Early Care and Education Coordination/Collaboration

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Overview
- Brief overview of Early Education and Development Special Issue on Early Childhood Collaboration
- Overview of key findings
- Perspectives from policymakers and researchers on the policy and research implications

Early Education and Development Special Issue on Collaboration
- Early Education and Development (EED) is a top-tier peer reviewed academic journal in early childhood field
- Dr. Curenton is currently an associate editor of EED
- EED accepted a proposal for a special issue on collaboration and published a <u>call</u> 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 and Conceptualization of Coordination and 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

Key Findings from Articles in Special Issue
- **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
- **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

- **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

- **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

Questions about Implications for Policy
  - 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?

Questions about Implications for Research
  - 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?

Focus group of national research experts suggested 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

Details about Articles in the Special Issue

Articles in the Special Issue focus on <u>who</u> 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
- School districts receiving PDG grants
- Researchers, funders, practitioners and community members
- Early childhood educators and grantees
- Most of the articles (6 of the 8) focused on collaborations that followed formal guidelines such as collaborations supported by 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

Range of Research Questions Posed by Authors of Articles
- 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 <u>impact</u> of collaboration on classroom quality or child outcomes? . . . However, one article focused on <u>associations</u> between the collaboration and classroom quality and one included child outcome data
- What is the <u>cost/benefit</u> 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 Analytic Techniques Employed by Authors of the 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

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