**Instructions and Guidance for Early Childhood Education Experience Data Element**

**(SIMS element DOE050)**

**I. Overview: District/School Role**

The process of kindergarten enrollment will take place at different points in time in different districts. Some will register students and complete screening in the Spring while others will complete it in the Fall, as school is beginning; still others will conduct kindergarten registration in the Spring and kindergarten screening in the Fall.

District/school role in gathering this data:

1. to be a guide and of assistance to family member(s) who are completing the survey;
2. to know the background behind the survey and its questions as well as context about early childhood programs in your community, including Coordinated Family and Community Engagement (CFCE) and Parent-Child Home Program (PCHP);
3. to ensure that family members are supported in their ability to answer the questions as accurately as possible; and
4. to enter the data about each child’s early learning experiences, as provided by family members on the survey, into your local Student Information System (SIS) to ensure it is included in your district’s SIMS reporting.

**II. Rationale: Why are we asking families to share this information?**

Early childhood and research/data specialists at the state level designed this data element for several reasons:

1. To begin to have an accurate count of the number of children who enter kindergarten with one or more formal early childhood learning experiences;

2. To be able to describe the nature of that experience; For example:

* How many were in center-based preschools?
* How many were in licensed family child care?
* How many participate in programs for young children and families offered by the state?
* How many come to kindergarten having been at home with their parents since birth?

3. To accurately assess HOW MUCH experience the child had in the early learning setting, (i.e. whether participation was part-time or full-time).

It is expected that these data will be used to inform school districts and the state about the types of experiences with which children in each district enter kindergarten, and to provide greater support for alignment of educational experiences across the birth to grade 3 learning continuum.

**III. How do you collect the data: from whom, how and when?**

With few exceptions, data will be collected directly from the family member who is registering the child for kindergarten, or who brought the child to the school to complete kindergarten screening. In each case, the family member should be asked to complete the written survey themselves, or with the support of a staff member/volunteer assistant.

As stated above, it is expected that the timing of the data collection will vary widely from district to district. For some districts, staff will meet with parents for kindergarten enrollment in April, May or June. For other districts, the meeting might occur in August or September. Differences in timing may influence the answers given, especially if the parent is completing the survey in April and has plans for the child to attend a Summer pre-kindergarten program in the months to come.

**IV. Completing the Early Childhood Program survey**

This survey should be given only to families with children who are attending public kindergarten for the first time**. It is not for children repeating kindergarten.** Family members check which selection applies to their child. If they are completing an online version of the survey, they click on the answer they choose.

Below is guidance around each of the survey response options.

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| **Survey Response** | **Guidance** |
| My child did not have any formal early childhood program experience | Explain what ***a formal early childhood program*** is (the definitions are included in the sample survey).  If the child was home with a family member, a  nanny/babysitter or in unlicensed care, this option should be selected on the survey. |
| My child did not have formal early childhood program experience but participated in Coordinated Family and Community Engagement (CFCE) services | **CFCE** = Coordinated Family and Community  Engagement and is funded by the Department of  Early Education and Care (EEC).  Each CFCE program offers unique opportunities for  family engagement and support and may be known  by different local names. We recommend that each district contact the local CFCE coordinator and ask for a list of the local program and activities names for preschool-aged children.  You may identify your local CFCE coordinator using this link:  <http://www.eec.state.ma.us/ChildCareSearch/CFCE.aspx>    We also recommend that ahead of completing this  survey, districts ask the local CFCE program  coordinators to let families know that they will be  asked about participation during kindergarten  registration/screening so that families know ahead of  time that they participate.  Not all parents will know what is meant by CFCE services.  If the parent does not know the answer to this question, this option should not be selected on the survey. |
| My child did not have formal early childhood program experience but participated in Parent Child Home Program (PCHP) services. | **PCHP** = Parent Child Home Program and is funded  by the Department of Early Education and Care (EEC)  To find out if your community has PCHP:  <http://www.parent-child.org/our-program/find-a-pchp-near-you/>  Not every community has PCHP funding. For the  PCHP question, if the family doesn’t know the  PCHP by name, you may want to ask whether the  family has had visits at home where the visitor  brings a book/toy and models how to engage the  child with the materials. The family may only know  “someone comes to the house”.  We also recommend that ahead of completing this  survey, districts ask the PCHP program  coordinators to let families know that they will be  asked about participation during kindergarten  registration/screening so that families know ahead of  time that they participate.  Not all parents will know what is meant by PCHP services.  If the parent does not know the answer to this question, this option should not be selected on the survey. |
| My child did not have formal early childhood program experience but participated in **BOTH** Coordinated Family and Community Engagement (CFCE) **AND** Parent Child Home Program (PCHP) services. | **CFCE** = Coordinated Family and Community  Engagement and is funded by the Department of  Early Education and Care (EEC)  **PCHP** = Parent Child Home Program and is funded  by the Department of Early Education and Care (EEC)  Not all parents will know what is meant by CFCE services or PCHP services. If the parent does not know the answer to this question, this option should not be selected on the survey. |
| My child attended a Licensed Family Child Care | Licensed Family Child Care = EEC licensed family child care provider located in a home  To find out if a family child care provider is licensed by the Department of Early Education and Care (EEC), we encourage the district to utilize [EEC’s child care search](http://www.eec.state.ma.us/ChildCareSearch/EarlyEduMap.aspx) option.  Families need to indicate the hours/week that the child attended the Licensed Family Child Care in the year preceding kindergarten.  \*If you are asking this in the Spring, have the family  member estimate the hours/week through August. |
| My child attended a Center Based Program | Center Based Program = EEC licensed child care center, Head Start program, private or public preschool program  To find out if a preschool program is licensed by the Department of Early Education and Care (EEC), we encourage the district to utilize [EEC’s child care search](http://www.eec.state.ma.us/ChildCareSearch/EarlyEduMap.aspx) option.  Families need to indicate the hours/week that the child attended the Center Based Program in the year preceding kindergarten.  \*If you are asking this in the Spring, have the family  member estimate the hours/week through August. |
| My child attended **BOTH** a Licensed Family Child Care Provider **AND** a Center Based Program | Licensed Family Child Care = EEC licensed family child care provider located in a home  Center Based Program = EEC licensed child care center, Head Start program, private or public preschool program  Families need to indicate the hours/week that the child attended the Licensed Family Child Care and the Center Based Program in the year preceding kindergarten.  \*If you are asking this in the Spring, have the family  member estimate the hours/week through August. |

**VI. Optional items**

Districts are welcome to add questions to the family survey in order to further collect data related to preschool early childhood experiences that is of interest to the district and/or community. **Any additional questions will not be collected in SIMS**. Examples of these types of added questions might include but not be limited to:

a. Name of specific program(s) attended

b. Description of the program attended outside the U.S.

c. Name of the country in which the child attended the program, if attended outside the U.S.

**Definitions**

***Licensed family childcare*:** refers to child in a group setting with other children who are not siblings, OR may include care in the home of a family member, if the provider is both a relative and a licensed child care provider providing care to children from multiple families.

***Center-based care*** refers to care for children in a group setting, including public and private preschools, Head Start, day care centers, and integrated public preschools.

***Coordinated Family and Community Engagement (CFCE) Services*** are locally based programs serving families with children birth through school age. (e.g. parent/child playgroups, parent-child activities). The names and familiarity of these will vary between different towns and communities.

***Parent Child Home Program (PCHP)*** is funded through the Department of Early Education and Care. Not every community has a program. PCHP is a home visiting model providing low-income families the knowledge, skills, and tools to build school readiness in their homes before their children enter school.