Child Care Policy Research Consortium
2010 Annual Meeting Overview

The Child Care Policy Research Consortium (CCPRC) includes researchers and policymakers associated with child care research projects sponsored by the Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluation (OPRE) and the Office of Child Care (OCC) in the Administration for Children and Families (ACF). The purpose of the CCPRC is to increase national capacity for child care research, address important policy and methodological issues, and link child care research with policy and practice.

The 2010 Annual CCPRC Meeting (CCPRC 2010) was held on Thursday, October 21st and Friday October 22nd at the Starwood St. Regis in Washington, DC. Following an OCC-sponsored symposium on October 19th that celebrated the 20th anniversary of the Child Care and Development Block Grant, pre-meeting sessions for researchers and policy-makers were held on Wednesday, October 20th.

Planning for CCPRC 2010 was a collaborative process that involved the CCPRC Steering Committee (SC), OPRE Child Care Research Team, OCC, and principal investigators of funded projects. Within a framework based on OCC priorities, Theme Groups developed proposals for plenary and workshop sessions in the following topical areas: child care subsidy policies and practices; quality frameworks; collaboration, integration and linkages; and parents and families. Session proposals built on work that was completed or ongoing in OPRE workgroups.

This invitational meeting provided a forum for the exploration of emerging research findings, questions, and methods that relate to issues of concern to researchers and policy-makers; the strengthening of partnerships and professional relationships; and by highlighting high priority research and policy questions, helped ACF shape its ongoing child care research agenda. Special attention was paid to posters developed by researchers in attendance through thematic poster symposiums. Along with researchers and Federal partners, a substantial number of State child care administrators actively participated in CCPRC 2010.

- Pre-sessions on Wednesday addressed issues of interest to groups of researchers and policy-makers including:
  - An overview of emerging research findings and projects for State and Tribal CCDF Administrators. Presentations focused on: the Center for Early Childhood Research—Dual-Language Learners; the National Survey of Early Care and Education; and Emerging Findings from Research Projects.
  - Meetings with State Research Capacity, Secondary Analysis of Data on Child Care, and Child Care Research Scholar Grantees.
  - A Pre-Session on Measurement Issues in Child Care Subsidies. Presenters and participants identified challenges in conducting child care subsidy research and made recommendations about products that might be developed to improve the soundness of research on child care subsidies.

- Plenary and workshop sessions on Thursday and Friday addressed meeting themes and generally included an overarching plenary followed by workshop sessions that provided opportunities for in-depth discussion and problem solving. During the opening session, ACF leaders were introduced and Joan Lombardi, Deputy Assistant Secretary and Inter-Departmental Liaison for Early Childhood Development provided the keynote address. Friday's closing plenary included a panel of CCPRC members who reflected on the key research findings and issues addressed as well as implications for future directions and development of the Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF). Shannon Rudisill, OCC Director, responded with her reflections and engaged in a discussion with the panelists and audience. Naomi Goldstein, OPRE Director, closed with discussion of next steps.

The products developed for this meeting including the agenda, participant list, detailed session summaries and associated documents are posted on the meeting website at: www.researchconnections.org.

Overview of Plenary and Workshop Sessions

Thursday, October 21, 2010, 8:15 am-10:30 am

Plenary Session 1: Introduction to ACF Leadership and Keynote by Joan Lombardi

Ivelisse Martinez-Beck discussed the history of CCPRC and introduced ACF leaders. Shannon Rudisill talked about OCC's use of CCPRC research including the QRIS compendium and research about subsidy policies and practices. Naomi Goldstein said that a major value of the CCPRC meeting is that it provides an opportunity for researchers and policy-makers to work together on issues. Joan Lombardi stressed the importance of evidence-based practice; interagency efforts across early childhood programs; asset development for families; data quality; supporting early learning communities; and thinking across the developmental continuum. With Shannon, she spoke about the need to improve outcomes for children, and the tension that exists between the need to act and the limits of what we know from research. Specific to research, Joan discussed the importance of involving people who work with children every day; ensuring cost effectiveness; developing new research instruments; thinking internationally; nurturing young researchers; and communicating in language that is understandable to non-researcher audiences.

Plenary Session 2: Child Care Subsidy Policy Research: Where Are We, and Where Do We Need to Go?

