B3: *Improving the Accuracy and Feasibility of Infant and Toddler Assessment in Applied Settings*
Wednesday, April 17, 2019
2:30 p.m. – 3:45 p.m. | *Latrobe*

1. Descriptive Information

B3: *Improving the Accuracy and Feasibility of Infant and Toddler Assessment in Applied Settings*	**Facilitator** **Cornelia Taylor**, SRI

This session will be structured as a series of facilitated discussions with content bursts for framing. The facilitated discussions will build upon each other covering the current use of infant assessment in applied settings, the key outcomes, the available tools, and the innovation needed to increase the accuracy and reduce burden. The session will include time for the audience to share their experiences and solutions and learn from each other.
 	
Outcomes measurement for infants and toddlers is a time consuming and expensive endeavor which can produce inaccurate results. The challenges associated with assessment are magnified in applied contexts like Head Start and Child Care where providers may lack the time and resources necessary to invest in purchasing the tools and acquiring the appropriate training. This session will focus on generating innovative solutions for measuring the most important outcomes in applied settings.
 	
The session will begin by setting the context for infant toddler assessment in a landscape of increased use of assessment for accountability and program improvement. Next will be discussion about infant toddler outcomes and theories of change that tie those outcomes to program activities. The next presentation will focus on the tools currently used to measure infant and toddler outcomes in applied settings. The final presentation will be focused on needed innovation to improve the accuracy and feasibility of infant toddler assessment.
	Presenters
	     Judi Stevenson-Garcia, National Center on Development Teaching and Learning, Zero to Three
		Current Landscape of Infant Toddler Assessment in Applied Settings
		
		     Diane Horm, University of Oklahoma at Tulsa
			Key Infant Toddler Outcomes and Relationships to Theories of Change
			
			     Sally Adkins-Burnett, Mathematica Policy Research
				The Use of Infant Toddler Assessment Tools in Applied Contexts
				
				Scribe
				     Caroline Faux, ICF

2. Documents Available on Website

- Atkins-Burnett_Assessing Infants and Toddlers

3. Brief Summary of Presentations

- **Summary of Presentation #1: Diane Horm, University of Oklahoma at Tulsa | Key Infant Toddler Outcomes and Relationships to Theories of Change**
  - Diane is a researcher at the Early Childhood Education at OU Tulsa and collaborates with Head Start. She has administered 15,000 child assessments on 1,800 children and conducted 700 classroom observations. In assessment, the purpose and content are important. Things to consider include the limitations: assessments are a sample, items reflect a perspective, this shapes what/content. Thus, consider alignment with your goals, a logic model highlights what is important in a program.
  - Diane looked at Educare's Logic Model which is trying to achieve increased student achievement through strong parent relationships, school-family partnerships and parent support to learning. It is important to look at developmentally appropriate outcomes that are supported by research to be related to school readiness.
  - The Developmental Foundations of School Readiness is an OPRE Report (February 2016). It was a network of I/T Researchers that look at early precursors that have been linked to later school readiness

(a literature review). This was guided by two frameworks: NEGP-1991 and definition of school readiness versus Head Start Early Learning Outcomes 2015 1:1 domains outline. Important developmental principles include: I/T is a unique developmental period, serves as foundation for all that follows, age appropriate strategies and focus, attention to all developmental domains, and culture and context are important. The purpose of the OPRE report was to guide practice and policy, no specific focus on assessment. It is important to look at how we access the environment, in all sections. How do we share across systems?

o There are current gaps in direct child assessments, parent and teacher ratings/attributes, classroom observation tools, analogy of a patchwork quilt (one or two tools, more parent/teacher ratings, and emphasis on observation of adults. Other issues include challenge of knowledge of caregivers of assessments that are given to I/T.

- **Summary of Presentation #2: Judi Stevenson-Garcia, National Center on Development Teaching and Learning, Zero to Three | Current Landscape of Infant Toddler Assessment in Applied Settings**
    - o Head Start wants to improve data quality for program performance standards. A popular tool for ongoing Child Assessment is Teaching Strategies GOLD which is used by almost 60% of Head Start Programs (Early Head Start and Head Start)
    - o Common barriers to data use include data skills, availability of time to review and interpret the data, program culture does not prioritize data use/expect that data is part of the job, or data reporting tools do not support easy use by staff and management.

- **Summary of Presentation #3: Sally Adkins-Burnett, Mathematica Policy Research | The Use of Infant Toddler Assessment Tools in Applied Contexts**
    - o All assessments involve collecting samples of behavior. Observational assessments are the most common method of assessment used in I/T classrooms (checklists, rating scales, rubrics
    - o Principles for I/T assessment included the framework of typical development while taking cultural variations into account. Development is interdependent. Multiples sources of information are needed to get an accurate picture of children's development across developmental domains. Without training, professional development, this is hard to do. The caregiver child relationship matters, as well as collaboration with families.
    - o Early Care provides need access to professional development and ongoing guidance in using assessment, as well as clearer guidance about how and when to collect assessment information. Another recommendation is clearer guidance about how to use assessment information to look across domains and to link assessment to instructional decisions.

4. **Brief Summary of Discussion**

    - Indicators should be chosen carefully.
    - There needs to be integrative data, and there are some examples of states doing so (California).
    - Allentown, PA is trying to integrate data with Head Start.
    - It's important to look at biomarkers and Non-Disclosure Agreements when it comes to integrating data.

5. **Summary of Key Issues Raised**

    - *Emerging findings that may be of particular interest to policy-makers and ACF?*
        - o Most Head Start and Early Head Start programs are using Teaching Strategies GOLD to collect child assessment data. The Teaching Strategies GOLD instrument has very limited sensitivity to growth in infants.
        - o Providers still struggle to use assessment data to inform child level programing.

- *Methodological issues including innovative methodologies that may help maximize resources available for research and evaluation?*
    - Integrated data systems have the possibility of reducing data collection burden on individual programs and improving the usefulness of data in describing infants experiences.
    - Moving forward we need to provide clearer guidance on the link between assessment and programming.
- *Follow-up activities suggested addressing questions and gaps (e.g., secondary analyses of data, consensus meetings of experts, research synthesis or brief, webinar, etc.)?*
    - Choose indicators carefully.
- *Recommendations about future ACF child care research directions and priorities?*
    - Assessments that are sensitive to growth in infants and toddlers need to be researched and made available more broadly.