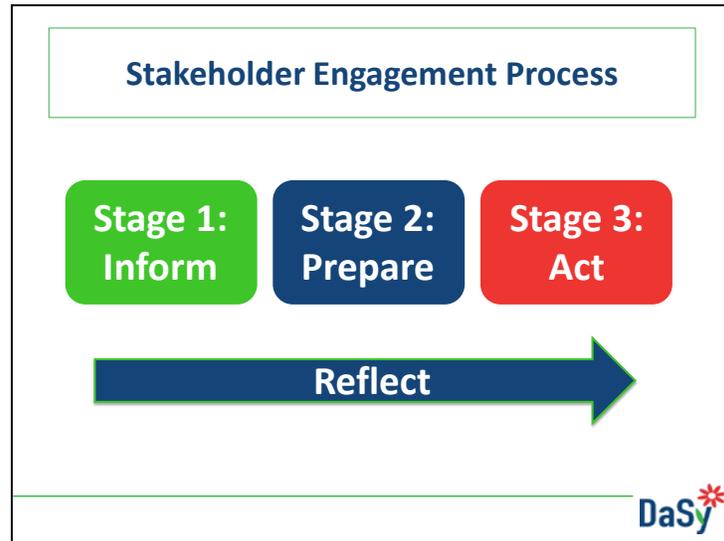


Welcome to Serving as a Stakeholder for a Cross-Agency Data System Initiative. This presentation helps prepare you to be a stakeholder in cross-agency data system initiatives that include your Part C or 619 data, such as an Early Childhood Integrated Data System or a P20+ State Longitudinal Data System initiative. The information presented helps you become an active participant in your state's efforts to build a data system that pulls data from multiple early childhood programs or links data on children in early childhood programs including Part C, Part B 619, and K-12 data.



Understanding the stakeholder engagement process is helpful when participating in a cross-agency data system initiative. This process is applicable whether you are joining a stakeholder group from the very start or after work on the project begins. If the project has begun, you may join the group in the beginning stage, Inform, although other group members are further along with their involvement. Regardless of where other group members are in their development as stakeholders, it is important for you to determine where you are in the process and take the necessary steps to ensure you can participate meaningfully.

## Stakeholder Engagement Stage 1: Inform

**Your involvement begins**

- Finding out who is involved in the work
- Developing an understanding of what is to be accomplished
- Identifying the benefits to children and families in your program
- Gathering and processing introductory information about the initiative's leadership



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Let's review some important considerations as a Part C or Part B 619 stakeholder at different stages in the stakeholder engagement process. As a stakeholder in the Inform stage, educate yourself about specifically who is involved in the work, what the group is striving to accomplish, and the benefits an integrated data system brings to the children and families served through your program. Use this time to gather and process introductory information about the initiative and develop an understanding of the vision for the work that is planned.

### Stage 1: Inform

Benefits of a High-Quality  
Integrated Data System to Part C/619

**An integrated data system enables you to:**



- Analyze data and answer critical questions about child and family outcomes
- Examine long-term benefits of the specific services provided
- Develop data-informed program improvement activities



Use the Inform stage to gain a deeper understanding of the benefits of a high-quality integrated data system for your Part C or 619 program. These systems enable users to analyze data and answer critical questions about child and family outcomes that cannot be addressed with program data alone. Examples of questions include, “How well do children enrolled in Part C/619 do when they enter kindergarten and beyond?” or “Is later school performance related to the length of time children are enrolled in a Part C or 619 program, or their age at referral to the program?” Answers to questions such as these help identify how specific services relate to child outcomes in later years. This information can be used to guide the development of program improvement activities. Your ability to engage in conversations about the benefits of high-quality integrated systems for young children with disabilities and their families is critical to your meaningful participation as a stakeholder.



Building an integrated data system can be a complex task involving a diverse set of stakeholders actively guiding the project through a collaborative decision-making process.

This graphic depicts a complex initiative with multiple agency involvement. Other initiatives may involve a much smaller number of agencies, perhaps only two or three. Stakeholders may include early childhood programs (such as Part C and Part B 619), state advisory councils, academic researchers, legislators, federal policymakers, family groups, and other entities with a stake in the project's outcomes.

While the goal of the initiative is the construction of a cohesive system with consistent, comparable data across agencies, each stakeholder brings his or her own needs and interests to the work. During the Inform stage, it is important for you to identify the needs and interests of Part C or Part B 619 and prepare yourself to articulate those to the initiative's leadership and other stakeholder partners.

**Stage 1: Inform**  
Exploring Your Program's Needs and Interests

- What questions does my program want to answer that we are unable to answer now?
- What data do we need to include in the new system to ensure we are able to answer the questions we want/need to answer?
- How will my program's involvement in the initiative be sustained?
- What opportunities will I be given to participate in future enhancements to the system?

