

Delaware Preschool Development Grant Birth-Five Needs Assessment Executive Summary

Prior to the start of the PDG B-5 Needs Assessment, the State undertook a literature review of existing health and education needs assessments and strategic recommendations for the early childhood field within the last eight years. This information served as the starting point for the two integrated components of Delaware’s PDG B-5 Needs Assessment: a User Experience Needs Assessment and a Data Systems Needs Assessment. The User Experience is comprised of 1) Field Research that gathered qualitative, human-centered input from families and early childhood (EC) professionals and 2) a quantitative Provider Landscape Assessment that analyzed all EC programs, services, funding, and policies in the state. The following table provides a description of each component:

User Experience Needs Assessment	Field Research	Interviews and surveys with families of children aged birth through five (B-5) and EC professionals to qualitatively assess their diverse range of needs. Questions focused on uncovering gaps in current programs and services across the state.
	Provider Landscape Assessment	Statewide collection and analysis of EC professional-level and program-level data to calculate and report on the current landscape of programs and services available to children B-5 and their families.
Data Systems Needs Assessment		Inventory and assessment of current data systems, focusing on the State’s ability to quantitatively identify the unique number of children B-5 being served in Delaware’s EC system. Data flow and business flow diagrams map gaps in data collection.

The documents that accompany this Executive Summary include all of the detailed analyses and findings of the Needs Assessment. They are:

- **Delaware PDG B-5 Needs Assessment and Strategic Plan Literature Review** – This document summarizes common themes from existing Delaware-specific early childhood health and education needs assessments, strategic plans, and recommendation reports within the last eight years.
- **Delaware PDG B-5 Consolidated Needs Assessment** – This document merges all analyses, findings, and recommendations into one final deliverable and is organized into an analysis of Delaware’s EC landscape, opportunities to improve the system, and a vision for the strategic plan.
- **Delaware PDG B-5 User Experience Needs Assessment** – This document summarizes the qualitative data gathered from Delaware families and EC professionals and organizes their feedback into *Needs and Insights*, *Experiences that Matter*, and *Shifts and Design Principles*. The design of this document reflects the human-centered approach taken to understand Delawareans’ experience within the early childhood care and education (ECCE) mixed delivery system. It summarizes what they eloquently and authentically shared with the PDG B-5 team as they traveled across the state to meet with families in their homes, communities, and workplaces.

- **Delaware PDG B-5 Data Systems Needs Assessment** – This document summarizes the technical, data systems analyses. It includes an analysis of the number of children currently served and awaiting services in the ECCE system, with particular focus on the unduplicated number of children served. Findings explore the use of Delaware’s unique child identifiers and how data currently flows through state agency systems and the business processes that support these flows.

Key Needs Assessment Conclusions

The Consolidated Needs Assessment merges the qualitative and quantitative information from all pieces of the Needs Assessment and frames them into four *Experiences that Matter* and seven *Opportunities and Enabling Conditions*. The *Experiences that Matter* are a synthesis of the interventions that families themselves said will have the highest impact for them in our ECCE mixed delivery system. They are:

- 1) Becoming Your Child’s First Teacher
- 2) Finding Care that Works
- 3) Coping with Adversity
- 4) Transitioning to a New Setting

To meet these needs and improve the state’s ECCE mixed delivery system, Delaware must address a set of fundamental *Opportunities and Enabling Conditions*. Each of the *Opportunities and Enabling Conditions* are broken into strategies and insights with supporting data and map to the *Experiences that Matter*. They are:

Opportunities

- Availability of programs/services
- Quality of programs/services
- Affordability of programs/services
- Identifying and navigating programs/services

Enabling Conditions

- High-quality, stable educator workforce
- Data to understand child/family needs
- Unified governance for consistent program/service delivery

To address these *Opportunities and Enabling Conditions*, our Needs Assessment identified five *Key Structural Shifts* to make and sustain change in the overall system and raise quality. They are:

Design Principles for Improving EC Quality from Needs Assessment
1. From Policy Mindset → To Service Mindset
2. From Pay Later → To Invest Now
3. From Stigmatized → To Universal
4. From Undervalued → To Valued
5. From Focus on Compliance → To Focus on Kids

Crosswalk of Needs Assessment Analysis to Required Domains

The following table maps each federally-required domain for the Needs Assessment to the corresponding Needs Assessment document and page number(s).

Needs Assessment Domain	Corresponding Document and Page Number
Definitions: Quality Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE), ECCE Availability, Vulnerable or Underserved Children, Children in Rural Areas, ECCE System as a Whole	Consolidated Needs Assessment, pages 17-18
Focal Populations for the Grant: Vulnerable or underserved children in your state/territory, and children who live in rural areas in your state/territory	Consolidated Needs Assessment, pages 18, 60
Quality and Availability: Current quality and availability of ECCE, including availability for vulnerable or underserved children and children in rural areas	Consolidated Needs Assessment, pages 24-30 User Experience Needs Assessment, pages 29-40, 74-77
Children Being Served and Awaiting Service: Data available and/or plan for identifying the unduplicated number of children being served in existing programs and unduplicated number of children awaiting services in existing programs	Consolidated Needs Assessment, pages 8-10, Data Systems Needs Assessment, pages 4-7
Gaps in data on Quality and Availability of programming and supports for children and families	Consolidated Needs Assessment, pages 46-50
Gaps in data or research to support collaboration between programs/services and maximize parental choice	Consolidated Needs Assessment, pages 46-53, Data Systems Needs Assessment, pages 7-11
Measurable Indicators of Progress that Align with the State/Territory's Vision and Desired Outcomes for the Project	Consolidated Needs Assessment, pages 24-53
Issues Involving Early Childhood Care and Education Facilities	Consolidated Needs Assessment, pages 10-11, 61-62
Barriers to the Funding and Provision of High-Quality Early Childhood Care and Education Services and Supports and Opportunities for More Efficient Use of Resources	Consolidated Needs Assessment, pages 13-15, 31-34
Transition Supports and Gaps	Consolidated Needs Assessment, pages 8, 16 User Experience Needs Assessment, pages 41-60 (focus on 56-59)
System Integration and Interagency Collaboration	Consolidated Needs Assessment, pages 51-53 User Experience Needs Assessment, pages 61-72