

B5: Moving to a More Aligned System: Working across Sectors to Improve Early Care and Education

Wednesday, April 17, 2019

2:30 p.m. – 3:45 p.m. | *Constitution CDE*

1. Descriptive Information

B5: Moving to a More Aligned System: Working across Sectors to Improve Early Care and Education

Multiple programs make up the early care and education landscape across the country. The last decade has seen numerous efforts to build stronger connections across these programs at the state and local level. Examples of these efforts include creating a governance structure that houses multiple ECE programs within one agency at the state level, joint professional development, and building integrated data systems that allow states or communities to examine how many children are served by more than one program. This session will explore some ways in which ECE programs can work together including a look at alignment in content focus (i.e., standards, curriculum, assessment), a mechanism for promoting collaboration (using a common data platform to provide cross-program professional development on evidence-based practices), and an in depth look at how one program (Head Start) is integrated within state ECE systems.

The session will begin with a brief overview and framework for thinking about coordination across ECE programs and include a facilitated discussion of supports, barriers, intended outcomes, and what is known about how building more aligned, integrated ECE systems improves outcomes for children and families.

The objectives for the session are to increase knowledge of current issues in systems alignment and to contribute to the development of a research agenda on this topic in early care and education.

Facilitator

Kathleen Hebbeler, SRI

Presenters

Kathleen Hebbeler, SRI | *Thinking about Alignment in Early Care and Education: Definitions and Overview*

Jade Marcus Jenkins, University of California, Irvine | *Standards, Curriculum, and Assessment in Early Childhood Education: Examining Coordination across Multiple State Systems*

April Crawford, Children’s Learning Institute at The University of Texas Health Science Center | *Integrating and Scaling Early Childhood Platforms to Build Quality and Improve Efficiency*

Kelly Maxwell, Child Trends | *What Existing Data Tell Us About the Connections Between Head Start and Other Early Care and Education Programs*

Scribe

Nazran Baba, ICF

2. Documents Available on Website

1. Thinking about Alignment in Early Care, Hebbeler
2. Standards Curriculum and Assessment, Jenkins
3. Connection Between HS and State/Territories, Maxwell

3. Brief Summary of Presentations

- Summary of Presentation #1: Kathleen Hebbeler
 - Reviewed definitions “system” and “loosely coupled” system
- Multiple perspectives of systems exist:
 - Segment perspective
 - Age year perspective
 - Levels perspective: federal, local and provider level
 - Components perspective: for example, Special Education is its own system. This perspective speaks to various components within the system.
 - Integration perspective
- What is the point of integrating systems?

- Helps us ultimately arrive at having higher quality programs. We don't want some programs to have qualified programs and other programs to have lesser qualified programs. We care because it will make life better for providers, families and kids. Higher quality care ultimately leads to better child outcomes.

- **Summary of Presentation #2: Jade Jenkins**

- Paper looked at curriculum as a policy lever to look at early childhood education and improving child outcomes. The study is descriptive and at the state level.
- Most curriculums currently in use do not lead to increased child outcomes.
- Looking at it from a state policy context, we zoomed out from the micro level to a macro level. This kind of lens is very familiar to the K-12 system. There are 3 main curriculum requirements or policy levers: Standards, Curriculum and Assessments.
 - We took those 3 and modified it for a better understanding of state policy.
- We do not have enough systematic research on how system level state policy is created. Right now, it is dispersed and varies across states and many agencies.
- Disorganization at state level is hindering the synergy of state policies. If you have more organizations, then there is more coordination required. Coordination and alignment is possible if a few organizations exist. A single organization doesn't help either – it becomes bureaucratic.
- There has been a call for greater alignment on state and local levels.
- We operationally define assessment as QRIS.
- A lot of states do not mention early learning standards in their QRIS.
- We pulled from multiple data sources: NIEER, QRIS compendium, states CCDF profiles etc. We then coded curriculum policies for the analysis to get at the 3 standards to better know what states required for their programs. Review presentation slides for specific results and data.
- Managing organizations: some states have a couple of agencies, some have 9 plus.
- No pattern in terms of which type of managing organization.
- We see little evidence in alignment. Different requirements in standards of QRIS seem to be prevalent in ECE overall.

- **Summary of Presentation #3: April Crawford**

- Focus will be on integrated systems in Texas through the University of Texas (UT)
- Inputs for the data system:
 - QRIS
 - TECPDS work force data
 - CLI Engage quality improvement
- Activities:
 - Technology integration – getting systems to talk to each other and have more commonality and portability
 - Dissemination of evidence-based programs – want to see what we can do better disseminate across program types
 - Alignment of standards — instead of implicit alignment, want to move towards more clearly articulating those alignments
- Outcomes:
 - Increase resource utilization
 - Build a knowledge base on research and evidence
 - Increase system efficiencies
 - Quality of care improvements
 - Scaled work force development
 - Better outcome for kids
- CLI Engage, developed in 2015
 - The system takes professional development content along with supplemental curriculum, activities, and other support resources and puts them on a platform to scale it. Initially, 2000

teachers were served. After these improvements, the number increased to 30, 000 teachers. This is a strong example of scaling evidence-based practices.

