Expectant and Parenting Youth in Foster Care: Systems Leaders Data Tool Kit

THE ANNIE E. CASEY FOUNDATION

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Executive Summary

All parents want their children to succeed. Given the complex demands of transitioning to adulthood while taking care of a child, young people who are expectant or parenting while in foster care — mothers and fathers — need access to opportunities, resources and support to thrive, as parents and as adults in their own right.

Two recent developments have expanded opportunities for child welfare systems to more effectively serve these youth. First, the added data elements to the Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System (AFCARS) on youth who are pregnant, have given birth or have fathered a child is a significant step in building data systems that can inform decisions about policies, practices and resources for these young families. Second, the Family First Prevention Services Act (Family First) identifies youth in foster care who are pregnant or parenting as eligible for prevention services financed through Title IV-E.

To benefit, states need to know more about expectant and parenting young people in foster care. By collecting and using data, child welfare systems can make policy and practice decisions based on a better understanding of the experiences, strengths and needs of these families.

With that in mind, the Annie E. Casey Foundation, working with the Center for the Study of Social Policy (CSSP) and other partners, surveyed child welfare jurisdictions to create a snapshot of data each state collects. They designed this tool kit to support child welfare leaders and system leaders in their data collection and continuous improvement efforts.

The State of Data Collection: About the Survey

Although expectant and parenting youth in foster care are getting more attention as a distinct population, questions abound about how they are faring:

- Are they receiving regular quality prenatal care that leads to healthy births?
- Do they have connections to sources of support outside of systems that they can call on in times of need?
- Does placement instability predict teen pregnancy while in foster care?
- Are current interventions working to reduce disparate outcomes for expectant or parenting youth of color?
- Are children of young parents who are in foster care enrolled in quality early care and education programs and on track to succeed when they enter school?
- Are efforts to engage and support young fathers improving?

Because data on expectant and parenting youth in foster care and their children often are not collected or analyzed in systematic ways, child welfare systems are likely to experience challenges in answering these critical questions and more.

Through its Jim Casey Youth Opportunities Initiative, Casey focuses on ensuring that young people in foster care have the resources, relationships and opportunities to succeed as they transition to adulthood. In 2018, Casey and CSSP brought together a group of stakeholders interested in addressing the data gaps and improving well-being outcomes for these young families. More than 20 national experts joined a workgroup focused on data about expectant and parenting youth in foster care, including representatives from Casey, CSSP, child welfare administrators, researchers, evaluators, advocates, young parents and practitioners.

Casey and CSSP developed a survey to understand data collection, analysis, sharing and use across states. The survey included 16 questions. Forty-two child welfare agencies responded — 33 of those agencies were state-administered systems; the other nine agencies were split between county-administered and hybrid systems (partially administered by the state and counties). The first section of the survey requested basic information about the state child welfare agency. The second section was designed to learn how states define expectant and parenting youth within their policies, the data they collect, challenges they are experiencing in the data collection systems and the strategies they are using to address the needs of expectant and parenting youth.

Key Survey Findings

Below is a snapshot of available data:

- Twenty-seven states have written policies on identifying and/or serving expectant and parenting youth in foster care.
- Twenty-three jurisdictions collect or require contract agencies to collect data on identifying or serving expectant and parenting youth in foster care.
- More than three-quarters of the states with data collection practices collect data on young women who are parenting.
- More than half of those reporting that they are collecting data have included data elements on expectant and parenting youth in foster care in their database.
- Almost all states that collect data on expectant and parenting youth in foster care have data-sharing agreements with other public systems (i.e., education, health care and behavioral health, juvenile and criminal justice, early childhood education and public health).

Below is a snapshot of challenges with existing data systems:

- Having written policies and reporting requirements did not mean data were consistently collected.
- There was incongruence between written policies and practices across agencies. For example, the list of jurisdictions that reported that they collect or require contract

agencies to collect data was not the same as the list of jurisdictions that reported having data-collection policies.

- Jurisdictions varied in how they defined expectant and parenting youth in policy.
- Only 20 percent of the jurisdictions collected data on the number of healthy births to parents in foster care.
- Less than half of the jurisdictions collected data on young men who are expectant or parenting.
- A small number of jurisdictions collected data on race and ethnicity of expectant and parenting youth.

This tool kit is designed to support child welfare and other public system leaders in using data to inform policy and practice decisions, align resources and track and improve outcomes for expectant and parenting youth in foster care and their children. It includes these resources:

FAQ: Information about the tool kit and how to use it to strengthen data collection, use and analysis to improve outcomes for expectant and parenting youth in foster care.

Maximizing the Family First Act: A summary of provisions aimed at improving services for expectant and parenting youth in foster care and their families.

Policy Resource Guide: Links to sample policies and an outline for developing and improving your policies for expectant and parenting youth in foster care.

10 Tips for Building Effective Data Systems: A summary of 10 critical steps to initiate or strengthen current data systems for expectant and parenting youth in foster care.

Data Elements Checklist: A tool to conduct a quick assessment of existing data elements and to help inform continuous quality improvement efforts.

Guide to Data Sharing and Collaboration: This document describes ways to share information and data and provides links to templates to be used in establishing agreements.

Federal Data and Reporting Requirements Matrix: This guide highlights federal regulations for data requirements and reporting on expectant and parenting youth in foster care.

Continuous Quality Improvement for Meaningful Use Data Systems: This document describes how child welfare leaders can create a continuous improvement process.

State-by-State Data Profiles: These profiles provide a snapshot of data collected during the Expectant and Parenting Youth in Foster Care Survey in 2018.

For more information or to request technical assistance, please contact the Casey Foundation at https://www.aecf.org/contact/.

How do we define the population of "expectant and parenting youth in foster care"?
"Expectant and parenting youth in foster care" refers to young people in foster care who are pregnant, who have created a pregnancy or who are custodial or noncustodial parents.

Why do we use the term "expectant and parenting youth" instead of more common language such as "pregnant youth and young mothers"?
We use "expectant and parenting youth" to include young men who have created a pregnancy or have fathered a child. All too often, the importance of and critical role played by young fathers is overlooked.

What age group is included in this population?
While most children and youth in foster care are under the age of 18, many states allow young people to remain in foster care until age 21. This tool kit covers any youth or young adult who is expectant or parenting in foster care up to age 21.

Why is it important to collect data on this group of young people?
By collecting, analyzing and using timely, relevant and accurate data on expectant and parenting youth in foster care, child welfare systems and other organizations serving youth and families are better positioned to understand which policies, practices, programs and services improve their well-being. With this understanding, data-driven decisions can be made to break the intergenerational cycle of child welfare system involvement.

Who should use the *Expectant and Parenting Youth in Foster Care Data Tool Kit*?
The tool kit was developed to support efforts by child welfare administrators, researchers, practitioners and other systems leaders (e.g., education, juvenile/criminal justice, health and mental health, housing or other support services) to build and improve data collection systems that can be used to identify expectant and parenting youth in foster care, align services with their needs and improve their well-being and that of their children.

Where can I find additional information on what my jurisdiction is collecting?
State profiles of the data collected by each state are available at aecf.org. These profiles were developed using state child welfare agency responses to the *Expectant and Parenting Youth in Foster Care Data Survey*, created by the Annie E. Casey Foundation and the Center for the Study of Social Policy. The survey was sent to the 51 state child welfare agencies in the United States.; 42 of the 51 agencies completed it. If data were not reported for your state, you can contact your child welfare jurisdiction directly.

