

Frontiers in Child Care Research
Annual Meeting of the Child Care Policy Research Consortium
Radisson Lord Baltimore Hotel
March 8–11, 2005

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 early learning standards for children's 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 use of administrative data sets and 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 will share the status of new work and provide the topical framework for general discussion.

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There is a consensus that it is necessary to take a broader look at workforce and professional development. The workgroup will share resources and facilitate communication between people working on this issue. There is a Web site in the piloting phase to assist in this effort. The Steering Committee also holds regular conference calls to discuss these issues. Those interested in receiving emails with information on the workgroup's activities and related issues signed up on an email list.

How NACCRA has developed this work:

- Membership of CCR&Rs that do training.
- The group is trying to get a picture of types of training, what providers are participating, requirements of trainers, core curricula in States.
- Group is in the process of developing instruments to collect this information.
- Training takes multiple forms and is seen as including consulting, technical assistance, and mentoring, as well as work shops and group sessions.
- Give CCR&Rs the capability to track training at the provider level, so that information can be linked if providers change employers, etc.
- Department of Defense contracts for child care provide linkages between civilian and military child care systems.
- Once the group is finished revising the survey, it will be available for dissemination.
- Work group is trying to look across different efforts, being sure to include variables that can be linked and core elements to link.

Role of work group:

- Prevent duplication of work, falling into same traps in terms of inconsistent definitions.
- Look across different efforts; come up with the best way of linking information.
- Some specific programs will have more specific questions, but there should be certain core elements consistent across data collection.
- Whether training is in-house or contracted out, data are still collected for child care.
- Who are the trainers, train-the-trainers and providers?
- Group is asking demographic questions about those being trained.
 - It is difficult to get an unduplicated number of providers.
 - Provide breakdowns by race/ethnic categories, education, income categories. Otherwise, estimate.
 - Accuracy of these data is unclear.

How many workshops count toward credit?

- Parsimonious categorization of training content is needed.

- People need to develop a small set of categories that will be useful across systems.
- NACCRA uses CDA categories as the basis for their current instrument development.

Jere Wallden

Wisconsin Registry

- Informal alliance of State registries.
- Registries have three functions: (1) training in State, (2) trainers, (3) practitioners and type of training they have.
- Try to coordinate and compare data across States.
- There are 8-to-10 core knowledge areas. Do not want to mandate data collection, but want to report as “one voice.”
- All types of training and education are entered into a computer system, which calculates level of training achieved.
- Regardless of specifics in State, can report total credits in early childhood.
- Four-state project—Missouri, Maine, Montana, Wisconsin—State maps that show training in each State, merge data for look at four States overall.
- In Missouri 4 years ago, a certain number of clock hours was required, redundant credits are acceptable.
- OPEN—Opportunities in Professional Education Network—statewide system
- List of good things registries State-by-State should include. Verification will likely prove to be important.
- Need to merge efforts to avoid parallel efforts in States that will duplicate systems. Work smarter not harder, especially since there are limited funds.
- Want to end up with common database of providers.
- Need to develop a list of what should be collected and how, so State-by-State comparisons will be possible.

Support for data collection:

- Registries are potentially a very rich data source. However, if they are voluntary, results may over-represent the people who are interested in having information recorded, likely those getting the most training.
- It is necessary to know how many States require registry participation and how many are voluntary.
- Only registered care required. Study could link registry participation to quality initiatives.
- Illinois: No one can receive training by someone not in the trainer registry. Being in the registry is voluntary.
- Private universities have a good model: translating training into credits. This takes high skill levels and can be expensive.
- Registries could become a way for the general workforce to have experience quantified.
 - This would require agreements with higher education, because universities would likely not accept credits otherwise.

- Has this been explored by registries?
- Universities could take a mix of training, experience, etc., and translate it into credits on the transcript.
 - For example, at the private school Pacific Oaks, people are highly trained to do this. They have developed a set of equivalencies. It helps with their recruitment.
- Higher education is not represented in this group.

Is one of the goals of registries to describe the overall workforce?

- Yes, but the study is not close to this objective. Right now it is collecting the data.
- Used PARS data to describe regulated workforce in Illinois.

Good Start, Grow Smart

- Address some of these issues through articulation.
- Maryland articulation agreements with community colleges for Head Start.
- Consultant to develop articulation plans for entire State.

Recommendations for higher education people from Maryland:

- Core set of fields on which to collect data.
- Share results with NACCRRA
- Identifiers in case providers move across States.
 - SSNs, DOB used in Missouri for this purpose.

Bobbie Weber

Six Capacity Grant States: Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, Oregon, Rhode Island, and Wisconsin

- One activity shared by all research and data capacity grantees has been the development of ongoing capacity to describe and track the child care workforce.
- Drivers that are leading the States include: Professional development and registries, training and compensation initiatives, quality initiatives (which often include workforce indicators), economic impact studies (must estimate size of workforce).
 - A system perspective is key. There is a need for ongoing capacity within the State to collect data on the child care *system*.
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- States have long had facility-level databases and are creating individual-level databases.
 - Facility level databases include:
 - Licensing
 - R&R
 - Subsidy
 - Child and Adult Care Food Program
 - Individual-level databases include:

