What About Quality Matters for Children’s School Readiness

Institute on the Intersection of Research, Policy, and Practice

July 31, 2007
Washington, DC
Introductions

Moderator:
- Lori Connors-Tadros, early learning coordinator for the National Child Care Information Center (NCCIC)

Presenters:
- Joanne Roberts, Wellesley College
- Wendy Wagner Robeson, Wellesley College
- Rosemarie Allen, CO Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) Administrator
- Gladys Wilson, FL CCDF Administrator
Goals for the Session

- Share new research findings impacting policy related to *Good Start, Grow Smart* priorities and school readiness
- Learn about CO and FL efforts to improve quality in all settings in order to support school readiness
- Discuss critical policy and research questions
Research Questions

- What is the relation between preschool program quality and children’s academic school readiness?
- What characteristics of preschool classrooms make a difference in school readiness outcomes for children?
Samples

- Sample 1 (low-income sample): N=165
  - 41 different centers throughout Massachusetts
  - All enrolled in centers serving low-income children

- Sample 2 (longitudinal sample): N=213
  - 150 different child care centers throughout Massachusetts
  - Children and their families have been followed since they were 12-months
  - Study retention rate of over 85% over 4 years!
Methods

- Observed pre-K classrooms in the fall
- Assessed children’s school readiness in spring
- Surveyed parents during pre-K year
- Surveyed pre-K teachers
Measuring Classroom Quality

- Teacher education and experience
- Child-Caregiver Relationship Scale
- Classroom observations
  - ECERS-R
  - ECERS-E
  - SELA
  - Arnett Caregiver Rating Scale
Quality: ECERS-R

Average Score on ECERS-R

- **Space**: Low-Income Sample: 4.1, Longitudinal Sample: 4.7
- **Personal Care**: Low-Income Sample: 2.8, Longitudinal Sample: 2.6
- **Language**: Low-Income Sample: 3.6, Longitudinal Sample: 4.2
- **Activities**: Low-Income Sample: 3.2, Longitudinal Sample: 3.5
- **Interactions**: Low-Income Sample: 4.0, Longitudinal Sample: 4.4
- **Program Structure**: Low-Income Sample: 4.9, Longitudinal Sample: 5.2
- **Parents & Staff**: Low-Income Sample: 2.0, Longitudinal Sample: 4.1
- **Overall**: Low-Income Sample: 4.1, Longitudinal Sample: 4.1
Quality: ECERS-E

Average Score on ECERS-E

- Literacy
- Math
- Science
- Diversity
- Overall

Low-Income Sample
Longitudinal Sample
Quality: Latent variable measurement models

- Four indicators of quality that were modeled as latent variables
  - Literacy and Math
  - Curriculum
  - Safety and Health
  - Caregiver/Child Relationships
# Factor Loadings for Classroom Quality

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Scale</th>
<th>Factor Loading</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Literacy &amp; Math</strong></td>
<td>SELA</td>
<td>.87***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ECERS-E Literacy</td>
<td>.87***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ECERS-E Math</td>
<td>.63***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ECERS-E Science</td>
<td>.53***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ECERS-R Language and Reasoning</td>
<td>.89***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Curriculum</strong></td>
<td>ECERS-R Activities</td>
<td>.83***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ECERS-R Program Structure</td>
<td>.65***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Safety and Health</strong></td>
<td>ECERS-R Space &amp; Furnishings</td>
<td>.71***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ECERS-R Routine Care</td>
<td>.70***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Caregiver-Child Relationship</strong></td>
<td>Arnett-Positive Relationships</td>
<td>.95***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Arnett-Detachment (reversed)</td>
<td>.84***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Overall Quality of Classroom</strong></td>
<td>Literacy and Math</td>
<td>.96***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Curriculum</td>
<td>.90***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Safety and Health</td>
<td>.82***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Caregiver-Child Relationships</td>
<td>.76***</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001
Definition of School Readiness

● 5 Domains
  ● Health and physical development
  ● Social and emotional development
  ● Approaches to learning
  ● Language development and communication
  ● Cognition and general knowledge
Measuring School Readiness

