

Child Care Policy Researchers Day

Title: Working Lunch: Universal Prekindergarten and Sustaining Interest in Issues around Child Care

Discussion Leader: Gina Adams, Urban Institute

SUMMARY OF PRESENTATION

- For various reasons, less funding for broader child care issues
- One reason is pendulum swinging away from welfare reform, another reason is growth in prek
- Goal of pre-k is school readiness, narrowly defined (language/literacy)
- left out are social emotional outcomes, parent outcomes, family issues – a whole set of issues around child development as well as other systems such as subsidies
- pre-k usually serves just one age group, often just in schools, pre-k focus is on outcomes, on identifiable services (hours, teachers, etc.)
- how to sell what we think is important using what we do know, while being honest about what we don't know
- how should help funding world re-engage with child care issues?
- there's been a shift away from funding research on child care subsidies, and we need to shift the focus back on such research

SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION

- Administrator: strategy: Pre-k is not serving kids all day long, and not serving enough age groups. Subsidy system affects more kids than pre-k does.
- Funders being referred to include those outside of government.
- Brain research has had a big impact on interest in early childhood education
- Parents don't think of "learning" or "education" for their young children (less than 4 years old); voters therefore don't think of toddlers in the context of learning, education.
- Child care and pre-k should be thought of as together, not "we" and "they"
- Need pre-k people working with the child care people, communicate with each other
- Access to full time care, which is necessary for full-time employment: after-school programs, wrap-around care – need good facilities and trained caregivers
- West Virginia: struggling because pre-k and child care centers have different requirements; pre-k is negatively impacting the state
- Should track impact of pre-k in states, and should look to other countries and see what they are doing
- model in Chicago: open classrooms that bring together kids from home-based care
- faith-based child care – any research on that? pastors are very influential locally
- really should be communication, meeting, between pre-k people (from US Department of Education) and the child care people
 - Dept. of Ed do not provide oversight of child care programs – states do

- suggestion to bring in research, if state funding exists
- should have Dept. of Ed meet with state-level people to discuss things on a national level
- Child Care Bureau funds research on child care subsidies, but we need more funding from outside!

KEY POINTS

Because the topic of pre-k is currently very “hot,” research for child care has been negatively impacted as a result. How can we draw the attention – and the funding – back towards child care? One suggestion is that there is more communication between the “pre-k people” and the “child care people,” and to view these two groups as being on the same “side.”