

# Child Care Policy Research Consortium

## 2005 Meeting Overview

*Frontiers in Child Care Policy and Research*, the 2005 Annual Meeting of the Child Care Policy Research Consortium was held March 8-11, 2005 at the Radisson Lord Baltimore Hotel.

Each year the meeting themes are developed collaboratively by the Consortium Steering Committee, the Child Care Bureau's Research Team, and Principal Investigators of funded projects. This year's meeting explored new frontiers on the horizon for child care policy and research, focusing on linkages between child care and other programs such as early education and mental health, on professional development of providers and assessment of children, and on the intersection of child care with programs and labor market trends affecting families with children in care. Children are at the heart of child care and issues surrounding the quality of their experience run throughout all of the themes. All of the products developed for this meeting - including the agenda, participant list, and detailed session notes - are posted on the meeting website at [www.researchconnections.org](http://www.researchconnections.org)

During the meeting, each of the three broad themes was summarized in a plenary panel and discussed in greater depth during breakout sessions. To allow participants the ability to follow a particular theme throughout the meeting, breakout sessions focused on each theme were included in every group of sessions rather than being clustered together in a single group following the relevant plenary. However, because these themes are intricately interlinked, discussion in the sessions ranged across many issues and a given topic might occur as the focus of one session and be considered secondarily in another. For this reason, searchable key words are provided along with session summaries.

To provide a general overview of each theme, plenary sessions were videotaped by ..... Summaries of the transcripts are being developed. We also videotaped interviews with some of the presenters and theme leaders for this meeting. Once the transcripts and summaries are complete they will be posted on the meeting website. The videotapes themselves can be viewed by.....

The three- and-a-half day meeting was organized into three components designed to elucidate the new frontiers for child care policies and programs, understand what cross-cutting research and programmatic linkages are needed for policy issues now on the horizon, strengthen partnerships and professional relationships, and share new knowledge.

- Tuesday consisted of special meetings for project teams and steering committees, an orientation and professional development session for new scholars; and training for researchers interested in working with national Head Start evaluation data.

- Wednesday and Thursday were devoted to plenary and breakout sessions covering the meeting themes as well as a discussion with the Associate Commissioner and a special training by Research Connections for archiving data. The handbook for contributors and users of data archived at Research Connections is posted on the meeting website. Two poster sessions were also held, during which participants informally discussed their projects, engaged in networking, and discussed issues. Copies of the posters are also posted on the meeting website.
- On Friday, theme leaders lead a discussion of what had been learned throughout the week and provided a synthesis for each theme. State child care administrators who did not attend the meeting in person were invited to participate by conference call.

### **(Plenary Panels)**

**(add summaries here)**

### **Breakout Sessions**

The following paragraphs briefly describe each of the 12 breakout sessions. Detailed notes can be found in the electronic folder for each session on the meeting website.

Session 1. Assessments and Measures that Support Linkages Among Early Care and Education Programs. *Assessments and measures that provide data about quality and costs across early care and education programs can support linkages among these programs. How can assessment and measurement approaches support linkages that strengthen the early care and education system as a whole? What data, including cost data, are needed by policymakers in considering policy decisions that support linkages? The session highlighted the experience of Ohio in linking their child care and other early education programs and research that looks at cost and quality issues.*

Session 2. Issues in the Linkage of Child Care, Mental Health, and Special Intervention. *This session highlighted the experiences of Connecticut and Vermont in promoting linkages on behalf of children with disabilities as well as mental health issues. These case studies were used as a springboard for the non-researchers in the group to discuss the issues and challenges they face and the research questions they would like answered. Researchers in the group discussed approaches they are taking—or would like to see taken in new studies—to answer some of these questions.*

Session 3. Linkages among Employment, Workplace Policies, and Child and Family Well-Being. *Examining the employment context is critical in understanding the realities low-income parents face. Work characteristics and workplace policies affect the well-being of families and children. This session focused on what we know about these issues and explored new frontiers for future research.*

Session 4. Implementation Issues in Evaluation of Quality Initiatives. *QUINCE is a study of two interventions to enhance the quality of children's experiences with family child care providers and center-based teachers. Developers of each intervention*

*described the core elements and procedures of the model and then, based on the first 6 months of implementation, four directors of community and State agencies responsible for quality improvement described the success and challenges of integrating such models into existing agency services. Implementation issues such as balancing staff needs with maintaining fidelity to the original model were discussed.*