What type of data should we collect?
Given federal requirements, most child welfare agencies collect basic demographic information on expectant and parenting youth in foster care. Child welfare agencies and their partners should go further and work together to collect more comprehensive information. The Data Elements Checklist included in this tool kit provides a list of data elements that child welfare agencies should consider collecting.

Do we need to collect all these data ourselves?
No. Much of the data are already collected by various agencies working with or providing services to expectant and parenting youth in foster care. Linking and sharing data can streamline data collection and agencies can work together to develop a comprehensive understanding of these young people, their needs and their outcomes.

What other systems or program providers should we work with to collect the data?
Education, juvenile and criminal justice, early childhood education, early intervention, child support, health care, homeless services, housing, substance abuse and mental health systems are potential partners for sharing reliable, real-time information.

How do we ensure that the data are useful?
Meaningful use data can be ensured through a continuous quality improvement (CQI) process, a method for continuously assessing and improving the relevance and quality of data and data collection practices.

Can jurisdictions access support for implementation?
Yes. In addition to the resources in the tool kit, jurisdictions can request technical assistance by contacting the Annie E. Casey Foundation at https://www.aecf.org/contact. Support can be provided in a variety of ways, including by phone or video conference, with a partnership of experts led by the Foundation and the Center for the Study of Social Policy.

Introduction

The Family First Prevention Services Act (Family First), signed into law Feb. 9, 2018, offers new opportunities to improve the outcomes for expectant and parenting youth in foster care and the outcomes for their children, and makes it more important than ever for child welfare systems to have accurate and relevant data to realize those opportunities.

To better meet the needs of expectant and parenting youth while they are in foster care and as they transition into adulthood — and to prevent their children from becoming involved with the child welfare system — system leaders must go further in their data collection and usage. Collecting and disaggregating data by race and ethnicity helps jurisdictions apply appropriate, targeted strategies to achieve equitable results for these young families.

Under the Family First law, states have become eligible to claim Title IV-E reimbursement for services that can prevent the children of pregnant and parenting youth in foster care from entering care themselves — the children do not have to be at imminent risk of entering foster care for them to receive these prevention services. Some states define "pregnant and parenting youth" to include young women who are pregnant, young men who have created a pregnancy and parenting mothers and fathers. Therefore, while the technical language in Family First is "pregnant and parenting youth," many states use the term "expectant and parenting youth" to refer to these young people.

The types of prevention services eligible for Title IV-E reimbursement for not more than a 12-month[1] period include:

- mental health and substance abuse prevention and treatment services provided by a qualified clinician; and
- in-home, skill-based parent programs, which include parenting skills training, parent education and individual and family counseling.

These services must be evidence-based, which the law defines as programs designated well-supported, supported or promising. Family First requires the Children's Bureau to outline the criteria for these designations in a clearinghouse it is expected to create.

Key Steps to Maximizing Family First

These steps may affect the types of interventions that jurisdictions select and how they leverage funding.

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[1] Title IV-E reimbursements are provided for a 12-month period, though there are some exceptions. For example, states can continue to be reimbursed through Title IV-E if the need is documented in the prevention plan.

Step 1

Review available data on expectant and parenting youth in foster care to identify what the data say about their characteristics, strengths and needs.

Step 2

Assess the service array that your jurisdiction offers for expectant and parenting youth in foster care.

Step 3

Identify what you want to achieve for expectant and parenting youth in foster care and how services will prevent foster care involvement for their children. Specifically, how do the desired results contribute to well-being outcomes for the young parents and their children?

Step 4

Identify which prevention services align with the needs of expectant and parenting youth and your desired results. Under Family First, states must implement evaluation and fidelity plans for evidence-based prevention services included in their Title IV-E Prevention Plan. They must outline how services will be monitored and evaluated to determine if the desired result has been achieved. In addition to building the evidence for evidence-based programs through these evaluations, states may also choose to use maintenance-of-effort dollars or other state and local money to build the evidence for programs that do not currently meet evidence-based criteria.[2]

Step 5

Determine which partnerships with other systems and organizations in the community providing evidence-based interventions (such as home-visiting programs) might expand your collection of data on expectant and parenting youth in foster care. Data agreements and matching across systems, for example, can facilitate greater data access. Consider the prospect of engaging universities as key evaluation partners in support of assessing results and aligning funding.

Step 6

Identify data elements to be collected, both for reporting requirements and to inform ongoing continuous quality improvement. States electing to claim the Title IV-E prevention services reimbursement must report child-specific data to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) for each child who receives Title IV-E prevention services, as required by section 471(e)(4)(E) of Family First. (Note: In this section, the law uses the word "child" to describe the expectant or parenting youth.) Guidance from the Children's Bureau details some of the minimum data states should be prepared to report for each child who receives prevention services. Those data include the following:[3]

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[2] Find updated Family First guidance from the Children's Bureau at https://www.acf.hhs.gov/cb/laws-policies/whats-new.

[3] Note that these are the data requirements for all prevention services under Family First and are not exclusive to expectant and parenting youth in foster care as a categorically eligible population. Therefore, some data elements may not be relevant for expectant and parenting youth already in care.

- the specific services provided to the child and/or family;
- the total expenditures for each of the services provided to the child and/or family;
- basic demographic information (e.g., age, sex, race, ethnicity); and
- the duration of the services provided:
  o the child's placement status at the beginning and at the end of the 12-month period that begins on the date the child was identified as a "child who is a candidate for foster care" in a prevention plan; and
  o whether the child entered foster care during the initial 12-month period and during the subsequent 12-month period.

Section 50711 of the Family First law states that to receive Title IV-E reimbursement for prevention services and programs, expectant or parenting youth must have a written prevention plan that specifies the needed services for or on behalf of the expectant and parenting youth's child. The services or programs identified in the prevention plan need to be guided by an organizational structure and treatment framework that involves understanding, recognizing and responding to the effects of all types of trauma. Prevention plans must:

- be included in the youth's foster care case plan;
- list the services to be provided to or on behalf of the youth to ensure that the youth is prepared (in the case of a pregnant foster youth) or able (in the case of a parenting foster youth) to be a parent; and
- describe the foster care prevention strategy for any child born to the youth.

Step 7
Develop a data collection plan. The Federal Requirements and Reporting Matrix within this tool kit outlines key data elements that, if collected and analyzed, can be used to answer critical questions and identify and implement services to prevent the removal of children from their families and improve well-being outcomes. The matrix also suggests possible sources for each data element. When using the accompanying Data Elements Checklist and developing a data development agenda, agencies should consider the following questions:

- What opportunities are available under Family First to secure more funding, implement new services or align services with the needs of expectant and parenting youth in foster care and their children?
- What data are needed to assess needs, match services and track progress? Are there additional data that should be added to the data elements?
- What are considerations that might support evaluation and building evidence for services for expectant and parenting youth in foster care? Are there local, innovative programs that target their needs, as well as their children's needs, that should be evaluated and possibly scaled?
- Given that services for expectant and parenting youth in foster care are voluntary, are there areas of concern about oversurveillance? What are some potential options to safeguard against unintended consequences?

