

Child Care & Early Education
RESEARCH CONNECTIONS

Research Connections
Teaching Modules:
Introduction for Faculty

Research Connections Teaching Modules: Introduction for Faculty

What you will find in this Introduction

Welcome to the Child Care and Early Education *Research Connections* Teaching Modules for Early Childhood Faculty! This Introduction for Faculty will familiarize you with *Research Connections* and the many tools available on the website. The Introduction includes the following sections, with special reference to your work with ECE students:

- Purpose and Benefits of the Teaching Modules
- Quick Tips for Using the Teaching Modules
- About *Research Connections*
- Link to Research Connections' Collaborative Activities
- Quick Tips on Using the Website
- Tips for Searching the Collection and a Guide to Other Resources
- *Research Connections* Staff Contact Information

Before downloading and using the modules with your students, we suggest that you read through this Introduction, explore the *Research Connections* web site, www.researchconnections.org on your own, try some searches, and generally familiarize yourself with the many resources available. Because new search features and procedures have been added as of January 2010, as well as a new Module 6 (*Research Connections* and School-Age Children), even if you have used *Research Connections* in the past it will be valuable for you to revisit the site, for your own updated information and that of your students. The updated "[Guide to Searching the Collection](#)," especially the "Ways to Search" section, will be worth a careful review. As you go through this Introduction, pay special attention to the blue "S" icon and the extra notes in ***bold italic*** font—these will direct you to resources that have special relevance for students.

This familiarity with *Research Connections*' collection will make it easier for you to decide how to incorporate the modules' suggested assignments and activities into your courses.

Purpose and Benefits of the *Research Connections* Teaching Modules

The purpose and benefits of the *Research Connections* Teaching Modules are

- 1) To help faculty introduce students to the value of research in supporting effective practices and policies
- 2) To give faculty easy-to-use, adaptable materials to incorporate into typical courses in an undergraduate teacher preparation program, specialized certificate/credential, or similar professional development activity.
- 3) To offer a research resource for students—not as the only source of information, but as one of the easiest to use and most credible.
- 4) To increase students' interest and engagement in learning more about current research on key topics in early development and education

Through your use of the *Research Connections* Teaching Modules, you will enhance your students' learning, expand your own horizons, and have a good time while doing this!

Quick Tips for Using the Teaching Modules—The Big Picture

Each module includes suggestions, but here we provide some “big picture” tips:

1. As suggested, take plenty of time to review and use *Research Connections* on your own. This Introduction is a great guide, and parts of it may be adapted for your students.
2. Remember that all these materials may be freely adapted and edited. Just be sure to download the Word version—and of course give credit to *Research Connections*.
3. No matter what course you are teaching, be sure to look at *all* the modules. After the first module, each has been designed to fit with a specific course (such as Child Development) or specialized credential (such as Out-of-School Time or School-Age Child Care). However, you may find that specific activities from a different module align very well with your goals and your students’ needs—for example, an activity from Module 4 (*Research Connections* and Families of Young Children) might enrich your Child Development syllabus, or a few activities from Module 6 (*Research Connections* and School-Age Children) might enrich a course on early childhood curriculum. Mix and match!
4. Also, other modules may have generally-helpful tips for students about additional *Research Connections* resources, such as “Browsing with Topical Classifications” and “Key Topic Resource Lists” described at the beginning of Module 4, or the “State Searches,” “New Research,” and Research-to-Policy Briefs” described at the beginning of Module 5.
5. Along the same lines, don’t feel that you must use every activity within a module. These are only suggestions; perhaps not all will work in your situation, and there may simply be too many activities to incorporate comfortably into your course. Similarly, you should feel free to change the order of activities.
6. Each suggested activity has an accompanying “student worksheet.” Again, these are intended to be modified, but they’re simple frameworks that may help guide students through an activity and that will give you a record of what students have done. Some faculty have put these on line so that students may complete and submit their work electronically.
7. Be attuned to your students’ need for extra support in certain areas. This, of course, depends on their prior use of data bases and experience in conducting searches. For many students, finding appropriate search terms is a challenge, especially if they do not yet know the “lingo” of ECE and school-age programs. They may also have difficulty narrowing or focusing their search, applying filters to search results, or knowing when to “Search” versus “Browse.” Demonstrating searching and browsing strategies in class, if you have internet access, will be very helpful. And teams of students may be able to help one another.
8. Here and in other matters, seek student feedback throughout, not just at the end of your course. And please send us suggestions (contact information is on the site)!

About Research Connections

The next section of this Introduction gives you some general information about the *Research Connections* web site and collection. This information may be helpful for your work in general, and it may also help you think about how to integrate *Research Connections* into your courses.

Research Connections promotes high quality research and the use of that research in early childhood policy and practice. We reach our audience through our web site: www.researchconnections.org. If you are not already familiar with the site, please take a moment to preview and bookmark it.