Session 5. Issues in Measuring Quality in Home-Based Settings. *This session considered measurement issues encountered when assessing child care quality in a range of home-based settings. What do we know about quality in home-based settings? How has quality been measured? What types of measures exist? How do these measures vary depending on the type of home-based setting—from family, friend, and neighbor caregivers to licensed family child care providers?*

Session 6. What are we learning about the relationship between subsidy and welfare-to-work systems and policies, and the child care and employment patterns of low-income parents? *This session provided an opportunity to discuss recent research on the implications of multiple levels of subsidy policy and practice for the employment and child care patterns of low-income parents. The discussion focused on two interrelated types of subsidy-related research and their implications for child care and employment: (1) subsidy administration issues (such as the implications of devolution of child care subsidy management, as well as the strong interconnections between child care and TANF/welfare-to-work systems); and (2) child care subsidies and subsidy policies.*

Session 7. Defining and Measuring Content of Professional Development. *In both research and practice there is little agreement on how to measure the content or extent of professional development. We have little evidence regarding the specific content, number or sequencing of courses that are linked to standards for children's early learning and that can best support positive practice and child outcomes. Several efforts are underway to develop better measurement approaches in early childhood professional development. These efforts include (1) work by NACCRRRA to conduct a survey of agency directors regarding the content of training offered; (2) work by the National Registry Alliance on how best to record the content and extent of the training and education achieved by licensed child care providers; (3) work focusing on extending market rate surveys to include provider-level education and training information; (4) work by researchers piloting new prospective measures of training in evaluation studies; and (5) work focusing on strengthening state and federal survey data to better document the qualifications of the early childhood workforce. Individuals associated with these approaches shared the status of new work and provided the topical framework for general discussion.*

Session 8. What Child Care Arrangements Do Low-Income Parents Use? How Do State Policies and Programs Affect Their Choices? *Parents use a variety of child care settings and arrangements. This breakout focused on the types of care that low-income parents use and explored how subsidy policies ultimately affect the type of child care arrangements observed. The dialog delved deeper into what we know about the*

context in which low-income parents make child care arrangements and the constraints affecting their options.

Session 9. Assessment of School Readiness and Child Outcomes in Preschool. *This workshop explored the issues states need to consider when embarking on assessments of preschool and kindergarten children, including the appropriateness of various measures and methodologies for screening children for special needs, customizing teaching to the class, evaluating programs, and determining the effectiveness of programs and policies. This workshop surveyed the state-of-the-art in measures and methodologies used in assessments, including the merits and limitations of common approaches to evaluation of school readiness and the impact of early care and education programs.*

Session 10. State-Level Assessments of Quality Rating Systems. *Discussants addressed how research findings on child care quality have been used within States, what it takes to get a program implemented, issues that policy makers need to consider when considering quality rating systems, and the challenges of monitoring changes over time in light of State quality investments.*

Session 11. Linking Data From Different State Systems. *What are we learning from efforts to use a common identifier across different administrative datasets—including data from child care subsidy, licensing, and registry systems, as well as TANF, Unemployment Insurance, and Census data?*

Session 12. Dynamics of Child Care Arrangements. *Stable arrangements are seen as a goal in child care—but what does stability mean, and how is it measured? This breakout session focused on the various ways that researchers have examined the stability of child care for low-income children and highlighted findings from research. Participants in this session attempted to arrive at a better understanding of the measures and explored the possibility of using comparable measures on different data sets.*

**Synthesis and Wrap-Up**  
(add summary here)

### **The Child Care Bureau Research Team**

Karen Tvedt  
Director, Policy and Research Division  
[ktvedt@acf.hhs.gov](mailto:ktvedt@acf.hhs.gov)

Ivelisse Martinez-Beck, Ph.D.  
Research Coordinator and Team Leader  
[imartinezbeck@acf.hhs.gov](mailto:imartinezbeck@acf.hhs.gov)

Dawn Ramsburg, Ph.D.  
SRCF Fellow and Consortium Manager  
[dramsburg@acf.hhs.gov](mailto:dramsburg@acf.hhs.gov)

Suzanne Freed  
Policy Analyst and Research Connections Manager  
[sfreed@acf.hhs.gov](mailto:sfreed@acf.hhs.gov)