

Module 5
***Research Connections* and The Early Childhood Profession**
Worksheet 5.1: Current Trends and Critical Issues

Your Name _____ Course _____ Date _____

Your trend or issue (individual, team or whole class) _____

Back-up _____

As discussed in class, you will use *Research Connections* to learn more about a current trend or critical issue in the early childhood profession, including issues related to school-age children. For this part of the assignment, your main source of information will be the *Research Connections* web site, www.researchconnections.org. Using the Search Tips in your guide and other suggestions from your instructor, learn more about your assigned trend or issue.

<p>1. Begin by doing a search from the home page using as the search term an "exact phrase" for your trend or issue. You can do this by putting your phrase in quotation marks. Describe the initial results.</p>	<p>How many resources? How many were peer reviewed journal articles?</p>
<p>2. Focus your search in one or more of the ways suggested by your instructor (for example, you might search only for very recent research or only for "Fact Sheets and Briefs"; you can do this by using the filters on the right side of the results page. You also might try to answer a specific question you have, using several search terms simultaneously. This can be done by clicking "More</p>	<p>What did you do to filter the search? What were the results? (describe briefly)</p>

Search Options", putting your terms into the different boxes, and searching from All Fields.	
3. Following the format given by your instructor, summarize your findings about this trend or issue in a poster or other display.	On this worksheet, just make a few notes about main points you will summarize.
4. Finally, consider how this current trend or critical issue may specifically affect your future in the early childhood field. Include these reflections in a way determined by your instructor.	On this worksheet, simply note a few preliminary reflections.

Examples of current trends and critical issues (need to receive instructor's approval). These are just examples.

- State "QRS"s (Quality Rating and Improvement Systems)Family structure or family composition
- Wages and compensation for early childhood educators
- Working families
- Child care funding
- Head Start reauthorization
- Growing numbers of children who are bilingual
- Concerns about low quality in infant-toddler programs
- Greater numbers of children with disabilities in early childhood programs
- State-funded prekindergarten programs (State PreK)
- Homeless children and families
- Children with serious medical conditions (e.g., HIV/AIDS)
- School age programs' impact on academic success; and prevention of negative behaviors (i.e. substance abuse).

Other notes:

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***Research Connections* and The Early Childhood Profession**
Worksheet 5.2: ECE Systems and Services

Your Name _____ Course _____ Date _____

The component of the ECE system that you are investigating: _____

As discussed in class, your team will be responsible for becoming the experts on one component of the ECE service delivery system—this might be family child care; kindergarten, state preK, Early Head Start, school-age programs, or some other service or setting. Your main source of information will be the *Research Connections* web site, www.researchconnections.org. Using the Search Tips in your guide and other suggestions from your instructor, learn more about this component and be prepared to share your knowledge with your classmates in a “jigsaw” format. If your class is able to have a panel discussion, your team should also be prepared to interview the visitor(s) who work in “your” setting.

1. Begin by doing an initial search from the home page using your assigned ECE component as the search term. Briefly describe the results.	How many resources? How many were Fact Sheets?
2. Filter or refine your search, using some of the suggestions discussed in class or in the <i>Research Connections</i> “Guide to Searching the Collection.” For example, if there are many, many resources, consider limiting only to those that have come out in the past year.	What did you do to refine the search? Filters? New term? Combinations of terms with AND or OR? Etc? What were the results? (fewer/more/better resources, etc.)

<p>3. With your teammates, look at some of the most relevant and interesting information (some can be downloaded directly from this site; in other cases use your library access to download full-text).</p>	<p>What are the key points you will share during your part of the "jigsaw"? What will be most informative and relevant for your classmates to know? (make notes here)</p>
<p>4. By filtering your search to show only "Fact Sheets and Briefs," identify 1-2 short resources that (with your instructor's permission) can be copied and shared with the class as part of your "jigsaw."</p>	<p>Note which resource(s) your team chose.</p>
<p>5. Identify questions about your team's ECE component, that you could ask of a panelist or someone else whom you might interview (for example, if you are researching Infant-Toddler Child Care, this might be an infant-toddler caregiver or administrator).</p>	<p>Note questions here.</p>

Other notes:

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Worksheet 5.3: Observing and Measuring ECE Quality

Your Name _____ Course _____ Date _____

As part of your class discussions of quality, this assignment will help you find some of the many ways in which ECE quality, including quality in diverse settings such as family child care and school-age programs, has been described and measured by researchers. You will find actual "instruments" (observation tools, questionnaires, or other measures), look at these, and reflect on their value. Some of this material will be included in your professional portfolio. Your main source of information will be the *Research Connections* web site, www.researchconnections.org.