These resources can help child welfare leaders learn more about maximizing outcomes for expectant and parenting youth in foster care under Family First:

- The Center for the Study of Social Policy offers three documents identifying how Family First can be used to serve, support and address the unique needs of expectant and parenting youth:
  - Pregnant & Parenting Youth FAQs focuses on eligibility and some of the most commonly asked questions about the law.
  - Connecting the Dots: A Resource Guide for Meeting the Needs of Expectant and Parenting Youth, their Children, and their Families provides information and resources on evidence-based, informed and promising interventions.
  - Seizing the Opportunity outlines 10 opportunities for states to use Family First to both advance equity and promote better outcomes for children and families.

- November 2018 guidance from the Children's Bureau highlights some of the minimum data collection requirements related to prevention services. States electing the Title IV-E prevention program must report child-specific data to HHS as required by section 471(e)(4)(E) of the law for each child who receives Title IV-E prevention services. This document focuses on data, evaluation and considerations for data collection to maximize Family First for expectant and parenting youth in foster care.

The guide designed to help child welfare jurisdictions develop or update local policies to address the unique needs of expectant and parenting youth in foster care. This guide provides:

- important resources for developing comprehensive policies;
- sample policies from various jurisdictions; and
- a template for jurisdictions to map definitions, policies and procedures for serving expectant and parenting youth in foster care.

Resources cited below offer practice and procedure guidelines to assist with day-to-day implementation and discuss considerations that are relevant to local political environments.

How to Use This Guide

Leaders seeking to develop policies should review all available data to:
- complete an analysis of expectant and parenting youth within their jurisdiction;
- determine sources of support and resources available to improve outcomes for this population;
- determine gaps in current policy and service array;
- survey the resources for developing comprehensive policies, including relevant sample policies; and
- decide what policies are needed and use the policy template below to begin drafting them.

Leaders seeking to improve or expand policies should:
- use the policy template as a starting point to map current policies and procedures;
- identify opportunities and gaps; and
- use resources and sample policies from various jurisdictions to amend policy language.

Important Resources for Developing Comprehensive Policies for Expectant and Parenting Youth in Foster Care

- Sexual and Reproductive Health of Youth in Out-Of-Home Care: A Policy and Practice Framework for Child Welfare: Developed by the Center for the Study of Social Policy, this report provides information and resources designed to help child welfare leaders develop policies and practices that address the sexual and reproductive health needs of expectant and parenting youth in foster care.

- Advocacy for Pregnant and Parenting Teens in Foster Care: Developed by Healthy Teen Network in partnership with the American Bar Association's Center on Children and the Law, this report answers key legal questions about the rights of expectant and parenting teens in foster care.

- Twice the Opportunity: This brief from the Center for the Study of Social Policy outlines child welfare policy recommendations to support expectant and parenting youth in foster care and their children.

- Changing Systems & Practice to Improve Outcomes for Young Fathers, Their Children & Their Families: Developed by the Center for the Study of Social Policy, this report provides recommendations for child welfare system policy and practice changes that recognize the critical role young fathers can play in improving the outcomes for their children and families.

- Expectant and Parenting Youth in Foster Care: Addressing Their Developmental Needs to Promote Healthy Parent and Child Outcomes: Developed by the Center for the Study of Social Policy, this report outlines how to best serve expectant and parenting youth in foster care — listing five domains crucial to developmental needs that create positive experiences and mitigate or prevent adverse outcomes.

Sample Policies from Various Jurisdictions

- **Texas**: Youth Parents and Pregnant Youth in DFPS Conservatorship: Fiscal Year 2017 describes data reporting and formatting requirements.

- **Ohio**: Provision of Services to Unmarried Minor Parents defines the provision of services for unmarried minor parents.

- **District of Columbia**: Older Youth Services, recognizing that different age groups have different needs, outlines steps to ensure capacity for accessible and appropriate support for D.C.'s older youth population. Section D addresses pregnant and parenting youth.

- **Louisiana**: 6-1230 Pregnancy and Impending Fatherhood outlines the state's Department of Children and Family Services policy to provide for the needs of expectant parents in foster care and their babies, both prior to and after birth.

- **Georgia**: Minor Parent Expecting or Who Has a Child While in Foster Care outlines the procedures and practice guidance to ensure that all expectant mothers receive appropriate prenatal care and are placed with their infant(s) when possible; the child welfare agency does not seek custody of infants born to mothers in foster care unless warranted; and expectant fathers in foster care receive services to facilitate a relationship with and/or care of their child.

- **Rhode Island**: Issues of Sexuality and Pregnancy Affecting Youth in DCYF Care outlines initial policy and procedure for ensuring that staff provide accurate information and coordinate referrals in a timely manner when a youth has issues about sexuality and/or pregnancy.

- **New York**: New York City's Administration for Children's Services: Sexual and Reproductive Health Care for Youth in Foster Care outlines practice requirements and procedures for supporting expectant and parenting youth in foster care.

- **New Jersey**: Department of Children and Families: Placement of Pregnant Adolescents or Minor Parents with Their Children in Resource Homes establishes procedures for the placement and care of pregnant adolescents and minor parents with their children in out-of-home placement.

- **California**: Department of Social Services Manual of Policies and Procedures: Foster Family Homes contains policy, procedure and licensing requirements for whole-family foster care as a placement option for expectant and parenting youth and their children.

Policy title

Policy information
Policy number and type, effective date, date last revised, compliance reporting, policy owner, policy contact.)

Reason for policy
Generally, one to two sentences. Articulate commitment to a value or strategic goal, why the policy must exist, the problem/conflict it seeks to address or any legal, regulatory, stewardship or other requirement it aims to meet. This latter information is helpful when the policy needs to be reviewed or updated.

Policy statement
Generally, one to two paragraphs. Articulate the policy's intent, when the policy applies and any mandated actions or constraints. Please note: The statement does not describe procedures.

Scope
All categories of people, processes and governance to which the policy applies.

Definitions
Terms specific to this policy.

Procedures
Outline how the policy's requirements will be met. Include the following areas:

- *Identification and reporting*
- *Reproductive health information and services (If minor/dependent is pregnant)*
- *Placement of expectant and parenting youth*
- *Labor and delivery*
- *Services for expectant and parenting youth*
- *Service requirements for the noncustodial infant*

Forms
List forms needed to meet policy's requirements. Use embedded links, when possible, or upload to policy page.

Responsibilities
List units or responsible individuals, such as colleges, departments, offices, faculty, students and employees. Summarize major responsibilities — the what, not the how ("how" details should be in procedures section).

Description of potential repercussions for those within policy scope who violate the policy
When possible, articulate a prescribed set of consequences for various types and frequency of noncompliance.

Related information
List related policies and/or external documents that provide helpful, relevant information to the policy. Use embedded links, when possible, or upload to policy page.

Policy history
Dates/brief descriptions of revisions, authors and departments

1. **Center the voice of expectant and parenting youth in foster care.** Authentically engage young people in the development and implementation of data collection processes. Involve expectant and parenting youth in the planning, design and implementation of your data systems. Getting their input on the type of data to be collected and the method and frequency of collection can have an exponentially positive impact on your overall data system. Additionally, incorporate them within continuous quality improvement processes by soliciting their feedback and using it to align services with needs.