- Child Assessments
  - BMI
  - PPVT-III
  - EVT
  - Bracken
  - PALS
  - Woodcock-Johnson III: applied problems

- Teacher Survey
  - ASQ-SE
  - SSRS
  - Children’s Approaches to Learning

- Family Survey
  - ASQ-SR
  - SSRS
Academic Readiness: Latent variable measurement models

- Latent variable comprised of standard scores from
  - PPVT-III
  - Bracken
  - EVT
  - Woodcock-Johnson III: applied problems
  - PALS
**Academic Readiness Factor Loadings**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Test</th>
<th>Loading</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PPVT-III</td>
<td>.78***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bracken</td>
<td>.84***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EVT</td>
<td>.74***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Woodcock Johnson-Applied Problems</td>
<td>.84***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PALS</td>
<td>.73***</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001*
Additional Variables

- Child age
- Child gender
- Child race and ethnicity
- Poverty status
- Maternal depression
- Home literacy environment
### Home literacy environment: Latent variable measurement models

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factor loadings</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of books in the home</td>
<td>.75 **</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frequency of reading</td>
<td>.70 **</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Play/teaching interactions</td>
<td>.61 **</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Classroom Level of Analysis

Child Level of Analysis
Conceptual Model

Classroom Characteristics

Classroom Average Developmental Outcome

Child, Parent, and Home Characteristics

Developmental Outcome
## Multilevel model of academic readiness

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Child level</th>
<th>Beta</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>-.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender (1=Male)</td>
<td>.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Race (1=White)</td>
<td>-.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnicity (1=Latino)</td>
<td>.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maternal Depression</td>
<td>-.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poverty</td>
<td>-.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Home literacy environment</strong></td>
<td><strong>.72</strong>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R squared</td>
<td>.65</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Classroom-Level</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Quality of Classroom</td>
<td>.43*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R squared</td>
<td>.18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001
**Multilevel model of academic readiness**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality Indicator</th>
<th>Beta</th>
<th>R squared</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Literacy and Math</td>
<td>0.46 **</td>
<td>0.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curriculum</td>
<td>0.22</td>
<td>0.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Safety and Health</td>
<td>0.24</td>
<td>0.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caregiver-child Relationship</td>
<td>0.40 *</td>
<td>0.16</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Predicting academic readiness

- Variability in academic readiness is partially a function of the home literacy environment.
- Overall quality of the classroom significantly predicted academic readiness.
- The literacy and math environment of the classrooms and the caregiver-child relationships were the strongest quality predictors of academic readiness.
Policy implications

- Quality of PreK experiences predicts children’s academic readiness.
- Literacy and math environments, as well as caregiver-child relationships, are important components of PreKs.
- Quality of PreK is largely minimal. Science, math and literacy are areas that need particular attention.
Policy implications

- The home literacy environment is critical. Parents need to be encouraged to read to their children.

- Child assessments were highly related, forming a latent variable. Assessments of school readiness may be able to be streamlined to reduce burden on teachers and students.
The Colorado School Readiness Quality Improvement Program

Office of Children, Youth and Family Services
Steve Bates, Director
Division of Child Care
Rosemarie Allen, Director

Mission:
We Improve people’s lives by supporting quality Child Care
Division of Child Care's Vision

- We meet the need for quality child care by partnering with families, providers, and local communities.
The overall goal of the Division of Child Care is to promote quality, accessible and affordable child care services for Colorado families.
We Improve People’s Lives By Supporting Quality Child Care

Division of Child Care

- Child Care Licensing
- Colorado Child Care Assistance Program
- Quality Initiatives

We Improve People’s Lives By Supporting Quality Child Care
Early Childhood Councils

- Develop and implement early childhood systems in local communities that address the following goal areas:
  - Program Availability
  - Program Quality
  - Accountability
  - Organizational Structure and Governance
  - Parent and Family Engagement
  - Public Engagement
  - Professional Development
  - Funding and Finance
Early Childhood Councils Statewide