1. Search using "quality", and filter your search so that you limit the results to "Instruments"	How many resources before and after the filtering process?
2. Using the brief descriptions as a guide, identify a few instruments to look at more closely. Some may be directly downloaded from <i>Research Connections</i> ; others can be accessed through your library.	List the instruments you looked at and briefly describe them using the chart at the end of this worksheet. For example, what aspects of quality are they trying to measure? Are they classroom observation tools? Questionnaires for teachers or parents? (etc.)
3. If possible, informally try out one of these in your workplace or student teaching setting (consult with your instructor to see if this is possible). You are not collecting research data, just seeing what it is like to use this kind of instrument.	Just make notes here about what you might do.

<p>4. Whether or not you've been able to use one of the instruments, reflect on how well you think it might measure quality, and also what some of the challenges are when trying to achieve quality in this area.</p>	<p>Make a few notes here.</p>
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Describing Quality Instruments

<p>Name of Instrument</p>	<p>Type of instrument (classroom or program observation; questionnaire; individual assessment of children, etc.)</p>	<p>What is being measured? (e.g., overall classroom or program quality; specific interactions of staff/teachers with children; parents' satisfaction; language and literacy environment; etc.)</p>	<p>Who is being studied? (e.g., teachers, all children in class, individual children, parents)</p>
<p>1.</p>			
<p>2.</p>			

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Worksheet 5.4: Quality Improvement Initiatives within and Beyond Your State

Your Name _____ Course _____ Date _____

As part of your class discussions of quality, this assignment will increase your awareness of various state initiatives to improve the quality of programs and services for young children, in your state and elsewhere. Some of this material will be included in your professional portfolio. Again, your main source of information will be the *Research Connections* web site, www.researchconnections.org-- in particular, resources found through browsing the collection using Topical Classifications.

1. "Browse" Topic #1 ("Child Care and Early Education Quality"), specifically the subtopic "Quality Initiatives."	How many resources did this produce?
2. On the Search Results page, look for your state, and if it is listed (don't forget "More!"), filter the results to review only initiatives in your state.	Summarize: how many Quality Initiative results are there for your state (or if your state is not listed, pick another that interests you)? What kinds of quality improvement efforts do you see? For example, is the state using a Quality Rating and Improvement system? Is the state focusing on professional development? Etc.
3. Download at least one of the resources and bring to class.	
4. From what you have learned about quality improvement initiatives, in your state or other states, reflect on what these might mean for your	Make a few notes here, and include in your portfolio if your instructor requests.

own current or future work in the early childhood field. Does the state seem to be focused on important aspects of quality? What are gaps or problems?

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Worksheet 5.5: Beyond Higher Education—Training and Professional Development

Your Name _____ Course _____ Date _____

Your Search Term (choose from Training; Mentoring; Professional Development) _____

As discussed in class, in this assignment you will learn more about current ways of helping early childhood and school-age practitioners continue to learn and grow professionally. You will identify and download brief reports on training, mentoring, and other professional development and will include reflections on this information as part of a professional portfolio. Try to focus on ongoing training for people who work in the kind of setting you are likely to spend time in. Again, your main source of information will be the *Research Connections* web site, www.researchconnections.org.

<p>1. Identify some "Fact Sheets and Briefs." Using your search term and filtering the results to show only "Fact Sheets and Briefs", what are examples of things that you found? Review and summarize on this worksheet and attach 1-2 downloaded documents.</p>	<p>Put your summary here.</p>
<p>2. Narrow the scope if you wish. For example, if you are interested in Head Start, kindergarten, or after school programs do a search using "More Search Options," with two search terms simultaneously—your original search term AND also "kindergarten" or Family Child Care or some other setting, etc. (Be sure to click on "All Fields" for</p>	<p>Put your summary here.</p>

<p>both of your search terms. Again, review and summarize what you found and attach 1-2 documents.</p>	
<p>3. Reflect on your future growth. From this information as well as class discussions, consider what you may need for your continuing professional development. Might the kind of training described in some of these resources meet your needs? If not, what else might you require? Make notes on this worksheet and expand for your portfolio.</p>	<p>Make notes here.</p>

Other notes:

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Research Connections and The Early Childhood Profession Worksheet 5.6: State Standards

Your Name _____ Course _____ Date _____

Your State _____

State for Comparison _____

Every state has its own standards and regulations—whether these are Early Learning Standards, regulations for child care centers and family child care homes, school-age programs, or K-12 content standards. Early childhood professionals need to understand and critically examine these kinds of standards. In this assignment, you will review your own state's Early Learning Standards (or other standards assigned by your instructor). You will also compare these to standards from one other state. Again, your main source of information will be the *Research Connections* web site, www.researchconnections.org. As described by your instructor, use the "More Search Options" feature and include the name of your state as one of the search terms. The other term can be "Early Learning Standards" (remember to surround it in quotation marks because it is an "Exact Phrase"). Make sure you search from All Fields. You can further filter your search on the results page by selecting your state under "Filter by State." To compare states, do the same thing using the name of the other state.