- professional development registries—voluntary in most states
 - criminal records—required of persons who work or spend unsupervised time in regulated facilities; and
 - NACCRRRA training database under development to document training events and other individual-level data over time.
- In home-based care has little difference between the facility and the individual levels.
- Issues:
 - Identify who is really a member of the child care workforce. Many persons in criminal record system may be relatives of family child care providers.
 - Providers are not good at documenting their own training; many do not keep records of their own training and experience.
 - Duplication of databases - there is a great need to reduce the number of these databases.
 - Merge them, e.g. NACCRRRA and registries.
 - Providers will only have to give this detailed information one time.
 - Technology makes sharing of a single database by multiple organizations *possible*. Store this data somewhere neutral; use passwords so that only relevant portions are seen by each organization.
 - If collected information is already shared, some organizations are concerned that they will be deemed unnecessary and their budgets and jobs will be cut. How should this concern be handled?
- Organizations can still share information, even if it is not a shared database.
 - A support for sharing databases is common ID numbers. For example, the DOB + last five digits of SSN are used in Oregon's tracking system.
 - SSNs are too sensitive, and some organizations are not allowed to collect them. Using the last five digits may address this concern.
 - It must be something providers will remember and that will stay the same over time.
 - Hopefully, the common ID protects confidentiality.
 - Data security is important, but is an area for technical expertise. It is also a reason for not collecting whole SSN.
 - There may be legal issues concerning what can be shared across public and private organizations.
 - Other issues include where data are housed, concerns about integrity of databases, and security issues. We need to be careful about what is collected in the first place so it cannot be misused or used to identify an individual.
- Registries
 - Benefits of registries include the following:
 - Employers can advertise to a certain level of personnel;
 - They provide mobility to child care workers; and

- They help build a sense of professional identity.
 - o Public recognition in Missouri for moving up a step on the ladder provides motivation to register in voluntary registry
- Licensing plays a key role.
- Linking Licensing and Registries:
 - o Helps employers screen applicants and may be useful for workers moving from State-to-State;
 - o Makes clear that voluntary registry is different from mandatory reporting of licensing, however, Connecticut is considering licensing individuals, which will make registry mandatory and require providers to put all qualifications into a transcript.
 - o What does it mean for database development when participation is voluntary and mandatory for different people?

Donna Bryant

QUINCE Study

We tried to write questions about professional development for the teachers and family child care providers in the QUINCE study, taking into account the topics discussed at professional development meeting last year:

- Separated education, credentials/licenses, and training.
- Family child care interview, center teacher interview, center director Interview:
 - o QUINCE is asking questions in a consistent way.
 - o QUINCE has a short time-frame: we would not expect large increases in any categories after 10 months of intervention (time 2), or 6 months later (time 3).
 - o QUINCE has rich quality measures of the environments; we will try to tie education and professional development training to quality assessments.

Education:

- There are totally separate questions for high school (or lower) education and higher education.
- Higher education is divided evenly between high school graduation and GED.
- Information on study beyond high school includes academic major, credit-hours, courses in early childhood or related field.
- How many degrees are in other fields?
- Some degrees may amount to a credential even if it is not official.

Credentials/certification:

- Professional memberships
- Accreditation
- Credentials
- Licenses

Training:

- Retrospective self-report of training taken over past 2 years includes:
 - Workshops, number of hours, number of sessions;
 - Continuing Education Units (CEUs) acquired;
 - Content of each workshop or experience coded in categories;
 - How the workshop was delivered; and
 - Purpose of the individual's participation in each workshop or experience (e.g. to help children, to improve job function, to qualify for a supplement, etc.).

Problems with collecting these data:

- Responses are often from memory and therefore suspect. Providers who keep notebooks of all their training experiences can respond to these questions quite well; providers who rely on memory struggle to remember. Research team wonders if a better and simpler indicator may be whether the provider has a notebook or not.
- QUINCE study may determine whether a larger-scale study of hundreds of providers documenting some of these categories of information might be useful. QUINCE alone will not have the sample size to answer all types of questions regarding professional development.

Other Comments from Audience about Collecting Professional Development Data

State could use a system, such as memory cards, at the end of training sessions for plugging individual training records into the tracking system. How could general education requirements be included in such a tracking system?

One state reported that being in the professional development registry was a requirement for workforce incentives and this helped increase individuals' professional development.

If professional development experiences were automatically recorded by the CCR&R as training occurs, they could perhaps be transferred onto a transcript. This could be a wonderful opportunity for linking data and systems:

- Programs that move TANF recipients or immigrants into child care as a place of employment;
- Different purposes of training and education;
- Disconnect between two major groups of people—those who are technicians and “do” child care, and those with higher education who are concerned about the “why” of how to do and improve child care;
- How do states perform their market rate studies? Are administrators adding questions? Market rate surveys are good opportunities to ask other questions;
- How do we measure the demonstration of competence?
 - Are providers are learning actual practices to improve their quality of care?
 - Observations of providers do show correlation, although it is a “distal measure.”

- We need measures to categorize intensity, “dosage” of care.

Rick Brandon

- Two key missing areas include:
 - Characteristics of the child care workforce; and
 - Conceptual clarity regarding who is in the workforce.
- Three areas of current data collection to build on include:
 - Licensing (potentially the greatest source of data);
 - Market rate surveys (required by federal law, some inquire about characteristics of caregivers); and
 - Registries.
- South Carolina is moving to unified provider database, with data on rates and staffing based on licensor site visit and interview.
- K-12 field has thirty years of experience with common core of data which can provide a model for a coordinated effort by states to collect comparable, high quality data.
- Who do we include in workforce?
 - Teachers, aides, assistants (food service, art specialist, bus driver)?
 - Do these interactions have an affect on the children?