

# Using Workforce Member Surveys to STEP Forward with Data

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The [System Transformation for Equitable Preschools \(STEP\) Forward with Data Framework](#) is a tool to help preschool system leaders understand the experiences of preschool-aged children, their families, and early childhood workforce members. The Framework includes 20 essential questions and is flexible so that users can focus on one or more questions with one or more metrics, depending on their unique goals and context.

The Framework identifies six types of data sources to answer the 20 questions and associated metrics: administrative data, administrator documentation, community family surveys, preschool family surveys, program documentation and surveys, or workforce member surveys. One data source may be used to answer multiple questions, and one question may be answered with more than one data source. **In this resource series, we focus on how preschool system leaders, or those who oversee or can influence system-level decisions about preschool programs, can use individual data sources to answer multiple questions from the Framework**, which offers valuable insights into various aspects of their preschool system.

**This resource highlights how surveys of workforce members (individuals who work in the preschool system as providers, teachers, directors, or support staff) can be used to understand what is happening in their preschool system.** We provide an overview of workforce member surveys and then outline which Framework questions can be answered.

## Overview of Workforce Member Surveys

**Workforce members** in the preschool system can work at all levels and across all roles. They not only include the individuals who work directly for children (i.e., lead and assistant teachers and providers), but also those who provide administrative or support (e.g., center director, family child care owner, paraprofessionals, or volunteers). Workforce members are vital to the successful functioning of the preschool system, and thus, preschool system leaders must understand their needs and experiences, especially for workforce members from focal populations of interest for the preschool system.

Information about the workforce may be collected through a variety of ways, such as policies that regulate the workforce experience (from administrator or program documentation) or data on the characteristics of the workforce (from administrative data). This resource, however, focuses on information that can be gathered directly from workforce members.

## Essential Questions Answered by Workforce Member Surveys

The following section identifies the Framework questions and associated metrics for which a workforce member survey could be used. For each metric, this resource offers sample survey items and response

options (see [Appendix A](#) for a sample workforce member survey). Preschool system leaders can choose to use one or more metrics to answer each essential question. To offer preschool system leaders further flexibility, multiple survey questions are provided in the tables below as a starting point for leaders to use or adapt to best meet their system’s needs.



## Supply

### Q1. Does the existing supply meet the needs of families from focal populations?

Recommended Metric	Survey Question Options	Response Options
Percentage of workforce members who are fluent in the language spoken by the children they serve (supports child’s development)	What are the home languages spoken by the children that you serve?	Select all that apply from a list of languages commonly used in the community.
	Which languages do you speak?	Select all that apply from a list of languages commonly used in the community
	Of the languages you speak, rate your fluency:	Native speaker, fluent, proficient, limited
Percentage of program sites where children with a disability or developmental delay are enrolled in which workforce members have early childhood special education training or experience working with children with special needs (supports child’s development)	Which of the following degrees, certifications, or trainings have you received focused on working with children with disabilities or developmental delay?	Specialized degree, clinical experience, certification, specialized training or professional development course, direct experience, none
	How many years of experience do you have working with children with a disability or developmental delay?	Numerical value
Percentage of workforce members who have early childhood education endorsements, certification or training, or experience working with preschool age children (supports child’s development)	Which of the following degrees, certifications, or trainings have you received focused on working with preschool-aged children?	Specialized degree, clinical experience, certification, specialized training or professional development course, direct experience, none
	Which of the following have you received?	Select all that apply from the available preschool-aged certifications or designations within the preschool system (e.g., Child Development Associate)