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Articulating your program's needs and interests requires initial exploration on your part. During this exploration, think about the types of questions your program would like to answer that you are unable to answer now. What additional data do you need to answer those questions? Are there data security and data access questions? Thinking long-term, how do you see your program being involved in sustaining the data system? What expectations do you have for Part C/619's participation in identifying future enhancements or expansion opportunities? Taking into consideration specific details helps you frame your program's needs and interests in concrete terms.

### Stage 1: Inform

Enhancing your engagement – System Literacy

**Develop an understanding of data system terminology and concepts**



“mechanisms for linking data”

“unique student identifiers”

“data dictionary”



The Inform stage is also a time for you to build the confidence and competence you need to have knowledgeable conversations with other stakeholders and leaders. This requires developing your “data systems literacy” skills. Data systems literacy means having an understanding of data systems terminology and concepts needed to fulfill professional roles and responsibilities, including communicating with others. Of course, you aren’t expected to be an expert on data systems, but it is helpful to understand some of the basic terms and concepts involved in building an integrated initiative, such as the mechanisms used to link data sets like unique student identifiers and the benefits of developing and maintaining a data dictionary for the system to facilitate communication among cross-agency users.

## Stakeholder Engagement Stage 2: Prepare

**Your involvement builds and continues**

- Understanding the context in which the integrated data system work is occurring
- Identifying how Part C/619 fit into the work and advocating for your program
- Clarify expectations for your engagement (both your own expectations and those of the initiative's leadership)

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As you progress through the stakeholder engagement process to Stage 2 (Prepare), you may benefit from specific activities that build a better understanding of the context of the cross-agency initiative. In other words, what child- and family-related data from each participating program will be included in the system, and specifically where does Part C does and 619 fit into the work. Acting as an advocate for your program requires you to build knowledge of the project's scope and contribute informed opinions. For example, it's important for you to articulate what data from Part C or 619 should be included in the system, as well as what data your program needs from other programs or agencies to answer your questions. Identifying exactly how you see yourself as a Part C or Part B 619 representative fitting into the work, understanding the value your program data bring to the integrated system, and what your program should expect to get out of the new system are essential to your involvement in the initiative.

At the Prepare stage, it is also important to clarify expectations for your involvement as a stakeholder, both expectations you have for yourself and those held by the initiative's leadership. It helps to know the timeline for your involvement, how frequently you can expect to receive communications from the group's leadership, the methods used to gather input from stakeholders, how decisions will be communicated back to stakeholders, and what you expect your program to get out of being involved.

## Stage 2: Prepare

Enhancing your engagement - Purposeful Planning

**Active engagement requires purposeful planning**

- Identify specific outcomes you hope to achieve as a stakeholder (e.g., access to K-12 data for longitudinal analyses)
- Understand how the information gained improves child and family outcomes
- Continue to strengthen your data systems literacy skills





Active engagement as a stakeholder requires purposeful planning. An important part of the Prepare stage is planning ways to be an effective participant in the stakeholder engagement process through additional discussion and collaboration within the program you represent. When you participate in a collaborative data systems initiative, the planning you do as a stakeholder may include identifying specific outcomes you hope to achieve for your program. For example, you may gain access to K-12 data to conduct longitudinal analyses on the children served by Part C/619 or be able to link data between Part C and Part B 619 programs.

You also need to spend time further refining the types of questions the data system should be able to address for your program, and determining how answers to those questions helps your program improve outcomes for the children and families you serve. This is critical for promoting buy-in and understanding within your program when it comes time to implement the collaborative data system.

Finally, it is important to continue to strengthen your data systems literacy skills throughout your involvement so you are able to engage in an educated conversation with initiative leaders and other stakeholders. Plan time to engage with others in your agency who have an understanding of data systems and use them as a resource to increase your knowledge and understanding.

All of these activities take time and may require input from others in your program or agency. It is critical that you plan time to engage with the people you represent to get their ideas, suggestions, and additional information to support your understanding of what is needed for your program from participation in the collaborative data systems. As a stakeholder, you must take the initiative to connect with others, gather information and resources from them, and use that information to be an actively engaged stakeholder.

**Stakeholder Engagement  
Stage 3: Act**

**You become an active contributor to the work and:**

- Develop and/or strengthen relationships with leaders and other stakeholders
- Discuss roles/responsibilities
- Ensure Part C/619 needs are addressed in discussions
- Actively gather information to better understand the work
- Ask questions and advocate for your program

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During the Act stage, you are in full swing as an active contributor to the work. You serve as a stakeholder and provide input as the project progresses. Your consistent and responsive involvement during the Inform and Prepare stages helps you participate, particularly in terms of providing input to guide decision-making. At this stage, develop and/or strengthen your relationships with other stakeholders and lead agency representatives. Engage in discussions with leadership about your various roles and responsibilities in the initiative, including what to do if or when you feel you are being “left out of the loop.” When you feel this way, speak up and notify the group’s leadership of your concerns.

