INTRODUCTION

The Illinois Early Childhood Asset Map (IECAM) is intended (1) to assist policy makers in allocating resources for early care and education programs to areas where they are most needed, (2) to make public resource allocation transparent by showing the changes in funding of services from year to year, and (3) to provide a one-stop source for early care and education data gathered from multiple agencies in Illinois. We accomplish this by providing information on the capacity of existing services and the demographic characteristics of young children and their families.

IECAM presents data on early care and education services in both table and map format. These services are funded by federal agencies, which fund Head Start and Early Head Start, state agencies, which fund Preschool for All and Early Intervention, and private sources, which fund child care centers and family child care homes. IECAM also presents demographic data on the population, poverty level, linguistic isolation, and employment characteristics of families with children ages birth through age 5. Data are presented at various geographic levels (e.g., counties, legislative districts). Thus, IECAM provides a quick snapshot of where children live and the capacity of services available to them in those locations.

For the most part, IECAM data are used by policy makers, legislative staff, early care and education program administrators, advocates, and, to a lesser degree, by the general public. To facilitate such a wide variety of users, IECAM is undergoing a general redesign to accommodate not only the more experienced users but also those users who have not searched for data on the Web site as much. During FY2013, staff redesigned the home page to feature large menu options, with brief explanations of those options to help more inexperienced users choose an appropriate option for their queries. In upcoming months, staff will continue to redesign search pathways to facilitate optimal search options and results. IECAM staff also focused efforts during FY2013 on formalizing procedures related to data collection and quality assurance issues related to the data displayed on IECAM. In addition, IECAM programmers have modified the online database and GIS map pages to use a different map each year to accommodate changes to the map of the state of Illinois that occurs annually.
IECAM staff have strived to work collaboratively with state agencies and other entities, including advocacy organizations and higher education. Staff have served on Early Learning Council (ELC) committees, provided data and statistical expertise to the ELC and various committees and workgroups, and collaborated with the Governor’s Office of Early Childhood Development (OECD) on gathering and integrating risk data. The project coordinator has been involved in the Professional Development Advisory Committee (PDAC) and will continue her involvement by serving as co-chair of the newly-formed Information, Analysis, and Trends Committee.

**HIGHLIGHTS OF FY2013**

**Changes to the Web site.** A major effort for IECAM during FY2013 was a redesign of the structure of its online database and corresponding GIS pages. Previously, data for each year were represented by the same map and regions. However, we know that most regions change at least somewhat each year (townships, municipalities, zip codes, school districts), and that a major change in congressional districts and state legislative districts will take effect with the 2013 data. Thus the database redesign provides different regions for each year (i.e., the ones applicable to the selected year) and a different GIS map for each year. These changes are completely transparent to users and require no changes to how a user accesses the data on IECAM.

This effort took precedence over adding new features to the Web site over the past fiscal year. Still, several new features were added, including the provision of data by new regions (elementary and unit school districts), the provision of some site-based data by the new legislative districts, the addition of a new early care and education data type (child care centers and homes providing school-age care), and the addition of a new demographic data type (children age 6 through 12). Of course, regular updates of existing data types proceeded as usual.

While the redesign of the database structure was ongoing in FY2013, several new features were begun that will be brought to fruition in FY2014. These include the presentation of a new standalone Demographic Theme Map page, the addition of new demographic themes to this page, the provision of time-sequence maps, the redesign of the presentation of Parents Too Soon program data, the display of GIS maps in Silverlight versions as well as “classic” asp.net versions, the addition of new sections of the Web site to present specialized data types from the Risk Data project (discussed elsewhere), the provision of information on margin of error (MOE) to some Census Bureau demographic data, and the addition of the newly redrawn congressional and state legislative districts to the online database.

**Risk Data.** In 2011, IECAM worked on a project for the Office of Early Childhood Education, Governor’s Office, to gather data on risk factors for children and families in Illinois. The data from this project have been available on a Risk Data page on the IECAM Web site ([http://iecam.crc.uiuc.edu/riskdata/](http://iecam.crc.uiuc.edu/riskdata/)) since the autumn of 2011. In late 2012 and early 2013, IECAM worked on a second phase of this project, updating data for additional years, acquiring new data,
preparing maps, and undertaking related functions. The data from this project have been provided on a private page (http://workspace.crc.uiuc.edu/riskdata2/) since April 2013.