## Learning experiences

### Q8. Are identities of children from focal populations and families reflected in programs?

Recommended Metric	Survey Question Options	Response Options
Percentage of program sites where children from focal populations are exposed to staff in their program who reflect their own identities	<i>This series of questions depends on the focal populations of interest for the preschool system. Once identified, preschool system leaders can ask workforce members to provide demographic or characteristic information aligned with specific identities or focal populations.</i>	Example responses: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Levels of income</li> <li>• Race/ethnicity</li> <li>• Languages spoken</li> <li>• Country of origin or nativity</li> <li>• Disability status</li> <li>• Past experience with the same preschool program</li> </ul>
Percentage of program sites that use materials, projects, activities, curricula, and resources that reflect or celebrate the identities of children from focal populations and their communities	In the past year, have you used materials, projects, activities, curriculum, or resources that reflect or celebrate the identities of children from focal populations and their communities in your learning environment?	Yes/No
	What percentage of the materials, projects, activities, curriculum, or resources used in your learning environment reflect or celebrate children from focal populations and their communities?	Numeric value between 0-100

### Q9. Do workforce members receive training in supporting the needs of children from focal populations and families?

Recommended Metric	Survey Question Options	Response Options
Percentage of workforce members who receive training in culturally responsive instruction, especially to understand a child's developmental progress to inform instruction	Have you received training on culturally responsive instruction? If yes, when did you last receive training?	Yes, No, Unsure  If yes, over a year ago, in the past year, in the last six months, in the last three months
	How confident do you feel you can provide culturally responsive instruction?	Very confident, somewhat confident, not confident
Percentage of workforce members who receive training on trauma-informed care or responsiveness	Have you received training on trauma-informed care? If yes, when did you last receive training?	Yes, No, Unsure  If yes, when: over a year ago, in the past year, in the last six months, in the last three months, never
	How confident do you feel you can provide trauma-informed care?	Very confident, somewhat confident, not confident

Recommended Metric	Survey Question Options	Response Options
Percentage of workforce members who receive training on reducing or eliminating bias in their work	Have you received training on reducing or eliminating bias in their work? If yes, when did you last receive training?	Yes, No, Unsure  If yes, when: over a year ago, in the past year, in the last six months, in the last three months, never
	How confident do you feel you are able to notice and reduce your bias in your work?	Very confident, somewhat confident, not confident

**Q13. Are multiple forms of evidence used to understand the developmental progress, strengths, and needs—across domains of development—of children from focal populations?**

Recommended Metric	Survey Question Options	Response Options
Percentage of programs that use multiple forms of evidence to understand a child’s development	On average, how many pieces of evidence (e.g., developmental assessment, parent observation, individualized goals, specialist observation, IEP information, etc.) do you use to inform direct child observations or assessments?	Numeric value
	What percentage of the time do you use more than one piece of evidence (e.g., developmental assessment, parent observation, individualized goals, specialist observation, IEP information, etc.) to determine a child’s development?	Numeric value 0-100
Percentage of workforce members who report that they utilize more than one form of evidence to inform their instruction	When informing your instruction, how often do you incorporate evidence of a child’s developmental stage?	All the time, some of the time, none of the time
	What percentage of your instruction is informed by more than one piece of evidence of children’s development?	Numeric value 0-100

**Q14. Are facilities structured and maintained to support the well-being of children from focal populations?**

Recommended Metric	Survey Question Options	Response Options
Percentage of program sites that have the infrastructure necessary to support student learning, in systems where focal populations make up at least half of the student population	Does your facility have the infrastructure necessary to support children’s learning?	Yes, No, Unsure
	What improvements, if any, would you make to your space or facility to better support children’s learning?	Open-ended response

Recommended Metric	Survey Question Options	Response Options
Percentage of program sites that ensure the safety and security of children and workforce members, in programs where focal populations make up at least half of the student population	Which of the following characterizes how safe and secure you feel in your space?	I feel very safe/secure; I feel somewhat safe/secure; I do not feel safe/secure
	What could be improved to ensure that you feel safe and secure in your space?	Open-ended response
Percentage of program sites that meet children and workforce members' health and hygienic needs, in programs where focal populations make up at least half of the student population	Which of the following characterizes how hygienic your facility is?	Very hygienic, somewhat hygienic, not hygienic
	What, if any, could be improved to ensure that your space meets your hygienic needs?	Open-ended response
	What, if any, could be improved to ensure that your space meets children's hygienic needs?	Open-ended response