- TEXPDS
 - It is a training registry and a workforce registry
 - It has an opt-in functionality that was added into the CLI engage. As a result, it went from 400 participants in the work force registry to 19,000 since that was added.
 - Advice: You have to find where your users are and then use that to the advantage of the system. You cannot build a system and expect them to come.
 - Integrated features: real-time reporting for child care licensing; breakdown views for QRIS; reporting features on core competency training areas; (for the first time) issuing distinct certificates
 - We are also seeing an increase in training certificates for coaching. It is also opening opportunities for us to understand more learning opportunities.
- QRIS
 - We have integrated QRIS into CLI Engage.
- The 3 strategies we are using:
 - Trying to help the state build efficiencies. Without integration this cannot be possible.
 - Working with organizations who are big trainers to automate certificate data transfers, thus increasing efficiencies.
 - Allowing providers and coaches to identify resources for their TA plans and QRIS requirements. We are also using the trainer network of approved trainers, leveraging them to do TOTs to transitioned to the more communities
- **Question:** can you speak about the data governance issues? How did you build the systems to talk to one another?
 - Response: One reason why this is working is that all three of the platforms are housed at UT. Because all 3 systems are housed in UT, we were able to show the state offices how you can accelerate this work through integration.

- **Summary of Presentation #4: Kelly Maxwell**

- Looking at connections between HS and other aspects of the ECE system.
- HS is different from others because funding flows directly from Federal to local. This can make things more challenging to coordinate.
- This report comes out of publicly available data about the connections between state/territory ECE system
- The importance of the location of HS Collab offices:
 - These offices are designed to facilitate coordination between HS and states and coalitions
 - Location of the office makes it easier to coordinate with other ECE systems. It also makes it easier for coordination when the location is central to early childhood services.
- We are also looking at how HS coordinates with QRIS
 - HS participates in QRIS: 39 of 42 states report to Quality Compendium
 - 19 of 39 QRIS have alternative pathways for HS programs to earn a rating
- Summary
 - Relationship between HS and other parts of ECEs vary across states and territories
 - Collaboration and systems building are long term efforts. As a result connections may change over time
 - Further research is needed to understand how and why HS is connected to state and territory ECE systems.

4. Brief Summary of Discussion

- a. **Question:** Did you look at alignment of HS and information on states sharing databases?

- b. Response: We only pulled in information from publicly available data. Focused more on the integrated data systems.
 - i. Audience member comment: National Institute for Early Education Research (NIEER) is another good data source for you to consider.
- c. **Question:** How many HSs are licensed, and have QRIS?
 - i. We have the quality compendium data to know whether HS programs in general are participating in the QRIS.
 - ii. NIEER did ask this as well and we are looking forward to that data
- d. **Question:** What is the work that has been done on data elements behind these systems?
 - i. Follow-up question: How do you put a dollar amount value on initiatives like this?
 - ii. Response: financing is always complicated. Some collaboration is paid for by CCDBG. Every office across the state is doing different activities. Cost analyses are also happening at the individual agency level as well.
- e. **Question:** From the family's perspective they have to navigate this landscape of systems. We don't have enough guidance for families. What is being done about this?
 - i. Response: It's the administrative burden of the field of child care to manage state child care systems. A more integrated system has positive impacts for family navigation. Sometimes, though, states hide behind parental choice and do not do enough to integrate.
 - ii. One of the reasons for the disparate systems is that it is a culture clash occurring in a system of mixed delivery methods. Ultimately, we are responsible for the same kids, and integration, alignment and collaboration will help with this and enhance our ability to respond.
 - iii. It is hard to work across administrative silos.
 - iv. The early childhood development system is a reactionary system. In the past we have reacted to new laws and new initiatives instead of strategically taking a step back and planning more from the onset.
- f. **Audience Member Comment:** PDG B-5 is coming up and this is an opportunity for all of us. It will help us know what to plan for and what is currently limiting us. It will also help us explore the things that we'd like to do. We should answer the following:
 - i. What challenges are we facing?
 - ii. This round of PDG B-5 is not focused on results as much as learning what we have and what we need and where we would like to go.
 - iii. When we compete for the next round we should be able to look at several directions, and we should go to state legislators and look at other grants available to develop and integrate data systems.
 - iv. States should be addressing barriers to their system integration initiatives. New challenges should be uncovered as part of this round for addressing in the upcoming years.
- g. We also need to think about the end customer.
- h. We should also be looking at state role models -for example, is there a state where more coordination is happening? What are the differences and what can we learn from them?
 - i. It would be helpful to look at waiting lists and to understand if these are being shared. This can be telling of state policy as well. Another example would be to look at welfare experiments coordination between different welfare agencies and the work that they do.

5. Summary of Key issues raised

- We need to figure out what will coordination and collaboration of systems change or aim to change. Then, we should develop a logic model based on this. This can drive the conversation.
- The Texas case study is very promising – it shows us an example of system integration and partnership between different stakeholders that normally don't get partnered up so easily.