The data in both of these projects have been organized into several general domains:

- Population, Poverty, and Living Conditions
- Language
- Employment
- Early Care and Education Services
- Education Variables
- Health Care and Health
- Other Social and Economic Factors

For the various data types, the pages provide links to the IECAM online database when applicable, Excel files with data, and selected demographic theme maps that highlight certain aspects of the data. Descriptions of the data and links to the data sources are provided.

Over the second half of calendar year 2013, most of the data from the private page will be moved elsewhere on the IECAM Web site. Some of the data (e.g., population of children in poverty, linguistically isolated households) are already part of the IECAM online database. Some demographic data (e.g., number of children under age 5 by race/ethnicity) will be added to the online database for the first time. Most of the data will be incorporated into the current Risk Data page, updating the data on the latter page (e.g., data on “family employment condition by poverty by family marital condition” for 2010 and 2011 will update the data previously provided for 2009).

For a few of the data types that generally address a similar topic (e.g., data on health, employment), we will likely create a separate section of the Web site in which users can get access to these different data types (as we’ve done for demographics on languages in Illinois). For these specialized data types, we will consider preparing data reports over the course of FY2014 to help people understand how to use and interpret these data.

**ACTIVITIES RELATED TO PROJECT OBJECTIVES**

**Tasks and Activities.** IECAM staff performed tasks and activities related to two areas: (1) online data and Web site maintenance and (2) collaboration, demonstrations, and presentations of the IECAM web tools and data (see Table 1).
Table 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Online Data and Web Site Maintenance</strong></th>
<th><strong>Collaboration, Demonstrations, and Presentations</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Posted FY2011 and FY2012 child care data</td>
<td>Participated in the IECAM Technical Advisory Committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Posted FY2011 and FY2012 PFA data</td>
<td>Participated in the Professional Advisory Committee (PDAC); co-chair of the Information, Analysis, and Trends Committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Posted FY2011 Head Start data</td>
<td>Attended quarterly meetings of the Early Learning Council (ELC)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Posted FY2011 Early Intervention data</td>
<td>Collaborated with the Governor’s Office of Early Childhood Development on the risk data project</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Added FY2011 Parents Too Soon data</td>
<td>Participated in the activities of the ELC’s Data, Research, and Evaluation Committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Began to change display of Birth to Three data to reflect changes requested by Illinois stakeholders</td>
<td>Participated in the activities of the Family and Community Engagement Committee (ELC)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Added new early care and education data type: Child care centers and homes providing school-age care</td>
<td>Participated in the Hard to Reach Subcommittee and the Capital/Infrastructure Subcommittee of the Family and Community Engagement Committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Posted FY2011 and FY2012 Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP) data</td>
<td>Participated in the activities of the Home Visiting Task Force</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Posted data (in Excel files) for new post-2010 census legislative districts</td>
<td>Co-presented with the Latino Policy Forum at the 2013 Spring into Action Conference</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Added new pages in the Legislative District Information section on the IL Senate and House 98th General Assembly and the 113th Congress</td>
<td>Participated in the Public Engagement Symposium at the University of Illinois</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Added new regions of unit school districts and elementary school districts</td>
<td>Participated in the Annual Spring Conference of the Illinois Geographic Information System (GIS) Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Added Silverlight version of GIS map pages</td>
<td>Presented at the University of Illinois Annual GIS Fair</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Revised and updated Web site definitions and demographic methodology pages, particularly definitions of geographic regions</td>
<td>Disseminated nine issues of the IECAMnews-L (electronic newsletter)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Redesigned home page featuring larger menu links</td>
<td>Participated in the National Association of Early Childhood Specialists at State Departments of Education (NAECS-SDE) annual meeting</td>
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<tr>
<td>Provided individualized technical assistance to IECAM users by telephone and e-mail</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

4
WEB STATISTICS

Annual Statistics. We rely on statistics to get an overall picture of which features and pages are most useful for those individuals who use the IECAM Web site. In this section, we will highlight statistics for the overall Web site (e.g., page views), individual pages most frequently used (e.g., search options page), and national and international usage (e.g., most active U.S. states and countries). Additionally, a brief summary of user survey results from FY2013 is reported. For an overall look at the IECAM Web site (e.g., total hits, page views, visitor sessions), see Table 2.