## Administration

### Q17. Are families from focal populations and workforce members engaged in shared leadership?

Recommended Metric	Survey Question Options	Response Options
Percentage of workforce members from focal populations who report that they are consulted, involved, collaborate, or are a co-creator in the preschool system.	In thinking about how decisions are made about the preschool system, which of the following characterizes your engagement in decision making?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I am a co-creator in the system where I have an active role in making decisions</li> <li>• I am a collaborator in the system where I am involved in various aspects of the system, but not the final decision maker</li> <li>• I am involved in the decision making process where I am invited to make decisions on specific issues, topics, or activities</li> <li>• I am a consultant where my feedback is solicited to inform decisions, but I am not involved in any decision making</li> <li>• I am informed when decisions are made, but I am not involved in any aspect of decision making</li> <li>• I have no role</li> <li>• Unsure</li> </ul>

**Q19. Is there system-level guidance for how to support equitable experiences for children, families, and workforce members?**

Recommended Metric	Survey Question Options	Response Options
Percentage of families and workforce members reporting positive relationship quality with one another	A series of questions which can draw from existing measures, such as the Family and Provider/Teacher Relationship Quality FPTRQ), which has a short-form survey in <a href="#">English</a> and <a href="#">Spanish</a>	<i>See response items in surveys linked in the previous column.</i>
	How do you feel about your relationship with families?	Very positive, somewhat positive, neutral, somewhat negative, very negative

**Q20. Are there mechanisms to support equitable experiences for workforce members from focal populations?**

Recommended Metric	Survey Question Options	Response Options
Number of professional development opportunities the preschool system offers that are intentionally tailored to workforce members from focal populations to support their unique needs	What, if any, trainings, courses, or professional development opportunities would you like to see offered to best support your needs?	Open-ended response
	Which of the following best characterizes how you feel about the current professional development opportunities available to you?	They meet my needs; they meet some but not all my needs; they do not meet my needs
Number of career pathway supports the preschool system offers that are intentionally tailored to workforce members from focal populations to support their unique needs	What, if any, career supports would you like to see offered to best support your needs?	Open-ended response
	Which of the following best characterizes how you feel about the current set of career supports and pathways available to you?	They meet my needs; they meet some, but not all, of my needs; they do not meet my needs
Workforce members from focal populations earn wages comparable to the overall population of preschool workforce members	What is your annual salary range?	Different income range bands
	What is your monthly salary?	Different income range bands
Workforce members from focal populations have retention rates comparable to the overall population of preschool workforce members	How many total years have you worked with preschool-aged children?	Numeric value
	How many years have you been in your current role or position?	Numeric value
Percentage of workforce members from focal populations who receive benefits comparable to that of the overall preschool workforce population	Which of the following benefits are available to you?	Select all that apply from a list of benefits included in the system
	Which of the following benefits do you utilize?	Select all that apply from a list of benefits included in the system
	How do you receive your benefits?	Employer; family member's employer; government program; private, individual program; another source

## Final Thoughts

Workforce members play a critical role in ensuring the success of the preschool system, and preschool system leaders who want to understand how to improve their preschool system must understand their unique experiences. In addition to other data sources, such as administrative or programmatic data, preschool system leaders can gather information directly from workforce members to support the workforce within the preschool system, especially those from focal populations.

# Appendix A. Sample Workforce Member Survey

Below is a sample workforce member survey that could be administered to allow preschool system users to gather data for each of the recommended metrics. This survey only asks questions that align to the recommended metrics from the Framework. Preschool system leaders interested in gathering information from workforce members can adapt the following sample survey or integrate these questions into existing workforce surveys to capture other aspects of the workforce experience beyond the Framework. Leaders should consider what they want to learn and how best to ask these questions.