During the Act stage, your role is to ensure that the needs of the Part C/619 program are addressed in the discussions that arise. Take the initiative to seek out the information you need to better understand how the work is taking place. Above all, continuously advocate for your program’s needs and be sure your input is documented along the way.

**Stage 3: Act**  
Enhancing your engagement – Information Gathering

**Get the answers you need to advocate for Part C/619**

- Where is Part C/619 in the state’s priority timeline for including your data?
- Will your data be included now or years down the road?
- What data from other agencies/programs can you expect to access to answer the questions you want to answer?
- Which agency/program “owns” and maintains data in the system?

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 DaSy

Your role as a Part C/619 representative in the stakeholder group requires you to take the initiative to ask questions to ensure your program is addressed as the work evolves. For example, you need to understand where Part C/619 fits into the state’s priority timeline for including your data in the system. Just because you are invited to participate now, doesn’t mean your data will be in the initial “wave” of data included in the system. You need to find out when your data are planned to be included and advocate for a timeline change, if needed. It’s also important for you to ask questions that help you gain a better understanding of what your program is able to do with the data from the system. In other words, what data from other agencies/programs can you expect to access to answer the questions you want to answer? In addition, find out which agency or program will be considered the “owners” of the system and how they plan to involve Part C/619 in the maintenance of the system.

**REFLECT**  
Enhancing your engagement

**Assess progress toward targeted outcomes**

- Is the work moving in the direction I hoped or expected?

**Examine your roles and contributions**

- How am I actively contributing to move the work forward?

**Reflect on the content of the group's discussions**

- Am I getting the information I need from leadership to make informed contributions to discussions?

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 DaSy

Ongoing reflection is an essential component of the stakeholder engagement process. It is important to understand the value that reflection brings to situations in which you are serving as a member of a stakeholder group. Through reflection, you can determine if the work is moving in the desired direction and evaluate your contributions to the effort. Engaging in reflection involves posing questions about the work's progress, examining the amount and quality of your contributions, and identifying challenges that may be impeding your engagement.

### Meeting Challenges

- Take advantage of constructive conversations to understand the work's focus and where Part C/619 fits
- Actively ask questions to establish your presence in the group and gain information that helps you contribute
- Contribute accurate and thoughtful input
- Get the information you need from group's leadership
- Protect your program's interests



Collaboration can be challenging. Your effectiveness as a stakeholder will improve over time as you take advantage of opportunities to represent your program and audiences in constructive conversations about the system through regular group communications, meetings, and other collaborative interactions. To establish a presence for yourself in the group, actively ask questions throughout the process and seek information that helps you contribute to group discussions. Although not all stakeholders have equal influence over each decision made, it is imperative that you are prepared to contribute accurate and thoughtful input toward building an integrated data system.

You may find it challenging to get the information you need from the group's leadership. Remember, your responsibility is to participate as an informed, active member of the group and to protect your program's interests. Find ways to be respectful and proactive about communicating with leadership regarding your need for information and clarification, the work being done on the project, and what benefits and outcomes you expect to achieve from your involvement. It is important for you to seek information throughout the project so you can offer feedback and represent your program in a effective manner. Also, keep in mind that many challenges can be overcome by enhancing your communications efforts.

## Seeking Support from DaSy

**Ways DaSy can support you:**

- Facilitate communications with those leading the stakeholder group
- Build knowledge to prepare you to be involved in discussions
- Examine the impact of the work on your program

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Remember the DaSy Center can support you as a stakeholder in cross-agency data system initiatives. DaSy can facilitate communications with those leading the initiative or help you develop the knowledge of integrated data systems needed to productively participate in discussions with your stakeholder group. We can help you consider options for decisions, problems, and challenges. You also may find it valuable to have us involved in examining the potential benefits of the initiative to your program, such as how you can use data from the new system to answer critical policy questions. DaSy is available to help in a variety of ways so reach out to us at any point.

## Putting It All Together

- Actively seek and gather information needed to make informed contributions
- Strengthen relationships with leaders and other stakeholders
- Build knowledge and capacity to function effectively as a stakeholder through communication, cooperation, and collaboration
- Seek support when needed

**The DaSy Center is here to help!**

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Overall, your experience as a stakeholder in a cross-agency data system initiative is shaped by the level of engagement you establish for yourself, as well as how effectively you advocate for your program's involvement in the work. Actively seek and gather the information you need to make informed contributions. Make connections and build relationships with the leaders of the initiative and other stakeholders, and take advantage of the resources and information they provide to you. Do your best to maintain open lines of communication that promote cooperation and collaboration. Above all, seek support from DaSy as you navigate the complex work of stakeholder engagement. We are here to help you.