care Services data quarterly. Each agency may access its own confidential information within the system, and only TEA has access to the integrated data.

ECIDS will be delivered to the public through a dedicated state website at ecids.texas.gov. The website has been developed and deployed, domain approval has been granted, and public availability will follow completion of routing and final agency review.

Public dashboard content is interactive and includes geographic mapping, allowing users to examine early childhood data by region without access to information about individual children. All public content applies the masking and suppression standards described above. Authenticated agency users access additional details through TEAL according to their permissions and approved use cases.

Must Have Use Cases

A set of core use cases were identified by program stakeholders during Joint Application Design (JAD) sessions. These use cases reflect the most critical functionalities needed to support integrated data efforts across early childhood programs.

The following use cases are listed in priority order, beginning with those deemed most essential for initial implementation.

1. View total population by county, school district, ESC region, LWDA, and ECI service region with demographic breakdowns (ethnicity, gender, age, risk levels)
2. Identify children eligible for services but not enrolled
3. Estimate population coverage rates by program and analyze what percentage of eligible population is being served (by program)
4. Track service availability vs. population need by area
5. Identify families and children receiving individual or multiple services (ECI, Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE), prekindergarten, kindergarten, Family Support Services (FSS), child care services) and timing of services delivered
 - Track where children receive both ECI and TEA services (deaf/hard of hearing, visually impaired)
6. Map service co-location and provider overlap in communities
7. Identify service gaps in high-risk zip codes and counties
8. Track children transitioning from ECI to ECSE
9. Analyze prekindergarten and child care services enrollment patterns and gaps by geography
10. Compare outcomes for children who received ECI vs. those who didn't before entering special education
11. Track the presence of prekindergarten partnerships through students dually enrolled in child care services and public prekindergarten

The analytic tools developed for ECIDS take the form of interactive dashboards and reports. Program stakeholders define the question during Joint Application Design sessions, the data workgroup determines the data elements and definitions required to answer it, and the resulting requirements and wireframes are reviewed and approved by stakeholders before development begins. Completed dashboards are validated against source data before release.

All dashboards present analysis using a common set of geographic units: county, school district, ESC region, LWDA, and HHSC service region. Using the same units across every dashboard allows findings to be compared directly across programs and agencies and allows results to be viewed through the service boundaries each agency actually administers rather than through a single agency's geography. Dashboards include geographic mapping where the analysis is spatial.

Three dashboards are in production. They present early childhood population and demographic characteristics statewide, child care services and provider availability, and risk factors and service gaps by geographic area. Together they establish the population baseline against which coverage and gaps are measured and provide the state's current view of where service capacity does not meet population need.

A dashboard presenting cross-agency program enrollment is in development. It is the first to require matched data from all three participating agencies and will identify children receiving individual or multiple services across programs, along with the timing of those services.

The data models and integration processes supporting these use cases have been developed ahead of the availability of the underlying cross-agency data, so that dashboard development can proceed without delay once each data source is received.

Use cases and dashboards are developed iteratively rather than as one-to-one, fixed products. Stakeholders review each dashboard against its related use case, and refinements identified during that review are returned to the data workgroup and incorporated into subsequent development. Reviewing a working dashboard routinely produces clarifications that were not apparent when the use case was first written, including adjustments to definitions, breakdowns, and the level of detail required to make a finding actionable. New use cases identified by program staff or agency leadership are evaluated through the same process, and the Executive Steering Committee determines their priority relative to work already underway. The use-case library is maintained as a living record of the questions the system is being built to answer, and dashboards already in production are updated as definitions are refined and additional data becomes available.

Staffing

The TEA team hired an ECIDS Product Manager in spring 2025. The ECIDS project was officially kicked off following the hiring of the product manager and initial requirement gathering began. The team also successfully hired and onboarded a Business Analyst

contractor in summer 2025 to support the Product Manager in ECIDS development and technical requirements gathering.

The TEA team continued to build capacity for ECIDS development by successfully hiring additional key personnel, including a Software Development Manager, Power BI Developer, Project Manager, and Quality Assurance Engineer.

Funding

HB 3963 permits the early childhood interagency work group, the cooperating entities, and the lead agency to use any available state or federal funds to develop the ECIDS and requires TEA, as the lead agency to actively pursue grants or other money available from the state and federal government to operate the system.

On October 22, 2025, the commissioner of education notified the Legislative Budget Board and the Office of the Governor that pursuant to Rider 19, Limitation on the Transfer and Use of Funds, his intent to transfer \$750,000 in fiscal year 2026 and \$750,000 in fiscal year 2027 to support ongoing ECIDS development work.

In November 2025, TWC's three-member commission approved the use of Child Care and Development Funds to support ongoing ECIDS development work. TWC is providing the funding to TEA through an interagency contract for an amount not to exceed \$1,415,000. This interagency contract expires on August 31, 2027.

The total amount made available to support ECIDS development is \$2,915,000 for work to be completed through August 31, 2027.

Next Steps

The initial key milestone for this project was the establishment of the data sharing agreement that was fully executed in August 2026. Next steps include the following.

The immediate next step is child matching. TEA and TWC share a common child identifier, allowing records from those agencies to be linked directly. HHSC records do not carry that identifier, so children reflected by HHSC data will be matched using the demographic data elements and matching rules established by the data workgroup. Matching assigns a consistent internal identifier to each child, allowing a child's participation to be followed across programs and agencies without exposing identifying information to users of the system.

Child matching is foundational to the remaining work. Analyses of enrollment, service gaps, transitions, and later progress all depend on accurately linking each child's records

across agency systems so that children are not duplicated. For HHSC data, TEA will assess match rates and will review unmatched and ambiguously matched records with the data workgroup. Match quality will be documented so that findings involving HHSC data can be interpreted with an understanding of how completely the underlying records were linked.

The data elements and definitions for each submission have already been established by the data workgroup. TEA will work directly with partner agency data owners and stewards to confirm that the data received matches those specifications. Validation will address file structure, expected data elements, record volumes, reporting period, completeness, valid values, duplicate and missing records, and consistency with prior periods. Discrepancies will be resolved jointly with the submitting agency rather than corrected unilaterally, so that each agency retains authority over the interpretation and quality of its own data. Data will not be published until the submitting agency confirms that it has been received and interpreted correctly. This process will establish the recurring quarterly submission cycle described in the Design Plan.

TEA will complete and publish the remaining must-have use cases. The cross-agency program enrollment dashboard will move to production. For the use cases addressing program transitions, eligibility coverage, and service history comparison, the underlying data models, integration processes, and requirements are in place, and dashboard development will resume once the corresponding data is received and validated. This work delivers the scoped set of capabilities identified for the initial implementation.

TEA will publish the ECIDS website. Public availability follows completion of routing and final agency review, after which the publicly available dashboards will be accessible to the public, to local providers and school districts, and to policymakers.

As integrated data accumulates across quarters, ECIDS will support the recurring analysis contemplated by the objectives in this report, including identification of service gaps, underserved populations, opportunities to align programs, and communities achieving stronger results than comparable communities.

The steering committee will prioritize the next set of use cases beyond the initial implementation. Program staff at all three agencies continue to identify additional questions the system can answer, and the committee will determine which are developed next, informed by what the first year of integrated data makes possible. TEA will also evaluate the resources required to operate, maintain, and expand the system beyond the current implementation period.

TEA will continue to convene the steering committee, the data workgroup, and the legal workgroup on their established schedules, and will continue to report progress to the Governor, the Legislature, and the participating agencies as required.