Indicators of ECE Quality for Multiple Purposes

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Session Outline

*Brandon*: why are we here?

*Tout*: CT scan of various requirements for quality-related data

*Malone*: examples of (multi-) state data systems serving multiple purposes

*Kreader*: moderate discussion by participants
Session Purpose

- Understand the environment in which quality-oriented data systems are being developed.

- Consider opportunities, supports for the ECE field.

- Discuss the levels and elements of a desirable quality-oriented data system based on a logic model.

- Consider balance between ideal data systems and operational and fiscal constraints, as exemplified by state and local experience;

- Reflect different reporting and research requirements; promote cross-state comparability, reliability.

- Build on past INQUIRE work, provide analytic base for future efforts to assist states and researchers.
Pressures for Quality-Oriented Data

*Internal to ECE Agencies:*
- Improve programs and policies
- Operate QII/QRIS
- Measure impact of QII/QRIS
- Understand, monitor ECE workforce
- Reliable within and across-state comparisons

*External Demands:*
- Accountability: evolving OCC requirements, RTT-ELC, legislatures and private funders
- Linkages to other service systems: K-12 (SLDS), human services
Prevalence of Less-than-Good Quality ECE: Findings from ECLS

Quality of Settings for 2-year Olds

- Inadequate-Minimum (1-3): 9 (All center-based), 36 (All home-based)
- Fair-Adequate (3-5): 66 (All center-based), 57 (All home-based)
- Good-Excellent (5-7): 24 (All center-based), 7 (All home-based)

Author’s chart from data in Mulligan & Flanagan 2006
Opportunities

- Better data for planning, evaluation, policy development.

- Richer understanding of relationships among different aspects of ECE inputs (human and financial), outputs (programs and supports) and child outcomes.

- Financial support for longitudinal and cross-systems data systems: SLDS, DOL, RTT-ELC

- Developing a voluntary cross-state data system that allows comparisons and national data for key indicators (cf. K-12 Common Core of Data)
Challenges

- Different conceptual bases and time referents for different pressures.
- Issues for which reliable 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.
- Process for achieving voluntary agreements among states.
Simplified QII/QRIS Logic Model

**Child Development** Outcomes Improve: overall and elimination of gaps; Children experience higher quality ECE. [Impact]

**Providers Offer Higher Quality ECE**
- **Outcomes**

**Supports to Providers:** [Outputs]
- Clear standards; objective rating
- Fees/reimbursement cover standards.
- Incentives to improve
- Stable cash flow, ‘venture capital’ to invest in meeting standards

**Essential Inputs**
- Reliable rating scales, trained raters
- Funding to cover provider costs of meeting standards; prompt and stable payments
- Outreach to assure high level of participation by providers, staff.
- Staff registry to track qualifications.

**Parents Demand/Select Higher Quality ECE**
- **Outcomes**

**Support to Families:** [Outputs]
- Assistance to afford higher quality ECE
- Information about the nature of quality and ratings

**Essential Inputs**
- Financial assistance structure that reaches all families needing assistance
- Public information/education programs to inform parents about quality and ratings
- Outreach to assure parent awareness, participation in financial assistance

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Logic Model as Unifying Factor

Advantages of a Logic Model to Guide Data Development

- Links what we want to know about inputs, outputs and outcomes – avoids gaps
- Can be adapted to different programs, contexts

Draft matrix [Brandon and Isner, INQUIRE, July 2011]

- Distinguish 2 Tracks: Parents, Providers
- Include 3 Levels: Individual, Program, System
- Illustrates Inputs, Activities, Outputs, and Short/Long-term Outcomes for each level in each track.
- Data elements: policies, services, staff and child characteristics, developmental outcomes, expenditures
Provider Track: Encourage and support ECE programs/providers to offer higher quality

- **Individual**: influence how staff members interact with children and parents;

- **Program**: influence the level of program quality through incentives, supports, regulations; achieve high participation in QII/QRIS; improve programs’ quality rating over time;

- **System**: improve the overall level of quality offered in a community/market and narrowing gaps among the quality experience by more/less advantaged children.
Parent Track: Inform and motivate to seek and demand higher quality ECE

- **Individuals**: influence different groups of parents to recognize, select and demand higher quality ECE;

- **Program**: influence programs to interact positively with parents, seek and accept subsidies to assist parents to afford higher quality ECE;

- **System**: influence all or most parents to seek and demand higher quality ECE, and participate in financial assistance programs to support their demand.
Some starting questions for discussion:

- What innovative efforts are you aware of to unify measures and data systems?
- What challenges and constraints have you observed or experienced – fiscal, operational, collaborative …?
- What strategies adopted to overcome challenges, constraints?
- For what indicators would states like to able to compare themselves with others?
- How to use data for both reporting and evaluation?
- Additional purposes, opportunities …… ?
Resource Links

ACF/OPRE Website:
http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/opre/about_opre.html

- INQUIRE briefs:

- QRS Assessment documents:
  http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/opre/cc/childcare_quality/

- Research Connections:
  www.researchconnections.org