

EARLY CARE AND EDUCATION COLLABORATION:

Overview of definitions, methods,
emerging findings and implications



Diane Schilder, Principal Research Scientist, EDC
Meghan Broadstone, Research Scientist, EDC
Stephanie M. Curenton, Associate Professor, Boston University

EDC

**Learning
transforms
lives.**

Desired Outcomes of Today's Discussion

- Share questions, methods and findings of forthcoming research articles focused on ECE collaboration
- Obtain your expert advice and input about policy implications of forthcoming research articles on collaboration
- Discuss gaps in the research and future opportunities



Editors of Early Education and Development Special Issue on Collaboration



Diane Schilder



Stephanie M. Curenton



Meghan Broadstone

Potential Research Issues to Consider

- 1. What are research implications of the articles in the special issue?**
 - Given the descriptive nature of the articles, what contextual information is important to include in the introduction of the special issue?
 - What additional methods should be considered for future research?
 - What questions should be posed in future research and analyses?
- 2. What are the implications for federal policies and initiatives?**
 - What are the implications for child care, Head Start, PDG-B5, Part C and Part B, as well as preschool policies and regulations?
 - What are the implications for equity?

Background of Special Issue

- Early Education and Development (EED) is a top-tier peer reviewed academic journal in early childhood field
- Stephanie is currently an associate editor of EED
- EED accepted our topic and published [call](#) for a special issue in July 2017
- Emails were sent to national researchers who were engaged in research on collaboration to encourage contributions to the journal

Definitions of Collaboration

- Authors used a range of definitions of the term “collaboration”
- All articles focus on two or more ECE staff or programs working together toward a common goal



Scope of the Accepted Articles . . .

Who is collaborating. . .

- Head Start and Early Head Start program administrators and staff
- Child care center administrators and staff
- Family child care home providers
- Public school preschool teachers
- Researchers



With whom?

- Child care center administrators and staff
- Family child care providers
- Head Start/EHS
- School districts receiving PDG grants
- Researchers, funders, practitioners and community members (one article focuses on Educare)
- Early childhood educators and grantees

Overview of Types of Collaborations

Most of the articles (6 of the 8) collaborations followed formal guidelines

- Early Head Start/Child Care Partnership grants
- Preschool Expansion and Development grants
- Head Start partnerships
- Educare participation

One article focuses on “informal” collaborations among teachers



Overview of What Is Missing . . .

- Articles that focus on **state-level collaboration**
 - Articles that focus on collaborations between **ECE programs and the broader social service system**
- ❖ These are important to consider in future research and policy and also have been studied previously



Rationale Behind Research Questions

- Several articles focus on describing collaboration by addressing questions focused on the “Why,” “How” and “What,” of collaboration:
 - **Why** are teachers engaged in collaborations?
 - **How** are partnerships between EHS programs and child care providers developed and maintained?
 - **How** do partners work together to deliver comprehensive, high quality, individualized services to children from low-income families?
 - **What** are the patterns and characteristics of collaboration among early childhood educators within and across sectors?
 - **What** work environment supports facilitate collaboration both within and across sectors?



Overview Specific Research Questions

Several articles focus on aspects of collaboration that predict its success:

- Which factors support success in communities that offer new publicly funded preschool slots in private early care and education programs?
- Is the administration of a collaboration associated with its success?
- Is the strength of the relationships among those engaged in the collaboration associated with collaboration success?
- What transition practices that include collaboration are associated with children's success in kindergarten?



What Research Questions were missing . . .

- What is the impact of collaboration on classroom quality or child outcomes? . . . However, one article focused on associations between the collaboration and classroom quality and one included child outcome data
- What is the cost/benefit of collaboration? . . . However, several articles discussed the importance of allocating personnel time to collaboration



Overview of Methodology across Studies

- Quantitative methods
 - Surveys of those engaged in collaborations
 - Assessments of classroom quality (of the classrooms engaged in collaboration)
 - Secondary analysis of administrative data (FACES)
- Qualitative methods
 - Focus groups
 - Interviews
 - Document reviews



Overview of Analysis of Studies

- Quantitative methods
 - Descriptive statistical analyses
 - Regression analyses
 - Network analyses
- Qualitative methods
 - Directed content analysis approach with deductive coding
 - Comparisons of responses and identification of themes across respondents within and across programs
- Mixed methods
 - Descriptive analyses coupled with qualitative examples

Key Findings (Slide 1 of 4)

Why and **how** are ECE providers collaborating?

