Characteristics and Professional Development Experiences of Early Educators in Massachusetts

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Professional Development and QRIS

- Professional development as a driver of change and quality improvement
- Targeting approaches likely to influence change in practice
- In this study, we examined professional development participation in relation to 2 policies:
  - Encouraging educators who work together to attend PD together
  - Prioritizing educators working with high needs children

Research Questions

1. **What are the characteristics of educators enrolled in the PQR?**

2. **What are the characteristics of educators who participated in professional development (PD)?**

3. What are similarities and differences among educators who work primarily with high needs children and those who do not? (characteristics and PD participation)

4. **To what extend do educators who work together participate in the same PD coursework?**

5. **What type of density is reflected in participation patterns (vertical or horizontal)?**

6. **Do we see increased density with the requirement to send multiple staff members from one program to a professional development course?**

Data Sources and Limitations

- Professional qualifications registry (PQR) (n=55,749)
- Program priority rating list
- PD attendance records for educators (n=3410)
- PD "course catalog" FY12
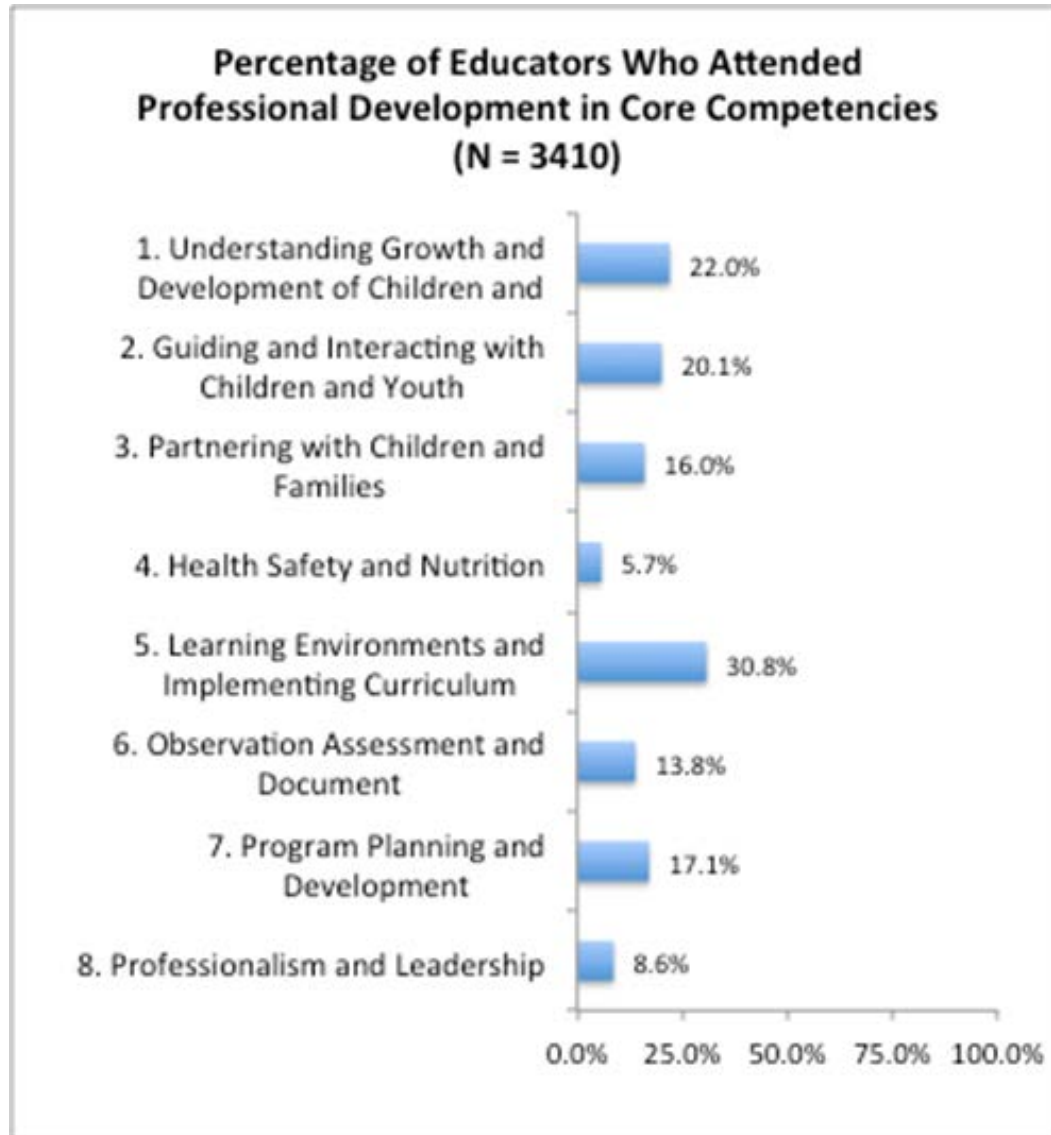
- Limitations: missing data