Table 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Annual Statistics</th>
<th>HTML (Q1, Q2, Q3, Q4)</th>
<th>GIS Pages (Q1, Q2, Q3, Q4)</th>
<th>Total for FY2013</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Hits</td>
<td>407,686</td>
<td>161,477</td>
<td>569,163</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Page Views</td>
<td>111,820</td>
<td>17,833</td>
<td>129,653</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Visitor Sessions</td>
<td>28,995</td>
<td>2,503</td>
<td>31,498</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Individual Pages. In addition to looking at the more global statistics of IECAM use, we are able to gather data on individual pages. See Table 3 for the 20 individual pages most frequently used by IECAM users during FY2013. By looking at the most frequently accessed pages, we are able to ascertain which features and/or information appear to be most beneficial and helpful to users. This information can assist us in making decisions related to IECAM.

1. The Search Options page has consistently been the #3 accessed page on the site, which suggests its usefulness.
2. The Snapshots of Illinois Counties page is well accessed, suggesting its popularity.
3. The PFA page is well accessed, suggesting that even after so many years people still find it useful to get general information about the program.
4. Three legislative district pages appear in the top 13 pages, which suggest their usefulness, perhaps especially now that we are moving to the newly redrawn districts.
5. The accesses to the Standard Report (in the GIS section of the Web site) and the GIS 2010 map were fairly high.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Page</th>
<th>Number of visitors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1    | Illinois Early Childhood Asset Map  
http://iecam.crc.uiuc.edu/ | 8,125 |
| 2    | IECAM. Search  
http://iecam.crc.uiuc.edu/cgi-bin/iecam/search.asp | 2,510 |
| 3    | IECAM. Search Options  
http://iecam.crc.uiuc.edu/search-options.html | 1,594 |
| 4    | Senate Districts 2011  
http://iecam.crc.uiuc.edu/data/districts/senate/sd2011.pdf | 979 |
| 5    | GIS Standard Reports  
http://ecap-iecam.ad.uiuc.edu/iecam_tasks/std_report/ | 960 |
| 6    | Data on Risk Factors for Children and Families in Illinois  
http://iecam.crc.uiuc.edu/riskdata/ | 904 |
| 7    | GIS 2010 map  
| 8    | House Districts 2011  
| 9    | Preschool for All Children  
http://iecam.crc.uiuc.edu/about/ece-information/prekall.html | 683 |
| 10   | Resources on Early Care and Education: Reports, Programs, Data  
http://iecam.crc.uiuc.edu/resources.html | 655 |
| 11   | Snapshots of Illinois Counties  
http://iecam.crc.uiuc.edu/pubs/snapshots/ | 588 |
| 12   | Tech Report #1  
http://iecam.crc.uiuc.edu/pubs/reports/technical/techreport1.pdf | 474 |
| 13   | Senate Districts 2013  
http://iecam.crc.uiuc.edu/data/districts/senate/sd2013.pdf | 459 |
| 14   | Methodology Related to IECAM Demographic Estimates  
http://iecam.crc.uiuc.edu/data/methodology/ | 450 |
| 15   | About IECAM  
http://iecam.crc.uiuc.edu/about/ | 447 |
| 16   | Head Start  
http://iecam.crc.uiuc.edu/about/ece-information/headstart.html | 438 |
| 17   | Tech Report #2  
http://iecam.crc.uiuc.edu/pubs/reports/technical/techreport2.pdf | 436 |
| 18   | Contact IECAM  
http://iecam.crc.uiuc.edu/contact/ | 414 |
| 19   | GIS 2008 map  
| 20   | What is IECAM?  
http://iecam.crc.uiuc.edu/about/whatis.html | 380 |
Most Active US States. The most active U.S. state reflected by IECAM users is, of course, Illinois, but other active states include California, Missouri, and Texas. Because we have had requests for information about the design and the cost of start-up for a site such as IECAM, we believe that several of these states may be accessing the site with this interest in mind. Figure 1 shows the breakdown of users from states other than Illinois during FY2013.

Figure 1

International Users. Although IECAM focuses its data on Illinois and 61% of its users are accessing the Web site from the United States, users come from 130 counties from around the globe. Twenty-one percent of visitors are from China, 3% from Belarus, and almost 2% from Germany. Visitors from the Ukraine, Japan, Poland, France, the United Kingdom, Mexico, and the Republic of Korea are among the nations represented. Figure 2 shows the breakdown of international users during FY2013.