Through this free, **easy to use** web site, one can quickly search the full text of thousands of resources relevant to the field of child care and early education. Interactive tools allow users to refine their searches, download full text documents, build customized tables on state policies, compare state demographics, and analyze research data online. Your students will most likely use only a few of these features, but this guide will introduce you to a broader range of resources that may help you in your own work.

This **comprehensive** and unbiased collection includes scholarly research, policy briefs, government reports, data, and instruments from a wide range of disciplines and sources, including multiple federal agencies. *Research Connections* compiles and distributes bibliographies, develops issue briefs, and synthesizes research on key topics.

Research Connections offers **public access** to child care and early education research data, some of which have never before been publicly available. Researchers can download analysis-ready data directly to their desktop or analyze selected data online free of charge. Data training workshops and an archive for research projects serve the entire field. A recently-expanded feature allows **full text** access to many resources; some may be downloaded directly and others may be accessed through college and university libraries—another useful feature for your students.

The **integrated** database links written documents to the actual instruments and data files on which their findings are based, provides links from the data files to the publications based on them, and links resources on similar topics, by the same author, or funded by the same agency. Again, some of this will be more useful to you than your students, but it will give them a sense that research is not just “pulled out of thin air.”

Our database is **up to date** and continually growing. Currently, we provide access to over 15,000 resources, including more than 150 datasets.

Research Connections **reaches out** to everyone who can make use of research findings to improve the provision of child care and early education, to promote children’s well-being, and to support working families. Obviously this includes you as a faculty member, and it also includes your students, future or current teachers of young children.

Research Connections is funded by the Child Care Bureau, Office of Family Assistance, and the Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation, Administration for Children and

Families, in the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. It is operated by the National Center for Children in Poverty at the Mailman School of Public Health, Columbia University, and the Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research at the Institute for Social Research, University of Michigan.

***Research Connections'* Collaborative Activities**

Research Connections is currently a partner in several collaborative research endeavors. To access the materials from these various collaborations, visit www.researchconnections.org and under the 'What's New' drop down menu click on 'Collaborations'.

Quick Tips on Using the Web Site

Child Care & Early Education *Research Connections* provides useful resources, whether you are a faculty member, a student, an early childhood practitioner, or a policymaker.

Read further (and practice as you read) to learn how to get the most out of *Research Connections*, and how you may help your students do the same:

Navigate with Ease

Research Connections' streamlined home page helps you access resources with ease. The Topics of Interest section allows you to quickly see resources and publications related to a specific issue area. The New Research section highlights the latest research findings in the field of child care and early education. The Search box lets you immediately search the database for your subject of interest. And finally, the main toolbar and drop-down menus, accessible from any page on the site, help you easily pinpoint the information you need. In later sections of this Guide you will see suggestions for how to introduce your students to these and other features, including options for browsing by Topical Classifications.

Perform Searches on Specific Topics

Search functions provide easy access to the ever-expanding collection of resources, currently including over 15,000 reports & papers, datasets, fact sheets & briefs, and other resource types. [Search the Collection](#) or consult [Quick Tips on Using the Web Site](#) to learn more about our search features. Obtain tips for searching the database and navigating various sections of the Web site by reading the **Database Search and Web Site User Guide** below.

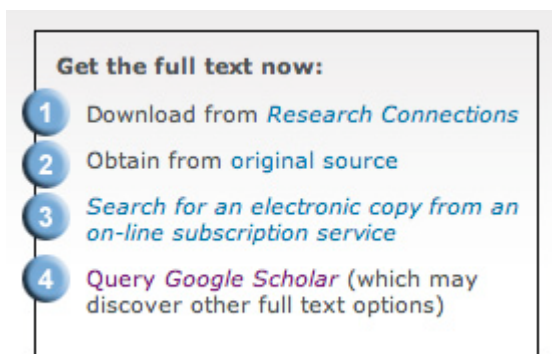
Clarify Search Results with Icons

When you perform searches on *Research Connections*, icons designate resources as peer reviewed journals (*) or produced by *Research Connections* (RC), to clarify your search results. You are also able to “Filter” the initial results of your search, using criteria such as only peer reviewed publications; only articles from a specific year; or only specific types of resources such as “Fact Sheets and Briefs.” Visit this sample search on [Infant and Toddler Child Care](#) to see these icons and how they can aid your search. The Teaching Modules will provide more examples of sample searches that you can use as-is with your students or modify.