<p>1. Your state's Early Learning Standards. Use the instructions above to find and download these standards. Preview to see how many different categories of standards there are, what those categories are, how many different items, etc.</p>	<p>Summarize notes about your state's ELS here.</p>
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<p>2. The comparison state. Use the same procedure to find and download the Early Learning Standards from a second state. Preview these in the same way.</p>	<p>Summarize notes about the other state's ELS here.</p>
<p>3. Presenting your comparison. With guidance from your instructor, prepare a chart or poster comparing these two sets of standards on certain criteria. Be prepared to discuss with classmates who have done comparisons with other states. What do you think of your own states' standards? How would you use these kinds of standards as an early childhood professional?</p>	<p>Summarize similarities and differences here.</p>

Other notes:

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Worksheet 5.7: Ethical Issues When Doing Research
in Child Development and Early Education

Your Name _____ Course _____ Date _____

As discussed in class, in this assignment you will expand your thinking about the ethics of research in early childhood development and education. Be sure you start by becoming familiar with NAEYC's Code of Ethical Conduct, http://www.naeyc.org/about/positions/ethical_conduct.asp. Then please follow the steps below, individually or as a team. Again, your main source of information will be the *Research Connections* web site, www.researchconnections.org.

<p>1. Find resources on ethics. From the <i>Research Connections</i> home page, go to "More Search Options" and search for resources using the term "ethics" OR "ethical" AND "research" Search from All Fields. Although this search will yield many results, remember that these are sorted by relevance to your search terms. Focusing on those at the top of the results list, preview and select a few that seem to focus specifically on ethical issues when conducting research with young children and that are especially interesting and relevant. For example, students interested in school-age care might investigate ethical issues in studies of children who</p>	<p>List your key resources here.</p>
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<p>are unsupervised or who engage in risky behavior when home alone. Download 1-2 if possible.</p>	
<p>2. Find a study on a topic that helps you think about the ethics of research. As guided by your instructor, you will find one peer-reviewed study on one of the following: child abuse; peer aggression; infant distress. Perform an exact phrase search by surrounding your phrase with quotation marks, and remember the green icon for peer-reviewed resources. Download your article in full text if possible. Read the article to try to get the gist of what the researchers did, and how they did it ("Methods").</p>	<p>List your reference here.</p>
<p>3. Reflect on ethical issues in doing this kind of research. Try to apply some of the principles and recommendations from the NAEYC Code and from the other ethics resources, as you think about the study you found. Do you think it is ethical to do this kind of research? If so, how did the researcher seem to protect the rights of the children or families that were studied? Hint: sometimes the "Methods" section of a research article discusses how the research participants were treated.</p>	<p>Make notes here.</p>

Other notes:

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Research Connections and Families of Young Children Worksheet 5.8: Global Perspectives on ECE

Your Name _____ Course _____ Date _____

Which Country You Are Investigating? (not U.S.) _____

Which Component of ECE? Child Care Kindergarten School-Age Care

Although your course probably focuses mainly on the U.S., we live in a global environment. Early childhood professionals need to be aware of how other countries are addressing many of the same challenges. For this assignment, you will use *Research Connections* to begin to learn more about some aspects of early childhood services outside the U.S. Again, your main source of information will be the *Research Connections* web site, www.researchconnections.org. As described by your instructor, begin by browsing Topical Classification #13, "International Child Care and Early Education," just to get a general idea of what is available about ECE in other countries, through *Research Connections*. Then use the "More Search Options" feature to do a more systematic search and include the name of "your" designated country as one of the search terms. The other term can be either "Child Care" or "Kindergarten," depending on your instructor's suggestion. Remember to search from All Fields. Using the chart below, make notes on as many of the key features as you can (your sources may not have all of this information, so include what you can). Bring this to class and be prepared to discuss with others, who have explored other countries' ECE situations. Your instructor may have other requirements to supplement these.

Aspect of ECE Programs and Services

Examples/Information from This Country

Does there seem to be much current interest in this aspect of ECE in "your" country?	
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Who is served (ages of children)? Do many/most families receive the service?	
Who pays for the services?	
What is the education and training of teachers?	
What is emphasized in the curriculum or teaching methods?	
What are the problems or challenges that are discussed in your sources?	
Other information that is valuable to share?	

Sources used (list 3-4 of the most useful sources that you found on *Research Connections*)

Other notes: