

## Plenary 4: Coordinated Services for Children and their Families: Research Approaches, Benefits, and Challenges

Thursday, February 8, 2018

3:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m. | Adams/Morgan

### 1. Descriptive Information

#### **Plenary 4: Coordinated Services for Children and their Families: Research Approaches, Benefits, and Challenges**

Program and community-based efforts to meet the needs of children and their families through a wide range of coordinated services including education, family economic security, and physical and mental health have generated great interest. The plenary began with an overview of coordinated services models and the research evaluating these, including discussion of how research can support program development and measure impacts. Then, panelists presented research on two coordinated services models with an early childhood focus. The Community Action Project of Tulsa County (CAP Tulsa) offers job training to parents and early education to their children enrolled in Head Start. Family Connects offers universal home visiting with coordinated family services to new parents within communities. The plenary ended with a discussion of crosscutting themes and key questions and challenges for program implementation and research.

#### **Facilitator**

**Christine Ross**, Mathematica Policy Research and **Tamara Halle**, Child Trends

#### **Panelists**

**Christine Ross**, Mathematica Policy Research | *Overview of Coordinated Services Models and Research Approaches*

**Teresa Eckrich Sommer**, Northwestern University | *The Effects of a Coordinated Human Capital Intervention on Low-income Parents and their Young Children in Head Start*

**W. Benjamin Goodman**, Duke University | *Supporting Entry into a System of Care Through Universal Home Visiting*

#### **Discussant**

**Tamara Halle**, Child Trends | *Cross-Cutting Themes and Next Steps for Implementation and Evaluation of Coordinated Services for Parents and Children*

#### **Scribe**

**Katie Caldwell**, ICF

### 2. Documents Available on Website

Coordinated Services for Children and their Families: Research Approaches, Benefits, and Challenges

### 3. Brief Summary of Presentations

- **Summary of Presentation #1: Christine Ross**
- Meeting the needs of the whole family may be a promising approach, it is backed by theory and research
- Approaches to supporting parents and their children:
  - Place-based coordinated services
  - Integrated supports in a hub location
  - Programs offering coordinated support
- Conceptual Frameworks to help think through this topic
  - Framework for Services and Outcomes
  - Service Partnership Framework

- Research and evaluation of coordinated services programs are in early stages and programs are generally developing, but they would benefit from research partnerships
- Research partners could support programs in data informed program development, which involves partnering to create a program logic model, developing administrative and other data sources to assess service quality and intensity, participant engagement, and outcomes, and assisting program leaders and staff with identifying ways to bring program operations and outcomes in line with their vision for the program.

- **Summary of Presentation #2: Teresa Eckrich Sommer**

The Effects of a Coordinated Human Capital Intervention on Low-Income Parents and Their Young Children in Head Start

- Research question: Does a coordinated human capital approach have a greater effect on parents than Head Start alone?
- CareerAdvance program - key innovative elements:
  - Begins with the foundation of Head Start
  - Includes coaching and peer cohorts
  - Tuition free courses at community colleges
  - Incentives and in-kind assistance
  - Stackable training
  - Sector-based
- CareerAdvance draws on parents' strengths
- Quasi-experimental; mixed methods evaluation approach
- Selected a matched comparison group from the group of families enrolled in Head Start but not in CareerAdvance, using propensity score matching
- Study summary:
  - Increases in parent education, employment, psychological well-being
  - No effect (increase or decrease) on parent stress or psychological distress
  - Improved children's Head Start attendance and reduced chronic absenteeism
- Holds promise, but unclear if coordinated approach translates to benefits for children's outcomes
- Longitudinal follow-up, including children's outcomes, is needed and planned
- **Summary of Presentation #3: W. Benjamin Goodman**  
Supporting Entry into a System of Care through Universal Home Visiting
- The model: Family Connects was designed to achieve population impact by serving as the first step into a broader early childhood system of care
  - Engage families of all newborns;
  - Assess unique family strengths and needs;
  - Connect families to matched community resources, as needed and desired, for long-term support.
- Program designed to be brief (3-7 contacts), increasing participation and retention
- Seeks to align existing services
- Randomized control trial in Durham, NC
- Separate impact evaluation study
- Findings:
  - More connections to community resources
  - Higher mother-reported positive parenting behaviors
  - Higher observer-rated mother parenting quality
  - Higher observer-rated home environment safety
  - Higher quality child care
  - Lower probability of mother clinical anxiety
- Exploring possibilities for expanding the assessment / referral process for families from birth – school entry
  - Additional Family Connects visits (e.g., Toddlerhood)
  - Collaboration with pediatric practices
  - Embedding within broader community initiatives
- **Summary of Presentation #4: Tamara Halle**

- Coordinated services approaches are promising, but there are few studies of their effectiveness. We need more consideration of:
  - Measures development
  - Data linking and data use
  - Methodological issues
  - Effective implementation before conducting outcomes evaluation
- Challenges with scale-up
  - Funding sources
  - Sustainability
  - Approaches to information sharing, collaboration, and coordination
- Need for clarifying terminology and understanding similarities and differences in approach
  - Two-generation approaches
  - Comprehensive services
  - Integrated approaches/services
  - Coordinated human capital
  - Community-wide approaches

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

- Will the children in CareerAdvance study be followed for the longer term?
  - Currently looking for funding to do so
- What was required in terms of partnerships and collaborations at the local levels to implement the models?
  - Both programs involved many deep partnerships
- Ben - what is effective in supporting families in selecting higher quality care?
  - Discussion of plan - if they are still in the process of selecting care, the nurse in the home has the ability to pull up a listing of nearby high-quality child care and connect families to the needed services
- When you evaluate these bundled services you cannot quantitatively tell exactly which service is making the most difference.

#### **5. Summary of Key issues raised**

- Study of coordinated human capital program of Head Start, parental career training and supports showed positive effects for parents' education, employment, and psychological well-being and for children's attendance at Head Start, but more longitudinal research for these programs is needed to assess longer-term parent outcomes and a broader range of child outcomes.
- A low-cost home visiting model offering 3-7 home visits with connections to a broader set of human services programs showed improvements in parenting practices and the home environment, parent psychological well-being, the use of quality child care, and lower rates of referral to child welfare agencies and lower rates of emergency room use.
- Coordinated services approaches are promising, but there are few studies of their effectiveness. Research partnerships that can support programs in articulating their program models and measuring services, engagement and outcomes in order to strengthen implementation is needed.
- There is a lot of interest in both the public and private sector in meeting the needs of children and parents together as families in a variety of ways.