The screenshot displays the website's search interface. At the top, the navigation bar includes links for Home, Search, Contact Us, and a language selector. Below this is a menu with categories: ABOUT US, UNDERSTANDING RESEARCH, RESEARCH COLLECTION, OUR PUBLICATIONS, WHAT'S NEW, DATASETS, POLICY RESOURCES, COLLABORATIVE PROJECTS, and HELP. The main content area is titled "Search Results" and features a search bar with the query "infant and toddler child care". It shows 400 results found, sorted by Relevance. The results list includes several entries with icons indicating their status: a star (*) for peer-reviewed journals and "RC" for resources produced by Research Connections. The first result is "Credentials for the infant/toddler child care workforce: A technical assistance tool for Child Care and Development Fund administrators" (Other). The second is "The regulatory status of center-based infant and toddler child care" (Reports & Papers, marked with a star). The third is "Infant-toddler child care in the United States: Where has it been?: Where is it now?: Where is it going?" (Other). The fourth is "Partnerships for quality: Improving infant-toddler child care for low-income families" (Executive Summary, marked with RC). On the right side, there are filter options: Filter Results, Filter by Resource Type (Reports & Papers: 138, Fact Sheets & Briefs: 132, Other: 103, Executive Summary: 14, Instruments: 7), Filter by Author (Knitzer, Jane: 55, Stebbins, Helene: 55, Schumacher, Rachel: 17, Paulsell, Diane: 16, Columbia University, National Center for Children in Poverty: 13), Filter by Year (2007: 74, 2008: 47, 2003: 40, 2002: 36, 2005: 33), and Filter by State (CALIFORNIA: 22, PENNSYLVANIA: 21, NORTH CAROLINA: 17, WASHINGTON: 17, KANSAS: 16). A "Save this Search" button is also present.

Access the full text of a resource

To determine the availability of the full text of a resource after conducting a search, select the title from the **Search Results** page, which will take you to the **View Resource Details** page. On this page you will see a box in the top right hand corner of the page with a variety of options for obtaining full text.



Not all options are present for all publications, and for some publications the full text may not be available at all. Please note that electronic access to full text published in journals is dependent upon whether your institution subscribes to the journal. Scholarly journals seldom provide free access to the full text of their articles without such an institutional subscription. If your institution hasn't paid for access, you or your students may have to pay to obtain the full text. You may wish to discuss these options ahead of time with your library staff.

1 Download from *Research Connections*. This document is available for you to download directly from the *Research Connections* site. Selecting this option will open up a PDF version of the document.

2 Obtain from the original source. This item is freely available to the public through another Web site. Selecting this option will link you directly to the document at another Web site.

3 Search for an electronic copy from an online subscription service. This option will be most useful to anyone at an institution that subscribes to online journals. Based on your computer's network address, selecting this option will take you to the full text of the document, if your institution has paid for access to it.

4 Query *Google Scholar*. Selecting this option will link you to the Google Scholar search results for this document. An abstract or summary of the document may be available at no charge and payment may be required to access the full text.

Export a Citation

You can create a bibliographic list of your search results by exporting a citation from the **View Resource Details** page. Select the **Export via RIS** link under the *Export Citation* heading in the box on the upper right hand corner of the **View Resource Details** page.

Save the Results of Your Search

From your Search Results page, you may also save your search and register to be notified when new items meeting your search criteria are added to the Research Connections collection. Several assignments suggest this option for students, a valuable tool when working on a long-term project.

Access Related Resources

You can use the Related Resources links that appear in some resource records to access related materials that have been indexed by *Research Connections*. For example, a dataset may be linked to instruments used for data collection, a report may be linked to a major research project of which it is part, and an executive summary or fact sheet may be linked to a larger report of original research on which it is based.

Understand Research

Have you ever had students say “What’s the use of research?” or “Everything I read has a different answer—how do I decide what information to pay attention to?” *Research Connections* offers resources on [Understanding Research](#). This page offers information on how to evaluate the quality of research, descriptions of common data collection methods, and two glossaries--one of terms used in policy research and another of terms used in child care and early education practice and policy. Again, the various Teaching Modules will suggest assignments and activities to make this information even more practical for students, including hands-on exercises that you can use to help students learn about and use key concepts about research, whatever their level of prior knowledge.

Use Our State Data Tools

Our [State Data Tools](#) page provides links to various 50-state databases on the web related to child care and early education, including those developed by the National Center for Children in Poverty which allow you to create customized tables for a range of child care and social welfare policies and state-level statistics. The Teaching Modules will suggest some assignments to help your students learn more about early care and education issues and policies in their own state.

Download Publications in Our Series

Research Connections produces various publications that synthesize research on critical issues and identify policy implications. You can easily search and download [Our Publications](#) by topic or by publication type. Research Connections currently offers four types of publications: [Key Topic Resource Lists](#), [Reviews of Research](#), [Research-to-Policy Connections](#), and [Research Guides](#). Depending on the courses you teach and the level of your students, many of these may be valuable resources for them.

