2011 CCPRC Annual Meeting
Plenary Session 5
November 17, 2011, 12:15-1:45 pm

Indicators of ECE Quality for Multiple Purposes

Description

This plenary session built on the recognition that as States are developing diverse quality improvement initiatives they are faced with a variety of Federal and State requirements to provide data to account for progress. These requirements include new Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) biennial plan and ACF-801 requirements, the data required for the Race to the Top–Early Learning Challenge (RTT-ELC), and State longitudinal data system requirements for education departments. This session considered the degree to which it might be possible to craft quality indicators and data systems that can serve these multiple purposes, and the extent to which states could adopt a voluntary system of standardizing key quality indicators to allow cross-state comparisons and national data on quality improvement.

Facilitator

J. Lee Kreader, National Center for Children in Poverty

Presenters

Lizabeth (Liz) Malone, Mathematica Policy Research, Inc.
Kathryn Tout, Child Trends
Richard (Rick) Brandon, RNB Consulting

Scribe

Julie Shuell, National Center on Child Care Quality Improvement

1. Documents in Session Folder

- "Indicators of ECE Quality for Multiple Purposes," Richard N. Brandon
- "Getting the Most Out of Quality Data: QRIS Efforts to Meet Multiple Purposes," Lizabeth Malone, Gretchen Kirby, and Pia Caronongan
- "Successful Recipes for QRIS Data," Kathryn Tout and Tabitha Isner

2. Summary of Presentations

- **Summary of Presentation #1:** Rick Brandon
  - After introductions by Lee Kreader, Rick discussed the current data environment and possibilities for integrating data for different purposes. He talked about the internal and external pressures for data including the desire to better understand QRIS and the early care and education workforce, and to make comparisons across States.
  - While recognizing the need to balance what would be ideal with operational and fiscal constraints, Rick described elements that might be included in a quality-oriented data system based on a logic model with data at the individual, program and systems levels. He talked about pressures for quality-oriented data, and its importance, given that observed quality in most child care is less than good.

- Opportunities include: Better data for planning, evaluation, and policy development; richer understanding of relationships between different aspects of ECE inputs; financial support for longitudinal and cross-system data systems; and the development of a voluntary cross-state data system that allows comparisons and produces national data for key indicators (such as common core data in K-12).
- Challenges include: Different conceptual bases and time references related to differing goals; relational scales and relevant categories have not been developed; variation in State requirements, capacity, and resources; operational challenges in obtaining, cleaning, managing, and analyzing complex data; and process for achieving analysis in reasonable time.

- **Summary of Presentation #2:** Kathryn Tout
  - Kathryn discussed sources of data, including the new RTT-ELC and CCDF data requirements which are being modified to capture more about program quality and expenditures.
  - Data is collected on State populations (denominator), participating populations, movement within and exiting from the participating population, and number and types of practitioners receiving various forms of training, education, TA and financial support.
  - Kathryn talked about the data States will be required to report under RTT-ELC and the requirement that they be able to demonstrate the validity of their system and measure progress.
  - Data fundamentals include: Unique identifiers; demographic, developmental and contextual data; linkages to facilitate tracking over time; governance; and transparent policies and practices.

- **Summary of Presentation #3:** Liz Malone
  - Liz discussed quality data purposes including: accountability, management, monitoring validation/refinement, reliability, and evaluation.
  - Data considerations for QRIS include storage, coverage, access (across data systems and levels), and documentation (for collection, entry and use of data).
  - State examples of linkages between QRIS and other data were provided along with discussion of how quality data systems used for multiple purposes (Pennsylvania and Miami-Dade).
  - Finally, Liz talked about the need to define common elements such as "participation" and "education."

3. Summary of Discussion with Presenters and Participants

- The National Registry Alliance was acknowledged as having set standards.
- Participants were interested in a common set of data about quality.