

The *Zen* of Data

Colorado Department of Education
June 19, 2009



Goals for the Morning



- Demystify data
- Develop a common language about data
- Come to a common understanding about why we use data
- Understand the kind of data a Council needs to be concerned about
- Identify data that might be easily accessible

Demystifying Data: But I'm not a Statistician

- We may believe we don't have the skill to collect and interpret data
- It can seem difficult or foreign (what exactly is a mean? Did you say á la mode?)
- We may not be sure what questions to ask
- It may seem too time consuming or expensive



Demystifying Data: Every Day Data

- We all use data every day, whether we are aware of it or not
- What kind of data have you used in the last 24 hours?

Total Fat 12g	18%
Saturated Fat 3g	15%
Trans Fat 3g	
Cholesterol 30mg	10%
Sodium 470mg	20%



63° F
Cloudy



Developing a Common Language: General Types of Data

- Two basic types of data:



- Quantitative

- NUMBERS – things you can count

- Qualitative

- WORDS – things you can describe
- Can also include pictures, videos, sound...



Developing a Common Language: More Data Definitions

- **Assessment:** Examining a situation *prior* to developing a strategy
- **Monitoring:** Tracking or measuring what is happening *during* implementation of a strategy
- **Evaluation:** Systematically determining the success of a strategy (*after or at key points* in implementation)

Why We Use Data: What's the Point?

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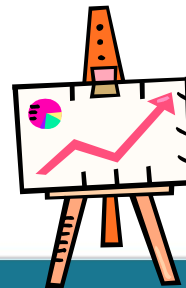


"Are you just pissing and moaning, or can you verify what you're saying with data?"

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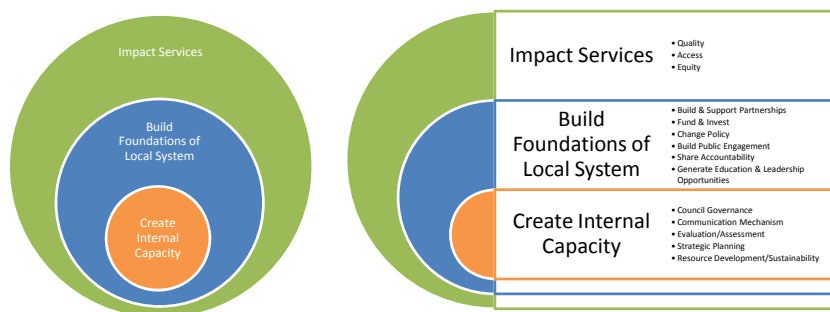
Why We Use Data: Yes, Virginia, There Really is a Point

- Data can (and should) be used to:
 - Inform decision making
 - Getting beyond opinion and belief
 - Make continuous improvements
 - Advocate and inform
 - Policy Reform
 - Shifts in Public Opinion
 - Fundraising
 - Engage Stakeholders



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Role of Early Childhood Councils




Data Councils Should Be Concerned About

Internal Capacity


- Count or describe the capacity or the infrastructure of the Council itself
- These are the support systems needed to function effectively

Data Councils Should Be Concerned About: Examples




Internal Capacity

- # and representation of partners on Council
- % participation on committees, by domain
- Increase in funding, by source



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Data Councils Should Be Concerned About




Build Foundations of Local System

- Count or describe the linkages across partners and the policy & funding context of the system



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Data Councils Should Be Concerned About: Examples




Build Foundations of Local System

- # and type of MOUs/agreements between system partners
- # early childhood bills, rules or policies introduced, passed or changed
- % of Council partners using shared data system



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Data Councils Should Be Concerned About

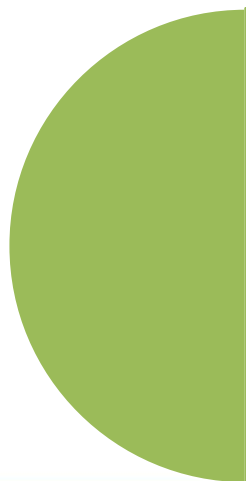


Impact Services

- Count or describe the impact that the capacity and foundations have on services provided by system partners


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Data Councils Should Be Concerned About: Examples



Impact Services

- % increase in EC professional credentials
- Decrease in # of forms required of families to get child care assistance
- % increase in # of children served by participating system partners, by demographics

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"My question is: Are we making an impact?"

Identify Data that Might Be Easily Accessible: **An Interactive Exercise**

- With your table group, agree on 2-4 types of data you could collect to track/assess your assigned Council Role.
 - Your assigned role is on a card in the middle of the table
- As a group, identify how/where you might get this data.
- Record on flip charts.