Search Datasets and Statistics

For your own professional use (or that of graduate students with whom you may work), *Research Connections* offers data sets for further analysis using your own statistical software as well as a number of datasets that can be analyzed online, using software provided by Research Connections. Click on the [Datasets](#) section on the main Toolbar to get started.

Access Information on Federally Funded Research and Early Childhood Policies

Again, for your own professional use, from the Policy Resources section of our Toolbar, you can access various information about the [Good Start, Grow Smart \(GSGS\) Interagency Workgroup](#), as well as other research supported by the [Child Care Bureau](#) and other [Federal Research Links](#). These resources provide useful context for understanding child care research.

Contribute Research

If you conduct research on early development and learning, or on policy issues in early education and child care, you may be interested to know that *Research Connections* welcomes contributions to the database. Research contributions are indexed, described, and displayed on the *Research Connections* Web site and can easily be located using the search tools. By contributing to our collection, authors receive professional recognition for their research and data collection efforts and make them available to others. From the “Research Collection” section of the Toolbar at the top of the page, select [Contribute Research](#) from the drop-down menu.

Learn About Grants, Jobs, and Events

Another professional resource is a *Research Connections* section devoted to keeping you aware of the latest [Grants, Jobs, and Events](#) related to child care and early education. Learn of these frequent updates in the field by clicking on the light blue “Learn” box on the bottom of our home page, or by clicking on the [What’s New](#) section of the Toolbar at the top of the page.

Subscribe to Our Listserv: *News & Resources*

Want to keep in the loop? You can easily subscribe to [News & Resources](#) to receive bi-monthly e-mail notifications of the latest research and opportunities in the field of child care and early education. Just click on the light blue “Join” box on the bottom of our home page. Also included in these announcements are updates from *Research Connections* about new and noteworthy research added to our site.

Find Research Connections in the Field

Research Connections participates in conferences and meetings related to child care and early education -- through presentations, posters, and exhibits. We also host data training workshops and provide technical assistance. You can find a continually updated listing of [Our Presentations and Trainings](#) by clicking on the light blue “Attend” box at the bottom of the home page, or by clicking on the [What’s New](#) section of the Toolbar at the top of the page.

Technical Assistance

Research Connections offers online Technical Assistance. To ask a question, report a problem, or share comments related to the Teaching Modules or more generally to the site, e-mail us at contact@researchconnections.org. *Research Connections* staff will respond within 48 hours.

Tips for Searching the Collection and Finding Other Resources

This Introduction for Faculty includes tips for searching the *Research Connections* collection and navigating the various sections of the Web site, and a description of the fields and types of resources found in the collection. We have noted with a blue “S” those Resource Types that may be most valuable for your undergraduate students to explore, and have added notes in *bold italics*. These are the Resource Types around which many of the Teaching Modules’ suggested assignments and in-class activities are organized.

Resource Types in the *Research Connections* Collection

Datasets	Raw data compiled by researchers that users can analyze using statistical applications
S Executive Summaries	Brief summaries of major findings and recommendations from larger, more detailed reports of original research. Students may find these to be accessible starting points for major reports.
S Fact Sheets & Briefs	Brief, descriptive summaries of statistical results, research findings, and/or their policy implications. Many can be downloaded from the original source, making them useful to include in student assignments.
Instruments	Data collection tools and measures used in child care and early education research reports, datasets, and major research projects in the <i>Research Connections</i> collection
S Literature Reviews	Resources that summarize and critique various reports on a particular topic, to provide a broad understanding of the status of research and knowledge on the topic. Helpful to get students away from thinking that one study can “say it all.”
Major Research Projects	Projects that encompass data collection in various ways over time and often in multiple sites, are significant in scope, and result in various reports
S Reports & Papers	Reports of original research, and papers dealing with theoretical issues relevant to child care and early education. For the most part students will download through their institution’s library.
Child Care Bureau/OPRE Projects	Descriptions of research initiatives currently underway that are sponsored by the Child Care Bureau, Office of Family Assistance and the Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation, Administration for Children and Families of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
Tables of Findings	Created or commissioned by <i>Research Connections</i> , these tables on specific topics describe the methods, data and findings of all original research reports cited in an accompanying literature review
S Bibliographies	Descriptive lists of books, journal articles, reports, or other printed materials that are commonly compiled on one subject by one author, or relating to a particular time period. Definitely look at what’s available for topics in your key courses or specialized certificate programs. Also be sure to look at those produced by <i>Research Connections</i>, which are known as Key Topic Resource Lists and can be found under Our Publications.
Book Reviews	Critical descriptions of newly printed books, usually by experts in the field
Methods	Resources discussing research design, data collection methods, instruments, and data analysis techniques that address issues specific to the field of child care and early education
Other materials	Other printed materials that do not fit into any of the groups above

Search [please see the Teaching Modules for search assignments and activities to use in typical ECE courses. Student assignments are built around many of these search types. Again, types of searches that may be especially appropriate and interesting for beginning student-searchers are marked with a blue "S" and bold-type notes are added.]

