Child Care Collaboration Study
Child Care and Early Education Policy Research Consortium
Grantee Meeting
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Background: Key Policy Issues

Policy Issues

• Federal and state initiatives are supporting collaborations among Head Start, child care and pre-K programs
• Initiatives are designed to create more seamless and higher quality early care and education for children and families
• Questions exist about the nature and influence of collaborations on quality and comprehensiveness of services

Research Team

• Diane Schilder, Meghan Broadstone, Sarah Kim, & Jess Gropen

State Partners

• Maryland Department of Education
• Vermont Department of Children & Families
Child Care Collaboration Study Questions

1. What is the nature of collaboration at the:
   • State-level
     • Child Care and Development Fund Administrators
     • Head Start State Collaboration Office Directors
     • ECE Specialists in State Departments of Education overseeing state pre-Kindergarten
   • Community-level
     • Child care providers
     • Head Start/Early Head Start programs
     • Pre-K providers
     • Informal organizations and coalitions

2. What is the association between collaboration and structural indicators of child care quality including: QRIS rating, provision of comprehensive services, professional development incentives, employee benefits, and use of standardized curriculum
# Child Care Collaboration Study Methods

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<th>Study Phase</th>
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<td>Phase 1: National trends/patterns in collaboration</td>
<td>Review of Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) Plans</td>
<td>• 2014-2015 CCDF state and territory plans (N=49)</td>
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| | National Online Survey | • CCDF Administrators (N=48)  
• Head Start State Collaboration Office Directors (HSSCD) (N=48)  
• State Early Childhood Specialists/Pre-K Administrators (N=25) |
| Phase 2: Collaboration in Vermont and Maryland at state agency and local levels | State Administrator Online Survey | • CCDF, HSSCD, State Early Childhood Specialists (N=6) |
| | State Administrator Professional Network Survey | • CCDF, HSSCD, State Early Childhood Specialists (N=6) |
| | State Level Network Survey | • Professional Networks of CCDF, HSSCD, State Early Childhood Specialists from Vermont (N=51) and Maryland (N=25) |
| | Provider Pilot Study | • Child Care Providers in Vermont (N=7) and Maryland (N=7) |
| | Provider Formal and Informal Collaboration Online Survey | • Child Care Providers in Vermont (N=191) and Maryland (N=118) |
| | Provider Network Online Survey | • Child Care Providers in Vermont (N=171) and Maryland (N=112) |
Findings
Study Results: State-Level Collaboration

Factors that support state-level collaboration:

• Regular scheduled meetings
• Pre-existing relationships at the state agency level
• Objectives and work or strategic plans that are consistent

Factors less important to collaboration:

• Defined roles and responsibilities
• Sufficient time
Study Results: State-Level Collaboration

Barriers to state-level collaboration:

• Conflicting program requirements or regulations
• Funding constraints

Other barriers to state-level collaboration that are less frequently cited:

• Governance structure (where agency is housed)
• Supervisory structure/reporting relationships
Study Results: Program-Level Collaboration

Question
Do programs in collaboration with Head Start, Early Head Start, and/or Preschool Development Grantees, differ from those not collaborating in terms of size and characteristics of children served?

Answer
Collaborating programs differ from non-collaborating programs in terms of:

- Size (in terms of number of children enrolled)
- Percentage of children with documented special education needs
- Racial/ethnic diversity of children in attendance
Study Results: Program-Level Collaboration

Question
Do programs in collaboration with Head Start, Early Head Start, and/or Preschool Development Grantees, differ from those not collaborating in terms of structural indicators of quality?

Answer
Collaborating programs differ from non-collaborating programs in terms of:

- QRIS ratings
- Professional development opportunities
- Employee benefits
- Provision of comprehensive services
- Use of standard curriculum
Main Findings/Conclusions

State-level collaborations

• Conflicting program requirements and regulations are a barrier to collaboration at the state level

• Structures such as an early childhood advisory council and a Quality Rating and Improvement System can support collaboration

Program-level formal collaborations

• Programs in formal collaboration differ in terms of the demographics of children served

• Although collaboration is correlated with higher quality, self-selection could be a reason
Implications for Policy

State-level policy implications

- Regular meetings and existing structures are cited by state-level stakeholders as key to collaboration across child care, Head Start and pre-K
- Therefore, supporting or requiring meetings among those responsible for early care and education programming could support collaboration success

Program-level policy implications

- Formal program-level collaboration is associated with improved structural indicators of quality
- Although policymakers might require early care and education programs in collaboration to meet specific quality standards, the study authors cannot yet recommend such policies
- Additional analysis is first needed to better understand the relationship
Remaining Questions/Next Steps

Study team plans to:

• Collect qualitative data from programs to better understand the reasons child care programs engage in collaboration or decide against collaboration

• Examine relationship between state-level collaborative initiatives and program-level collaborations as well as indicators of quality

• Analyze differences between family child care and center based child care to determine if differences exist based on provider type
More Information

Check Out Findings from 15 Years of Early Childhood Partnership Research

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