This plenary provided an overview of what we know about the effects of child care subsidy policy and identified areas for future research. Presenters included: Bobbie Weber, Chris Herbst, Liz Davis, Andrew Williams, and Gina Adams. Suggestions for future research included:

- What child, family and community characteristics are associated with subsidy use? Are there qualitatively distinct patterns? Do characteristics vary across groups? What are major reasons parents exit the subsidy program?
- Which policies are associated with continuity, and what are the pathways? How stable are subsidized arrangements? How are subsidy spells and stability of child care arrangements related?
- Family and child well-being: need to build a systematic body of knowledge that includes longitudinal studies.
- What characterizes a well-functioning child care market and do markets differ in rural areas and low-income communities? Do subsidy expenditures influence prices in private-pay markets?
- More knowledge is needed about provider behavior and subsidy policies that are supportive to providers.

Thursday, October 21, 2010, 10:45 am-12:15 pm

Workshop Session A1: The Role of Data System Integration in Policy, Practice, and Research

Ways that integrated data systems can be used to answer research questions, analyze policies, and inform practice were discussed. Presenters included: Tamara Halle, Jana Martella, Isabel Bradburn, Aaron Schroeder, and Rod Southwick. The field can learn from the field of education as well as States. Virginia is implementing a federated data system that integrates data from social services and education. This system will feed into longitudinal data for K-12 and include the quality rating system; the system provides a platform for policy discussions, new questions, and increased interdisciplinary collaboration. Massachusetts established an integrated data system that follows children from birth to age 5, and then through grades K-12. The intent is to track children over ages

and time and to examine outcomes. The State is grappling with identifying indicators and questions to be answered.

Workshop Session A2: New Research on QRIS: Implications for Policy and System Improvement

This workshop addressed emerging QRIS research including quality measurement, validation of QRIS rating tools, quality improvement approaches, parent awareness of QRIS, and the role of QRIS in building systemic supports for quality. Presenters included: James Elicker, Gretchen Kirby, Kathryn Tout, Lizabeth Malone, Michel Lahti and Gail Zellman. The QRIS assessment project is cataloging comprehensive and consistent information across QRISs and developing a toolkit for QRIS evaluation. Some initial findings include low rates of provider participation in most States; alternative approaches to measuring QRIS (building block versus point systems); variation in the extent to which specific elements are included; and the need for more work on measurement and validation. Questions were raised about which settings care for children served through CCDF; differences between centers and family child care settings and implications for how they are rated; and the extent to which parents use QRIS ratings to make child care decisions.

Workshop Session A3: Interface of Child Care Subsidy Policies and Practices and Child Care Markets

Building on research about how policies and practices affect providers and markets, participants explored issues such as dependence of providers on the subsidy program, whether subsidy participation influences provider stability, and differences in child care supply across communities. Presenters included: Roberta Weber, Gina Adams, Liz Davis, Deanna Schexnayder, and Reeva Murphy. Summary conclusions included: demand-side funding of child care predominates in the US and more study is needed about how market forces affect child care supply; providers with fewer alternatives to vouchers often experience issues with quality and financial viability that relate to policies; providers need more support in managing services and helping subsidized families; and while the complexity of child care markets makes them difficult to examine, we need to know more about supply and demand across varying markets and policy contexts.

Workshop Session A4: Models of Effective Professional Development and Quality Improvement: Coaching, Consultation, and Mentoring

This workshop addressed research that examines relationship-based approaches to professional development including coaching, consultation and mentoring. Presenters were Martha Zaslow, Ann Collins, Helen Raikes, Diane Paulsell, and Jennifer LoCasale-Crouch. Findings were presented from studies involving a range of child care settings, all of which found effects for some groups of providers. Among the issues raised were: the need for replication of studies with planned variation and longer follow-up; the need to address turnover of providers and consultants as well as supports and training for consultants; questions about which providers benefit most from interventions; recognition that while fidelity is important, tension sometimes exists between fidelity and individualizing to provider needs; the potential for using curriculum and evaluation measures to structure interventions; and the need to subject intervention strategies to cost-benefit analyses.

