Protecting Our Children:
Using Data as the Foundation

Working group recommendations from a symposium held June 17, 2014.

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“A lot of people are working hard to protect our children. The focus of this conference is improving the use of the data and information people have. We want to help them find ways they can better work together.”

- Institute Director
David Yepsen
Illinois policy makers should:

1. Establish a bipartisan, bicameral task force of the Illinois General Assembly to study successful child welfare data collection in other states, such as Texas and California.

2. Examine current data sharing, including the barriers to sharing data across human services agencies such as the Department of Children and Family Services, Department of Human Services and its divisions Alcoholism and Substance Abuse and Office of Mental Health, Department of Juvenile Justice, Department of Public Health and community providers.

3. Establish a data governance board by legislation to oversee data sharing and/or create a clearinghouse for Illinois’ child welfare data where data sharing does not exist between agencies and providers.

4. Create a system to collect and measure data using the federal standard as a minimum for language and data elements.

5. Collect data on racial disparity that incorporates data elements necessary for a rigorous study of racial overrepresentations and underrepresentations.


7. Convene a group of stakeholders to examine and make recommendations about evidence-based programs that demonstrated good outcomes for children and families.

8. Examine the cost and availability of similar services in different regions of the state to ensure all children have access to required services.

9. Analyze state funding factors and formulas to determine disparate impacts on rural and underserved areas of Illinois when deciding resource allocation to service agencies.

10. Analyze state funding factors and formulas to ensure the appropriate allocation of resources in rural and underserved areas of Illinois.

11. Explore the consistency of the prosecution, conviction and sentencing of child abuse offenders, including juvenile sex offenders.

12. Train the child welfare workforce about:
   - The importance of data collection on race, ethnicity and immigration status.
   - Cultural equality.
   - Cultural competence.
   - Improving accessibility and utilization of services.