

Session # B-1

Title: Miniplenary: Emerging Finding From the Evaluations of Three Models of Professional Development: Implementation, Contexts, and Outcomes

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Cathy Grace, Ed.D., Professor and Curriculum and Instruction Director, Early Childhood Institute, Mississippi State University

Carolyn Layzer, Ph.D., Associate, Abt Associates, Inc.

SUMMARY OF PRESENTATION

1. Preliminary Findings from the QUINCE Study: Quality Interventions for Early Care and Education (Donna Bryant)

Partners and Participants

- FPG Child Development Institute at UNC-CH
- UCLA
- Iowa State University
- University of Nebraska
- Child Trends and U of Minnesota

Purpose of study was to see if Partnerships for Inclusion model of on-site consultation improves child care quality and whether it is related to child outcomes

- Project design:
 - o 24 R & R agencies in 5 states → 94 QE consultants agreed to be in the study
 - o Consultants then randomly assigned to either a control group or an experimental treatment group (the PFI model)
 - o Timing of Environmental Quality Assessments:
 - T1: Baseline (intervention beginning)
 - T2: End of intervention
 - T3: Post-intervention (maintenance 6 mo. later)
 - FDCERS, ECERS, or ITERS used for assessments
- Findings about consultants:
 - o Average caseload of consultants ranged from 5-100 providers
 - o Typical consultation ranges widely in content and intensity
 - o Agencies most effective at PFI are agencies supportive of the model, when staff are stable and have experience and skills
 - o A major finding of the study was the amount of consultant turnover.. They move on to other jobs, promoted from within, and in many cases these programs are funded year-to-year so job stability is a worry.
 - o This study has created a PFI fidelity scores and, although there is a wide range of implementation fidelity, characteristics of consultants and programs do not seem to predict the fidelity score. Next step is to see whether fidelity helps predict quality improvement. Results forthcoming.

2. Right from Birth: A Model of Professional Development that Builds on the

Science of Early Child Brain and Behavior Development (Cathy Grace)

- Used a model of professional development based on Craig Ramey and Sharon Ramey's "Right from Birth" book and video
- 2 levels of training for model:
 - o Workshop sessions based on the Rameys' "Right from Birth" tapes
 - o RITE training: Rameys Immersion Training for Excellence with highly intensive side-by-side daily coaching for 20 days (approximately 6 hours per day)

The seven essentials that coaches helped caregivers practice in the RITE training program:

1. Encourage active exploration
2. To mentor children in "the basics"
3. To celebrate each child's new skills
4. To help children rehearse and extend new skills
5. To protect from harsh and inappropriate treatment
6. To provide language-rich interactions and promote language and literacy development
7. To guide and limit children's behavior

An important part of the RITE plan: One of the most effective ways of getting a strong attachment between the provider and the coach is to have the coach being hands-on in the classroom and setting. It has helped when they are helping out in the classroom and show the provider that they are in it with them and not just standing on the side giving orders.

3. Developing effective early childhood teachers: Findings from Project Upgrade (Carolyn Layzer)

- a. Did study using a rigorous, two-year experiment test of three language/literacy curricula in Miami-Dade in 164 child care centers serving subsidized and other low-income four-year-olds.
- b. Wanted to find out if it was possible to train and support child care staff to deliver high-quality curricula with fidelity and what is the impact of high-quality language/literacy curricula on children's language development and emergent literacy
- c. The population of children were low-income four year olds. In Spring 2003 it was found that low-income four-year olds scored in the lowest third nationally on a language assessment. More than half of the children in the study were predominantly Spanish-speaking
- d. More than half of the teachers spoke Spanish as their first language and 28% spoke only Spanish in the classroom
- e. Found that all three of the interventions produced large and significant impacts on teacher behaviors. In addition, found that all three interventions produced significant impacts on the classroom literacy environment
- f. Found that two of the three interventions had significant impacts on four measures of children's emergent literacy. These impacts of the two

interventions brought children close to or above national norms on three of the four outcomes

- g. Some reasons for these impacts are:
 - i. All three curricula are based on the most recent research on what predicts reading success in school
 - ii. All three were sensitive to ELL students, which was a large population in this study
 - iii. Two of the three used technology to support and enhance teacher behavior and activities.

SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION

1. Donna Bryant explained that it is often like pot-luck across all agencies and consultants as to whether or not these consultants are able to help child care providers to improve their quality—models, content, methods vary widely.
2. Supervision of consultants was discussed: In North Carolina Donna explained that there are meetings and touch-base sessions so that consultants will all be on the same page. However, resources to support this do not exist in all states.. The supervisors of consultants rarely ever go out into the field so we are not really sure what is going on in the field.
3. Consultants who are creating a relationship with their consultees are different from consultants who are going into a classroom with a checklist. Supervisors need to keep these roles in mind. A next step would be how can we support the supervisors who are ultimately in charge of the consultants going out to do the actual work.
4. In the QUINCE study consultants were asked to document their work but that was more accountability than most of those consultants had ever had in their work before, so its interesting to note that they really are out there on their own working out of their car trunk.
5. Consultation can vary from simple visits to really intensive consultations models. However, even if you are doing less consultation it is still something that has proven to be effective.
6. We are spending a lot of money through provider communities a lot over the last few years. We are seeing different ways of doing this, however, there is not much mentioned about the content of these PD.
7. Early childhood literacy instructional practices, with regards to the Mississippi data, their coaching starts with the basic health and safety issues but then it goes back to the level of choice that is encountered. We have to work with what we know from the ITERS scores plus what we know about the individual we are working with. An example of this could be what one person considers clean versus another. So its something that you need to meet in the middle to make gains.
8. In Miami-Dade it seems like the content could have been anything, not necessarily just literacy but it implies that it would have been effective with any other content as long as the professional development was high quality and focused. It can't just be all over the place like many other programs they had

already experienced. It could have been any content just something intense and focused over a period of time. If you can change the behavior enough of the teacher than it will affect the behavior of the children and over two years (which it was with Miami-Dade) then that is enough time to embed this information into the teachers knowledge and practices.

9. Mississippi brought up the fact that professional development also needs to be examined from the point of policy because it is important to note that in Mississippi they allow more children in classrooms than are allowed in most other classrooms in most other states. In terms of family child care providers it helps them to know that there is an agency out there that values what they do and it helps them to take pride in their work. So much of what they do is driven at an emotional level. It is also important to look at how the coaches and the consultees communicate with one another.

KEY POINTS

1. Consultation, coaching, technical assistance are emerging as effective means of professional development from these and other studies.
2. However, not all consultants implement approaches with fidelity and we need to learn more about the consultants themselves. We need to learn about characteristics that make consultants effective.
3. There was wide variation in what is currently called consultation in states. It varies anywhere from checklists and quick visits to intensive on-site work that is sustained.
4. As we learn more about consultation we need to learn more about process as well as content.