

## C2: Addressing Childhood Inequities through Alternative Methodological Approaches

Wednesday, February 7, 2018

4:00 p.m. – 5:15 p.m. | Washington II

### 1. Descriptive Information

#### **C2: Addressing Childhood Inequities through Alternative Methodological Approaches**

This session uses a racial/ethnic equity lens to examine large-scale research and evaluation studies of ECE. The first presentation highlights equity issues and measurement challenges in a state evaluation of the Preschool Development Grant in Virginia. The second presentation examines our capacity to study equity in CCDBG policy and administrative data. The final presentation describes the development and validation of the Early Childhood Organizational Equity Assessment to help YMCAs promote equitable access to high quality ECE programs. We will engage the audience in a dialogue about these projects, drawing connections to the plenary on equity in ECE. Attendees will understand the limits of current methods and data and will begin to consider what modifications or new tools will be needed to build capacity in our field for research that is responsive and able to substantially alter childhood inequities.

#### **Facilitator**

**Julia Mendez Smith**, University of North Carolina at Greensboro and the National Research Center on Hispanic Children and Families Research Foundation

#### **Panelists**

**Erika Gaylor**, SRI International | *Examining Racial/Ethnic Disparities in Child Outcomes in Preschool and Kindergarten: How to Interpret and What Actions Can We Take?*

**Pamela Joshi**, Brandeis University | *Incorporating an Equity Lens into CCDBG Policy Evaluation Research: What Questions to Ask and What Data are Needed?*

**Michael Abel**, McCormick Center for Early Childhood Leadership | *Promoting Equity through Organizational Policies and Practices: The Development and Validation of the Early Childhood Organizational Equity Assessment*

#### **Scribe**

**Katie Caldwell**, ICF

### 2. Documents Available on Website

N/A

### 3. Brief Summary of Presentations

- **Summary of Presentation #1: Julia Mendez Smith**

This is a solution focused session.

Three questions guided each presentation:

1. What frameworks were used to guide the research questions and methods of study?
2. What, if anything, they would have done differently in the study to directly study issues of equity?
3. What questions and gaps remain in ECE access and equity that we should address as a field?

- **Summary of Presentation #2: Erika Gaylor**

- Examining disparities in child outcomes in preschool and kindergarten.
- Traditional framework:
  - Compared to their white peers, African American and Hispanic children are behind
  - Usually then it is said that these are predictors and it's hard to catch up later in a child's schooling
  - Recent research shows that over the past 50 years these academic achievement gaps still exists
- What is missing from this traditional framework?
  - "Comparative deficit" approach - assuming differences are disparities, it positions the problem in the children and families not the system
  - Does very little to address the question as to why these differences exist
  - What is our role as researchers? How do we present this information? Are we helping people interpret the data?

Example: Virginia Preschool Initiative Plus (using funds to improve quality of preschool instruction in high needs communities)

- Biannual reports of data that get fed back to the school districts and the state
- Majority demonstrate kindergarten readiness and varies by demographic characteristics. See differences in gender and race and ethnicity
- Kindergarten readiness by academic risk characteristics
- Limitations of the data and interpretation
  - Inability to identify what race/ethnicity might be a proxy for and limited data
- Typically we have explained difference as the result of differential access or quality
- What can or could we do differently to better address issues of equity?
  - Conduct systems analysis of root causes of inequity
  - Evaluate and acknowledge biases in the measures
  - Collecting data on experience outside of preschool

### ● **Summary of Presentation #3: Pam Joshi**

Incorporating an Equity Lens into CCDBG Policy Evaluation Research

- Policy Equity Assessment Framework - how do you incorporate a racial ethnic equity lens?
- Logic: how is equity addressed in the CCDBG Reauthorization Law?
  - Explicit: equal access to stable high quality care, target vulnerable populations, clarifications for tribal grantees
  - Implicit: eligibility and access policies, health and safety
- Capacity issues that can affect equitable access and effectiveness
  - Waitlists
  - Geographic local distribution
  - Availability of resources
  - Providers
- To study equity within CCDBG, mixed methods is very important
- Mapping is important: for example with access - 5-10 minutes in a car is a lot if you don't have a car
- Parent interviews: Subsidy exists
- Admin data quality issues: data quality of race/ethnicity

### ● **Summary of Presentation #4: Michael Abel**

Promoting Equity through Organizational Policies and Practices: Early childhood organizational equity assessment

- Working with the YMCA, project is called Blueprint for Early Childhood Equity
- Equity assessment - 7 domains
  - Organizational and leadership commitment to equity
  - Resources allocation/ budgeting
  - Organizational Climate/culture
  - Outreach/Communication/Family Engagement
  - Human Resources Practices

- Data Use
- Community Collaboration
- McCormick Center did a validation study on the tool the YMCA was developing
- Organizational Equity Assessment Validation Study
  - Preliminary results given
  - Looks like the tool is holding together

#### **Kevin Ferria**

- Thinking about data collection - what are the outcomes?
- The projects that were discussed today showcase the co-creation of knowledge together
- Think about the language we are using together
- Reflection - how to use data and evaluation as a program practice

#### **Mike Lopez**

- What are the differences? Teasing apart the complexity of race and ethnicity
- Being careful not to fill in the blanks and infer meaning; doing so throws rigor out the window

#### **4. Brief Summary of Discussion**

- Importance of having researchers reflect the population being studied
- If you are not explicating doing a research project where the goal is to look at race/ethnicity how do you start to have the conversations?
  - When it's built in to give data back, that is a good jumping off point
- One way to get people interested or caring about equity issues - research is not as rigorous if equity isn't included. This is a good way to speak about including equity issues to funders.

#### **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)

- Differences between children are not necessarily disparities and the field needs to be sure not to infer meaning when data does not give meaning.
- Research has been conducted on the equity of the most recently authorized Child Care Development Block Grant and how its policies promote or hinder equity.
- It would be helpful to provide information on how to incorporate equity into research moving forward and how to discuss the importance of these issues with funders and stakeholders.