



# Child Care Collaboration Study

Child Care and Early Education Policy Research Consortium  
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Meghan Broadstone & Diane Schilder

Education Development Center, Inc.

# Background: Key Policy Issues

## Policy Issues

- Federal and state initiatives are supporting collaborations among Head Start, child care and pre-K programs
- Initiatives are designed to create more seamless and higher quality early care and education for children and families
- Questions exist about the nature and influence of collaborations on quality and comprehensiveness of services

## Research Team

- Diane Schilder, Meghan Broadstone, Sarah Kim, & Jess Gropen

## State Partners

- **Maryland** Department of Education
- **Vermont** Department of Children & Families

# Child Care Collaboration Study Questions

1. What is the nature of collaboration at the:
  - **State-level**
    - Child Care and Development Fund Administrators
    - Head Start State Collaboration Office Directors
    - ECE Specialists in State Departments of Education overseeing state pre-Kindergarten
  - **Community-level**
    - Child care providers
    - Head Start/Early Head Start programs
    - Pre-K providers
    - Informal organizations and coalitions
2. What is the association between collaboration and structural indicators of child care quality including: QRIS rating, provision of comprehensive services, professional development incentives, employee benefits, and use of standardized curriculum

# Child Care Collaboration Study Methods

Study Phase	Component	Data Source
Phase 1: National trends/ patterns in collaboration	Review of Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) Plans	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2014-2015 CCDF state and territory plans (N=49)</li> </ul>
	National Online Survey	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CCDF Administrators (N=48)</li> <li>• Head Start State Collaboration Office Directors (HSSCD) (N=48)</li> <li>• State Early Childhood Specialists/Pre-K Administrators (N=25)</li> </ul>
Phase 2: Collaboration in Vermont and Maryland at state agency and local levels	State Administrator Online Survey	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CCDF, HSSCD, State Early Childhood Specialists (N=6)</li> </ul>
	State Administrator Professional Network Survey	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CCDF, HSSCD, State Early Childhood Specialists (N=6)</li> </ul>
	State Level Network Survey	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Professional Networks of CCDF, HSSCD, State Early Childhood Specialists from Vermont (N=51) and Maryland (N=25)</li> </ul>
	Provider Pilot Study	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Child Care Providers in Vermont (N=7) and Maryland (N=7)</li> </ul>
	Provider Formal and Informal Collaboration Online Survey	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Child Care Providers in Vermont (N=191) and Maryland (N=118)</li> </ul>
	Provider Network Online Survey	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Child Care Providers in Vermont (N=171) and Maryland (N=112)</li> </ul>

# Findings



# Study Results: State-Level Collaboration

## Factors that support state-level collaboration:

- Regular scheduled meetings
- Pre-existing relationships at the state agency level
- Objectives and work or strategic plans that are consistent

## Factors less important to collaboration:

- Defined roles and responsibilities
- Sufficient time

# Study Results: State-Level Collaboration

## Barriers to state-level collaboration:

- Conflicting program requirements or regulations
- Funding constraints

## Other barriers to state-level collaboration that are less frequently cited:

- Governance structure (where agency is housed)
- Supervisory structure/reporting relationships

# Study Results: Program-Level Collaboration

## Question

Do programs **in collaboration** with Head Start, Early Head Start, and/or Preschool Development Grantees, differ from those not collaborating in terms of size and characteristics of children served?

## Answer

Collaborating programs differ from non-collaborating programs in terms of:

- Size (in terms of number of children enrolled)
- Percentage of children with documented special education needs
- Racial/ethnic diversity of children in attendance



# Study Results: Program-Level Collaboration

## Question

Do programs **in collaboration** with Head Start, Early Head Start, and/or Preschool Development Grantees, differ from those not collaborating in terms of structural indicators of quality?

## Answer

Collaborating programs differ from non-collaborating programs in terms of:

- QRIS ratings
- Professional development opportunities
- Employee benefits
- Provision of comprehensive services
- Use of standard curriculum

# Main Findings/Conclusions

## State-level collaborations

- Conflicting program requirements and regulations are a barrier to collaboration at the state level
- Structures such as an early childhood advisory council and a Quality Rating and Improvement System can support collaboration

## Program-level formal collaborations

- Programs in formal collaboration differ in terms of the demographics of children served
- Although collaboration is correlated with higher quality, self-selection could be a reason

# Implications for Policy

## State-level policy implications

- Regular meetings and existing structures are cited by state-level stakeholders as key to collaboration across child care, Head Start and pre-K
- Therefore, supporting or requiring meetings among those responsible for early care and education programming could support collaboration success

## Program-level policy implications

- Formal program-level collaboration is associated with improved structural indicators of quality
- Although policymakers might require early care and education programs in collaboration to meet specific quality standards, the study authors cannot yet recommend such policies
- Additional analysis is first needed to better understand the relationship

# Remaining Questions/Next Steps

Study team plans to:

- Collect qualitative data from programs to better understand the reasons child care programs engage in collaboration or decide against collaboration
- Examine relationship between state-level collaborative initiatives and program-level collaborations as well as indicators of quality
- Analyze differences between family child care and center based child care to determine if differences exist based on provider type



# More Information

[Check Out Findings from 15 Years of Early Childhood Partnership Research](#)

Contact information:

Diane Schilder, [dschilder@edc.org](mailto:dschilder@edc.org)

Meghan Broadstone, [mbroadstone@edc.org](mailto:mbroadstone@edc.org)