Number of EC Community Grantees: 31 (representing 57 counties)

We Improve People’s Lives By Supporting Quality Child Care
Local EC Council Partners
(include, but not limited to the following)

- County Social Services
- Public Schools
- Head Start
- Resource and Referral
- Family Child Care
- Business
- Home Visitation
- Community Mental Health
- Higher Education
- Family Resource Centers
- Family Literacy
- Early Childhood Connections
- County Health Dept.
EC Council Successes: Collaboration

- Increased partnership, reduced turf issues
- CCCAP, CPKP & Head Start dollars used jointly to fund full-day, full-year programs
- Economic impact analysis of child care profession in multiple communities
- Professional development plans leading to credentials and college credit
- Participation in School Readiness program
SCHOOL READINESS
QUALITY IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM

Purpose:
To improve the school readiness of
- Children 5 years of age and younger
- Receiving care from a provider whose facility serves children who will attend underperforming elementary schools that receive Title I federal funds.
School Readiness Projects

- Must be coordinated by an Early Childhood Council
- Participating communities selected based on approval by CDHS of a plan to improve school readiness in their community.
- Receive funding over 3 years to use according to their plan.
Participating Child Care Providers

- Must be licensed.
- Must be located near elementary schools that had an overall academic performance rating of “Low” or “Unsatisfactory” on their School Accountability Report in 2005.
Participating Child Care Providers

- All participating sites received assistance in improving the quality of care through:
  - The use of enhanced educational materials,
  - Specialized teacher training,
  - Mentoring/coaching,
  - and increased parent involvement.
Participating Child Care Providers

Centers and Homes in Program

- 80% Centers
- 20% Homes

We Improve People’s Lives By Supporting Quality Child Care
School Readiness Projects – Quality Ratings

- All participating providers receive an annual Quality Performance Rating by Qualistar Early Learning.
- Ratings range from 0 to 4 stars, with 4 representing the highest level of quality.
- To remain in the program, sites must either sustain ratings of 3 or 4 stars or improve their score on the quality of the learning environment.
Summary of The First Three Year Funding Cycle

- The program has just completed its first three-year grant period
  - 10 participating projects,
  - involving about 175 sites,
  - 440 early care and education classrooms.
  - 6,100 children (at any given time).
Summary of The First Three Year Funding Cycle (continued)

- The children who were in the program attended over 100 schools in 18 school districts located in diverse locations around the state.

- Participating projects worked with local school districts to track the children in the program as they enrolled in school.

- In those districts that were willing to give student-assigned state identification numbers, their achievement on state assessments can be monitored.
Evaluation of First 3 Year Cycle

- There has been considerable success in improving the quality of early care and education sites across the state.
  - Generally, sites rated at the 2 stars or below level are considered “low quality,” while those rated 3 stars or above are considered “high quality.”
When the program began,
   - Only thirty-seven percent (37%) of all participating sites were considered high quality,
   - While a full sixty-three percent (63%) were considered low quality.

By the 3rd follow up rating,
   - Seventy-six percent (76%) of the participating sites were rated high quality,
   - The number of low quality sites had been reduced to twenty-four percent (24%).
Star Ratings

Comparison of Ratings

We Improve People’s Lives By Supporting Quality Child Care
Due to its success, in 2005 the legislature reauthorized the continuation of the School Readiness Program, HB05-1238, modifying the name to the “School Readiness Quality Improvement Program” to more accurately reflect the focus of the program’s work.
Future Funding

- June 2006 $2.2 million per fiscal year was awarded to 14 diverse communities across the state incorporating urban, suburban, mountain, and rural plains areas.