- Specific **grant funding** or opportunities for ECE providers prompted collaborations.
- Educators engaged in collaboration report **sharing ideas for effective classroom practices**, sharing **curriculum plans**, and working together on **behavior management issues**
- Head Start directors collaborating with public schools to support transition report helping schools identify incoming kindergarteners, engaging in joint-trainings, and sharing curriculum

Key Findings (Slide 2 of 4)

What aspects of collaboration lead to success?

- ❖ **Success is defined differently in each study.** It is important to frame research questions based on implications for equity.
- Focus on mutual **outcomes** (such as meeting the needs of students) is predictive of stronger collaboration (as defined by process measures).
- Establishing a **collaborative relationship** with clarity about the roles, regulations and processes appears key
 - Staff buy-in is critical
 - Joint understanding of regulations is important
 - Sharing of curriculum practice is one important aspect that appears linked with success
- Strong **administrative procedures** such as contracts, procedures for explaining each program's regulation, and processes for sharing data appear important for collaboration success
- **Time** devoted to the collaboration is important for collaboration success



Key Findings (Slide 3 of 4)

What are the articles reporting about collaboration and desired improvements in classroom quality as well as child outcomes?

- Regression analysis reveals a relationship between **QRIS scores** and collaborations that have stronger administrative practices and relationships among those in the collaboration
- **EHS/CC partnerships** report above average classroom quality scores
- **Collaborations that focus on data** and include multiple partners demonstrate improved classroom quality scores



Key Findings (Slide 4 of 4)

What are the articles reporting about collaboration success?

- Two articles discussed “process success”
- EHS/CC partnerships report offering more comprehensive services and supports
- ECE providers participating in Educare collaborations report using data to inform targeted improvements
- Qualitative findings reveal:
 - collaborations help the programs enroll and retain larger numbers of four-year-olds
 - Collaborations helped programs enroll new four-year-olds whose families were looking for flexible hours and convenient wraparound care
 - collaborations helped reach families who otherwise would probably not have attended the private program for the full day due to costs

Potential Policy Issues to Consider

What are the implications for addressing issues of equity?

What are the implications for federal policies and initiatives?

- Child care and Head Start regulations
- Preschool Development and Expansion Grant Birth to Five (PDG 2.0)?
- Title 1, Special Education (Part B and Part C), Home Visiting, etc.

What are the implications for state child care administrators, preschool administrators, school districts, counties, and programs?

Potential Research Issues to Consider

What are research implications of the articles in the special issue?

- Given the descriptive nature of the articles, what contextual information is important to include in the introduction of the special issue?
- What additional methods should be considered for future research?
- What questions should be posed in future research and analyses?

Implications

Advisors suggested that research is needed that. . .

- Reflects racially, culturally, and linguistic competence and focuses on the relationship between formal collaborations and issues of equity
- Employs consensus definition of collaboration and associated processes and outcomes is needed
- Uses mixed methods to unpack the processes that are related to success in different contexts and with a range of populations

Advisors suggested that policies are needed that. . .

- Focuses attention on issues of equity
- Are informed by the latest research on collaboration (accounting for what is still not known about collaboration)
- Support technical assistance as well as processes that research suggests are predictive of desired outcomes

Next Steps

- All articles are being finalized after having gone through the peer-review process
- Editors are finalizing introduction to the special issue
- The special issue will be released in the fall 2019

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THANK YOU

Diane Schilder
dschilder@edc.org

Meghan Broadstone
mbroadstone@edc.org

Stephanie Curenton
curenton@bu.edu