- S Search the Collection**
- Enter one or more words in the box on the [Search the Collection](#) page (also on home page) and hit Enter on your keyboard or click the "Go" button, or
 - Enter one or more words in one or more of the search boxes on the [More Search Options](#) page, and hit "Go"
 - By default, the search engine looks for the word(s) in all the fields describing resources, as well as the full text, if *Research Connections* has archived a copy of that resource
 - Searching is case insensitive, so you may enter words in any case (e.g. a search for "Faces" will retrieve resources containing the terms FACES, Faces, or faces)

Students are often challenged and frustrated when trying to find the right search terms. It's worth spending time demonstrating and encouraging them to give their less-experienced peers assistance.

- S Browse the Collection using Topical Classifications**
- From "Browse the Collection" on the home page, click "[Browse by Topic](#)" to see a list of 14 major topics, most with subtopics shown when the "+" sign is clicked.
 - By clicking on the topic or subtopic, will show all the Research Connections resources associated with that category.
 - Results may be filtered in the same way that results of Searches may be filtered.
 - [Notes on the scope/content](#) of each category are available.

Both the Browse functions and the Search functions are useful for different purposes (broad overview of a category versus searching for more specific topics. Several assignments will help students appreciate the differences and get the most out of these tools.

- S Perform a Boolean search**
- Enter words or phrases in two or more of the search boxes on the [More Search Options](#) page, and select a Boolean operator between the search boxes to combine terms
 - **AND** retrieves only resources that contain search terms in all search boxes. Using this operator will narrow or limit your search
 - **OR** retrieves all resources that contain search terms from one or both of the search boxes. Using this operator will expand your search

You might ask students to experiment with this search strategy in an early assignment or during an in-class demonstration.

- S Limit your search to a particular field**
- Enter one or more words in the search box on the [More Search Options](#) page, and select a Field from the drop-down menu to the left of the search box

S Limit your search by date

Limit your search to resources published in a particular year by entering in the publication years you are searching for below the search box, or filter a set of search results by date. ***You may want to help students focus on very recent research on some topics, or compare research from the past and present.***

S Limit your search by full-text availability

- Filter the results of your search to only those resources that offer full-text access. For instructions on how to find the full text of journal articles and other copyright protected resources, see the section under "Quick Tips on Using the Web Site" titled "Access the Full Text of a Resource" at the beginning of this document ***Your students have the benefit of college/university electronic library access, through which they may be able to gain free access to articles in many early childhood journals. Many of the Teaching Modules activities will encourage them to take advantage of this access.***

S Use truncation or wildcards

- Enter an asterisk * at the end of a word to search for plurals or to truncate (search for the word with various endings)
- Enter an asterisk * at the beginning of a word to search for the word with a variety of prefixes
- Enter an asterisk * in place of one or more letters to search for other word variations
- Examples:
 - A search for network* will also find resources containing the words networks, networking, or networked
 - A search for wom*n will find resources containing the words woman or women
 - A search for lab*r will find resources containing the words labor or labour
 - A search for *time will find resources containing the words full-time or part-time

Again, students may be asked to try their hand at this potentially-useful search strategy.

