

1. Descriptive Information

Discussion of ECE Licensing, Available Data & Research Needs

States are responsible for regulating facilities that care for young children, including issuing licenses. Thus, licensing affects a broad array of early care and education (ECE) programs and providers. This fall, the Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation (OPRE) launched a 5-year research project to synthesize what we know about licensing, provide a conceptual framework to guide research, and conduct new studies to address gaps and priorities. With the growing recognition of the importance of licensing in ECE policy and research, this session will provide an opportunity for researchers to learn about a) the relevance of licensing to various priority topics within the Child Care and Early Education Policy Research Consortium (CCEEPRC), and b) the types of licensing data available. It will also allow participants to work together to develop important licensing-related questions that need to be addressed in research.

There are three objectives for the session:

1. Increase awareness of the ECE licensing system and existing sources of licensing data,
2. Identify priority policy questions about the role of licensing in ECE that researchers could help address, and
3. Encourage researchers to use licensing data in their work.

The session will begin with an overview of the ECE licensing system and description of how licensing is related to many topics of interest among CCEEPRC members. Participants will then learn about various sources of licensing data and hear examples of how licensing data have been used in research. The session will end with discussions about pressing policy questions about ECE licensing that need to be addressed in research.

Facilitator and Presenter

- **Kelly Maxwell**, Child Trends | *An Overview of ECE Licensing and Its Connections to Key ECE Issues*

Presenters

- **Dionne Dobbins**, Child Care Aware of America | *The Child Care Licensing Benchmarking Tool: Engaging Stakeholders in Measurement Development*
- **Kelly Dwyer**, Urban Institute | *Using the CCDF Policies Database to Understand Requirements for License-Exempt Providers*
- **Sheri Fischer**, ICF, National Center on Early Childhood Quality Assurance | *Child Care Licensing Study: Overview of Data and Key Findings from 2017*
- **Nina Johnson**, ICF | *Licensing Administrative Data: An Overview of What's Available*
- **Rob O'Callaghan**, Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning | *Beyond Licensed Capacity: Measuring the Availability of Child Care by Age Group Using Licensing Data in Georgia*
- **Josh Borton**, NORC at the University of Chicago | *Using Licensing Lists to Construct Accurate Provider Samples*

Scribe

- **Katie Caldwell**, ICF

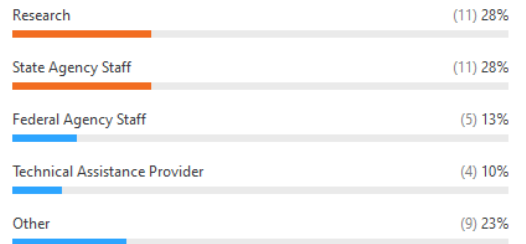
2. Documents Available on Website

- ECE Licensing Combined Presentation
- Fischer_CCEPRC Licensing HANDOUT
- CCDF Database 2018 Fact Sheets
 - CCDF Database 2018 Fact Sheets Alt Text (508)

3. Brief Summary of Presentations

To begin the webinar, Kelly Maxwell introduced the session and a poll was conducted to see who was present on the call. The results appear in the graphic to the right.

1. What is your primary role in ECE?



- **Summary of Presentation #1:** An Overview of ECE Licensing and Its Connections to Key ECE Issues, Kelly Maxwell
- The Role of Licensing in Early Care and Education (TRLECE) project
 - Supported by the Office of Planning, Research & Evaluation (OPRE) in the Administration for Children & Families, with research set-aside funds in the Child Care Development Block Grant Act of 2014. Child Trends and ICF partner to conduct the project.
 - Purposes: a) address gaps in knowledge of how key features of licensing are related to quality and outcomes for children, families and key stakeholders in the licensing system; b) conduct studies to address gaps and priority questions; and c) develop resources to support state/territory licensing staff in using data and research to strengthen licensing systems
- Entities that set standards for early care and education (ECE) providers
 - Child and Adult Care Food Program
 - Child Care Licensing (Licensing is unique because it sets the standards for legally operating a program serving young children)
 - Child Care Subsidy
 - Head Start / Early Head Start
 - Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) Part C and Part B
 - Pre-Kindergarten
 - Quality Rating and Improvement System
- Primary functions of ECE licensing systems
 - Set Regulations
 - Monitor licensed facilities
 - Enforce compliance with regulations
 - Provide training and technical assistance
 - Education consumers
 - Monitor license-exempt providers (in some states/territories)
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- **Summary of Presentation #2:** Sheri Fischer
 - Representing the National Center on Early Childhood Quality Assurance (ECQA Center)
 - Child care licensing studies
 - Done in partnership with the National Association for Regulatory Administration (NARA)
 - Studies conducted in 2005, 2007, 2008, 2011, 2014, 2017
 - Data available in the Child and Family Data Archive
 - Purpose: track changes in child care licensing policies, practices, and look at requirements for providers