2. **Collect data that will help inform policy and practice decisions.** Identify data elements needed to answer key questions and develop a data collection plan around those elements.

3. **Disaggregate data by race and ethnicity** to identify racial disparities and inform strategies for eliminating inequities.

4. **Invest in and implement a continuous quality improvement process** to ensure that (1) the data needed to improve the well-being of expectant and parenting youth and their families are being collected and (2) the data go through a process of checks and balances to ensure usability.

5. **Collaborate with other service systems.** Expectant and parenting youth in foster care and their children often have contact with multiple systems. Establish partnerships across systems to share and link data. Identify ways to streamline processes to ensure that young families can access the services they need and maximize available resources to support expectant and parenting youth in foster care.

6. **Communicate and make data accessible.** Share your results. Make data publicly available and implement mechanisms for engaging stakeholders in providing insights.

7. **Connect data** to everyday practice, performance and outcomes.

8. **Leverage existing legislation**. Cross reference data collection efforts with federal legislation and reporting requirements. Many data elements needed to maximize funds available through the Family First Prevention Services Act (Family First) are already required for other federally mandated reporting systems (such as the Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System, the National Youth in Transition Database and the National Child Abuse and Neglect Data System). Jurisdictions in compliance with these data-reporting requirements will be in the best position to take advantage of the funding available under Family First.

9. **Support and collaborate with researchers**. Look for opportunities to partner with researchers to build an evidence base for interventions and services that are most effective for this group of young people.

10. **Align contributions.** Comprehensive data collection, analysis and use allow multiple systems and partners to make informed decisions about their contributions — and maximize available resources — to support and improve outcomes for expectant and parenting youth and their families.

Data Elements Checklist

The following table outlines key data elements that can be used to begin to answer critical questions for identifying and implementing services to prevent the removal of children from young parents who are in foster care and improve well-being outcomes for multiple generations: expectant and parenting youth, their children and their families. Each data element within the table includes a list of possible sources for collection.

Use this tool to help inform your data development plan in support of expectant and parenting youth in foster care. For each data element, consider which data sources are the most efficient for collection and analysis. Identify the action steps needed and which team members will be responsible. By collecting these data, child welfare systems are better positioned to comprehensively understand which policies, practices, programs and services lead to improved well-being outcomes for all. The burden and cost of collecting these data is minimal in comparison to the potential cost savings from reducing future placements, decreasing time to permanency and ensuring that these young families succeed and thrive.

Demographic Information on Expectant and Parenting Youth in Foster Care	Data Sources		Action Steps	Team Members/Partners Responsible for Data Collection
Young woman or young man in foster care who is pregnant or expectant	☐ ☐ ☐ ☐	Add data element to administrative data system/CCWIS AFCARS Case file Other _____		
Demographic characteristics of young woman or young man in foster care who is pregnant or expectant (gender identity, sexual orientation, race, ethnicity, disability and mental health status)[1]	☐ ☐ ☐ ☐	Add data element to administrative data system/CCWIS AFCARS Case file Other _____		
Young woman who is a mother or young man who is a father in foster care (Young woman or man is in a parental role — intent is to capture parenting.)	☐ ☐ ☐ ☐	Add data element to administrative data system/CCWIS AFCARS Case file Other _____		

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[1] Recommendation is to collect all listed elements.

Pregnancy and Health Data[2]	Data Sources	Action Steps	Team Members/Partners Responsible for Data Collection
Expectant mother's due date	☐ Add data element to administrative data system/CCWIS ☐ Case file ☐ Data link with _____Data sharing agreement with _____ ☐ ☐ Other _____		
Pregnancy outcomes (range of possibilities): • Stillbirth • Miscarriage • Abortion • Live birth	☐ Add data element to administrative data system/CCWIS ☐ Case file ☐ Data link with _____ ☐ Data sharing agreement with _____ ☐ Other _____		
Young woman in foster care received prenatal care: • Dates of prenatal care	☐ Add data element to administrative data system/CCWIS ☐ Case file ☐ Data link with _____ ☐ Data sharing agreement with _____ ☐ Other _____		
Young woman in foster care received postnatal care: • Dates of postnatal care services	☐ Add data element to administrative data system/CCWIS ☐ Case file ☐ Data link with _____ ☐ Data sharing agreement with _____ ☐ Other _____		
Young woman or man in foster care received grief counseling if the pregnancy outcome was other than live birth	☐ Add data element to administrative data system/CCWIS ☐ Case file ☐ Data link with _____		

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[2] Elements under this section can be found in the medical section of the case plan.

	☐ Data sharing agreement with _____ ☐ Other _____		
Young woman received a six-week postpartum screening.	☐ Add data element to administrative data system/CCWIS ☐ Case file ☐ Data link with _____ ☐ Data sharing agreement with _____ ☐ Other _____		

Parenting Data	Data Sources	Action Steps	Team Members/Partners Responsible for Data Collection
Number of births for mother	☐ Add data element to administrative data system/CCWIS ☐ Case file ☐ Data link with _____ ☐ Data sharing agreement with _____ ☐ Youth survey ☐ Other _____		
Number of births for father	☐ Add data element to administrative data system/CCWIS ☐ Case file ☐ Data link with _____ ☐ Data sharing agreement with _____ ☐ Youth survey ☐ Other _____		
Age at first birth for mother	☐ Add data element to administrative data system/CCWIS ☐ Case file ☐ Data link with _____ ☐ Data sharing agreement with _____ ☐ Youth survey ☐ Other _____		

Age at first birth for father	☐ Add data element to administrative data system/CCWIS ☐ Case file ☐ Data link with _____ ☐ Data sharing agreement with _____ ☐ Youth survey ☐ Other _____		
Number of children for mother	☐ Add data element to administrative data system/CCWIS ☐ Case file ☐ Data link with _____ ☐ Data sharing agreement with _____ ☐ Youth survey ☐ Other _____		
Number of children for father	☐ Add data element to administrative data system/CCWIS ☐ Case file ☐ Data link with _____ ☐ Data sharing agreement with _____ ☐ Youth survey ☐ Other _____		
Young mother and/or father have legal custody of child(ren)	☐ Add data element to administrative data system/CCWIS ☐ Case file ☐ Other _____		
Young mother and/or father have physical custody of child(ren)	☐ Add data element to administrative data system/CCWIS ☐ AFCARS ☐ Case file ☐ Other _____ _____		
Child abuse or neglect allegation against young mother and/or father	☐ Add data element to administrative data system/CCWIS ☐ NCANDS ☐ Other_____		
Substantiated child abuse or neglect report against young mother and/or father	☐ Add data element to administrative data system/CCWIS ☐ Other_____		
Child(ren) of young parents removed from their care and placed into foster care	☐ Add data element to administrative data system/CCWIS ☐ Other_____		

Substantiated allegations that are the reasons for removal from parents' care	☐ ☐	Add data element to administrative data system/CCWIS Other_____		
Noncustodial parent (mother or father) has at least biweekly contact/visits with their child(ren)	☐ ☐ ☐ ☐	Add data element to administrative data system/CCWIS Case file Youth survey Other _____		
Young parent (mother or father) is receiving co-parenting services and support	☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐	Add data element to administrative data system/CCWIS Case file Data link with _____ Data sharing agreement with _____ Youth survey Other _____		
Young parent (mother or father) is co-parenting	☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐	Add data element to administrative data system/CCWIS Case file Data link with _____ Data sharing agreement with _____ Youth survey Other _____		