Search for hyphenated or compound words	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ For words that may be single words or may be hyphenated, enter the word either with or without the hyphen to retrieve both hyphenated and single word forms ■ For words that may be hyphenated or written as two separate words, enter both variations in separate search boxes on the More Search Options page, and combine using the OR operator ■ Examples: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ A search for child care (with “exact phrase” button selected) will retrieve resources containing the phrase child care, but not child-care or childcare ○ A search for childcare will retrieve resources containing child-care or childcare, but not child care ○ A search for child-care will retrieve resources containing child-care or childcare, but not child care ■ A search for childcare OR child care (with “exact phrase” button selected) will retrieve resources containing child care, child-care, or childcare
S Locate information relevant to a particular U.S. State	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Select a state on the Browse by State page to find datasets, major research projects, or reports of original research for which data were collected in that state ■ Enter a state name in the search box on the or More Search Options page, to retrieve all resources containing the state name, sorted by relevance ■ Filter the results of a search by State (not always available, but if it is, the names of relevant states will appear on the Search Results page) ■ Use the links provided in the State Data Tools section to locate statistical information on states. Some suggested activities will involve students in finding information on their own state’s early learning standards, regulations, preK, or similar topics.
Locate resources relevant to a country other than the U.S.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Enter the name of the country in the search box on the Search the Collection or the More Search Options page to retrieve all resources containing the country name, sorted by relevance (resources containing the country name in the Title, Country, or Description fields will appear among the top results)
Locate resources published in a particular journal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ On the Search the Collection or More Search Options page, enter the journal International Standard Serial Number (ISSN) in the search box (format: XXXXXXXX or XXXX-XXXX) ■ On the More Search Options page, enter the name of the journal in the search box, select the “exact phrase” button, and select “Source” from the drop-down menu to the left of the search box <p>Browse a partial list of journals cited in the <i>Research Connections</i> database available from the Scope and Sources of the Collection page in the Research Collection section.</p>
S Locate resources from a particular author	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Click on the name of an individual or organization on the Browse by Author page, or ■ Enter a name in a search box on the More Search Options page and select “Author/Editor/Preparer” from the drop-down menu to the left of the search box to limit your search to this field, or ■ Filter the results of a search by Author (available only for some search results). Some Teaching Module assignments suggest that students follow up on researchers being discussed in class, using RC to find additional work they have done.
Locate resources from a particular publisher	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Click on the name of an individual or organization on the Browse by Author page, or ■ Enter a name in a search box on the More Search Options page and select “Publisher” from the drop-down menu to the left of the search box to limit your search to this field ■ Browse a partial list of publishers cited in the <i>Research Connections</i> database available from the Scope and Sources of the Collection page in the Research Collection section
Locate resources funded by a particular organization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Click on the name of an organization from the Browse by Author page, or ■ Enter the organization name in a search box on the More Search Options page and select “Funder” from the drop-down menu to the left of the search box to limit your search to this field
Search for datasets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Filter your search results to the resource type <i>Datasets</i> by clicking the Data Sets filter on the search results page
Search for instruments and measures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Filter your search results to the resource type <i>Instruments</i> by clicking the Instruments filter on the results page
S Search for original research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Filter your search results by one of the following resource types: <i>Reports & Papers</i>, <i>Major Research Projects</i>, or <i>Child Care Bureau/OPRE projects</i>. The Teaching Modules will build some assignments around this and other types of searches, helping students distinguish among them.

S Search for research syntheses

- Filter your search to one of the resource types: *Executive Summaries, Fact Sheets & Briefs, or Literature Review*. **Again, research syntheses are a great resource for students, especially when they understand the difference between a single study and a synthesis—and the value of a good synthesis.**

S Find recent publications

- Select the [Recently Added Resources](#) page from the [What's New](#) section to see newly acquired *Reports & Papers, Fact Sheets & Briefs, Executive Summaries, Datasets, and Instruments & Measures*
 - Limit your search to resources published in the current year by entering the year in the boxes on the [More Search Options](#) page.
 - If available for a specific search, filter the search results by Specific Year or by Recency.
 - Save your search (see box on Search Results page) and register to be notified of later additions to the Research Connections collection.
 - You can also see recent and noteworthy additions to the collection by visiting the **New Research** section in the center of the home page. **As mentioned earlier, it's important for students to see their field as a dynamic, evolving one. Limiting searches in this way will highlight the growing early childhood knowledge base.**
-

Search

Navigate through search results

- Click on the blue arrow at the top of the **Search Results** page to move to the next page of results

S Filter results

- When your search yields more than 25 results, filtering options are offered on the “Search Results” page
- Depending on the nature of the resources produced by the search, filter options may include Resource Type, Author, State, Specific Year, and others.

Students will find it very helpful to further focus their searches (or browses with Topical Classifications), using various filtering tools. A number of assignments ask them to do so.

Sort results

- By default, search results are sorted by their relevance in relation to the search term or terms, with the most relevant resources listed first
- Select an option from the drop-down menu at the top of the **Search Results** page to resort results by **Title**, Publication **Date**, or Recent Additions

S Locate peer reviewed articles

- Articles from peer reviewed journals are identified with a green asterisk on the **Search Results** page
- The **Peer Reviewed** field on the **View Resource Details** page will indicate whether a particular resource was published in a peer reviewed journal. ***It’s important for students to begin to understand what “peer review” means and how this designation can strengthen the credibility of research that they find.***

Locate Research Connections publications

- Publications written or commissioned by *Research Connections* are identified with an **RC** symbol on the **Search Results** page
- For a complete list of *Research Connections* publications, click on [Our Publications](#) on top navigation bar

S View the full text of a resource

- Up to four options are available for obtaining full text. A box in the upper right corner of each View Resource Details page presents the available options for that publication, which may include the following:
 - Download directly from the *Research Connections* site
 - Obtain from the original source
 - Search for an electronic copy from an online subscription service
 - Query Google Scholar. ***As noted earlier, many Teaching Module assignments and activities encourage students to find and download full-text of a resource. This box summarizes the options (note that “an online subscription service” usually includes your college or university library resources.***

