Innovations in Measuring Quality of Early Childhood Education Across Settings – September 18, 2020

1. **Descriptive Information**

Innovations in Measuring Quality of Early Childhood Education Across Settings	Moderator
There is a wide body of research indicating that high quality early childhood education yields positive benefits for children. However, although researchers typically describe structural, process, and instructional dimensions of quality, a small number of tools (ECERS/CLASS) dominate both the research and policy/practice worlds and there are challenges in using measures across diverse settings. In addition, current measures of quality have inconsistent links with teacher effectiveness and child outcomes. Finally, some measures of quality are onerous and expensive for districts and practitioners to collect, making them less useful for informing real-world practice. There continues to be a need for strong measures of early childhood quality that can be collected at-scale across a range of different settings and used to promote better outcomes for teachers and children.	• **Diane Early,** Child Trends **Panelists** • **Michelle Maier,** MDRC • **Kerry Hofer,** Abt Associates Inc. • **Marisa Schlieber,** Center for the Study of Child Care Employment, University of California, Berkeley • **Holli Tonyan,** California State University, Northridge • **Sarah Neville-Morgan,** California Department of Education • **Randy Hudgins,** Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning
This roundtable brings together researchers, policymakers, and practitioners to discuss new and innovative approaches for conceptualizing and measuring quality in diverse early childhood classrooms. A key goal of this session is to discuss new approaches that can build on the limitations of the metrics that the field has used to date. Panelists will discuss a variety of measurement tools that aim to address the unique needs of all early childhood providers, including those serving older and younger children and operating in center-based and home-based settings.	**Scribe** • **Katie Caldwell,** ICF
Two policymakers will discuss the applicability of these new measurement approaches for informing districts, cities, and states as they aim to measure quality in diverse early childhood settings.	

2. **Documents Available on Website**

   - Innovations in Measuring Quality of Early Childhood Education Across Settings Handout
   - Innovations in Measuring Quality of Early Childhood Education Across Settings PowerPoint

3. **Brief Summary of Presentations**
   - **Summary of Presentation #1:** Introduction, Diane Early, Child Trends
     - There are two main tools currently used to measure quality in early childhood education- the ECERS and the CLASS. Both tools have strengths and have moved the field forward, but they also have challenges associated with them:
       - Hard to implement and take a lot of time to do so
       - Hard to use across diverse settings (i.e., center based and family child care)
       - Some concerns about their appropriateness for diverse cultural communities
     - Today's panel will examine other methods and tools for examining quality of ECE.

- **Summary of Presentation #2:** Kerry Hofer, Abt Associates
  - Early Learning Study at Harvard.
  - Unique in that it is representative of 3- and 4- year olds in 2017, all care they were exposed to including unlicensed and family child care settings
  - 3-ish years of classroom observations and have observed (last year cut short by Covid-19)
  - Used both the Child Observation Protocol (COP) and Teacher Observation Protocol (TOP) across provider types and age groups; also used the CLASS and the Simple Interactions tool (SI) in some classrooms at some time points
  - Observation Rating Scale for Adult and Child (ORSAC) also used as an adapted version with unlicensed providers

- **Summary of Presentation #3:** Randy Hudgins, Georgia
  - State of Georgia
  - Rely heavily on the ECERS to evaluate quality in child care within the state's TQRIS.
  - Agency also oversees Georgia's Pre-K Program that use CLASS as an assessment and professional development tool
  - Research team provides internal consulting role for the agency, providing data analytics and advises on policy.

- **Summary of Presentation #4:** Michelle Maier, MDRC
  - Variations and Implementations of Quality Interventions (VIQI) project, supported by OPRE
  - Testing two different curricular approaches, Connect4Learning and Creative Curriculum
  - Participating centers with 3 and 4-year-old classrooms
  - Random assignment design
  - 3 different dimensions of quality

- **Summary of Presentation #5:** Sarah Neville-Morgan, California Department of Education
  - From California
  - Quality Counts California, is a statewide effort to strengthen California's early learning and care system, uses ECERS and CLASS, and does include Family, Friend and Neighbor (FFN) care in the effort. Also included is support for Tribal child care in designing their own QI system.

