



**COLLEGE OF EDUCATION
+ HUMAN DEVELOPMENT**

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

What is the MN Early Childhood Dataset?

The Center for Early Education and Development (CEED) at the University of Minnesota, in partnership with Child Trends and SRI International, began evaluating the early childhood education initiatives of the Minnesota Early Learning Foundation (MELF) in 2008. These initiatives included 11¹ innovative early childhood programs and partnerships, Parent Aware, and the Saint Paul Scholarship Program. The final round of evaluation data were collected in fall 2011 just prior to the MELF's sunset at the end of that year. The data collected for the MELF program evaluations, now known as the MN Early Childhood Dataset, continue to be of use after the MELF's sunset under the guidance of staff from the Center for Early Education and Development (CEED).

The Early Childhood Dataset provides researchers with a wealth of data on low-income children's experiences in early childhood education programs. The Dataset is permanently housed at and maintained by CEED. Data from approximately 1100 children are included in the set, from eight time points spanning spring 2008 to fall 2011. Data includes:

- assessments of children's achievement and well-being;
- surveys from teachers, directors, home visitors, and child care providers;
- classroom quality observations;
- parent interviews;
- cost data; and,
- programmatic data.

In addition to the data permanently included in the dataset, CEED has formed a partnership with the Center for Advanced Studies in Child Welfare (CASCW) to access additional education and human services data for the MELF children. This data will include information about the children's involvement in the child welfare system and schooling data like attendance, receipt of limited English proficiency services, and state test scores. Although this is not a permanent part of the Early Childhood Dataset an initial attempt to link the sets and perform preliminary analyses proved high successful. Additional analyses will be completed in 2016 when the education data for the final cohort of MELF children is available.

¹ 500 Under 5, Autism Society of Minnesota, Parent as Teachers, Wilder Family Literacy, Caring for Kids, St. Paul School Project Early Kindergarten, Bloomington Public Schools, Head Start, Suburban Ramsey Family Collaborative, Joyce Preschool, Anoka Healthy Start

What kinds of research questions could be answered?

Past research questions answered using the Dataset include:

- How do low-income parent's preferences and reasons for choosing early childhood education (ECE) settings vary by the type of ECE setting used?
- How do the school readiness outcomes of children in half-day programs compare to the school readiness outcomes of children in full day programs?
- Which classroom and child factors were the most powerful determinants of children's early elementary achievement?

Can I use the MN Early Childhood Dataset?

A staff member from CEED will devote a percentage of her time to managing the Dataset for use by researchers within the consortium (CEED, Child Trends, SRI), graduate students whose research aligns closely with the available data, or external researchers. Data requests from outside the research consortium will be granted after the applicant PI submits a written request with the following components:

- rationale,
- research question(s),
- initial variable list,
- analytic plan,
- dissemination plan,
- steps for maintaining data integrity and compliance with the U of MN IRB, and
- any other information key to completing the project (e.g., funding for project, including the fee for creating the data set for the project as determined by CEED staff, funding requirements, timeframe).

External PIs requesting access to the Dataset will consult with CEED staff to craft an appropriate research plan. Research plans meeting the above criteria, that are a good fit for the available data, where the PI has demonstrated a solid understanding of the data, will be approved. Approval decisions will be made in consultation with the data manager with the final determination made by the Co-director of CEED.

How can I get more information?

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