Overview

- Brief overview of Early Education and Development Special Issue on Early Childhood Collaboration
- Overview of key findings
- Perspectives from policymakers and researchers on the policy and research implications

Early Education and Development Special Issue on Collaboration

- Early Education and Development (EED) is a top-tier peer reviewed academic journal in early childhood field
- Dr. Curenton is currently an associate editor of EED
- EED accepted a proposal for a special issue on collaboration and published a call for a special issue in July 2017
- Emails were sent to national researchers who were engaged in research on collaboration to encourage contributions to the journal

Definitions and Conceptualization of Coordination and Collaboration

- Authors used a range of definitions of the term “collaboration”
- All articles focus on two or more ECE staff or programs working together toward a common goal

Key Findings from Articles in Special Issue

- Why and how are ECE providers collaborating?
  - Specific grant funding or opportunities for ECE providers prompted collaborations.
  - Educators engaged in collaboration report sharing ideas for effective classroom practices, sharing curriculum plans, and working together on behavior management issues
  - Head Start directors collaborating with public schools to support transition report helping schools identify incoming kindergarteners, engaging in joint-trainings, and sharing curriculum

- What aspects of collaboration lead to success?
  - Success is defined differently in each study. It is important to frame research questions based on implications for equity.
  - Focus on mutual outcomes (such as meeting the needs of students) is predictive of stronger collaboration (as defined by process measures).
  - Establishing a collaborative relationship with clarity about the roles, regulations and processes appears key
  - Staff buy-in is critical
  - Joint understanding of regulations is important
  - Sharing of curriculum practice is one important aspect that appears linked with success
  - Strong administrative procedures such as contracts, procedures for explaining each program’s regulation, and processes for sharing data appear important for collaboration success
  - Time devoted to the collaboration is important for collaboration success
**What are the articles reporting about collaboration and desired improvements in classroom quality as well as child outcomes?**
- Regression analysis reveals a relationship between QRIS scores and collaborations that have stronger administrative practices and relationships among those in the collaboration
- EHS/CC partnerships report above average classroom quality scores
- Collaborations that focus on data and include multiple partners demonstrate improved classroom quality scores

**What are the articles reporting about collaboration success?**
- Two articles discussed “process success”
- EHS/CC partnerships report offering more comprehensive services and supports
- ECE providers participating in Educare collaborations report using data to inform targeted improvements
- Qualitative findings reveal:
  - collaborations help the programs enroll and retain larger numbers of four-year-olds
  - Collaborations helped programs enroll new four-year-olds whose families were looking for flexible hours and convenient wraparound care
  - Collaborations helped reach families who otherwise would probably not have attended the private program for the full day due to costs

**Questions about Implications for Policy**
- What are the implications for addressing issues of equity?
- What are the implications for federal policies and initiatives?
- Child care and Head Start regulations
- Preschool Development and Expansion Grant Birth to Five (PDG 2.0)?
- Title 1, Special Education (Part B and Part C), Home Visiting, etc.
- What are the implications for state child care administrators, preschool administrators, school districts, counties, and programs?

**Questions about Implications for Research**
- What are research implications of the articles in the special issue?
- Given the descriptive nature of the articles, what contextual information is important to include in the introduction of the special issue?
- What additional methods should be considered for future research?
- What questions should be posed in future research and analyses?

**Focus group of national research experts suggested research is needed that. . .**
- Reflects racially, culturally, and linguistic competence and focuses on the relationship between formal collaborations and issues of equity
- Employs consensus definition of collaboration and associated processes and outcomes is needed
- Uses mixed methods to unpack the processes that are related to success in different contexts and with a range of populations

**Advisors suggested that policies are needed that. . .**
- Focuses attention on issues of equity
- Are informed by the latest research on collaboration (accounting for what is still not known about collaboration)
- Support technical assistance as well as processes that research suggests are predictive of desired outcomes
Details about Articles in the Special Issue

Articles in the Special Issue focus on who is collaborating... 

- Head Start and Early Head Start program administrators and staff
- Child care center administrators and staff
- Family child care home providers
- Public school preschool teachers
- School districts receiving PDG grants
- Researchers, funders, practitioners and community members
- Early childhood educators and grantees
- Most of the articles (6 of the 8) focused on collaborations that followed formal guidelines such as collaborations supported by Early Head Start/Child Care Partnership grants, Preschool Expansion and Development grants, Head Start partnerships, Educare participation
- One article focuses on “informal” collaborations among teachers

Overview of What Is Missing...

- Articles that focus on state-level collaboration
- Articles that focus on collaborations between ECE programs and the broader social service system
- These are important to consider in future research and policy and also have been studied previously

Range of Research Questions Posed by Authors of Articles

- Several articles focus on describing collaboration by addressing questions focused on the “Why,” “How” and “What,” of collaboration:
  - Why are teachers engaged in collaborations?
  - How are partnerships between EHS programs and child care providers developed and maintained?
  - How do partners work together to deliver comprehensive, high quality, individualized services to children from low-income families?
  - What are the patterns and characteristics of collaboration among early childhood educators within and across sectors?
  - What work environment supports facilitate collaboration both within and across sectors?

Overview Specific Research Questions

- Several articles focus on aspects of collaboration that predict its success:
  - Which factors support success in communities that offer new publicly funded preschool slots in private early care and education programs?
  - Is the administration of a collaboration associated with its success?
  - Is the strength of the relationships among those engaged in the collaboration associated with collaboration success?
  - What transition practices that include collaboration are associated with children’s success in kindergarten?

What Research Questions were missing...

- What is the impact of collaboration on classroom quality or child outcomes? ... However, one article focused on associations between the collaboration and classroom quality and one included child outcome data
- What is the cost/benefit of collaboration? ... However, several articles discussed the importance of allocating personnel time to collaboration
Overview of Methodology across Studies

- Quantitative methods
- Surveys of those engaged in collaborations
- Assessments of classroom quality (of the classrooms engaged in collaboration)
- Secondary analysis of administrative data (FACES)

- Qualitative methods
- Focus groups
- Interviews
- Document reviews

Overview of Analytic Techniques Employed by Authors of the Studies

- Quantitative methods
  - Descriptive statistical analyses
  - Regression analyses
  - Network analyses

- Qualitative methods
  - Directed content analysis approach with deductive coding
  - Comparisons of responses and identification of themes across respondents within and across programs

- Mixed methods
  - Descriptive analyses coupled with qualitative examples

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