Young parent (mother or father) is enrolled in a home-visiting program	☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐	Add data element to administrative data system/CCWIS Case file Data link with _____ Data sharing agreement with _____ Youth survey Other _____		
Well-Being Data on Expectant and Parenting Youth in Foster Care		**Data Sources**	**Action Steps**	**Team Members/Partners Responsible for Data Collection**
Young mother or young father in foster care is involved with the juvenile or criminal justice system	☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐	Add data element to administrative data system/CCWIS Case file Data link with _____ Data sharing agreement with _____ Youth survey Other _____		
Young mother has completed high school/GED	☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐	Add data element to administrative data system/CCWIS Case file Data link with _____ Data sharing agreement with _____ Youth survey NYTD Other _____		
Young father has completed high school/GED	☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐	Add data element to administrative data system/CCWIS Case file Data link with _____ Data sharing agreement with _____ Youth survey NYTD Other _____		

Young mother is enrolled in postsecondary education or job training program	☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐	Add data element to administrative data system/CCWIS Case file Data link with_____ Data sharing agreement with_____ Youth survey NYTD Other _____		
Young father is enrolled in postsecondary education or job training program	☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐	Add data element to administrative data system/CCWIS Case file Data link with _____ Data sharing agreement with _____ Youth survey NYTD Other _____		
Young mother is employed: • full time • part time	☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐	Add data element to administrative data system/CCWIS Case file Data link with _____ Data sharing agreement with _____ Youth survey NYTD Other _____		
Young father is employed: • full time • part time	☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐	Add data element to administrative data system/CCWIS Case file Data link with _____ Data sharing agreement with _____ Youth survey NYTD Other _____		

7

Young mother is receiving sexual and reproductive health services	☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐	Add data element to administrative data system/CCWIS Case file Data link with _____ Data sharing agreement with _____ Youth survey Other _____		
Young father is receiving sexual and reproductive health services	☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐	Add data element to administrative data system/CCWIS Case file Data link with _____ Data sharing agreement with _____ Youth survey Other _____		
Young mother exited foster care into: • reunification • KLG/guardianship • independence with an identified committed adult • adoption	☐ ☐	Administrative data system/CCWIS Other_____		
Young father exited foster care into: • reunification • KLG/guardianship • independence with an identified committed adult • adoption	☐ ☐	Administrative data system/CCWIS Other_____		

Young mother has safe and stable housing in place upon exit: • either independently or with a friend, roommate, boyfriend, girlfriend, fiancé/ée, husband, wife, etc. • with family (birth parents, other relatives such as grandparents, aunt, sibling, adoptive parents, legal guardian or chosen family) • in previous resource home • in college dormitory — year-round or not • in supportive housing • other (please specify)	☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐	Add data element to administrative data system/CCWIS Case file Youth survey NYTD Other _____		
Young father has safe and stable housing in place upon exit: • either independently or with a friend, roommate, boyfriend, girlfriend, fiancé/ée, husband, wife, etc. • with family (birth parents, other relatives such as grandparents, aunt, sibling, adoptive parents, legal guardian or chosen family) • in previous resource home • in college dormitory — year-round or not • in supportive housing • other (please specify)	☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐	Add data element to administrative data system/CCWIS Case file Youth survey NYTD Other _____		

Young mother has at least one positive and enduring relationship with a nonsystem adult	☐ ☐ ☐ ☐	Add data element to administrative data system/CCWIS Case file Youth survey Other _____		
Young father has at least one positive and enduring relationship with a nonsystem adult	☐ ☐ ☐ ☐	Add data element to administrative data system/CCWIS Case file Youth survey Other _____		
Young mother has health insurance upon exiting foster care	☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐	Add data element to administrative data system/CCWIS Case file Youth survey NYTD Other _____		
Young father has health insurance upon exiting foster care	☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐	Add data element to administrative data system/CCWIS Case file Youth survey NYTD Other _____		
Young mother has a medical home upon existing foster care	☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐	Add data element to administrative data system/CCWIS Case file Data link with _____ Data sharing agreement with _____ Youth survey Other _____		

Young father has a medical home upon existing foster care	☐ Add data element to administrative data system/CCWIS ☐ Case file ☐ Data link with_____ ☐ Data sharing agreement with _____ ☐ Youth survey ☐ Other _____		
Well-Being Data on Child(ren) of Expectant and Parenting Youth in Foster Care	**Data Sources**	**Action Steps**	**Team Members/Partners Responsible for Data Collection**
Child(ren) of young parent (mother and/or father) has/have health insurance upon parent's exit from foster care	☐ Case file ☐ Data link with _____ ☐ Data sharing agreement with _____ ☐ Other _____		
Child(ren) of young parent (mother and/or father) has/have a medical home upon parent's exit from foster care	☐ Case file ☐ Data link with _____ ☐ Data sharing agreement with _____ ☐ Other _____		
Baby born prematurely	☐ Case file ☐ Data link with _____ ☐ Data sharing agreement with _____ ☐ Other _____		
Demographic characteristics of child(ren) of young parents in foster care (e.g. race, ethnicity, birthdate)	☐ Add data element to administrative data system/CCWIS ☐ Case file ☐ Other _____		

Current living arrangement of child(ren): • with birth mother/father • with resource parent • with adoptive parent • with other relative • residential facility	☐ ☐ ☐	Add data element to administrative data system/CCWIS Case file Other _____		
Child(ren) enrolled in high-quality early childhood education program(s)	☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐	Add data element to administrative data system/CCWIS Case file Data link with _____ Data sharing agreement with _____ Other _____		
Paternity of child(ren) established	☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐	Add data element to administrative data system/CCWIS Case file Data link with _____ Data sharing agreement with _____ Other _____		
Child(ren) completed Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnostic and Treatment • Dates:	☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐	Add data element to administrative data system/CCWIS Case file Data link with _____ Data sharing agreement with _____ Other _____		

Child(ren) up to date with immunizations	☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐	Add data element to administrative data system/CCWIS Case file Data link with _____ Data sharing agreement with _____ Other _____		

Resources

New York City's Administration for Children's Services created an assessment tool to capture both qualitative and quantitative data on expectant and parenting youth in foster care.

Connecticut's Department of Children and Families modified their administrative data systems to include data elements related to expectant and parenting youth in foster care.

Guide to Data Sharing and Collaboration

Expectant and parenting youth in foster care and their children are often involved with multiple systems. Consider the following scenarios:

- A young father in foster care attends a public high school, has a child enrolled in a Head Start program and is also receiving mental health services.
- A pregnant youth in foster care meets regularly with her probation officer, is enrolled in a substance abuse treatment program and receives prenatal care services.

In these cases, each system and respective service provider has different data and eligibility requirements. Each is capturing only one aspect of the experiences, strengths and needs of expectant and parenting youth in foster care. Establishing data-sharing agreements across systems (such as education, juvenile or criminal justice, early childhood education, early intervention, child support, health care, homeless services, housing, substance abuse and mental health) that are intervening in the lives of young families will yield better results, including:

- a comprehensive view of each young person's experiences, strengths and needs;
- coordinated service provision, making it easier for young families to navigate the different systems in which they are involved;
- reduced duplication of services;
- enhanced data quality;
- increased accountability within and among systems;
- improved monitoring and tracking of progress;
- aligned efforts to address racial disparities across multiple systems; and
- improved well-being outcomes for multiple generations.

