

Understanding whether families have access to child care that meets their needs is complex. There remain gaps in our understanding of ECE access, including how the family needs, and preferences for child care interact with the availability of care. Additionally, barriers to access, such as cost, may vary by family or neighborhood characteristics. This session will provide reflections on what we know about critical family needs that impact access to ECE and share new strategies for supporting, measuring, and evaluating equitable access to ECE from a family-centered perspective.

Recently, research teams that have studied access in different states (SC, MN, FL) have developed different methods and frameworks (CEEPRA, ChildTrends) for measuring and characterizing the adequacy of the supply of child care. Through this session, attendees will discuss these different approaches, their suitability to answer different policy questions and identify other ways to measure access and the data needed to feed them. The presenters and audience will engage in discussion around possible improvements to access measures and data collection needed to support these improvements.