Access datasets for download or online analysis

- Download data and documentation files, and access tools for online analysis for a specific data collection, by selecting the link appearing in the “Download” field on the **View Resource Details** page
- Visit the [Datasets](#) page for more information about using research data, or to create a MyData account to take advantage of additional features

S Print a record

- Select the “Printer-Friendly” link at the top of the **View Resource Details** page to access a version of the page formatted for printing ***Students may need to do this for some assignments.***

Find related resources

- Select the “Related Resources” link appearing on the **View Resource Details** page to access related materials that have been indexed by *Research Connections*

Fields in the *Research Connections* Collection

Abstract	For Reports & Papers, Datasets, Major Research Projects, and Literature Reviews , contains an informative, non-evaluative description (250 words or less) of the research project and its findings, written in language accessible to a wide audience. Abstracts commonly contain a sentence describing the topic or problem being researched or the purpose, thesis, or organizing construct and the scope of the paper; information on the participants, including pertinent characteristics; the design and methods or sources used; the findings, including statistical significance levels, if applicable; and conclusions reached by the authors.
Country	For Reports & Papers, Datasets, Major Research Projects, and Literature Reviews , contains the name of the country or countries covered by a study
State	For Reports & Papers, Datasets, Major Research Projects, and Literature Reviews , contains the name of the U.S. state where data were collected for a study
Geographic Unit	For Reports & Papers , describes the lowest level of geographic aggregation covered by the data (Country, State, City, Town, Neighborhood, Zip Code area, Census tract, etc.)
Data	For Major Research Projects describes all types of information collected from observations and analyzed during the research study, as well as methods utilized for observing, measuring, and recording information.
Design and Method	For Major Research Projects describes research design and methods for data collection
Research Questions	For Major Research Projects presents the overarching research question(s), followed by the more specific research questions, if applicable
Sample	For Major Research Projects describes type of sample, sample design, and sample size
Unit Of Analysis	For Datasets and Major Research Projects , the basic unit of analysis or observation, or for Instruments, the unit of analysis the instrument can be used to assess (Individuals, Dyads, Families/households, Groups, Institutions/organizations, Administrative units, Social artifacts, etc.)
Date Of Collection	For Datasets , provides the date(s) when data for the research were collected
Kind Of Data	For Datasets , describes the types of data collected in the study
Universe	For Datasets , describes the population studied; for Instruments , describes the population that the instrument can be applied to in order to collect data and describe or draw conclusions
Administration Procedures	For Instruments , provides general description of the procedure for administration/use
Administration Time	For Instruments , the average administration time
Minority Populations	For Instruments , describes suitability for minority populations
Scores	For Instruments , gives the range of valid scores on the instrument
Reliability	For Instruments , describes reliability measures
Special Needs	For Instruments , describes suitability for special needs populations
Standardization	For Instruments , indicates if the instrument has been standardized
Training Requirements	For Instruments , includes training requirements for using the instrument properly
Translated Versions	For Instruments , notes languages other than English in which instrument is available
Use Restrictions	For Instruments , may indicate any restriction, as indicated in the manual or documentation, regarding the use of an instrument, or identifies situations or circumstances in which or subpopulations with which an instrument should not be used because it yields unreliable and/or invalid data
Uses	For Instruments , a description of the appropriate uses of the instrument (instructional, assessment, etc.)
Validity	For Instruments , provides measures or discussion of validity

Explore [See the Teaching Modules for assignments and in-class activities that will give students experience exploring many of these areas. Again, a blue “S” indicates competencies that may be especially relevant for undergraduate students, depending on their prior education and experience—and depending on your own goals for them. Explanatory notes are in *bold italics*.]