This is further affirmed by the recent Comprehensive Child Welfare Information System (CCWIS) Final Rule, which promotes cross-system data sharing, providing child welfare systems with a clear opportunity to collaborate in sharing reliable real-time information in support of data-driven decision making.

Different Ways of Collaborating

Data linking

This process matches records for an individual or family in one system (e.g., child welfare) to records for the same individual or family in another system (e.g., education). The linking is done using identifying information such as name, Social Security number, date of birth and/or address. Integrated databases typically include linked data from multiple systems.

For example, data on parenting youth in foster care from New York City's Administration for Children's Services (ACS) are linked to data from the New York City Department of Education on student grade level, attendance and progress. ACS has used the results of this data linkage to develop targeted strategies to improve educational outcomes for parenting youth in foster care.

Similarly, a study funded by the Conrad Hilton Foundation linked vital statistics birth records (from the California Department of Public Health) to child protective services data to examine teenage birth rates and child maltreatment history among current and former youth in foster care.

Data sharing

This is the exchange of information about individuals or families between two systems (e.g., child welfare and education). Data sharing is often a necessary precursor to data linking. Data can be shared for a variety of reasons.

For example, a child welfare system could share information about expectant and parenting youth with another system to auto-enroll them in a program. This could help streamline enrollment and minimize time and travel barriers for expectant and parenting youth, thereby increasing program participation.

By sharing data, child welfare systems can collaborate to improve outcomes for expectant and parenting youth in foster care. Data-sharing agreements oftentimes focus on factors like:

- the type(s) of data to be shared;
- the purpose for which the data will be used;
- the format of the data;
- the frequency with which the data will be shared;
- the processes that will be used to transfer the data in a secure manner; and
- under what conditions the data can be shared or reported with another party.

This guide developed by the National Collaborative Analytics Committee (NCAC) includes models and tools for developing data-sharing agreements, including executed MOUs and MOAs, data-sharing statutes and resources for data governance.

Jurisdictional Examples

Washington state's integrated client database draws information from more than 30 public data systems and contains more than 10 years of information about services, risks, history, service costs and outcomes. The database is used to create annual reports on risk factors and outcomes for expectant and parenting youth.

Colorado developed the Community Performance Center database, which downloads administrative data daily for children who enter foster care, automatically calculates when Early Periodic Screening Diagnostic and Treatment appointments should occur and tracks medical visits. Medical clinics enter appointment information and health care providers enter their visit notes directly into the system.

Allegheny County (Pennsylvania) Department of Human Services and Pittsburgh Public Schools share data on student progress and attendance, housing, receipt of mental health services and child welfare system involvement. These data help inform strategies to improve outcomes for children, youth and families.

Expectant and Parenting Youth in Foster Care Data: Federal Data and Reporting Requirements Matrix

Table 1: Federal Data Requirements for State and Tribal Child Welfare Information Systems

Description	Data Elements Related to Expectant and Parenting Youth in Foster Care	Required or Optional	Data Gaps	Resources
Comprehensive Child Welfare Information System (CCWIS) Final Rule 2016 includes the following key provisions: • promote data sharing with other agencies; • require quality data; and • allow agencies to build systems tailored to their needs. During the transition period, the state or tribal Title IV-E agency with a state or tribal automated child welfare information system (S/TACWIS) or non–S/TACWIS project must indicate whether it will: 1. transition the S/TACWIS or non-S/TACWIS to a CCWIS; 2. become a non-CCWIS; or 3. build a new CCWIS. Agency does not need to finish the transition within the 24 months to be a CCWIS. A new CCWIS may be built at any time.	Support collaboration, interoperability and data sharing by either of the following: 1. Keeping current data exchanges: • TANF systems — Title IV-A • child-support systems —Title IV-D • Medicaid eligibility systems — Title XIX • child abuse/neglect systems • financial systems • Title IV-E eligibility systems 2. Adding new data exchanges: • courts • education • Medicaid claims • child welfare contributing systems • ancillary child welfare systems used by agency staff	Optional Note: Agencies that decide to build a CCWIS will receive a more favorable cost allocation than is provided for non-CCWIS systems if the system meets the final rule's requirements.	State systems are in various stages of development and use. Although standards are available for the inclusion of specific information, each state or locality has the latitude to establish its own format and functionality.	[The Comprehensive Child Welfare Information System Final Rule: Overview](#)

Table 2: Federal Reporting Requirements for State and Tribal Child Welfare Systems

Description	Data Elements Related to Expectant and Parenting Youth in Foster Care	Required or Optional	Data Gaps	Resources
Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System (AFCARS) Final Rule 2016 collects case-level information from state and tribal Title IV-E agencies on all children in foster care and those who have been adopted with Title IV-E agency involvement.	1. Indicate whether the child has ever fathered or bore a child. __Yes __No 2. Indicate whether the child is pregnant as of the end of the report period. __Yes __No 3. Indicate whether the child and his/her child(ren) are placed together at any point during the report period. __Yes __No __Not applicable	Required Note: Title IV-E agencies are required to submit AFCARS data twice a year, effective October 1, 2020.	Delayed implementation. Captures limited data on expectant and parenting youth. No data on services or outcomes.	Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System (Aug. 21, 2018)
National Youth in Transition Database (NYTD) States report to Administration for Children and Families the independent-living services and supports they provide in 11 categories (independent living needs assessment; academic support; postsecondary educational support; career preparation; employment programs or vocational training; budget and financial management; housing education and home management training; health education and risk prevention; family support and healthy marriage education; mentoring; and supervised independent living).	1. Have you ever given birth, or fathered any children that were born? Or In the past two years, did you give birth or father any children that were born? __ Yes __ No __ Declined Note: Child must have been born. If you are a male and do not know, answer "No."	Required Notes: Collects information about youth in foster care ages 17 to 21, including outcomes for those who have aged out of foster care. States began collecting data in 2010, and the first data set was submitted in May 2011.	Only captures data on youth 17 – 21. Data do not explain why some youth do not receive services. No data on the quality of the services received.	Administration for Children & Families: About NYTD

Description	Data Elements Related to Expectant and Parenting Youth in Foster Care	Required or Optional	Data Gaps	Resources
	2. If you responded "yes" to the previous question, were you married to the child's other parent at the time each child was born? __ Yes __ No __ Declined Note: Answer "No" if you were not married to the other parent at the time at least one of the children in the above question was born. 3. Family support and healthy marriage education includes education and information about safe and stable families, healthy marriages, spousal communication, parenting, responsible fatherhood, child care skills, teen parenting and domestic and family violence prevention. Indicate whether you received this service during the reporting period. __Yes __No			
National Child Abuse and Neglect Data System (NCANDS) NCANDS is a voluntary data collection system that gathers information about reports of child abuse and neglect from all 50 states, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico.	Pregnancy/parenting services for young parents: Activities for married or unmarried adolescent parents and their families to assist them in coping with social, emotional and economic problems related to pregnancy and to plan for the future. 0=not collected/not applicable 1=yes 2=no 9=unknown or missing	Optional	Reporting is voluntary; not all states submit NCANDS data every year. Variations in state child maltreatment laws. Information systems could affect interpretation of the data.	Administration for Children & Families: NCANDS

