

2012 CCPRC Annual Meeting
Closing Plenary Summary
October 25, 2012, 3:15-4:30 p.m.

Closing Plenary: Highlights Across Themes and Reflections for ACF Leadership

Description

Representatives from the CCPRC Planning Groups reflected on the key research findings, questions and methodologies discussed during the meeting, including how efforts to increase access and quality are interrelated and implications for future research.

Audience members joined in the discussion, offering their thoughts about key findings and new research directions. Ajay Chaudry responded from the perspective of HHS.

Facilitator

Ivelisse Martinez-Beck, OPRE, ACF

Presenters

Wendy Wagner Robeson, Wellesley College

Kathryn Tout, Child Trends

Shannon Lipscomb, Oregon State University-Cascades

Discussant

Ajay Chaudry, Deputy Assistant Secretary, Office of Human Services Policy, ASPE/HHS

Scribe

Nina Chien, Child Trends

1. Documents in Session Folder

- “Lipscomb PPT (diagram);” Shannon Lipscomb
- “Breakout Session Ideas for Our Next CCPRC Meeting; Kathryn Tout.

2. Brief Summary of Presentations

- **Summary of Presentation #1:** Shannon Lipscomb
 - Representing the Methodologies Planning Group, Shannon provided a conceptual framework for thinking about methods. Her graphic demonstrates that research questions are influenced by conceptual models, policy questions, analytic strategies, and design/data.
 - Conceptual models discussed during the meeting include: QRIS framework, behavioral economics, systems theory, and implementation science.
 - Analytic strategies and data provide linkages to the conceptual models.
 - Policy questions become research questions after considering conceptual models, analytic strategies, and design/data.
 - Design/data examples and issues include:

- The National Study of Early Care and Education (NSECE) which offers innovations in sampling, data, measurement, and opens up the possibility of asking new questions.
- Administrative data, and the ability to link data from different sources, is a huge asset for answering questions in a timely way; need to influence what gets collected because it can be so useful.
- Data quality: the weakest link is often reliability and validity of data.
- Through the meeting, there was much emphasis on the value of qualitative data.
- Analysis strategies need to match conceptual models; innovative strategies discussed during the meeting included propensity score matching, survival analysis (Lahti), and latent transition analysis.
- **Summary of Presentation #2: Kathryn Tout**
 - Kathryn represented the Quality Planning Group and focused her presentation on quality breakout session ideas for the 2013 CCPRC Meeting. Suggestions include:
 - *It's Complicated*: understanding quality improvement and child development across ECE programs.
 - *Tipping Point*: exploring issues of *density* in QRIS and professional development (PD) systems. How many programs participate in QRIS? Percentage of providers who attend PD with their colleagues; education level of providers; and coaching, when do programs hit “too much?”
 - *High Impact Investments*: What is working in State PD systems?
 - *Movin' On Up*: Predictors of QRIS entry and movement patterns versus providers that get stalled; why do programs get stuck and what helps them to move? We need to look at structural issues.
 - *Show Me the Money*: Analysis of the costs and incentives in QRIS; currently the focus tends to be on incentives, but costs associated with higher quality need to be looked at explicitly.
 - *Writing: Strategies for Tracking Key Events in the ECE System*; we need to document what's happening.
 - *Let's Share*: syntax, surveys, data etc. across research and researchers; Research Connections is a logical resource here.
 - *Reliability, Reliability, Reliability*: this surfaced a lot during the meeting, can be problematic, and needs to be addressed at all levels including documentation review and collecting other information.
 - *Ghost Whisperers*: We need to articulate a conceptual and measurement framework for QRIS that includes intermediate outcomes (between activities and child outcomes).
 - *Celebrating the Good Work*: we need to celebrate our successes and look at the progress that has been made in ECE quality research.
- **Summary of Presentation #3: Wendy Wagner Robeson**
 - Wendy presented for the Subsidy Planning Group and started by talking about how subsidy and quality methodologies are increasingly intertwined with emphasis on outcomes for children.