Workshop Session A5: Poster Symposium: Lessons Learned About Child Care Decisionmaking from Child Care Policy Grantees

This poster symposium provided an opportunity for current child care policy grantees to showcase their work related to child care decision-making. Susan Jekielek facilitated. While commonalities were noted across studies in the factors that influence child care decision-making, e.g., the importance of relationships, convenience and work schedules, some factors appear to be population specific, making context important. In the Massachusetts Child Care Study, 50% of families on waiting lists said they ended up taking whatever care they could for their children. These families expressed a great deal of frustration with the waiting list process. Discussants suggested that social networks may be future information transmitters for QRIS and that we should think about how we

might inform these networks. Constraints can trump preferences in choosing child care with the most extreme examples being among families with children who have complex health or behavioral issues.

Thursday, October 21, 2010, 1:15 pm-2:15 pm
Plenary Session 3: Progress toward Supporting High-Quality Care and Education: Goals, Strategies, and Continuous Improvement

A framework for integrated quality improvement and professional development systems was presented. Presenters included Kathryn Tout, Martha Zaslow, and Deborah Cassidy. Among the issues raised for consideration were: duration of care and quality dosage, thresholds of quality, and quality features; whether differentiation is needed among on-site approaches; and targeting of quality improvement approaches to individuals and settings. From the policy perspective, the following needs to be considered: costs versus benefits; application across varying settings and levels of quality; quality, dosage and continuity of care, especially for at-risk children; reassessment of the assessments/tools being used; and implementation of research findings in the real world of regulation and subsidies. Participants discussed the importance of program contextual factors, buy-in from directors for individualized approaches, assessments that align with program philosophy, new ways to inform parents about quality, and preparation and supports for professional development providers.

Thursday, October 21, 2010, 2:30 pm-4:00 pm
Workshop Session B1: Methodological Issues in Studies with Linguistically and Culturally Diverse Families

This session provided an opportunity for CCPRC members to share lessons learned in the study of diverse families. Presenters included: Dina Castro, Eva Marie Shivers, Helen Ward, and Kay Sanders. Methodological issues relating to research design, recruitment, and data collection were identified as well as successful strategies for addressing these issues. Directions included building organizational capacity to improve outreach to families and recruiting and encouraging people of color to work in the field. Other suggestions included institutionalizing the practice of researching and working with diverse populations and sharing strategies and experiences that will help all researchers. Creation of an ongoing work group was recommended.

Workshop Session B2: Integration of QRIS and State Professional Development Systems

This session explored research and practice dealing with the integration/alignment of State professional development systems and quality rating and improvement systems. Presenters included: Lori Connors-Tadros, Kathryn Tout, Sheila Smith, Sarah LeMoine, and Pam Winton. Perspectives were provided on indicators of effective integration including research and examples from the field. Recognizing that there is an interplay among systems dealing with individuals and programs, we need to think about who needs what and how. Infrastructure elements and systemic integration around professional development, planning, and career advising need to be attended to. We need implementation studies to help inform decisions about effectiveness and costs including possible redeployment of PD resources and intensity for various audiences. More time should be spent thinking about the people who do training and PD.

Workshop Session B3: Supporting High Quality Family-Provider Relationships through QRIS

This session addressed research on measurement of family-provider relationships within the context of QRIS and focused on operationalization of family sensitive-care/family engagement (FSC/FE). Presenters included Michel Lahti, Toni Porter, Juliet Bromer, Sheryl Peavey, and Dan Haggard. Overarching questions include: what are the expectations about how programs and providers should interact with families; what kinds of standards and indicators can be developed to assess family partnerships; and do we know enough to establish indicators that can provide meaningful measures

of family engagement? Challenges include: the need to match what parents want and need with what is provided; and the need for national consensus between researchers and policymakers about what constitutes quality and how it should be validated and measured. The conceptual model needs to be reciprocal, taking into account what the parent wants, needs and gives along with what the provider does.

Workshop Session B4: Poster Symposium: Child Care Subsidies and Child/Family Well-Being
This session, facilitated by Chris Herbst, was intended to increase understanding about the complex pathways through which child care subsidies influence child and maternal well-being. The organizing principle was that subsidy policies and practices lead to important changes in the lives of low-income families, and many of these have implications for children's development and parental well-being. This session offered a conceptual framework within which to understand the impact of child care subsidies on well-being, time for review of posters covering one or more of the pathways, and concluded with a discussion about findings, a conceptual framework, and future research needs. Suggestions about the framework included the need for inclusion of other factors/measures including dosage, value of the subsidy, State-specific dynamics, and relationship between maternal employment and the child care market. A study that takes into account the range of components (administrative data, quality, and education) would be beneficial.

