

## **A1: Igniting Discussions and Sharing Insights on Equity and Access**

Wednesday, February 7, 2018

10:45 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. | Washington I

### **1. Descriptive Information**

#### **A1: Igniting Discussions and Sharing Insights on Equity and Access**

Researching equity in family access to high quality early care and Education (ECE) is critical, especially in light of the 2014 reauthorization of the Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF). Given the considerable diversity among children and families seeking child care in the US, this session will use an innovative ignite format (7 presenters, 5 minutes each 20 slides) to share research, tools, and challenges when conducting studies of equity and accessibility. This will be followed by an in-depth discussion among participants about questions related to implications of findings for policy, practice and research. Discussion will include implications of CCDF reauthorization, policy strategies, guiding questions for research about equity in access, definitions of access as applied to diverse sub-populations, and potential research methods that appropriately measure the extent that access to ECE experiences is indeed equitable.

#### **Facilitator**

**Anna Johnson**, Georgetown University and Child Trends

#### **Panelists**

**Iheoma Iruka**, High Scope Research Foundation | *African American Children in Early Childhood Education: Making the Case for Holistic Supports*

**Gina Adams**, The Urban Institute | *Inadvertent Barriers to Subsidies for Four Populations of Concern: Infants and Toddlers, Children whose Parents Work Non-Traditional Work Schedules, Children Living in Rural Areas, and Children with Special Needs*

**Lisa Ojibway**, Child Care State Capacity Building Center | *Cultural and Linguistic Responsiveness with Infants/Toddlers*

**Katie Paschall**, Child Trends | *Measuring and Comparing ECE Access for Families: Analysis of National Survey of Early Care and Education*

**Amy Susman-Stillman**, University of Minnesota | *Barriers and Solutions to Preschool Attendance in Low-Income Families*

**Rebecca Swartz**, University of Illinois, Urbana Champaign | *Meaningful Messaging: Empowering Families and Caregivers through Information about Early Care and Education*

**Beth Rous**, University of Kentucky | *Inclusive Early Childhood QRIS Policy Evaluation Framework: Do QRISs Adequately Support Young Children with Special Needs and Their Families?*

#### **Scribe**

**Yasara Perera**, ICF

## 2. Documents Available on Website

- a. African American Children in Early Childhood Education: Ensuring Equitable High Quality Access
- b. Measuring Access to ECE using the National Survey of Early Care and Education

## 3. Brief Summary of Presentations

- **Summary of Presentation #1: Iheoma Iruka**, African American Children in Early Childhood Education: Ensuring Equitable High Quality Access
  - This presentation provided an overview of access to early childhood education for African American children. It initially started with a discussion of statistics of the current situation African American children are experiencing in terms of access to early childhood education. One key takeaway of this presentation was that access does not equate to quality. The presentation then walked through four ways (below) to ensure equitable access to education for African American children
    - Protection: Involves physical and emotional safe spaces that promote the love of learning and eagerness.
    - Affection: Involves nurturing the identities of children to ensure they feel valued and supported.
    - Correction: Provides support for adaptive behaviors, accountability and reconnecting children to be their best selves.
    - Connection: Involves creating a social, emotional and cultural connection in their lives.
- **Summary of Presentation #2: Lisa Ojibway**, Cultural Responsiveness with Infants/Toddlers and Their Families
  - This presentation discussed cultural inclusion, specifically among infants and toddlers and their families. The presentation started with a discussion of current statistics on infant and toddler education as well as information about the expectations of infant/toddler teachers. There currently is a mismatch between learning experiences the child needs and the quality of education they currently receive.
  - Cultural responsiveness, according to the presenter, involved identifying development that informs the infant's sense of self and creating a continuity between the child's home environment and their learning environment. The presenter provided six PITC (Program for Infant and Toddler Care) practices to expand cultural responsiveness between teachers and infants/toddlers and their families.
  - The presenter then identified 5 ways to be culturally responsive in infant/toddler classrooms:
    - Acknowledge, act, adapt
    - Interact with families as they are experts in their culture and language
    - Infuse culture and language into early childhood classroom
    - Draw connections to early learning outcomes framework
    - Support policy makers to strengthen equity and access – encourage workforce diversity, support infants/toddlers that keep them rooted in their culture
- **Summary of Presentation #3: Katie Paschall**, Measuring Access to ECE using the National Survey of Early Care and Education
  - This presentation walked through the four dimensions of access and how they were defined in the survey. The survey looked at a multitude of variables such as providers, the care available in the area, whether the care matches the needs of the families, etc. The presenter noted that the question is how availability and affordability work together in terms of access.
- **Summary of Presentation #4: Amy Susman-Stillman**, Preschool Attendance Project
  - This presentation focused on children enrolled in preschool and if they have equitable access to education. The presentation looked at barriers low income families face in preschool and what solutions are needed to eliminate these barriers.

