

Child

Defining and Measuring Quality

- Does child care/early education promote resilient academic outcomes for vulnerable populations of children (i.e. f/c, child welfare, homeless)?

Quality & Program Characteristics

Child Outcomes

- What features of child care are associated with early school achievement?
- What activities can promote parental involvement in their children's development in preschool programs?
- What program-level characteristics affect child outcomes?
- What is the effect of community context on program operations and quality? On child outcomes?
- What are the effects of family dynamics (work, etc.) on child outcomes?
- What do we mean by "school readiness," how can we measure it, and what should we do to improve it?
- How can we link inputs (program, child, family, etc.) and child and family outcomes in order to answer policymakers' demands for accountability?
- Is the child care community really preparing children for school (school readiness)?
- What are the indicators of healthy social and emotional development for children ages 0 to 3 years?

Child Outcomes, Including Health

- How are child health outcomes affecting a child's ability to learn?
- A healthy child learns better than a child without proper health services and screenings.
- What child care arrangements are more/less effective for various age ranges?

Workforce Characteristics

- What qualifications and characteristics do child care providers and educators need to have to effectively support all children's learning goals?

Effective Practice

- Who are the children in the most vulnerable care situations across all types of care? How can we target resources to improve quality in those settings?
- How are care givers including social/emotional development in their programs?
- What are appropriate "research-based" curricula for children in the state?
- How effective are programs – for children and families relative to their goals?
- What are the most effective programs/practices for children (i.e., by age, by special need, by SES/ethnicity)?
- The need for materials and equipment amongst relative and nonrelative subsidized care givers.
- What are studies that promote FCC as a quality option for families?
- Are we getting the services we're actually paying for?

- Effectiveness of programs to promote school readiness.

Quality

- What is the relationship between quality of early childhood care and “school readiness/school performance? (continuing)
- What level of quality is needed for school “readiness”?
- Are quality improvement initiatives having an impact?

Professional Development

- What types of efforts to improve the professional abilities of providers (e.g., compensation, education benefits) provide the most cost efficient yet meaningful improvements in child outcomes?

Quality

Measurement Issues

- Parental perceptions of quality: What is the quality of care by types as perceived by parents and measured by standard metrics?
- Is there a quality threshold above which quality is adequate/good and below which it is bad for kids?
- What are agreed upon indicators of high quality care?

Variations of Quality

- Are low-income or at-risk children in ECE settings different from other children? (What is the comparative quality of those settings?)
- Quality of care: How does the quality of care provided vary from one center to the other statewide? (question to be addressed periodically by state)
- What is the quality difference between licensed and unlicensed providers?

Impacts of Quality

- Do financial incentives affect quality of care?
- What do we know about the quality of ECE settings, and does quality matter?
- Does the type of care setting affect school readiness?

Quality Measures

Outcomes:

- o What impact do different types of early childhood settings have on children’s school readiness?
- o What are positive outcomes for children in child care?

School Readiness Sub-Theme

- How do child outcomes (readiness for school) relate to quality of child care programs?
- What aspects of child care quality are most important for children’s development?
- Which aspects of child care quality can programs improve upon (at relatively low cost) as a means of enhancing school readiness?
- What aspects of quality are most important for children’s outcomes?

Parent/Families

Outcomes

- What is the role of child care programs in helping/supporting the parent-child relationship?

Separate

- Children's health: Tracking health indicators over time that are relevant to the current problem of childhood overweight and obesity; for example, nutrition, activity in child care programs (link with USDA food programs)?
- What problems are there with our current child care system?
- What is the best way to respond to the common question from administrators: "How does our state compare to other states?"

How To Improve Early School Success for Poor and At-Risk Children Via Child Care Settings

- What impact does lengthy daily stays in child care have on child adjustment/behavior and on family functioning?
- What difference do different combinations of child care experiences make for early school success?
- What are the most effective early educational instructional practices that can be used in child care settings?
- What assessment tools are available to programs and early care teachers to determine whether children are developing at a normal rate?
- What are indicators of healthy social and emotional development for children 0-3?
- Which type of child care setting is best for child development?
- What do children learn in the course of a program year? What progress do they make in communication, social skills, etc.?
- How to promote early success in school for children across child care settings?
- How can early care programs better serve at-risk children?
 - o Homeless
 - o Linguistic
 - o Culturally diverse
- How can program promote parental involvement in preschool programs?
- How does the combination of family moves, teacher turnover and changes in child care impact outcomes for children?

Usage and Demographics

- What is the income (?) racial/ethnic composition of the child care population?
- Percentage of child care providers who are: (1) center care, (2) family center, (3) relative or FFN, (4) linked with Head Start.
- What is the number of families on the waiting list and length of time people stay on the waiting list?
- What are the geographical distributions by counties of children and families being served?

- What are the number of children and families being served—by race and ethnicity?

Measuring Quality

- What is the range of quality of child care settings on structural measures (ratio, group size)?
- Is child care quality adequate?
- Are there valid measures of process quality that can be feasibly and consistently assessed on a statewide basis?
- What are the primary quality indicators that states should identify and address in various child care settings?
- What is the quality of programs our “subsidy” dollars buy?
- What is quality child care?
- How do we measure quality? What are the different ways?
- How can child care quality be measured in a cost effective way?
- What is the quality of care delivered to children? How does this vary across provider types?
- What are the most critical indicators of quality and what policies best advance these?
- What is the range of quality of child care settings on process measures (interaction)?