## Introduction

The goal of this short survey is to understand more about how our preschool system can best support workforce members in our preschool system. This survey should not take more than 30 minutes of your time. By continuing with the survey, you are agreeing to participate. You are welcome to skip any question you do not want to answer. We will actively incorporate the feedback you provide to make improvements to our preschool system. This survey is anonymous, which we hope will encourage you to share as honestly as possible.

## The learning environment

The following questions are meant to provide us with more information about what you may be doing in your learning environment to support children and their families. This information will not be tied to you as an individual but will allow us to identify needs, so we encourage you to be as honest as possible.

1. How would you characterize your relationship and engagement with families?
  - a. Very positive
  - b. Somewhat positive
  - c. Neither positive nor negative
  - d. Somewhat negative
  - e. Very negative
2. On average, how many pieces of evidence (e.g., developmental assessment, parent observation, individualized goals, specialist observation, IEP information, etc.) do you use when identifying a child's developmental progress on direct child observations or assessments? (*Numeric value*)
3. How often do you incorporate evidence of a child's developmental stage when informing your instruction?
  - a. All the time
  - b. Some of the time
  - c. None of the time
4. In the past year, how often do you use materials, projects, activities, curriculum, or resources that reflect or celebrate the identities of children from focal populations and their communities in your learning environment?
  - a. Daily
  - b. Weekly
  - c. Monthly
  - d. Annually
  - e. Never
5. We want to know more about the types of training our workforce members have with specific populations to understand more about improvements to our system. What experience do you have with the following groups?

	Specialized degree	Direct or clinical experience	Certification	Specialized training or PD course in the last year	Specialized training or PD course over a year ago	No experience
Children with unique learning needs, such as disabilities or developmental delay						
Infants and Toddlers						
Preschool-aged children						
Children who speak a language other than English						
Children who have experienced homelessness						

6. How confident do you feel you can provide the following?

	Very confident	Somewhat confident	Not confident
Culturally responsive instruction			
Trauma-informed care			
Noticing and reducing bias in my work			
Supporting children with unique needs, such as disabilities or developmental delays			

### Creating a supportive environment for you

The following questions are meant to understand what would create a supportive environment for you. We want to know more about the space where you work and how our preschool system can support you.

7. Which of the following best characterizes how you feel about the **current professional development opportunities** available to you?
  - a. They meet my needs
  - b. They meet some, but not all, of my needs
  - c. They do not meet my needs
8. Which of the following best characterizes how you feel about the **current career supports and pathways** available to you?
  - d. They meet my needs
  - e. They meet some, but not all, of my needs
  - f. They do not meet my needs
9. What, if any, trainings, courses, professional development opportunities, or career supports would you like to see offered to best support your needs? (*Open-ended*)

10. Which of the following benefits have you utilized in the past year? *(Select all from a list of benefits offered by the preschool system)*

- a. Health insurance (e.g., medical, dental, and/or vision)
- b. Dependent care benefits
- c. Vacation leave
- d. Sick leave
- e. Paid family leave
- f. Retirement contributions or pension
- g. Stipends or scholarships for continued learning
- h. Other, specify

11. Rate your level of agreement on the following characteristics of your facility, or the space where you work and where you care for children.

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	N/A
My facility has what it needs to support children's learning.					
I feel safe and secure in my facility.					
My facility is a hygienic space appropriate for caring for children.					

12. What improvements, if any, would you make to your space or facility? *(Open-ended response)*

13. In thinking about how decisions are made about the preschool system, which of the following characterizes your engagement in decision making?

- a. I am a co-creator in the system where I have an active role in making decisions
- b. I am a collaborator in the system where I am involved in various aspects of the system, but not the final decision maker
- c. I am involved in the decision making process where I am invited to make decisions on specific issues, topics, or activities
- d. I am a consultant where my feedback is solicited to inform decisions, but I am not involved in any decision making
- e. I am informed when decisions are made, but I am not involved in any aspect of decision making
- f. I have no role
- g. Unsure

## About you

To help us understand more about the people who work in our system, we'd like to learn more about you.