- Two data sets used
 - 1. Licensing practices and policies
 - Results of NARA survey, survey was sent to directors and managers of child care licensing agencies in all 50 states, the District of Columbia (DC), and 5 U.S. territories.
 - Full set of responses were received by January 2019 for 2017 survey. 51 responses in total.
 - 2. Facility requirements (licensing regulations for child care facilities)
 - Compiled from the National Database of Child Care Licensing Regulations
 - Includes child care centers, family child care homes, and group child care homes
- Key findings from 2017 study
 - All findings can be found in the report “Trends in Child Care Licensing Requirements and Policy for 2017” available at: <https://childcareta.acf.hhs.gov/resource/trends-child-care-licensing-requirements-and-policies-2017>
 - Many states added health and safety topics to training requirements
 - More states require 5 types of background checks
 - More states regulate group sizes for centers
 - More states inspect at least once a year
- **Summary of Presentation #3: Child Care Licensing Benchmarking Tools, Dionne Dobbins**
 - Goals of the Child Care Licensing Benchmarking Tool Project
 - Update licensing benchmarks considering new policy and best practice advancements
 - Develop a rubric that guides the scoring/ranking of the benchmarking tool
 - Design a benchmarking tool that provides states with a point-in-time status update and opportunities to consider for future advancements in their state licensing standards
 - Engage stakeholders throughout the process:
 - Benchmarking workgroup
 - Review Panel
 - Benchmarking Pilot
 - Benchmark Topics
 - 14 benchmarks total (7 program, 7 oversight)
 - Pilot Process
 - 5 states participated
 - Created a rubric that is strengths based and one will be created for each state
 - Roll-out Plan
 - Delayed due Covid-19
 - Will release process paper and first 5 pilot state rankings
 - Recruit cohorts (10 at a time)
 - Complete scoring for all states
 - Data upkeep
- **Summary of Presentation #4: Using the Child Care and Development Fund Policies Database to Understand Requirements for License-Exempt Providers, Kelly Dwyer**
 - CCDF Policies database
 - Longitudinal data source
 - Can conduct cross state data analysis
 - Specificity across states for policy analysis
 - Collected from state caseworker manuals and other state documents
 - Verified and updated yearly
 - Data is available in multiple ways

- License Exempt Provider policies in CCDF policies database
 - Basic eligibility requirements
 - Background check requirements
 - Health and safety checklist requirements
 - Training requirements (CPR certifications)
 - TB prevention requirements
- Database also captures provider payment policies, who is eligible to provide care, reimbursement rate policies, and during state plan years information is published about market rate surveys.
- **Summary of Presentation #5: State Level Licensing Administrative Data, Nina Johnson**
 - Data on state licensing can be found on state licensing website
 - A zip code search can be used to find providers and is usually located on consumer education websites
 - Examples of data elements available: hours of care, quality level, environmental features, special schedules, facility capacity, and languages spoken by provider.
 - Inspection reports- states typically have at least three years of inspection reports available to view.
 - Information about serious incidents reports
 - Typically found on the licensing or consumer education website
 - Data elements include: aggregate child fatalities, serious injuries, and substantiated child abuse by type of care and licensing status
 - Information about Child Care Licensing
 - Background check requirements, types of care, inspection checklist and monitoring process.
 - Data elements reported to the Federal government
 - Can use the ACF-218, ACF-801 and ACF-800 reports, all reports are sent to the Federal government from state lead child care agencies.
 - Aggregated data from these reports is available on the CCDF statistics website
 - Additional data is kept in state licensing data systems if you request it (may or may not be publicly available)
- **Summary of Presentation #6: Beyond Licensing Capacity: Measuring the Availability of Child Care by Age Using Licensing Data in Georgia, Rob O'Callaghan**
 - Often asked about the licensed capacity of our child care programs
 - Based on square footage, does not tell how space is being used and the actual supply of child care slots.
 - Georgia sought to answer the following policy questions:
 - What ratios are being practiced in real life?
 - How prevalent are ratios that are better than required by licensing?
 - How might observed ratios inform quality improvement efforts?
 - What does availability of child care and of high-quality child care look like for specific ages in Georgia?
 - Are there areas of the state with an inadequate supply of child care or of high-quality child care, particularly for infants and toddlers?
 - Process
 - Obtain data set from database administrators (all visits July 2018 to June 2019)
 - Match providers over time; unique identifiers change with changes of ownership
 - Calculate maximum allowable capacity at classroom level based on youngest child present, number of staff, and the classroom square footage