Figure 2
**User Survey Highlights.** The user survey is sent out to users twice during a fiscal year through the IECAMnews-L (electronic newsletter). It is also available on an ongoing basis on the Web site and may be accessed at any time by visitors to IECAM. The survey is made up of 13 questions, eliciting information about the user (e.g., What role are you in as you visit IECAM today? Where are you located?) as well as information about the user’s searches (e.g., Which three features are most useful to you? Was it easy to find what you wanted?).

For FY2013, 76 users responded to the survey questions. On average, 47% of users reported visiting the IECAM Web site less than once a month, while 33% of users visited the site at least 1–4 times per month. When visiting IECAM, 25% of users indicated they were school district and Head Start administrators. Eighteen percent of users indicated “other,” specifying their roles as administrative assistant, developmental therapist, administrator of an adult education and family literacy provider, and retired ECE administrator. And, 11% of users reported being early childhood advocates.

Not surprisingly, 29% of users who responded to the survey indicated they were from Cook County (Chicago and suburbs). Other respondents represented 27 other counties from all over the state.

Reasons for visiting IECAM ranged from 78% of users looking for demographic information about Illinois children and families, 36% seeking information for advocacy purposes, to 29% wanting information to write a PFA proposal. A quarter of users reported they were trying to find the location of early childhood services, and 20% indicated that they were “just browsing.”

When asked which three features were most useful to them, users reported data in tabular format (67%), demographic theme maps (57%), and GIS maps with ECE locations (53%). Close to 20% of users indicated they do use the Help Screens, while 28% reported using the Definition page.

Because IECAM staff use the survey to indicate user preferences and ease of use, a question is included that ascertained that information. When asked “was it easy to find what you wanted?” 37% indicated it was “easy” and 30% chose “so so.” Ninety-seven percent indicated they would use the site again.

Users were asked for comments regarding the features that were not useful to them or difficult to use. Comments ranged from difficulty using specific maps (e.g., Evanston), difficulty finding demographics for children not enrolled in PFA, search screens timing out and broken links. Similarly, users were asked for comments about IECAM in general, including features and data they would like to see added. Table 4 provides several of the comments and requested data.
Table 4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>General Comments</th>
<th>Requested Features and Data</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“I think it is wonderful and so helpful in writing proposals!”</td>
<td>Unemployment rate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Thanks for providing this valuable resource.”</td>
<td>Teen pregnancy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“I wish you had kept the homeless information on children or if you do I couldn’t find it.”</td>
<td>Data on homeless children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“I can’t wait until I can get an IECAM app!!!”</td>
<td>Juvenile crime rate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“The IECAM website is great and very useful for parsing out poverty data. However, as mentioned above, it would be helpful to have more updated information.”</td>
<td>Block grant information</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Next Steps for IECAM**

We anticipate developing a technical report in conjunction with ISBE, developing data reports (e.g., data on homeless children) to help explain the advantages and/or limitations of particular types of data, and quick help handouts that help users as they navigate specific parts of the IECAM Web site. In addition, we will be developing a new resource titled “Spotlight on Stats,” in which we highlight particular data (e.g., employment rates) for the state as a whole.

We will continue to gather feedback from stakeholders and IECAM users to improve our data management procedures, how we display early childhood and demographic data, and auxiliary pages, such as methodology and definitions.

Upcoming activities include:

1. Addition of Head Start FY2012 data to the IECAM online database
2. Creation of a separate section for demographic theme maps with updated maps and new maps
3. Adding new data years for our Standard Reports
4. Addition of Prevention Initiative data for FY2012 to online database
5. Addition of PTS data from the IDHS Bureau of Childhood Development, in revised format, to the online database
6. Addition of child care data for FY2013 to the online database
7. Addition of school-age care data for FY2013 to the online database (per IDHS funding)
8. Addition of CCAP data for FY2013 to the online database
9. Addition of Margins of Error (MOEs) indications for some demographic data
10. Addition of data on children by race/ethnicity to the online database
11. Addition of estimated demographic data for new legislative districts, based on compilation of Census tracts, for 2011 (to correspond to site-based data for new legislative districts for 2011 and 2012)

12. Addition of data by Census Zip Code Tabulation Areas (ZCTAs) to the online database