- There are now 14 projects participating in the program, with approximately 148 early care and education sites representing 464 classrooms that are attended by 6250 Colorado children.
The Future is in Our Hands

We Improve People’s Lives By Supporting Quality Child Care
What About Quality Matters for Children’s School Readiness

Gladys Wilson, Director
Agency for Workforce Innovation
Office of Early Learning
Florida
The Agency for Workforce Innovation’s Office of Early Learning (OEL) works to support families and ensure children have quality care and early learning opportunities.
Support services and programs available to children and families:

- Child Care Resource & Referral (CCR&R)
- School Readiness
- Voluntary Prekindergarten (VPK)
Child Care Resource & Referral (CCR&R)

CCR&R is dedicated to helping families find answers to their questions regarding how to identify quality early learning programs and how to locate a provider that meets each family’s needs. Trained staff are available to provide families with referrals to programs that are customized to each family’s needs, as well as referrals to other services in the community.
Florida is unique in that the Florida State Network CCR&R Office is housed at the AWI-Office of Early Learning.

This positions CCR&R staff within close proximity to the policy and rule developers, program staff, and staff of the research and evaluation units.
School Readiness

“School Readiness Act”
Florida Statues
Chapter 411.01 School Readiness Programs; Early Learning
School Readiness...

is a financial assistance program for working families who are income eligible. Parents earning moderate or low incomes may qualify for financial assistance to help in paying a portion of the costs for early learning services.
Voluntary Prekindergarten (VPK)...

is a publicly-funded education program for all four-year-old children born on or before September 1st, who reside in Florida. VPK began in the fall of 2005 and is a free, voluntary, high quality education program.
Another Florida Early Learning Program
Child Care Executive Partnership (CCEP)

Another unique Florida program that partners Florida businesses with early learning.

http://www.ccep.bz/
The CCEP program is an innovative, public/private partnership program that was created by the Florida Legislature in 1996 to help employers meet the needs of a growing segment of their workforce—working parents.

This exciting program leverages a relationship between businesses and families that want to work and succeed. When families, businesses and the CCEP come to the table as partners, the entire community benefits.
How are the various early learning services delivered to Florida families?
Intersect of Policy and Program

- Data and Reporting
- Implementation
- Planning
Early Learning Coalitions

- 31 Early Learning Coalitions
- Each coalition is a unique, local governing board comprised of 18 members including Governor appointees
- Each of Florida’s 67 counties is represented by a early learning coalition
State of Florida Early Learning Coalitions

1  ELC of Escambia
2  ELC of Santa Rosa
3  ELC of Okaloosa & Walton Counties
4  ELC of North West Florida
5  ELC of the Big Bend Region
6  ELC of Florida’s Gateway
7  ELC of the Nature Coast
8  ELC of Alachua
9  ELC of CNBB
10 ELC of Duval
11 ELC of St. Johns & Putnam
12 ELC of Marion
13 ELC of Flagler & Volusia Counties
14 ELC of Orange
15 ELC of Seminole
16 ELC of Lake
17 ELC of Pasco & Hernando Counties
18 ELC of Pinellas
19 ELC of Hillsborough
20 ELC of Polk
21 ELC of Osceola
22 ELC of Brevard
23 ELC of Manatee
24 ELC of Sarasota
25 ELC of Florida’s Heartland, Inc.
26 ELC of Martin, Okeechobee, Indian River
27 ELC of St. Lucie
28 ELC of Southwest Florida
29 ELC of Palm Beach
30 ELC of Broward
31 ELC of Miami/Dade & Monroe
Coalition Plans

Each year, every coalition submit plans for service delivery in their areas.

Coalition plans are outcome driven and must demonstrate effectiveness and efficiency.
Coalition Plans

The early learning coalition must implement a comprehensive program of school readiness services that enhance the cognitive, social, and physical development of children to achieve the performance standards and outcome measures adopted by the Agency for Workforce Innovation.
Early Learning Coalition of Northwest Florida

An example of an outcome driven activity can be found in the plan of the coalition representing seven counties in the Florida Panhandle addressing *Coordinated Staff Development and Training*.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Required Element</th>
<th>Current Situation</th>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Activities</th>
<th>Outcome</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Coordinated Staff Development and Training</td>
<td>A Coalition Training Plan was developed and disseminated to School Readiness and VPK providers and posted on the website.</td>
<td>Increase the skill and documented level of Readiness and VPK teachers through a systematic plan of education as measured by newly developed teacher tracking system.</td>
<td>- Implement a process for recording and tracking teacher’s Professional Development goals and progress.</td>
<td>50% of teachers participating will have increased their level of education and skill based on education level at point of entrance into the tracking system and measured by written evaluations including pre- and post-tests, classroom evaluations, program evaluations, and completion of Teacher Work Projects.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Early Learning Coalition of Duval (Jacksonville Area)

