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Summit 2023  
9-11 October

Melbourne, Australia & Online



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## #357 - Using linked data to develop an early intervention evidence base in South Australia

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### Objectives/aims

The Child Protection system in South Australia is facing unprecedented pressure and demand – in addition to further investment in tertiary services, there is an urgent and pressing need for government to be able to direct investment towards evidence-based early intervention services if we are to create a sustainable solution for this escalating problem.

The South Australian Early Intervention Research Directorate (EIRD) was created to establish an evidence base for early intervention family support services. This presentation will provide an overview of the system reform that EIRD has undertaken, and the creation of a new cross-government linked data infrastructure.

As a result of this work, South Australia are now in a position to measure quantifiable outcomes for the redesigned Child and Family Support System, and to measure the degree of impact that early intervention services are having in protecting children and supporting families to remain safe and together. Collectively this will inform government decision making to ensure that public resources are being directed towards evidence-based services.

### Methods

EIRD uses a social-epidemiological (public health) approach to measuring factors associated with effective early intervention services and outcomes to better understand 'What works for who, and why?' This includes evaluation of interventions at the household, system, and population level. Key goals are integrating the experiences and needs of the people served in the approaches to measuring impact of services and outcomes for children and families.

### Main findings

This new approach to government- led data capture and linkage assists in the ability to describe the need for, the types of services required for complex families, to monitor the

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effectiveness of services families receive and understand how proximal and longer-term outcomes vary in response to these system factors.

This presentation will highlight some of the approaches EIRD is taking to building knowledge and capacity in the design and delivery of early intervention services to families. It will also highlight some of the early findings that we are observing and some early findings around;

1. The opportunity that we have to measure long term quantifiable outcomes for families
2. The characteristics, needs and strengths of children and families engaged in early intervention services,
3. The extent to which the supply of early intervention services meet demand,
4. The effectiveness of family engagement efforts and how that relates to outcomes for children and families.