- **Summary of Presentation #6:** Marisa Schlieber, Center for the Study of Child Care Employment, University of California, Berkeley
  - Tool developed by the Center for the Study of Child Care Employment, UC Berkeley, Supportive Environmental Quality in Adult Learning (SEQUAL)
  - Multi-purpose tool for examining and improving environments in which early childhood teaching staff work and learn.
  - Captures teaching staff assessments of how their program environment contributes to or hinders their ability to apply their knowledge and skills and improve their practice
  - Measure is geared to center-based programs but UC Berkeley is in the process of adapting it to use with other environments

- **Summary of Presentation #7:** Holli Tonyan, California State University, Northridge
  - Conceptual model for quality in home-based child care settings, developed by the Home-Based Child Care Workgroup that is part of CCEEPRC
  - Conducted interviews with over 100 family-based child care educators

4. Brief Summary of Discussion- Discussion Questions for the Panel

- We talked briefly about the common measure of quality that are used. How do you address these challenges?
    - Michelle: trying to extend the work beyond current thinking in VIQI
        - Using 3 dimensions of quality:
            - Structural quality: structural or physical aspects of classrooms
            - Interactional quality: differentiating the relational aspect of process quality from the instructional aspect
            - Instructional: what is being taught (e.g., skill domains) and how it is being taught
        - Collect a set of measures across days of observations
        - Supporting classic measures (ECERS, CLASS) with additional measures (LISn, study-created global measure) to round out the data collection
    - Kerry: using a combination of existing measures thought to relate to child outcomes and new/revamped measures to tap those same constructs in different environments
        - In ELS@H, really looking at all the care a child is exposed to
        - Use some slightly out of the box methods
        - Used the concept of the magic 8 (out of Vanderbilt University) with COP and TOP and how these relate to children's growth
        - For unlicensed providers ORSAC developed and adapted further to make sure it tapped same constructs as COP and TOP and could account for grandma and child or nanny and 3 children, etc.
    - Holli: conceptual model
        - Capitalizing on available resources and materials
    - Marisa
        - Teacher work place environment IS the learning environment
        - SEQUAL- bringing teachers voices forward
            - If we fail to tend to the environment we are missing a key factor in quality
- Think about quality across time. Is this resonating for you?
    - California
        - All tools are really critical to our analysis
        - FFN is critical to our system, really important to include in the quality supports and ensure we focus on where children are
        - Also important to look at how children are doing - and evaluate outcomes and impact - to help inform what additional supports are needed and where
        - How do families define quality? Need to build this into our definitions
        - Need to look at global quality as well as how individual children experience it. For example, we hear from some of our Quality Counts California (QCC) Consortia, such as San Francisco, that they find that some high-quality settings still have children that experience the program/quality on the fringe. Important to gather their experiences too and examine any implicit bias or discrimination that might exist
        - Exploring kindergarten readiness through analysis of our Desired Results Developmental Profile and finding that children in high quality preschool programs are showing higher developmental readiness than those in lower quality sites
        - CA's QCC expanded a few years ago to include Tribal Child Care and provides funding, support and partnership to honor their own work
    - Georgia
        - Understanding what quality means to families
        - Teacher-child interaction piece is really key to measure
        - Child care happens across all settings and multiple ages- how can we better include school age into QRIS. Don't have a good measure currently but are working on it