Thursday, October 21, 2010, 4:15 pm-5:15 pm
Plenary Session 4: Successful Family-Provider Relationships: Key Constructs, Related Outcomes, and Policy Implications
This plenary provided an overview of ongoing work in the area of provider-family relationships. Presenters included: Nancy Geyelin Margie, Dawn Ramsburg, Juliet Bromer, Nikki Forry, and Toni Porter. The presentations provided historical context for Federal interest in this issue, definitions of various conceptual models, research on related outcomes for children, providers and parents, and core components. Family support and family-centered care, parent involvement and family engagement, and family-sensitive care offer three approaches to this issue; all are based in an ecological perspective that is strengths-based and recognizes the important role of families. Practices that make for successful family-provider relationships include mutually respectful and reciprocal communication, gathering and using knowledge, and responsiveness to individual family needs. Sensitivity to cultural issues and differences in settings and families need to be considered. Participants agreed that more work is needed to address the challenges of measuring family support elements including disentangling the aspects of interventions that are associated with specific outcomes.

Friday, October 22, 2010, 9:30 am-10:30 am
Plenary Session 5: Early Childhood Collaborations: Definitions, Measurement, and Next Steps
Building on the May 2010 meeting, Collaborations in Early Care and Education, this session explored the issue of defining and operationalizing collaborations in early childhood education and highlighted the current status of knowledge and activities to address these gaps. Presenters included Beth Rous, Kathleen Dwyer, Darrin Hicks, Jessica Sowa, and Tamara Halle. A draft logic model was presented with inputs to collaboration (stakeholder inputs and design components) along with process components (norms or ground rules, inclusion, authenticity, equality, problem focus, political support, identification, facilitation, and generative purpose). Collaborative outcomes include elements at the State, service, and family and child levels. From the literature, collaboration is both a process and outcome and entails continuous change. Empirically supported outcomes of collaboration include growth in the number and complexity of interagency relationship and network ties, increased access to care, and improved program quality. Participants discussed the need for processes to help manage change and indicated that a tool to manage authentic collaboration would be useful.

Friday, October 22, 2010, 10:45 am-12:15 pm
<u>Workshop Session C1: Quality Indicators: Evaluation, Research, and Performance Measures</u>
The purpose of this session was to inform the development of performance measures by drawing on existing frameworks for research and evaluation of QRIS and other quality initiatives. Presenters included: Lee Kreader, Andrew Williams, Gail Zellman, and Rick Brandon. The Office of Child Care proposes to track information about how States are using CCDF quality dollars including the quantifiable outputs of these efforts, and the effectiveness of these efforts in improving program quality, practitioner qualifications and child and family outcomes. A three-step planning and reporting process is proposed: self-assessment on current quality improvement activities; goal-setting for quality improvement; and reporting at the end of each fiscal year (Quality Performance Report). Presenters discussed quality improvement logic models and how these might be used in selecting key constructs and research questions. Participants noted the need for quality indicators that provide a baseline about where States currently are; are meaningful and feasible to collect across States; include both cross-State measures and State-specific indicators; and are appropriate for different purposes (research, evaluation and performance measures).

<u>Workshop Session C2: Child Care Instability: Definitions, Context, and Policy Implications</u>
This session provided an overview of research and policy around child care stability and continuity, and the implications of stability for child care patterns and child, parent and family outcomes. Presenters included: Gina Adams, Taryn Morrissey, Ajay Chaudry, Julia Henly, Roberta Weber, and Rolf Grafwallner. Particularly during recession and labor market recovery, jobs in the low-wage market are a source of instability. Continuity is associated with family factors as well as provider, community and policy characteristics. Major challenges in measuring continuity include the need for common definitions/measurement including around measurement of subsidy spell duration; disentangling forms and causes of change and likely impacts; understanding interacting family domains and context; challenges related to data sources (linking administrative data with survey data); and the need for insights from qualitative studies. Questions for future research include: What child, family, and community characteristics are associated with stable and unstable subsidy programs? How can we distinguish planned, developmentally appropriate changes from unintentional or unpredictable changes? Does the intentionality and predictability of changes moderate the effects of instability on child development? What policies empower parents to choose higher quality care and promote stability of care?