Another example of an outcome driven activity can be found in the plan of the coalition representing northwest Florida addressing Developmentally Appropriate Curricula.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Required Element</th>
<th>Current Situation</th>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Activities</th>
<th>Outcome</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Developmentally Appropriate Curricula</td>
<td>✷ Four developmentally appropriate curricula have been approved by the Coalition</td>
<td>To implement the system within the presented timeline and monitor use by</td>
<td>✷ Curriculum Monitors will visit centers in rotation and monitor the use of</td>
<td>Activities will result in 85% of all school readiness providers having a developmentally appropriate curricula before the end of 2008-2009 year.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>for use by providers in school readiness centers.</td>
<td>all centers.</td>
<td>curriculum.</td>
<td>All centers participating in QRS will move to the next star in the Curriculum Domain.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Coalition Monitoring

The AWI-OEL has a review team that visits each coalition to monitor compliance with plans. Technical assistance is provided in those areas in need of attention (e.g., community outreach, governance, and CCR&R service delivery).
Current Efforts of Connecting Research and Data, Policy, and Programming Issues
Efforts to Increase Funding

In an effort to increase coalition funding to ensure the continuance of high quality service delivery, AWI-OEL is initiating the creation of Performance-Based Funding.
Performance-Based Funding

By attaching additional funds to the increase performance of service delivery by coalitions, AWI-OEL plans to award coalitions that go above and beyond by creatively and efficiently delivering early learning services to families in their communities.
Data Quality Initiative (DQI)

The mission is to promote program effectiveness, planning, and decision-making at all levels by providing valid and reliable data to internal and external constituents, by transforming data into useful information for decision-making through data analysis and research, and by implementing processes to assess program performance.
Data Quality Initiative (DQI)

Effort to centralize the early learning system, scrutinized collected data, and respond to the field’s requests for routine and ad hoc data needs.
Future Efforts of Connecting Research and Data, Policy, and Programming Issues
Current & Future Research Interests

Churn Rate:

A study of children enrolled in the school readiness program to focus on frequency of entry and exit of the program and contributing factors. Initial steps involve an examination of OEL data and later steps involve interviews, field work, and other qualitative components.
Current & Future Research Interests

Service Delivery Project:

- Purpose will be to analyze the service delivery models across coalitions. Some coalitions directly operate CCR&R, VPK, and SR Eligibility services while others utilize contracts. It is important to understand the effectiveness of each model. This will include examination of local staffing patterns, service delivery standards such as how parents gain access to all or any of these services. Information gathered could be used to begin determining what the most effective model is for coalitions and to move each coalition toward this model.

- A second piece to this examination will be to begin setting service delivery benchmarks for coalitions. Based on demographics such as number of children younger than five and number of working families – estimates on the number of children and families that should be served in a particular area could be determined.

- The ultimate goal of this investigation will be to move toward performance-based contracts for all services.
Current & Future Research Interests

Impact of Chapter 411.01:

Now that “School Readiness Act” has been in place for nearly a decade – how has its implementation changed service delivery in the early learning community and impacted children’s lives?
Thank you!

Gladys Wilson
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Gladys.Wilson@awi.state.fl.us
www.flready.com
Roundtable Discussion: Intersection of Research, Policy, and Practice

- How do the research findings or State approaches that you heard today impact your thinking about …
  - Access to high-quality settings for low-income families
  - The role of policy-makers and researchers in involving families
  - Reasonable approaches to measuring children’s school readiness
Wrap-Up

- Reflections
  - I learned …
  - I am surprised by …
  - I would like to know more about …

- Resources
Thank You

NCCIC is a service of the Child Care Bureau

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