Understand the scope of the Research Connections Collection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Visit the Scope and Sources of the Collection page in the Research Collection section to learn about <i>Research Connections</i> collection development policies, and view lists of journals and Web sites used by <i>Research Connections</i> staff to select resources for the database
S Find information on assessing research quality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Visit the Assessing Research Quality page in the Understanding Research section and download the “Quantitative Research Assessment Tool” or “Qualitative Research Assessment Tool”. <i>The “Welcome” Module has an assignment that uses some of these resources.</i>
Learn about research methods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Visit the Research Methods page in the Understanding Research section for information on topics such as research design, data collection, and data analysis
S Understand child care terminology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Visit the Child Care & Early Education Glossary in the Understanding Research section for definitions of terms used to describe aspects of child care and early education practice and policy. <i>Assignments and activities in several Teaching Modules help students gain down-to-earth understanding and application of some of these terms.</i>
S Understand research terminology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Visit the Research Glossary in the Understanding Research section for definitions of terms used in conducting social science and policy research, including terms relevant for school-age issues. <i>Again, assignments will help students gain an introductory familiarity with some of these terms.</i>
Find statistical information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use the links provided in the State Data Tools section to locate statistical information on U.S. states Visit the Statistical Sources page in the Datasets section to access a list of links for summary statistical information, including demographics, economic conditions, early care and education statistics, and program and policy statistics
Learn about federally funded research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Visit the Child Care Bureau/OPRE Projects, Good Start, Grow Smart Interagency Work Group and the Federal Research Links pages by selecting the links under Federally Funded Research on the <i>Research Connections</i> home page or by clicking on the Policy Resources section on the toolbar, for a summary of research initiatives from the U.S. government, and for quick access to resources in the database published or funded by the U.S. Child Care Bureau/OPRE
Learn about state and federal policies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Visit the Policy Resources section to access to access various policy relevant resources related to early care and education
Learn about collaborative activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Visit the Collaborative Projects section, by selecting it on the main toolbar, to access materials from partnerships of researchers, policymakers, and practitioners in the field of child care and early education
Contribute research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Visit the Contribute Research section to learn how to contribute research reports, instruments, measures, data, and other related materials, and to learn about the benefits of contributing
Contact Research Connections	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Visit the Staff page under the About Us section to access a complete listing of staff names and email addresses Send an email to contact@researchconnections.org to ask a question, report a problem, or share comments, and <i>Research Connections</i> staff will respond within 48 hours
Join the Research Connections listserv	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Join our Email List to receive bi-weekly updates on additions and enhancements to the Web site, including announcements of new <i>Research Connections</i> publications, information on events and opportunities related to child care and early education, and notifications about <i>Research Connections</i> data trainings, presentations, and exhibits

Tips and Guide for Data Users

Research Connections disseminates child care and early education research to researchers, policymakers, and practitioners through a comprehensive collection of research reports and summaries, policy analyses, key findings, literature reviews, data collection instruments and measures, and datasets for use in secondary analysis.

Through *Research Connections*, data users can access and download over 150 datasets for use in secondary analysis including the Early Head Start Research and Evaluation Study, Head Start Family and Child Experiences Surveys, National Household Education Surveys and the Child Care and Development Fund Administrative Data. As a faculty member, you may be interested in conducting such analyses. For tips and a guide for data users, go to

<http://www.childcareresearch.org/childcare/tipsguide.jsp>

Research Connections Staff: Contact Information

Research Connections Teaching Modules Liaison:

Sharmila Lawrence
Research Associate
Email: sl684@columbia.edu

David Gottesman
Project Coordinator
Email: dg2575@columbia.edu

Research Connections Staff: Biographies

Lee Kreader

Dr. Lee Kreader is active in many of NCCP's research efforts, primarily in collaborative projects focused on child care and early education policy. He is director of *Research Connections*, jointly operated by NCCP in partnership with the Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research at the University of Michigan, through a cooperative agreement with the Child Care Bureau and the Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluation in the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Research Connections' easy-to-use web site (www.researchconnections.org) features a comprehensive and up-to-date collection of research in the field, aiming to improve research quality and enhance its accessibility and utility for policymakers, practitioners, and researchers.

Lee has represented NCCP on research teams working with: Abt Associates (National Study of Child Care for Low Income Families and the Evaluation of Child Care Subsidy Strategies); Bank Street College (Assessing Child Care Development Fund Investments in Child Care Quality); and Chapin Hall (Employment and TANF Outcomes for Low-Income Families Receiving Child Care Subsidies in Illinois, Maryland, and Texas). He was co-director of NCCP's Child Care Research Partnership and part of the five-state study team for The Dynamics of Child Care Subsidy Use. He also coordinated Promoting the Well-Being of Infants, Toddlers, and Their Families: Innovative Community and State Strategies for NCCP.

Prior to joining NCCP in late 1998, Lee served as Assistant Chief and Administrator for Program Development of the Bureau of Child Care and Development, Illinois Department of Human Services. He was planner and first coordinator for Illinois' child care resource and referral system and has directed child care programs throughout Chicago. Lee received his PhD in United States social history from the University of Chicago.

Sharmila Lawrence

Ms. Sharmila Lawrence is a Research Associate for NCCP's *Research Connections* project. She coordinates the project's collaboration and outreach efforts and helps in the development of research and policy publications on key issues related to early care and education. Previously at NCCP she worked with the Research Forum to synthesize and disseminate research findings on the impact of welfare reform on child and family well-being. Her past research focused on issues of domestic violence and related barriers among low-income vulnerable populations.

Sharmila earned a Master's degree in International Affairs from Columbia University and holds a Bachelor's degree in International Relations from the College of Wooster.

David Gottesman

Mr. David Gottesman is the Project Coordinator for NCCP's *Research Connections* project. He coordinates the project's collaboration, outreach, and technical assistance efforts. Previously at NCCP, he worked on the Improving The Odds For Young Children project.

David is a graduate of Tufts University, and he holds a Bachelor's degree in child development and psychology.