Description	Data Elements Related to Expectant and Parenting Youth in Foster Care	Required or Optional	Data Gaps	Resources
Family First Prevention Services Act Enables states to use federal funds available under Title IV of the Social Security Act to provide enhanced support to children and families and prevent foster care placements through the provision of mental health and substance abuse prevention and treatment services; in-home, skill-based parent programs; and kinship navigator services.	Data collection and reporting requirements to include semi-annual reports to Health and Human Services (HHS) on services provided, progress made in achieving goals and number of children and families receiving services. Data to include: - the specific services provided to the child and/or family; - the total expenditures for each of the services provided to the child and/or family; - the duration of the services provided; - if the child was identified in a prevention plan as a "child who is a candidate for foster care": - the child's placement status at the beginning, and at the end, of the 12-month period that begins on the date the child was identified as a "child who is a candidate for foster care" in a prevention plan; - whether the child entered foster care during the initial 12-month period and during the subsequent 12-month period; and - basic demographic information (e.g., age, sex, race/ethnicity). May also collect data and conduct evaluations on prevention services and programs to assess how these services are reducing the likelihood of foster care placement, increasing the use of kinship care placements or improving child well-being.	Required	Pending clarity on roll-out of reporting and evaluation of programs.	H.R.253: Family First Prevention Services Act of 2017 PI-18-09: State Requirements for Electing Title IV-E Prevention and Family Services and Programs

Table 3: Federal Monitoring of State and Tribal Child Welfare Systems

Description	Data Elements Related to Expectant and Parenting Youth in Foster Care	Required or Optional	Data Gaps	Resources
Child and Family Service Reviews (CFSRs) CFSRs are periodic reviews of state child welfare systems to achieve three goals: 1. to ensure conformity with federal child welfare requirements; 2. to determine what is happening to children and families as they engage in child welfare services; and 3. to assist states in helping children and families achieve positive outcomes. After a CFSR is completed, states develop a Program Improvement Plan (PIP) to address areas in their child welfare services that need improvement.	Sample cases selected could be related to work with expectant and parenting youth.	Required	Small sample of cases, which may or may not include expectant and parenting youth in foster care.	Administration for Children & Families: Child & Family Services Reviews (CFSRs)

Continuous Quality Improvement for Meaningful Use Data Systems

Continuous quality improvement (CQI) is a method for continuously assessing and improving the quality of services and support for children and families over time. Used appropriately, CQI efforts help to identify the strengths and weaknesses and test solutions for improvements. CQI begins with a strong commitment to client satisfaction and works best with the participation of staff at all levels of the agency and all who are providing or receiving services, including children, youth, families and stakeholders.

Meaningful use data collection is used to define minimum standards for what data elements are collected, how the data will be used and with whom the data will be shared. A CQI process for meaningful use data will encourage widespread adoption, promote innovation and avoid imposing excessive or duplicative data collection among partners. Building on the tenets of the basic CQI process, CQI for meaningful use data for this population aims to:

1. improve the quality of services and programs for expectant and parenting youth in foster care and their children;
2. reduce racial disparities in areas of well-being;
3. engage expectant and parenting youth and their families;
4. improve care coordination among family-serving systems; and
5. ensure adequate privacy and security in data sharing and coordination.

CQI for meaningful use data requires doing something different to ensure that the data are relevant and useful and result in improved quality of service or service delivery, or other changes suggested by the data. This can include changes to the data elements being collected, the data collection process and the quality and/or type of services delivered.

Getting Started

The following are fundamental steps to begin your CQI process for meaningful use data systems:

Develop a CQI team. Include a diverse and committed group of program staff, administrators, partners, collaborators, evaluators and technical data specialists to get a comprehensive assessment of the organization's strengths and opportunities for improvement. If the agency has a formal young parent and/or youth advisory group in place, this group or members of the group should be key partners in the CQI process. If no such group exists, the organization can recruit from the young parents and caregivers it serves. Young parents and

1

caregivers may need support (training, mentoring, childcare, transportation, etc.) to participate in the process. (For more information, please see step 2 of the Annie E. Casey Foundation's *Race Equity and Inclusion Action Guide*.)

Engage other key stakeholders early in the process. Be explicit about the benefits and contributions for all partners. Listen for fears and challenges to identify and plan for risk.

Define goals. Focus on the five priorities of the meaningful use frame on the previous page to set your CQI goals. Determine your starting point. What baseline data are already available to measure progress? What new elements will you need?

Select a CQI framework. The CQI process involves an ongoing cycle of goal establishment, data identification, data collection and analysis, changes in practice and evaluation of the changes in practice. The CQI team must choose or revise a framework and schedule they will use for their process. It is important that the team outlines the key steps and understands the relevance and time frame for each step in the continuous cycle.

Provide support. It might be necessary to provide some technical support at the start for the CQI team. Make sure to set aside time for orientation and consider including experts in data and data systems. Set the standard that the analysis of the data is not to dispute the work of the frontline staff but rather to help them see the strengths of their efforts and how they can improve.

Multiple available CQI frameworks can be modified and adapted for a CQI process. The team might have to delete or add steps. The team will need to ensure that the process is appropriate for all partners and stakeholders. Each step will be guided by the group's responses to the previous step.
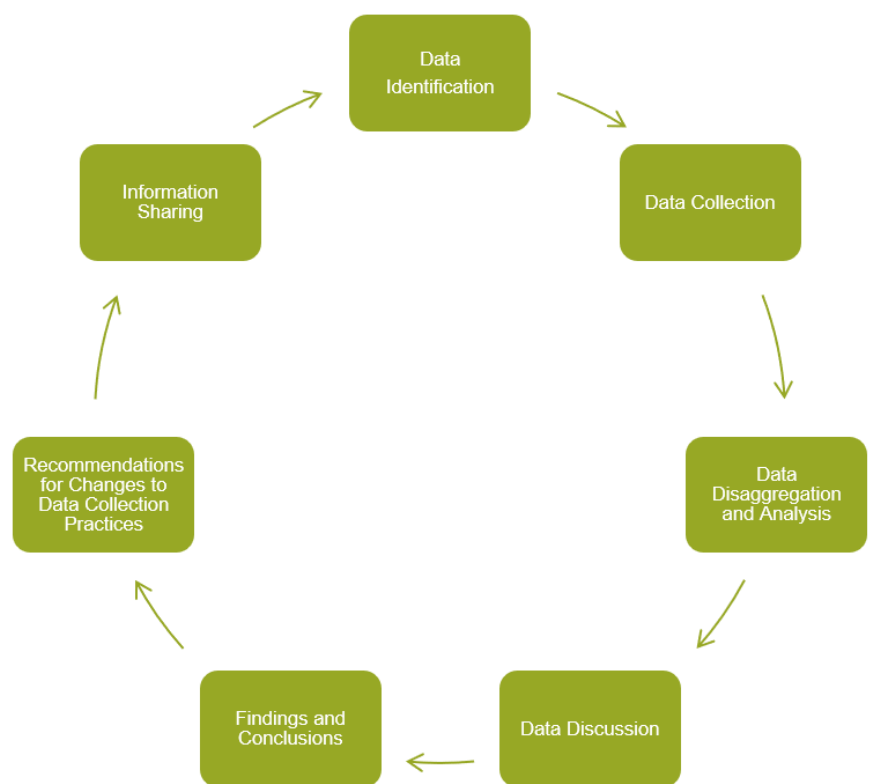
Phases to Follow

The following phases, depicted in the graphic below, outline some of the key questions and phases in your CQI process. Ideally, the meaningful use cycle will be embedded into staff expectations and into existing or newly formed data collection, analysis and use processes.

