

DaSy Talks

Episode 3 Transcript

Howard Morrison:

Hello and welcome to DaSy Talks, real talk for states by states, brought to you by the DaSy Center. We're all about using data to make a big difference for young children with disabilities. We are your co-host, Howard Morrison.

Jenna Nguyen:

And Jenna Nguyen.

Howard Morrison:

And today, we are thrilled to be welcoming two wonderful guests, Lisa Davenport and Jennifer Floyd. Lisa is the program manager for the Baby Watch Early Intervention Program and Utah's Part C Coordinator. Jennifer Floyd is the Early Childhood Utah program manager and oversees the early childhood integrated data system in Utah.

Welcome to DaSy Talks, Lisa.

Lisa Davenport:

Thank you, Howard. I'm excited to be here and excited for this opportunity.

Howard Morrison:

Thanks for joining us, Jennifer.

Jennifer Floyd:

Thank you for inviting us.

Howard Morrison:

Today, we're talking about early childhood integrated data systems, often referred to as ECIDS, and specifically how Part C and Part B 619 programs are involved. If you're thinking, "What's that?" An ECIDS collects, integrates, maintains, stores, and reports information from early childhood programs across multiple agencies within a state that serve children and families from birth to age eight. The purpose here is to help state agencies make informed decisions about early childhood programs and policies that promote positive outcomes for young children and families.

Recently, DaSy conducted a national data linking and integration landscape analysis with Part C and Part B 619 staff to get a better understanding of their participation in an ECIDS. So through this, we learned that 19 states have an operational ECIDS. Of those 19, 12 states are including Part C data, 12 states are including Part B 619 data, and 10 states are including both Part C and Part B 619 data.

We also learned that ECIDS lead agencies vary from education agencies to health, sometimes universities, early childhood agencies, which we're seeing more and more of, and then sometimes workforce and statistics agencies. We're also developing a new infographic with this information that's coming soon, but also includes common funding sources, challenges, and successes and advice from state Part C and Part B 619 perspectives. So be on the lookout for that in the future.

So now that we have that context, let's hear from Lisa and Jennifer in Utah. They've had an ECIDS for several years and have been very engaged in Part C participation. Let's dive right into our conversation.

I want to start by asking Jennifer if you could share a bit about Utah's ECIDS background and give us a little bit of idea and sense about when it started and when did Part C begin participating?

Jennifer Floyd:

Yeah. I'd love to get us started with that. Since 2002, there's been a lot of focus on early childhood in Utah, and the then governor established the Early Childhood Utah Advisory Council. As part of the Head Start Readiness Act, we're required to have that council to receive Head Start funding in Utah, but we really expanded on it to make it a statewide council where programs that serve early childhood in Utah's early childhood mixed delivery system can really cooperate together and start initiatives, make recommendations that make a difference to the system's work that we do.

And then in 2011, the Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems Grant was awarded to the Early Childhood Utah program in the Department of Health and Human Services. And with this funding, along with some other grant funding, we were able to start building our, what we call ECIDS because we don't want any CIDS next to our children. So that's why we call it an ECIDS. It's the Early Childhood Integrated Data System.

One of the most interesting things I think about our Early Childhood Integrated Data System is that we ingest all sorts of data depending on which programs want to work with us, then we will accept any data that they are willing to share with us. Of course, that's all de-identified and aggregated. We have some reports that are able to show participation in early childhood programming statewide. Right now, we have nine different data sources, including MIECHV home visiting, Head Start. We have a very large Ages and Stages Questionnaire online representation in our ECIDS system. WIC is in our ECIDS system and of course Baby Watch Early Intervention Part C.

With all of those data sources being integrated, we are able to see participation in multiple programs. At the same time, we're able to identify distinct child counts for various programs and across programs. And so that's been very valuable to us. I'd really like to pass it to Lisa to talk about when Baby Watch, when Part C started to join our system.

Lisa Davenport:

Yeah. Thank you, Jennifer. Baby Watch Early Intervention started to be part of the ECIDS conversations probably in about 2017. That's when we started having conversations about how we would share our data with the ECIDS database. And there was the very beginning stages at that point, and those conversations continued to grow and get richer as the ECIDS system continued to evolve as well.

Howard Morrison:

Great. Thanks, Lisa. That kind of leads me to my next question I wanted to ask you about is, what are some of the data elements that are shared with Utah's ECIDS system? And how did you decide what to share, what not to share, and kind of what that looked like for you all?

