2011 STAM – CCPRC Meeting
Workshop C3
November 16, 2011, 2:45-4:00 pm

Policy Implications of Systems and Data Integration Efforts

Description

This workshop provided an overview of early childhood education data and systems integration initiatives and efforts to integrate child care systems with other child- and family-serving systems, including child welfare; mental health; and adult benefit systems, such as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program and Medicaid Program.

Facilitator

J. Lee Kreader, National Center for Children in Poverty

Presenters

Danielle Ewen, D.C. Public Schools
Helene Stebbins, Birth to Five Policy Alliance, Early Childhood Data Collaborative

Discussant

Dan Haggard, New Mexico Children, Youth and Families Department

Scribe

Tabitha Isner, Child Trends

1. **Documents in Session Folder**
   - "Integrating Systems: Improving Access to Better Serve Families;" Hannah Matthews, Child Care and Early Education
   - "10 Fundamentals of Coordinated State Early Care and Education Data Systems;" Helene Stebbins (Handout)
   - "ECDC 2010 State Analysis of Early Care and Education;" Helene Stebbins
   - "New Mexico's Young Children: Their Needs, Our Future;" Peter Winograd, Tenley Ruth, Angelo Gonzales, Adai Tefera, Dan Haggard, and Thomas Scharmen

2. **Summary of Presentations**
   - **Summary of Presentation #1:** Danielle Ewen
     - What results should a comprehensive early childhood system deliver? There are three overlapping circles: Health, Early Learning and Development, and Family Leadership and Support. At the center, where the three circles overlap is "Thriving Children and Families." It is important to remind ourselves that this is at the core of what we do.
     - Many families are not getting all (or even any) of the services they are eligible for— sometimes because of waitlists or because they aren't applying for these supports.
     - Some promising practices for simplifying application processes include:
       - A single pathway to a package of services (for example, in Oregon, ten programs can be accessed with just one online application).

- Limiting in-person requirements: What information do we really need? Can we get it another way (perhaps by sharing information across agencies?).
- Simplifying renewals/improving retention. Many families are still eligible even after falling off; what makes the renewal process burdensome for families?
  o Business process reengineering (a process of analyzing the inefficiencies in the case management system). What information is being collected that is not being used? What information could we be gathering that would actually be helpful? How do we make it a better process for both caseworkers and families?
    - We can make child care subsidies more attractive and collaborative by screening for other programs when we're screening for subsidies.
    - Oregon is a model for aligning programs and improving processes and systems to make them as simple and integrated as possible. For example, the TANF employment program uses the same requirements as subsidies.
  o Challenges: Regulations from Federal agencies (e.g., Department of Homeland Security, Centers for Medicare and Medicaid, and Food and Nutrition Service) sometimes conflict with one another. It is difficult to align policies and data across agencies/programs.

- **Summary of Presentation #2**: Helene Stebbins
  o There are lots of ways to think about data, but at the core is the question, "What do we really need to know?" The Early Childhood Data Collaborative (ECDC) was created to help States bring together the vast amounts of data that are available to answer critical policy questions.
    - Are children, birth to age 5, on track to success when they enter school and beyond? Which children have access to high-quality early care and education programs?
    - Is the quality of programs improving? What are the characteristics of effective programs?
    - How prepared is the ECE workforce to provide effective education and care for all children? What policies and investments lead to a skilled and stable ECE workforce?
  o The ECDC focuses on the ECE domain, but there are many others. Six key programs: subsidized child care, licensed child care, early intervention (IDEA part C), early childhood special education (IDEA, part B, Section 619), State prek, and Head Start
  o In 2010, the ECDC collected data from States about their data systems and processes. Some States reported that just getting the needed stakeholders together was a big accomplishment. Findings from the State analysis include:
    - Every state collects ECE data on individual children, programs, or members of the workforce.
    - Data are uncoordinated across ECE programs (only one State can link child data to program and practitioner data).
    - Data gaps remain, including in child-level development data.
    - Governance matters when linking to other systems because linkages are easier within the same agency.

- **Summary of Presentation #3:** Dan Haggard

- o As New Mexico (NM) stakeholders worked on the Race to the Top application, multiple gaps in its data systems became apparent.
    - ▪ NM has a significant tribal population, but little data about it.
    - ▪ The same agency covers child welfare/protective services and child care subsidies, but can't figure out how to tell how many foster children are in which programs.
    - ▪ Getting non-duplicated counts of children is a real challenge.
- o They also discovered resources that they weren't aware of:
    - ▪ For instance, the Department of Health has an amazing epidemiology department with a great data system.
    - ▪ The Department of Education unique identifiers are already in good shape, so NM can build on those.
- o Our key policy question: Where are NM's children and communities living with a high incidence of conditions that affect individual and community development? Do high-risk children have access to services?
    - ▪ Using an epidemiological approach, they developed a combined risk factor index to measure each community's risk level. The results were mapped using geocoding. They then mapped the high-quality child care programs and overlaid that map onto the risk factor map.
- o By integrating systems (and the strengths those systems bring), they are able to answer policy questions that couldn't be answered before. They also looked at how they could intentionally target the areas of the State that most need interventions.

3. **Summary of Discussion with Presenters and Participants**
   - Additional Challenges: Resistance to unique IDs—not just for immigrant families; debates over data warehousing versus cloud computing
   - Summary:
       - o What do we really need to know? Let's collect ALL and ONLY the data that we need. Doing this will have positive effects for families, for caseworkers/program implementers, for research, and for policymaking.
       - o Administrative data systems can answer certain questions really well, but are not the appropriate source for other things, like studies on cause and effect.
       - o Partnerships (between State agencies and government and research organizations) can be hard, but have so many benefits. Different partners have different strengths and resources available to them. Collaboration can also strengthen credibility.