14. What of the following best describes the role you hold most of the time?

- a. Provider
- b. Lead teacher
- c. Assistant teacher
- d. Paraprofessional
- e. Support staff
- f. Director/owner
- g. Other, specify

15. How many total years have you worked with preschool-aged children? *(Numeric Value)*

16. How many years have you been in your current role or position? *(Numeric Value)*

17. Have you had personal experience with this preschool program?

- a. I attended this preschool program when I was a child
  - b. My children attended this preschool program
  - c. I have previously volunteered at this preschool program
  - d. No past experience with this preschool program before working here
18. What is your annual salary range? (*Different income range bands*)
19. What is your race?
- a. White
  - b. African American/Black
  - c. American Indian or Alaskan Native
  - d. Asian
  - e. Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander
  - f. Multi-racial, specify
20. Which of the following do you identify as?
- a. Hispanic/Latino(a)/Latiné
  - b. Not Hispanic/Latino(a)/ Latiné
21. Which languages do you speak? (*Select all that apply from a list of languages commonly used in the community*)
22. What is your country of origin?
23. Do you have access requirements that allow you to understand more about children who may have similar needs?
- a. Yes
  - b. No

#### Tips when administering a workforce member survey

- **Explore alternative approaches:** Surveys are a low-cost way to gather input from workforce members, but leaders can also use staff meetings, focus groups, or interviews to collect insights.
- **Offer incentives:** Providing incentives can encourage participation and show appreciation for the time workforce members spend on the survey.
- **Pilot test first:** Test the survey with a small group of workforce members to refine questions and approaches that resonate with staff.
- **Engage site administrators:** Ask preschool site administrators to help distribute the survey and encourage staff participation.
- **Collect demographics thoughtfully:** In addition to general “about you” questions, include optional demographic items to disaggregate findings for focal populations.
- **Ensure language access:** Translate surveys into the primary languages spoken by workforce members to support full participation.

# About the Data Source Series to Support the STEP Forward with Data Framework

This resource is part of a series to support preschool system leaders with implementing the STEP Forward with Data Framework. The Framework outlines six types of data sources that can be used to answer 20 essential questions. Each resource in this series focuses on how to use one of the data sources to answer the questions in the Framework. To learn more about the other data sources and access the entire series on our [Tools](#) page.

**Acknowledgements:** We are grateful to our colleagues Carlise King, Dale Richards, Silvana Esposito Hackett, Shana Rochester, Meg Bredeson, Joselyn Angeles-Figueroa, and Brent Franklin for their input and review of the product. We also thank Melanie Grafals and Olga Morales for their support in managing product development. We give special thanks to Catherine Nichols for the design and formatting of the product.

**Suggested Citation:** Lin, V. (2025). *Using Workforce Member Surveys to STEP Forward with Data*. Child Trends. DOI: 10.56417/5959j3066b

## Key Terms

**Preschool:** Early learning programs offered to 3- and 4-year-olds. In the Framework, we focus on those that are local, state, Tribal, or federally funded, including through state-funded, locally funded, and Tribal preschool and Head Start programs.

**Preschool program:** A type of preschool with a shared approach or curriculum, set of standards or regulations, funding stream, and/or administration (e.g., Head Start).

**Preschool site:** The location at which a child receives preschool, including center-, school-, home-, or faith-based settings.

**Preschool system:** The set of preschool programs that are overseen by a common set of leaders. The preschool programs in the system could be one type of program (e.g., state public pre-K) or multiple programs (e.g., Head Start, subsidized family child care, and state-funded pre-K).

**Preschool systems leaders:** Those who oversee preschool programs and who can influence systems-level decisions about how to improve preschool programs. Leaders may include state public pre-K administrators, Head Start State Collaboration Office directors, federal Head Start administrators, Head Start grantees overseeing large or multi-site preschool programs, Tribal early childhood administrators, state officers or administrators managing systems-wide early childhood initiatives, and city- or county-wide public preschool administrators.