- Filter out visit types where children not present or where all classrooms not observed.
 - 8,484 visits to 4,441 distinct providers
- Average data points for multiple visits to same provider.
- Aggregate data points for age groups statewide, by county, by quality rating, and by provider type.
- Staff:Child ratios in Georgia
 - Higher than many states based on NAEYC data
 - Most classroom do operate at better than required by the state
- Infant and Toddler Capacity
 - Observed 7,052 classrooms serving infants and toddlers in licensed centers
 - Including family child care, Georgia has capacity to serve 95,989 infants and toddlers at licensing ratios. This is a licensed “slot” for every 4.1 children ages 0-2
 - Many counties may have inadequate supply of infant and toddler care
 - 23 rural counties have more than 9 infants/toddlers per licensed slots
- Data challenges
 - Actual enrollment and desired enrollment remain unknown
 - Before- and after-school care for school-age children is often not observed
 - Mixed age groups used in centers
 - Counting staff in family child care was problematic
 - Changes of ownership risk double-counting the same location
 - Need to better understand discrepancies in classroom counts across multiple visits to same provider
 - Data must be interpreted cautiously
- **Summary of Presentation #7: Using Licensing Lists to Construct Accurate Provider Samples, Josh Borton**
 - To begin constructing an accurate provider sample, NORC began with the NSECE
 - 4 integrated, nationally representative surveys
 - Compiled a list of all listed center based and home based ECE providers
 - Compiled state and national lists into a master list
 - Removed providers that weren’t in scope
 - De-duplicated providers
 - Used geo-referencing
 - Subtract providers who are not serving children
 - Only 90% were providing care to children, and only 90% of that number were providing care to children under 5 not yet in Kindergarten
 - Add non-listed ECE providers
 - Many school districts offer ECE programs that may not appear on state lists
 - 255,000 eligible unique provider locations plus confirmed non-listed ECE providers
 - Additional sources were required
 - Additional state-level data lists
 - Other factors may affect interpretation

4. Brief Summary of Discussion

- Q: How have you used the licensing data during the Covid-19 pandemic?
A: Georgia has used it to examine who is open and closed. Looking at temporary closure data. The pandemic caused huge disruption in data collection; we now have virtual visits for monitoring. We are interested to see how these virtual visits will differ from in person visits. .
- Q: How often do you gather data on closures and how does the state stay on top of it?
A: That has been a concern. Rule change has just been approved but hasn’t been enforced yet to get this data.

- Q: For Dionne- have you looked at licensing data and how they are affected by Covid-19?
A: The next Benchmarks cohort is happening this fall- hoping to collect additional data on that cohort since it will be in the midst of Covid-19 and to see how it is has affected licensing.
Sheri- states are giving waivers to providers on certain rules and allowing flexibility
- Q: What data do you wish you had to help understand Covid-19?
A: Sheri- almost all states have come out with requirements or guidance about health and safety during this time. How are states enforcing those guidelines? Are they including these things in routine inspections? Are documents considered requirements or recommendations? Are providers being supported by T&TA to help with additional health and safety requirements?
A: Josh- we are doing a follow up NSECE survey on the provider side this fall to see what is happening as a result of Covid-19.
- Q: How can licensing be used to address racial equity?
A: Dionne- the tool Child Care Aware is using has a place for states to indicate where there are barriers and how to address equity. We have started looking at how child welfare uses risk assessment instead of just pure compliance and discussing how that idea could possibly be applied in child care licensing and monitoring situations.
For further research, the data could be looked at by city and look at licensing violations and compliance in facilities that serve higher populations of lower income families and see if there are any trends that could be viewed through an equity lens.
- Q for Kelly Dwyer: 2019 CCDF data will be published in late 2020, maybe early 2021. Will new data elements be collected this year because of Covid-19?
A: Mainly sticking with regular data to continue to track policy change.
- Q: Are states keeping up with Covid-19 cases in child care?
A: Georgia is building a system so providers can report Covid-19 cases and has passed a new rule to require reports from providers.
- Q: Are there any considerations to be made when analyzing licensing data?
A: For license- except, it important to consider where the care is being provided (relative vs non-relative)
- For Georgia it has been important to be in touch with licensing staff if there are questions about the data. Q: Has any research taken into account the reduction in demand for child care because of "work from home" policies by many employers?
A: I think this is an important issue. Researchers are likely trying to think about what "demand" means and how to measure it during the pandemic.

5. Summary of Key Issues Raised

- When using licensing data for research, getting appropriate data can be challenging. Combining multiple sources of data might help provide a more comprehensive picture. Sources such as the NSECE, the CCDF Policies Database, state level licensing data, the Child Care Licensing Studies and the upcoming release of Child Care Aware's Benchmarks are all potential sources of data.
- Possible future research questions:
 - How do we develop a better understanding of the effectiveness of policies regarding licensing?
 - For example:
 - Providers are currently inspected once a year, is that enough?
 - What is the right number?
 - What is the right caseload for licensing staff?
- Covid-19 has significantly affected child care. Further research is needed to understand its impact on licensing.