Lisa Davenport:

This is a great question and a very important one for programs to consider as they enter into any data sharing agreement. It's important not only to recognize the value in sharing enough data that will allow and support more complex research and result in richer conclusions being reached, but also to be very cognizant about the importance of protecting the data that will be shared.

When Baby Watch Early Intervention, which is Utah's Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act entered into their first data sharing agreement with the Utah's ECIDS in 2019, we agreed to share 20 data elements, which included pretty high level child and family demographic information. When we established our second data sharing agreement in 2025, Baby Watch agreed to share 30 data elements, which included the original demographic information and also additional child information about early intervention services received and the early intervention visits that were conducted. And I'll tell you why this happened.

In 2019, conversations and relationships were still growing. Trust was continuing to be established and processes and procedures to protect data were at the very beginning stages. In 2019, I felt very strongly that there were several important pieces that still needed attention and to be put in place, and data security is very important. My role as the data steward for the Baby Watch Early Intervention Program is to protect Utah's Part C child and family data.

Between 2019 and 2025, there continued to be valuable conversations around not only protecting the data, but also appropriate measures were being put in place to actually do so. There was growing evidence that there was not only more respect for the data being shared, but more assurance that Utah's Part C child and family data would in fact be protected. There were two very foundational pieces that made me feel much more competent in sharing not only the original data elements, but also the additional data elements.

First, there was increased transparency and accountability through implementation of informed and written parent consent. That was a really huge step in the right direction, specifically for Part C data because parent consent is in fact required anytime their child's data is shared outside of early intervention. This consent was implemented actually in January of 2026, so we're really excited about this. Again, it's a big deal for our state to have this in place.

The second piece that contributed to confidence in safely and securely sharing data is the strong governance over ECIDS, which specifically identifies who can make decisions about what data is shared and with who, and also who has the authority to act on behalf of each agency sharing data with ECIDS.

Howard Morrison:

Great. That's so exciting, Lisa. It's so important to see how Part C participation has evolved from 2017, when you all first started, to where things are now in 2026, and the importance of trust in relationship building as kind of a foundation as you're entering into this partnership and ensuring that you are maintaining privacy and confidentiality for the Part C program and individuals across the state. So I applaud you in all the work that you've done there, and it's great to hear the continuous improvements that are happening in Utah and your ECIDS system.

You mentioned governance. And maybe Lisa, we'll start with you first. And maybe Jennifer, you can chime in if you have thoughts. But governance is so important to the foundation of any kind of data system, so wanted to kind of get your insights on how you and Part C program were engaged. What does that look like? What is the process for Utah's ECIDS governance system and what that engagement looks like?

Lisa Davenport:

Yes. So there is actually an ECIDS data governance committee, and this committee consists of the data source agencies, as well as partners of Utah's ECIDS, such as ECIDS IT developers, the Utah State Board of Education, ASQ Online Enterprise account holders, Utah's Data Research Center, and several others.

The Baby Watch Early Intervention Program is one of the data source agencies that sits on this data governance committee. The purpose of the committee is to actually govern ECIDS and develop policies and procedures necessary for the implementation, maintenance, security, and improvement of ECIDS. Not only have policy and procedures been developed, including a Utah ECIDS data governance manual, but each data source also has ultimate power over sharing their agency's data, as well as a voice to vote on different topics. Voting may take place with the whole committee for things such as voting on the data government's manual, ECIDS reports, policies, procedures, security improvement and maintenance, or voting may take place through private voting methods in order to approve different data access requests that are submitted to Utah eCIDS.

Private voting for this purpose has been fantastic because no source agency is ever pressured to feel that they need to vote with the majority. We each have that autonomy to really vote how we feel is most appropriate for our agency's data. In addition, a few other things that the ECIDS data governance committee members are able to do and are actually responsible for is helping to ensure that ECIDS practices are consistent with FERPA and HIPAA and other applicable federal and state laws. The committee ensures that personally identifiable information is protected from unauthorized disclosure or use. The committee assists with data collection, management, and distribution. We review ECIDS reports for accuracy, and we promote the use of data to make informed policy decisions.

That's just to name a few that ECIDS data governance committee does a lot more. All of these things together further provide for ensuring confidence as a data source and sharing data with ECIDS.

Howard Morrison:

That's really exciting to hear, Lisa. I know in many ECIDS systems, Part C isn't always at the table, and even when they're sharing data, they might not always be actively engaged in the broader governance process and just maybe wanted to jump back and say, was that something that was an easy transition? Were you able to jump right in with the other partners in doing that or did you have to dedicate and make some time to be part of that committee? Just kind of wanted to get a sense of, was it just immediately welcoming or were you able to jump right in?