- Thinking about 2020. Has this changed your thinking on quality and has it had an impact on research?
  - Holli
    - 2020 has been a great opportunity to talk about issues the conceptual model addresses
    - Conceptualized big bucket- foundations for sustainability- practices that need to be in place for the "magic" of child care.
      - Importance needs to be given to equitable pay for quality to happen
    - Highlighted the role of lasting relationships:
      - Capture the need for trusting relationships as well as racial healing
    - Opportunities for learning and development; children learn what they have opportunities to practice
    - Privilege, power, and oppression are connected to how we view quality
  - Marisa
    - Pandemic has brought to light the inequitable situation surround child care
    - Teachers feeling like their needs are invisible during pandemic as child care stayed open but many schools closed
    - Work has changed- SEQUAL highlights provisions for health and safety and provides an opportunity to bring these voices forward to highlight these environmental needs
  - Randy
    - Sustainability has been brought to light; how much turnover often occurs in settings
    - How can we support providers in maintaining their quality throughout this time?
  - Sarah
    - Preschool development needs assessment
    - No longer really focused on rating – more on ensuring supports, using data to inform TA needed, and using QIS to drive a systems approach
    - Impacts of trauma - how can you use quality supports to help the community in that work
    - This year has let us know we were moving in the right direction (not requiring ratings, including tribal child care, deeper expansion to FFN and FCCH, focus on implicit bias and trauma informed practice) but need to do far more

5. **Questions from the Audience**
   - Q: Aspects of quality that are common across centers and FCC- can these be measured with a single tool?
     A: Kerry- Constructs like the magic 8 that are more localized and focused on specific behaviors are helpful and can be used in professional development. Example: how much time do teachers/caregivers spend listening to children?
     Holli- Conceptual model for quality in home-based child care- can be related to center-based measures.
   - Q: Given the limitations of the CLASS and ECERS what is necessary in development of future tools to capture the impact of racism?
     A: California- wanting to look at individual child experiences (dual language learners, disabilities). There is significant disproportionality in individual experiences. Also, as child age, look at suspension and expulsion rates.
     Holli- focus on lasting relationships- be able to draw from indicators on what people are actually doing. breaking things down and aggregating them- important to get that data
     Marisa- addressing inequities in work environment- when we analyze SEQUAL data in the backend of the tool we can look at teacher demographics and compare with resources available and other equity issues
   - Q: Infant/toddler quality? Need to have tools that research across the age range.
     A: Georgia is currently operating the Lifting Infants and Toddlers through Language-rich Environments (LITTLE) Grant, using LENA as a tool to measure quality in terms of interaction. LITTLE has been stifled with COVID. In a pilot currently but deeper evaluations on the horizon.
     Sarah: Check out the Program for Infant Toddler Care, which was developed by the California Department of Education and WestEd.

- Q: VIQI taking several days to measure quality in a setting? Practicality of that?
  A: VIQI is so far a pilot study in 2018-2019. Six days of observation total over the course of the fall, spring and a winter time points. Did try to double up on measures in one day. For instructional quality you do need more than one day to get a good picture.
  Holli- one study related to child interactions found that children get lots of "low level" interactions and then high bursts of high-level interactions with providers and the high level interactions is where the learning and benefit come in.
  Kerry- logistics and characteristics of the observations- no matter what you observe has such significant impact on what your findings are.
  Sarah- trainers/observers go through interrater reliability but there isn't a lot about differential power and implicit biases and how this effects observations and administration of a tool.
- Q: Question for Kerri: how do you summarize the experiences across various centers?
  A: Have used CLASS, simple interaction tools but mainly the COP and TOP (behavior coding, 3-second interval observations). Same procedure in FCC and unlicensed care- used a similar individual observation and sweeping the individuals repeatedly. Doing this can get at those same constructs in a similar but not identical way. Surprisingly simple. Focus on discrete behaviors.
  Holli- Look at Barbara Rogoff: Guided Participation monograph. Guided participation of toddlers and infants. Capture molar behavior across cultural context.

6. **Summary of Key Issues Raised**
   - The CLASS and ECERS tools are widely used to measure child care quality but have drawbacks. Other tools and methods that are being piloted or have been recently developed to support measuring quality in child care include: Supportive Environmental Quality in Adult Learning (SEQUAL), Child Observational Protocol (COP) and Teacher Observational Protocol (TOP), ORSAC, and the Conceptual Model for Quality in Home-Based Child Care Settings.
   - Issues of power, bias, and racial inequality still need to be addressed when developing and implementing measures of quality.
   - The events of 2020 have highlighted the importance of evaluating quality in home-based child care as well as the role the physical space has on both teachers/providers and children in care. As the field moves forward these are two considerations to be considered in future measures of quality of care.