Instrument B. TRLECE Data Systems Staff Interview Protocol

Understanding Child Care Licensing Challenges, Needs, and Use of Data

Interview Protocol

Data Systems Person

The Role of Licensing in Early Care and Education

Before the interview, the interviewer will know:
- Name of the licensing administrator who completed the interview

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Introduction

Hello [NAME]. Thank you so much for taking the time to speak with me today. My name is [PRIMARY INTERVIEWER] and I'm joined by [SECONDARY INTERVIEWER]. I will be leading the interview today and [SECONDARY INTERVIEWER] is going to take notes for the call.

We both work at Child Trends, an independent research organization. Child Trends has a contract with the Administration for Children and Families' Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation, usually referred to as OPRE, to strengthen the field's understanding of the role of the child care licensing system in supporting quality and outcomes for children, families, and key stakeholders. As one part of that contract, we are conducting interviews with the state and territory child care licensing administrators, as well as a person in each state and territory who is very knowledgeable about the licensing data. We've already spoken with [LICENSING ADMINISTRATOR], who suggested that we talk with you about the data system in the child care licensing unit. This interview will take about 30 minutes.

Your participation in this interview is voluntary. Information will be summarized across interviews and your name will not be associated with your comments in any reports. You may refuse to answer any question and may stop the interview at any time.

Child Trends and OPRE staff will use the information we gather to plan future activities and identify research priorities. Child Trends will develop an internal report for OPRE which may be shared with its federal partners to inform other federal efforts and may include state- and territory-level information. This report will not public, but it may be used to develop documents, as background materials for technical work groups, and to contextualize research findings from follow-up data collections. We may also produce an informational report for OCC and its technical assistance providers to support federally-funded TA.

To help clarify our notes, we would like to record this conversation. The recording would only be used to make sure that we correctly capture your responses. It would remain confidential and would be deleted after we use it to finalize our notes from this interview.

Are you okay with having the phone conversation recorded? YES/NO

Note: If the person agrees, turn on the recorder and ask the question again to record their response.

Now that we've begun recording, I want to confirm that you give us permission to record the conversation so that we can make sure that we correctly capture your responses. Do you agree to record this?

Do you have any questions before we get started?

Questions about Respondent

First, I would like to ask you a few questions about your current position.

1. What is your title?

    a. What are your responsibilities related to child care licensing?

2. How long have you been in this role?

3. What department and unit are you in?

4. *(If they are not in licensing)* Is that the same department as child care licensing or a different department?

Licensing Administrative Data

We're interested in understanding some general information about the child care licensing administrative data and how licensing staff use them. Child care licensing administrative data includes all the information the licensing unit regularly collects, including information about licensing applications, inspections, violations, complaints, and enforcement. This information may be stored in one data set or in multiple data sets. Please think about all of these data when answering the questions.

5. Is there a codebook or some type of document that defines each piece of information that is in the licensing data system? (*If there are multiple codebooks, note that and revise wording to be plural*.)

    If yes:

    a. Is the codebook updated regularly so it is generally up to date?

6. How do you and your team ensure that the data are accurate and entered correctly? (*Probe: For instance, does the data entry system have drop down menus or range checks that prevent implausible answers? Do you do double entry or interrater agreement checks?*)

7. When new data are entered into your system, does your system also keep the previous information or does the new data overwrite the older information? RETAINS PREVIOUS DATA/OVERWRITES

    If retains:

    a. How far back does the data go (e.g., 1 year, 5 years)? *(If the answer varies depending on the specific type of data, ask for examples of data that are kept for a long time and data that are overwritten frequently.)*

8. What challenges do you experience in collecting, entering, checking, or updating data in the licensing system?

We realize that most of the data in the child care licensing system focuses on the facilities and whether providers are meeting regulations. We're interested in learning about whether you also have any data on the characteristics of providers or the children and families served, such as languages spoken or race and ethnicity. For the next set of questions, we are interested in learning about what is in the licensing data only, not data available in some other dataset like subsidy.

9. Is there data in your licensing system about the characteristics of child care providers, directors, or staff? YES/NO

   If yes:

   a. What data do you have? Is it about directors? Teachers? Other staff?

   b. How complete is the information? For instance, does it include center-based care and family child care homes? Is there a lot of missing information?

   c. Who provides the data?

10. Is there data in your licensing system about the characteristics of children or families served? YES/NO

    If yes:

    a. What data do you have? Is it about children? Families?

    b. How complete is the information? For instance, does it include both center-based care and family child care homes? Is there a lot of missing information?

    c. Who provides the data?

11. Does the licensing unit ever use data to help guide decisions? YES/NO

    If yes:

    a. Can you give me some examples of the type of data you use and how your agency uses it to help with decision-making? *(Probe for two examples if possible; be sure to get details about the data source and how it influences decisions)*

    b. What challenges do you face in trying to use data to help with decision-making?

12. Has anyone used licensing data to examine relationships between two pieces of information, like number of violations and whether a program closed? (*If they do not seem to understand, say:* Another example could be whether violations for unsafe sleep practices declined after the state offered safe sleep trainings. *Probe for examples*).

13. Now, let's talk about linked data. In some states, the licensing data is linked to other data systems such as subsidy or QRIS.

    a. Are your data linked to any other systems?

       If yes,

       i.   Have you or your team ever used linked data to answer a question about licensing? YES/NO

         If yes,

            1.   Can you give me some examples? Which data sets did you use?

14. Either before or since the start of the COVID 19 pandemic, can you think of times when you were asked something about your licensing system– maybe by a legislator, department head, or the governor's office – but you did not have the needed data or team members with the needed skills to answer? (*If they are struggling to find examples say:* Remember that licensing data could include information about facilities, inspections, violations, enforcement, etc. *Probe to be sure we are getting multiple examples, if they exist. And for each example, be sure to specify if the examples were before or since the start of the pandemic. Note the information they did not have.)*

15. Since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic in March 2020, has the licensing team collected any new data to help your agency make decisions and answer important questions quickly? YES/NO

   If yes:

     a.   What new data did you collect?

     b.   How were the data used?

     c.   Are you still collecting it?

16. Are less data being collected now, as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic? For example, if monitoring visits are happening virtually, are some data fields not completed?

   If yes:

     a.   Can you give us examples of data that are not being collected now?

17. What have you and your team learned from the COVID-19 pandemic about your licensing administrative data that might affect what you collect, or how you collect or use data in the future?

18. In addition to the COVID-19 pandemic, there has been more attention to racial equity this past year in the U.S. Have you or your team thought about racial equity and how licensing administrative data can be used to better understand equity in [STATE/TERRITORY]? (*If they don't describe an example in their response, ask*: Can you give me an example?)

Wrap Up

19. As a final question, is there anything else you would like to share about your licensing data or use of data? Are there any other challenges or issues you'd like to raise that we haven't covered?

Thank you very much for taking the time to talk with us today. We really appreciate it.