Results: Characteristics of Early Educators in the Registry

- Average age: 37; 25% are 25 years old or younger.
- Gender: 94.1% female, 5.9% male
- Highest education earned:
  - 27.8% secondary education or a CDA
  - 23.8% some college coursework,
  - 12.4% associate's degree,
  - 26.1% bachelor's degree,
  - 9.9% graduate or professional degree
- Primary language: 86% English, 10% Spanish, 5% other
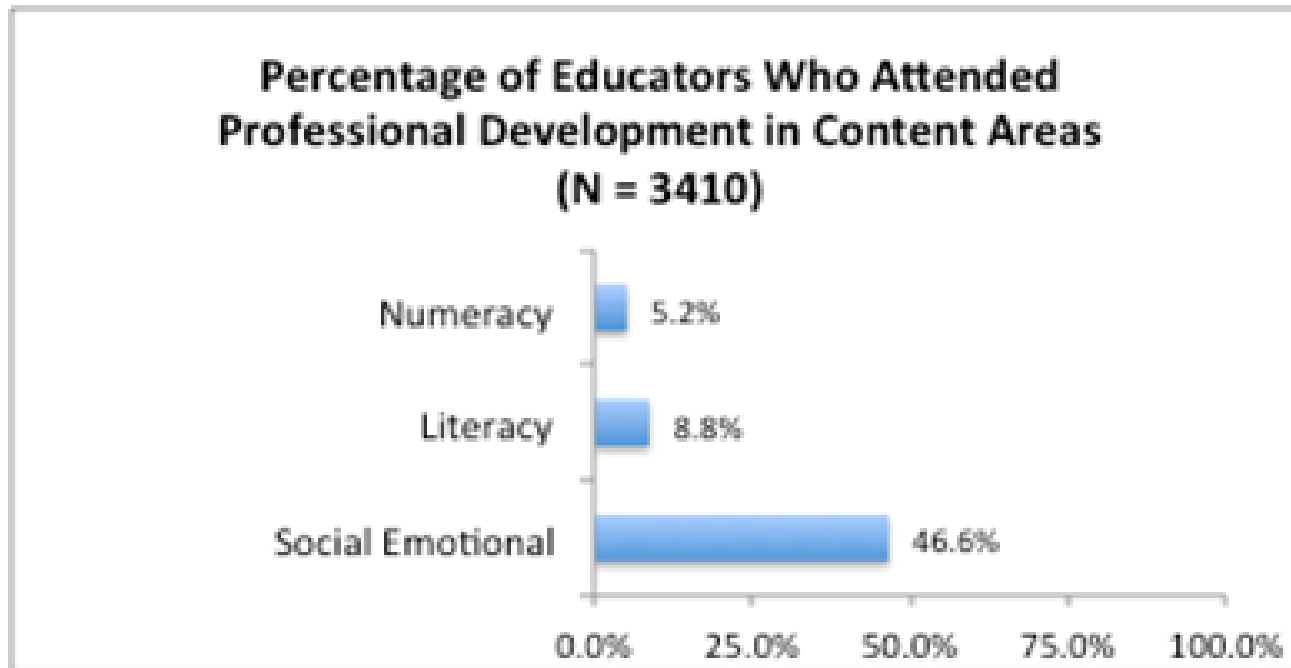- 12% are family child care providers

Characteristics of Educators with PD Attendance Data

- 3410 educators
- Compared with all educators in PQR
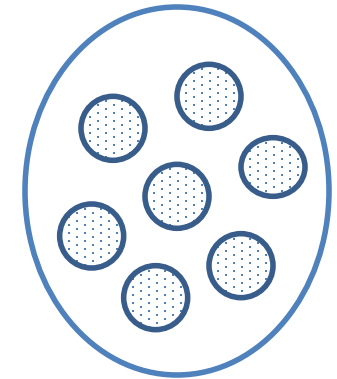
PD Course Content: Core Competencies

Percentage of Educators Who Attended Professional Development in Core Competencies (N = 3410)

Core Competency	Percentage
1. Understanding Growth and Development of Children and	22.0%
2. Guiding and Interacting with Children and Youth	20.1%
3. Partnering with Children and Families	16.0%
4. Health Safety and Nutrition	5.7%
5. Learning Environments and Implementing Curriculum	30.8%
6. Observation Assessment and Document	13.8%
7. Program Planning and Development	17.1%
8. Professionalism and Leadership	8.6%

PD Course Content:
3 content areas

Percentage of Educators Who Attended Professional Development in Content Areas (N = 3410)

- Numeracy: 5.2%
- Literacy: 8.8%
- Social Emotional: 46.6%

0.0%   25.0%   50.0%   75.0%   100.0%

Results: Participation Density

Density

- Density: when people who work together obtain professional development on the same content
    - Measuring density
        - PD utilization: when an ECE program has one or more educators who attended a PD course/event
        - Density of PD participation from the ECE program level – the percentage of PD "utilizations" in which an educator attended PD that covered the same content as PD attended by one or more others from their workplace.

- Horizontal and vertical density
- Potential benefits of participation density

No Density
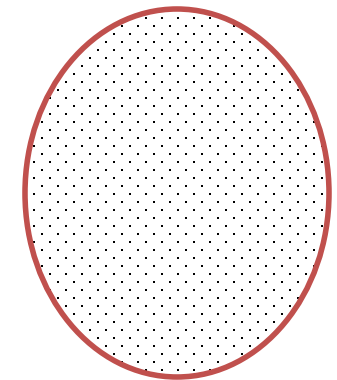
Results: Professional Development Participation Density

- Results:
  - Density in participation is uncommon
  - 74 % of the time an educator attended PD that no on else from his/her workplace attended
  - 26% of the time there was density
    - 23% = horizontal density
    - 3% = vertical density

Impact of Policy on PD Participation

	No Density		Density		Total number of PD utilizations	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
PD with Team Requirement (N=271)	148	55%	123	45%	271	100%
All other PD (N=740)	595	80%	145	20%	740	100%

How can these findings be used?

- Data systems
- Policy
- Professional development research