Lisa Davenport:

I think Part C was actually invited from the very beginning, so I felt confident in being able to jump right in. I go back to what I mentioned earlier though, and it took time to develop the relationships amongst the committee to really have those critical conversations that were important to how the data would be shared moving forward. But I did feel from the beginning that Part C was very much a part of this data sharing process.

Howard Morrison:

Great. That's super exciting to hear. That really is, it's a partnership. And so from an ECIDS leads point of view, you want to see your partners within your, you said yes, to feel like a collaboration, to feel like a partnership. So Jennifer, I don't know if you want to speak to that a little bit from your point of view.

Jennifer Floyd:

I do, because I want to highlight again what Lisa said about how the data access requests are handled. I think that is one of the essential things that we've learned is that there can't be any pressure on a single data source to share their data if they are uncomfortable with that data access request. And so that is why we do all of our voting on those requests privately so that there really isn't even a chance for

discussion that would harm someone's chances of making that decision for the data that they are the steward of.

What that means from a technical standpoint from the ECIDS, our ECIDS has reports that are aggregated from all of our data sources. And if one of our data sources says, "No, I don't want to approve this access request," then we do not give access to those aggregated reports. Instead, we will have our data steward pull those reports, isolating out that one data source, and then make those available to the person who made the data access request.

Another thing that happens is this is not true of our Part C data, but many of our other data sources we've made custom reports for. And so if those data sources say, "No, this data access request, I don't want them to have access to our custom reports," then they are able to make that statement as well. So I think that's really important and it contributes to the unity of the group. Lisa mentioned that there are other participants in the committee, for example, USBE and the Utah Data Research Center, but they are not voting members and they don't have any authority to decide on data access requests.

Jenna Nguyen:

Jennifer, I wanted to follow up a little bit on what you talked about earlier when you talked about Utah's mixed delivery system and you mentioned a few programs, MIECHV, which is the Maternal Infant and Early Childhood Home Visiting Program and WIC, which is the special supplemental nutrition program for women, infants and children. Both of those are federally funded programs.

And then Lisa, you talked about Utah's Baby Watch Early Intervention Part C program and how when you first entered into these data sharing agreements, you shared 20 data elements and then the next one, 30 data elements.

Jennifer, I wanted to ask you about the reports. Can you share a little bit about the reports you have and how you're using them at the state level?

Jennifer Floyd:

Yes. And thank you for spelling out those acronyms for me. We always speak in acronyms. Those reports, as I mentioned, we have different levels of reports. Our standard reports are reports that aggregate data from all of our data sources to show participation. And so we can see whether a single distinct child, because we do have those matched identities that are coming to our ECIDS system, we can see whether a single distinct child is participating at the same time in, for example, Head Start and WIC, or if they're participating at the same time in WIC and Part C Early Intervention. We also have all of the vital records, statistics, information, so we know how many children there are in Utah as well with distinct child identities.

Knowing that, we can make some estimations of how many children should be receiving services at a specific time, and we can also look and see if programs are collaborating together well. Because the eligibility requirements are the same, then they should be serving approximately the same number of children in a specific area.

Our advanced reports are similar, aggregate de-identified data, and they add the additional ability to disaggregate by zip code, race, and gender. So then we can do those same sort of access related studies based on those reports. So we have those reports. And then as I mentioned, we've really gone all out as a state on our Ages and Stages Questionnaire. We have a statewide developmental screening project. It is supported by Head Start, by our Help Me Grow, the Help Me Grow Utah, by our Office of Childcare and the Department of Health and Human Services. We've really made it a requirement to receive much

of our funding that the programs use these screening tools. In fact, we have many school districts joining with us as well, both for their Part B, preschools and for their typical developing preschools.

And so we have a lot of reporting based on those. We have 10 different reports based on those Ages and Stages Questionnaires so that we can see results for children across the state, and then we can also desegregate by zip code, by county.

And then Jenna, to finish answering your question, the third kind of reports that we have are more like custom reports. We have custom WIC engagement reports. Something that our ECIDS system can do that other systems cannot do is have distinct child counts. So we have specific WIC engagement reports that we've prepared for that program. We have specific engagement reports that we've prepared for Head Start and for home visiting that allow them to really do some research on how their services are being used across the state.

Jenna Nguyen:

It's really wonderful. I'm hearing a lot of data informed decision making about access and using all these different levels of reports. Are regional and local programs using some of these reports, whether they're the custom reports, the engagement reports, et cetera?

Jennifer Floyd:

I would love to be able to say yes, but the truth is we're really encouraging that right now. One thing that is changing as we move forward with our ECIDS system, we're actually changing our technology this year and doing some redevelopment, which will really help us to refresh the data more often.