- The study looked at ten half day classrooms and interviewed as many families as possible. The study looked at parents' work statuses, education, ethnicity, school affected attendance, etc. The study determined that the higher the number of barriers, the lower the attendance rate. African American and Hispanic families faced a higher number of barriers compared to other ethnicities. The two biggest barriers for families were teachers and buses. The study found that students had higher attendance if they took the bus.
- Ultimately, there is a need to find more ways to look at attendance challenges, and it is important to pay more attention to potential solutions and evaluations.
- **Summary of Presentation #5: Beth Rous**, Establishing A Structure to Evaluate QRIS Support for Inclusion
  - The presentation focused on quality frameworks being aligned with QRIS. The framework should be inclusive, accessible, and supportive. Teachers also need to provide accommodations to allow children with disabilities to participate. The presenter also discussed that children need to be actively supported through things like professional development, infrastructure, and collaboration. The presenter discussed three main themes to align QRIS with current school framework: domains, function/purpose, and theory/philosophy. Ultimately, the goal is to have equity and access to children with disabilities and their families.
- **Summary of Presentation #6: Rebecca Swartz**, Meaningful Messaging: Empowering Families and Caregivers through Families
  - Although this presenter was not there in person, she provided a video presentation regarding access to early childhood education (ECE). The presenter provided resources to families and early childhood education professionals. The presentation advocated for systemic program efforts to provide meaningful messaging to families and early childhood education. Information sharing is a time to provide meaningful messages and create and provide caregivers support through the ECE system. The presenter discussed developing materials that ensure that messaging is reaching the right groups of people and emphasizing the idea of show, not tell. The presenter then discussed the "Share a PEAR" (outlined below), which is trying to increase access to families and open dialogue with families.
    - Problem solve
    - Empathize
    - Amplify/soften
    - Reframe
- **Summary of Presentation #7 : Gina Adams**
  - This presenter was unable to attend the event.

#### 4. Brief Summary of Discussion

- a. There are 4 distinct vulnerable subgroups
  - i. Young black children
  - ii. Infants/toddlers – cultural responsive care
  - iii. Children with special needs
  - iv. Children with parents working non-standard hours and those living in rural areas
  - v. Absenteeism (all of the above may fall into this bucket)
- b. **Q:** What distinguishes type of care and hours available as operationally distinct?
  - i. Type of care is classified under meeting the parents' needs and desires. When we looked at availability, we were looking at how many providers there were generally. We can differentiate between parts of the parents' desires versus reasonable effort. We can access preference and availability by type.
  - ii. Availability speaks more to supply and preferences speak more to demand. We were looking at what extent these two areas intersect.
  - iii. Demand is also the availability of care versus the number of infants. There is not a perfect correlation in these dimensions.
  - iv. You can have a lot of access but if quality is not sufficient, we have to hold all of these things together. The question is how do we actually bring those things together?

- v. Do centers exist that are going to be developmentally beneficial to kids? We have to restrict our definition of supply if our definition is looking at the needs of the children.
- c. **Q:** Do you know the type of providers that the children are enrolled in? Did they have subsidies?
  - i. Subsidy was not involved when looking at preschool attendance. The study was just looking at school-based programs.
- d. **Q:** Iheoma, can you define racial literacy and discuss it more?
  - i. The idea is looking at what is race as a social construct. We need to become more racially literate about this issue. Howard Stevenson has a book and papers available that discuss this topic.
  - ii. Racial literacy is developing collaborative reciprocal relationships and is about continuous quality improvement. We need to improve policies and practices to become more racially literate.
  - iii. It is also about cultural humility – allowing people to know that you are willing to engage in those conversations.
- e. **Q:** What about urban areas that are concerned with absences? What kinds of options would be useful?
  - i. There are very few interventions in published literature. The study on preschool attendance was looking at social capital. There is a perpetuating idea that we need to be isolated from other people and not think that social capital is important. There were 3 week differences between schools in attendance. What are the configurations of the school (Homeless and Highly Mobile kids)? A lot of work needs to be done, and there is very little evidence out there.
- f. There are high absentee populations of Hispanic children because of vacation. We have to be culturally sensitive and aware of this.
  - i. If you are absent for a certain number of days, you are going to lose your spot in preschool. The issue is how do we ensure that these families are staying connected with their family members in other countries and ensure that kids are participating in the program as well?
- g. **Q:** How do we bridge the issue with QRIS standards especially within a state system?
  - i. We wanted to create a toolkit to look at QRIS standards and look at their practices but that is not going to work. We need to ensure that people are aware that these standards are written at different levels. It is taking us a lot longer to get through just the three states we were observing for this study.
  - ii. Each state has different QRIS standards. We need to develop access because we are not going to meet licensing requirements. To what extent are we motivating providers to encourage the enrollment of children that have special needs and disabilities?
  - iii. We have to be reflective of the community served. We need to think about how to reach out to families and communities to include them in the program and materials so they feel included.
  - iv. We should think through these standards – demand standards that could create another level of equity. How do we transform the workforce that is prepared and adequately compensate them?
- h. **Q:** How do we measure these barriers and obtain evidence of who is attending and who is not? We have to broaden the conversation that attendance is intertwined with health. Are schools interested in larger partnerships?
  - i. There are many angles which you can take this. We are continuing to work on this.
- i. The problem is that it is hard to measure need. As researchers, we need to figure out what these needs are. The question is how we use our tools to highlight what those needs are in a non-judgmental way.
- j. There is a loss of learning time, but we need to think about scheduling so that kids do not fall behind.

**5. Summary of Key issues raised** (facilitators are encouraged to spend the last 3-5 minutes of sessions summarizing the key issues raised during the session; bullets below are prompts for capturing the kinds of issues we're looking for)

- a. N/A