<u>Workshop Session C3: Collaboration Measures: Existing Measures and Opportunities for Future Development</u>
Participants in this session discussed instruments used to assess different aspects of collaboration and the relationship between collaboration and desired outcomes. Presenters included: Martha Zaslow, Diane Schilder, Darrin Hicks, and Jessica Sowa. A number of studies were discussed that demonstrate associations between outcomes and the quality of the collaborative process (perceptions of openness and fairness, well-defined goals and high levels of communication, and duration of the partnership). Perceptions of openness and fairness act as a proxy for trust and commitment including the extent to which individuals invest in the group and accept group decisions. In mandated partnerships, it is important to work on authenticity issues up front. Among measurement issues that must be addressed are the need to be clear about how we define collaboration; what constitutes a quality process and collaborative outcomes; what are the motives and antecedents; what is the collaborative design; and what is the level of analysis?

<u>Workshop Session C4: Models of Effective Professional Development and Quality Improvement: Options for Targeting Services for Individuals and Organizations</u>

This session focused on emerging evidence about strategies/models of professional development and quality improvement that target services to individuals or organizations based on an assessment of characteristics. Presenters included: Kathryn Tout, Shira Peterson, Carrie Leana, Anne Douglass, and Beth Rous. Tiered technical assistance approaches tailor services based on needs, while a readiness to change approach matches professional development to an individual's openness to change. Similarly, organizational professional development approaches assess the unique characteristics and culture of organizations and use the information to target professional development. These innovative approaches are appealing to States because of their potential to improve efficiency in the use of limited resources. Implications for professional development and QRIS practice, policy and future research were discussed.

Workshop Session C5: Poster Symposium: Research Findings and Implications for the Collaboration Logic Model

This session included brief descriptions about latest research findings in light of the logic model presented during Plenary Session 5. Rena Hallam facilitated this session. The intent was to inform further development, align what is known from research about the different components of the model, and assess gaps in existing research for collaboration. Key questions/issues raised were: how do we cultivate the next generation of "powerful agents" and ensure sustainability? How can we show that collaborations demonstrate cost-effective outcomes? Do we have a vision for what the "system" for children 0 to 5 years should be? How do we ensure that families are included in collaborations and that collaborations take into account cultural expectations and needs? How do we overcome collaboration barriers, such as fear, and the need to change frames of thinking? How can we integrate continuous improvement within the logic model? How can we ensure that future decision-making includes data, but is not limited to data? A toolkit might be helpful.

Friday, October 22, 2010, 1:15 pm-3:30 pm

Plenary Session 6: Implications of Behavioral Economics Research for CCDF Research and Policy

This session offered an overview of behavioral economics research including how it might help us understand decision-making among child care providers and low-income families. Presenters included: Ivelisse Martinez-Beck, Lisa Gennetian, Gina Adams and Roberta Weber. Behavioral economics provides a lens that may help us better explain behaviors that are not always rational and predictable. Key concepts include that individuals have limited attention, intentions and actions differ, and identity can inform our choices. This lens can help in considering how elements of trust, values and beliefs, complexity, and default options may be important in understanding child care decision-making. While this new and exciting area of emerging research is worthy of further exploration, limits on the availability of quality care, the importance of relationships, and the complexity of issues faced by parents and providers need to be considered in its application.

Plenary Session 7: Closing Plenary: Assessing What We Have Learned and Using Research to Shape New Developments in CCDF

Representing diverse areas of expertise and research interests, CCPRC members participated as panel members in reflecting on the research findings and issues addressed during the meeting. Ivelisse Martinez-Beck facilitated this session. Presenters spoke positively about CCPRC's ability to take on complex issues, the depth and breadth of inquiry, involvement of CCDF Administrators, and the presence of new players and perspectives. Among areas of progress noted were the availability of new instruments and studies that can help leverage change and move us to the next level, emerging research about the relationship between child outcomes and quality, and the new OCC performance measures. Among areas highlighted for attention were the need to recognize that everything interacts with everything else; the importance of relationships and trust; cost-benefit analyses, evaluation research, and large-scale interventions; and the implications of blending subsidy systems with other family supports. In her response, Shannon Rudisill, OCC Director, raised questions about how our

investments should be targeted, what happens to children who do not get a subsidy, whether we should use subsidies to pay for care that is not of high quality, improving continuity and stability of care, and use of contracts to expand access to quality care. Naomi Goldstein, OPRE Director, closed by talking about the need to be more strategic about disseminating research, and the need for improved clarity about what evidence is good enough in the area of evidence-based research, policy and implementation.