For local level decision making, a year is too long to wait for a data refresh. So at the state level, it is still very helpful, but at the local level, we need to get to at least quarterly to help them be able to make those decisions. And we're hopeful to do that no later than 2027.

Jenna Nguyen:

Very exciting. And Lisa, I would love to ask you a few questions about your role within the Part C office. So how have you been able to balance your Part C coordinator role as well as participating in your state's ECIDS in Utah?

Lisa Davenport:

That's another great question. And especially since there are a lot of different responsibilities that do in fact fall under a Part C coordinator's role. However, I will say I don't actually view my participation in Utah's ECIDS as another task or just one more thing to do. Rather, I have viewed it as a very important part of my role as Utah's Part C coordinator and also as an opportunity to be part of and have a voice in a very important initiative.

I think that everyone can agree on the value of research in early childhood for continuing to develop evidence-based interventions and potentially decreasing the need for services later on. And data sharing is a critical component to support positive change through early childhood education and intervention. So this has honestly been less of a balancing act and more of a priority for continuing to improve Part C early intervention.

Jenna Nguyen:

Great. It really sounds like both you, Lisa and Jennifer, you have been champions in this initiative in Utah. I'm curious for both of you, Lisa, I'd like to start with you. What advice would you give to a state Part C coordinator that's interested in participating in their state's ECIDS?

Lisa Davenport:

Thank you for asking that question. There are actually four things that I can think of that I would share as pieces of advice to other Part C coordinators who are interested in participating in their state's ECIDS. The first one is to really encourage open and true conversations. Communication is critical, and if it doesn't start at the beginning, it's going to be much harder to establish as things continue to evolve. Also, allow everyone to have a voice. This should not be a check the box process or thought of as a task. Everybody needs to be heard because everybody's data is different and everybody's data has different rules around it, and you can't think that those rules are less important for one dataset than another. So it's really important to allow everyone to have a voice and allow everyone to be heard.

And then also try really hard to stay clear of personal agendas. We all have a common goal of making sure that we answer questions to how we can improve outcomes for children starting in early childhood, but we don't want to put this together because it's somebody's agenda and there's an individual personal feeling that something needs to happen in order for the ECIDS to develop. And then finally, my last bit of advice is be patient. This is not something that happens fast, nor is it something that should happen fast. It takes care and it takes patience for a good system to evolve. That's my last piece of advice. Just be patient. It takes a long time to get these systems in place and the data sharing agreements in place.

Jenna Nguyen:

I love that. I know in a past podcast episode, we did talk about systems change, and so I'm hearing a lot of that, that it's not just the technical pieces, which is so important that you talked about with the data sharing agreement and privacy and confidentiality, but it's also about the communication, the patience, and the relationship building and collaboration. So kudos to you both and Utah, really building and budding these relationships.

Jennifer, is there anything that you would like to add?

Jennifer Floyd:

I would just like to agree with what Lisa said. As an ECIDS coordinator, I think it's important to remember that personalities matter and that building relationships takes time and building trust takes time. So allow that time. As Lisa said, try to maintain the end goal in mind of being able to make data-driven decisions that really make a difference for the children in your state. Assuming that everyone has that same good intention goes a long way toward building good relationships.

Jenna Nguyen:

I've been using this plant metaphor for a while, but it really, I feel like is kind of fitting to everything that you're sharing. If you have a little seed or seedling and you're nurturing it and nourishing, you have these different programs that are adding different nutrients like the sunshine and the water and creating this environment for that plant to grow. Those are the children within Utah's mixed delivery system. So just wanted to mention that because it really felt fitting.

Lisa Davenport:

I think that's a perfect analogy, Jenna.

Jenna Nguyen:

Lisa and Jennifer, it was wonderful having you both on the podcast today. Howard and I were thrilled to talk to you about Utah ECIDS. Thank you for enlightening us with so much insight. We wish we had more time to talk, but hopefully we can have you back on the show sometime.

Lisa Davenport:

I would love it. And thank you for this opportunity.

Jennifer Floyd:

Yes, it was great.

Jenna Nguyen:

Thank you. And thanks for joining us on the DaSy Talks Podcast. We'll see you next time.

Thanks for joining us on the DaSy Talks Podcast. Our guests today, were Lisa Davenport and Jennifer Floyd. Learn more about them and their work in today's show notes. You can find a transcript of today's show or browse our entire archive of episodes by visiting dasycenter.org/podcast. You can also connect with us on social media with the links in today's show notes.

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