Data identification
- List the questions you want to answer with the data.
- Establish an understanding of race equity and inclusion principles. It is important to identify and include any disparities you want to address so that you both collect the appropriate data elements and use the appropriate level for analysis. (See the Annie E. Casey Foundation's *Race Equity and Inclusion Action Guide*.)
- Define how the data will be used to inform delivery and track outcomes.

- Determine what data already exist. Do the data answer any of the questions you've listed? If not, determine whether the existing data should be modified or deleted from your data collection process.
- What data are missing? Are others collecting this data? Who owns it? How can you get access?
- Establish protocols for collecting and sharing.

Data collection

- Establish information system support and management.
- Conduct training of all relevant stakeholder groups. Convey how important it is that the data be gathered as part of a learning community culture that can lead to sustainable improvement in outcomes.
- Integrate the data collection into existing processes.
- Begin collecting the data.

Data disaggregation and analysis

- Disaggregate data by race, gender and other key demographics. The collection, analysis and use of race and ethnicity data should be an integral part of CQI.
- Conduct a systems analysis of root causes of inequities. (See the Annie E. Casey Foundation's *Race Equity and Inclusion Action Guide* for more information.)

Data discussion

Discuss the following questions with your team:

- Are you able to answer your original questions with the data you've collected?
- How has the CQI program benefited various stakeholders?
- Are all stakeholder groups seeing the results of the quality of data generated?
- Are trainings offered that will help frontline staff and others who might have to collect the data learn about the benefits of doing such work?

Findings and conclusions

Record your answers to the following:

- What do the data tell you about your services and how they affect your population?
- Have you used all the data elements or data points that you've added to the system?
- Have the data led you to additional questions to be answered?

- Continuously evaluate effectiveness and adapt strategies. (To learn more, see Casey's *Race Equity and Inclusion Action Guide*).

Recommendations for changes to data-collection practices
- Establish processes for identifying problems and solutions and managing the quality improvement process.
- Identify resources and gaps in resources.
- Identify other research and evaluation resources.
- Determine whether quantitative or qualitative methods will be used, or both.

Information sharing
- Identify trends and present information to key stakeholder groups for dissemination and feedback.
- Evaluate whether you are regularly presenting your data results to stakeholder groups in a timely manner. Use charts, graphs and anecdotal evidence to amplify the information presented.
- Use your CQI program to celebrate and share successes with staff at all levels.

Data Accessibility and Communication

Making data accessible and using data to communicate with staff at all levels, stakeholders, researchers, policy makers and the public at large promotes transparency and accountability. With effective sharing of data insights, child welfare systems can:
- connect the data to everyday practice, performance and outcomes for children, youth and families;
- inform improvements in policies, practices and services;
- align partners and resources; and
- identify racial disparities and inform strategies for addressing them.

Data should be communicated frequently and in formats that are most useful to the audience. For example, a one-page summary with infographics highlighting key successes and challenges might be more helpful to stakeholders than a detailed report of staff performance and outcomes, which is likely more helpful to program managers.

Questions to consider for communicating data
- Who are your key stakeholders?
- What data will most inform your stakeholders' understanding, feedback and decision making?
- How will the information be used?
- What are the most important messages to convey?
- What result do you hope to achieve in communicating the data?

Data dashboards
Data dashboards visually display selected performance and outcome indicators at the aggregate level and can be used to:

- monitor performance indicators;
- identify patterns and trends;
- highlight staff activities; and
- monitor progress on achieving outcomes.

Actively engaging staff and stakeholders in reviewing data and providing feedback can play an invaluable role in informing policy and practice, enhancing programs and services and monitoring progress. For example, community members might highlight the need for a particular service or provide insight on the unintended consequences of policies. Making data publicly available and communicating data with purpose can mobilize efforts to chart a path to making positive changes.

Lessons and Recommendations

- Qualitative data play an important role in the CQI process. Combining quantitative and qualitative data that describe the experiences of young people and families can make your data come alive and help interested parties. These data can be used to evaluate policy decisions and the relevance of practice designs and to inform the development of new interventions.
- Engage expectant and parenting youth in foster care and their families in the CQI process. Their voices are paramount.
- Incorporate race equity principles by disaggregating data to study during the CQI process, examining root causes of issues that affect different groups and developing targeted strategies.
- Systematically use findings to improve systems of care for expectant and parenting youth, along with practice, governance and policy.
- Ensure that supervisors and frontline workers, as well as interagency partners and families, have access to the data. Administrators and policymakers should have access to the information so they can make prudent decisions that support the desired outcomes.
- The more you use the data, the more powerful they become in the decision-making processes of your system.
- Be creative. Use graphs, charts and other visuals to increase engagement with the material.

The New York City Administration for Children's Services incorporates young parents' voices into policy and practice decisions through its Young Parents Speakers Bureau, which provides a forum for young parents who are or were in foster care to provide feedback on their experiences, as well as recommendations for policy, practice and program changes. The agency developed this data dashboard to track outcomes for expectant and parenting youth in foster care and inform policy and practice decisions.

The New Jersey Department of Children and Families (DCF) adapted its quality service review protocol to focus on the strengths, needs and experiences of youth and young adults. Data from reviews across the state are analyzed and used to improve practice and outcomes. The agency publishes data regularly on the publicly accessible New Jersey Child Welfare Data Hub, developed with Rutgers University. The website makes child welfare data available to the public, allowing users to create customized charts and graphs. Data shared on the website helps DCF staff, stakeholders and the public better understand the experiences of those involved with the child welfare system. The information serves as a tool to address gaps in services and ensure equitable access for all.

Georgia's Multi-Agency Alliance for Children engages young people and incorporates youth voice into its policy and practice decision making through a Young Parent Advocacy Group. This group was successful in changing state policy regarding the custody of children while their young parents are in foster care. The Multi-Agency Alliance for Children also gathers feedback from the young parents it serves with an annual survey on agency strengths and opportunities for improvement.

The Partners for Our Children Child Well-being Data Portal for Washington state provides access to an array of data visualization tools about children, youth and families through a data-sharing agreement with the Department of Children, Youth, and Families. The website uses data from multiple sources — all Washington state agencies, the Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System, the National Youth in Transition Database and local research efforts — to capture how the child welfare system is working and enhance transparency and accountability.

Learn More

- The Center for State Child Welfare Data provides data, resources and research in support of continuous quality improvement in child welfare.
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: *Public Health and Promoting Interoperability Programs* (formerly known as *Electronic Health Records Meaningful Use*).
- Department of Health and Human Services: *Continuous quality improvement: Gathering data to improve PAF programs*.