Multiple Programs, Services, and Funding Streams: Implications for Families, Policy-Makers, and Researchers

Child Care Research Consortium Meeting
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Panelists

- Diane Schilder, Education Development Center, Inc.
- Helen Ward, Muskie School, University of Southern Maine
- Monica Rohacek, The Urban Institute
- Stephanie Curenton, Rutgers University
Studies Discussed

- Collaborations within one system (e.g. Head Start and Pre-K) versus between multiple systems (e.g. IDEA E.I./Preschool Special Ed., child welfare and ECE)
- Exploratory studies versus ones that look at relationships between collaboration and improvement in specific outcomes.
- Primary focus on how families and children are affected versus how child care providers/programs are affected.
Children at Risk in the Child Welfare System: Collaborations to Promote School Readiness
A Case Study in Colorado

Very Young Child Age 0-6

Child Welfare System

Child Welfare Caseworkers

Courts

Foster Parents

Health Care Providers

Parts B & C of IDEA

Early Care & Education Programs

School Readiness Outcomes
Some of the Challenges Identified in Our Studies

- When missions and the primary beneficiaries of programs differ, that affects:
  - Expectations for parents
  - Eligibility for services/assistance
  - Differing "mindsets" about child versus family needs
  - Mode of delivery, amount and duration of care/services
  - Funding

- These issues can cause conflicts for parents and providers:
  - Stability of child care and parental satisfaction
  - Work problems for parents
  - Multiple transitions for children
  - Issues for child care staff/programs
  - Potential for children to go without early interventions
  - Unexpected issues involving additional programs/funding streams
Pre-Kindergarten Programs & Community-Based Child Care

Research Questions
- To what extent do community-based child care centers serve the population targeted by pre-k?
- How many centers currently meet quality or other standards associated with pre-k?
- Other considerations in delivering pre-k services through community-based child care?

Methodology
- 5 counties in 4 states
- Representative sample of center directors and teachers
- Exclusions from sampling population
Key Findings (Opportunities)

- Community-based centers are serving children targeted by prekindergarten initiatives
  - **Age** Almost all centers serve 3-4 year olds
  - **Family Income** 80% of centers in all sites serve at least one child living in a low-income family
  - **Limited English Proficiency** 10% (1 site) to 50% (4 sites) of centers served at least one child with LEP parents

- Community-based centers often have staff that speak languages of LEP families
- Community-based centers serve prekindergarten-age children in tandem with younger and older children
Key Findings (Challenges)

- Many community-based centers are likely to need extra support to fully meet and maintain pre-kindergarten standards
  - **Staff education level**: No teachers with B.A. degree in 20%-47% of centers (4 sites, lower in 5th site)
  - **In-service training**: On average 50% of teachers in a center had 10+ hours in prior year (4 sites, lower in 5th site)
  - **Hourly wage**: Community-based center average ($9-$18)
    Elementary school average ($22-$29)
  - **Ratios**: Teachers in 50% of centers had child:teacher ratios exceeding standards recommended by AAP/AAPA
  - **Financial condition**: 34%-50% of centers struggled to meet payroll or bills during previous year

- Other issues
Impact of Pre-K Expansion

Research Questions

- How does the expansion of pre-k affect the quality and supply of child care for low-income families?
- How are child care centers that partner with pre-k programs different from those programs that do not partner?
Impact of Pre-K Expansion (Opportunities)

County-level Investigation within States
- Examine impact of pre-k expansion in two counties in Ohio (Franklin, Cuyahoga) and two in New York (Albany, Niagara)

National-level Investigation
- Refine NIEER yearbook questions to investigate state pre-K and child care coordination

County-level Investigation within States
Examine impact of pre-k expansion in two counties in Ohio (Franklin, Cuyahoga) and two in New York (Albany, Erie)

Longitudinal investigation of changes in child care supply through analysis of data from Resource & Referral (R&R) Agencies

Assessment of changes in child care quality through analysis of survey and R&R data
Impact of Pre-K Expansion (Challenges)

Lessons for Researchers
- Sampling Issues
- Describing results in terms of context

Lessons for Administrators
- Various funding streams with different missions are being combined
Child Care Quality Study

Background:
- EDC has studied partnerships since 2001
- Focused on child care, Head Start and preK
- Methods:
  - Survey of all 50 states
  - Longitudinal survey study of 141 child care centers with data collected from directors, parents, teachers
  - Observations of classrooms
  - Assessment of a sample of children
  - Survey of family child care providers in partnership and comparison providers
Partnership Findings in Brief

Partnership with Head Start related to:

- Improved structural indicators of quality
- Greater likelihood of providing referrals & services to children and parents
- Employment benefits for teachers/staff
- Higher classroom quality as measured by ELLCO and ECERS-R
Partnership Findings & Implications

Elements of partnership predict benefits:
- Communication between partners
- Specificity in agreements
- Alignment of goals
- Partnership with federal I lead Start (as opposed to state)
- Funding
- Duration

Policymakers report specific steps to support partnerships:
- Follow federal IM to extend eligibility
- Provide T/TA
- Circulate information about rules/regulations
Questions for Panelists

- What are the implications for families, policymakers, program directors, researchers?
- What are the practical suggestions you have for examining these issues?
- What are the unintended consequences of attempts to align programs?
Questions for Panelists

- Given that the programs are inter-related how do we consider the entire picture together?
  - What methods are appropriate for studying these systems?
  - How do we account for the rapidly changing context?

- What can we learn from the studies about the following?
  - Outcomes for programs, children, families
  - Professional development needs of teachers
  - Quality of programs
  - Parent choice