- This raises questions about how our money is invested: to what extent are we investing in provider training and compensation and the physical environment of programs?
- How do we help parents learn about the benefits of ECE programs (what are the tradeoffs between centers versus family, friend and neighbor care)?
- Funding streams: there is increased need to blend and mesh funds, and to connect child care and Head Start research.
- QRIS and subsidies – should we require a minimum QRIS rating to receive subsidy? Does it make sense to tie provider reimbursement rates to QRIS ratings?
- **Summary of Presentation #4: Ajay Chaudry**
 - Ajay responded from the perspective of the Administration. HHS’s priority is to increase access to high quality care: access and quality are BOTH important – but like pushing two boulders up a hill, we need to move step-by-step on both.
 - The face of America’s children is changing and their needs are converging. Many young children are in poverty at the worst possible time from a life span perspective. Many of these children in poverty are Latino.
 - ECE is often the first place where immigrant children are exposed to an additional language (English); we need increased focus on immigrant children and families including as relates to QRIS.
 - Investments need to be “birth on up” (even though 0-3 is a more critical age, our public dollars tend to be focused on age 4). We need more research on effective models for infants and toddlers.
 - Research shows that low income kids only benefit when they attend high quality care, above some threshold of quality, but most low income kids attend care that is “barely adequate.” We need a path to quality and to help parents understand the options that are available.
 - QRIS research needs to continue, but we need to be modest about what QRIS can do alone – it’s an important element, but it occurs within a broader system. What are other policy levers States can use? Should we be looking at different criteria for infant-toddler teachers?
 - Research is young, but it has been growing with time, however there’s more to do than what we’ve done so far.

3. Brief Summary of Discussion

- Rick Brandon: subsidy reimbursements are limited as a financial lever in that they relate only to low-income families. How do we improve quality across all income levels, for instance, what about the federal child care tax credit? Could it be changed to promote quality through the market across income groups?
 - Ajay: The ideal is to promote quality through the market system. Low income families are in an “economic vice,” but so is the system itself. CCDF tries to support private care. There are lots of considerations to balance – increasing CCDF eligibility cut-offs is one option, but so is increasing tax credits.
- Bobbie Weber: our strategies tend to be “demand-based;” are there strategies we should be looking at that are “supply-based”? For instance, instead of tiered reimbursement, how

about bonuses for moving up a QRIS rating (tied to what it costs to progress)? Should we be examining the tipping point for demand- versus supply-based strategies?

- Tamara Halle: suggest having working group meetings to discuss this type of nitty-gritty issue so we don't have to wait an entire year until the next annual CCPRC meeting.
- Gina Adams: the market and public funding is strongest in providing care for 3 and 4 year olds. Where it isn't working is for infants and toddlers and family child care.
 - Ajay: our aspiration is to move issues simultaneously, being clear about our goals. We are currently agnostic about what settings are best for infants and toddlers because the research is not clear about what is best. What does PD for different providers look like?
 - Ivelisse: With data from the NSECE, we will know more about these issues.
 - Gina: concerned that we are moving down path of pushing quality at the expense of access, e.g., allowing parents to only enroll in places that are sufficiently high quality increases quality, but it reduces access.

4. Summary of Key issues raised

- Research questions are influenced by conceptual models, policy questions, analytic strategies, and design/data. Topics discussed during the meeting that relate to research design and data include:
 - A variety of conceptual models including a framework for QRIS, behavioral economics, systems theory and implementation science.
 - The need to match analytic strategies to conceptual models.
 - The importance of paying attention to data quality; the weakest links often relate to the reliability and validity of data.
 - The value of administrative data as an asset for answering questions in a timely way; we need to influence what gets collected to maximize its usefulness.
 - Examples of innovative research strategies including propensity score matching, survival analysis (Lahti), and latent transition analysis.
 - The importance of the NSECE in offering innovations in sampling, data, and measurement; it also opens up the possibility of asking new questions.
 - Qualitative data.
- In our ongoing work, we need to consider:
 - *Access and quality*: Focus on access and quality simultaneously. How do we do this in a way that supports the most vulnerable children including infants and toddlers, the lowest income, and children from immigrant families?
 - *Parents*: how do we help parents learn about the benefits of ECE programs? Should we require a minimum QRIS rating to receive subsidy?
 - *QI, QRIS and PD*: push the boundaries in understanding QI and child development across ECE programs; explore issues of density; understand what is working in State PD systems including for groups of providers; continue work around predictors of QRIS entry and movement; should we be encouraging States to consider other policy levers (in addition to QRIS)?
 - *Issues of Finance*: analyze costs and incentives in QRIS; is there a tipping point in the use of “demand-based” versus “supply-based” strategies; to what extent are we investing in provider training and compensation and the physical environment of programs; does it make sense to tie provider reimbursement rates to QRIS ratings;

- consider blending and meshing funds and connecting child care and Head Start research; incentives for quality built-into the federal child care tax credit?
- *Research and Data*: share resources and data across projects; focus on reliability; pay attention to the conceptual and measurement framework for QRIS;
 - *Other*: continue these discussions throughout the year via the CCPRC topical workgroups; document and celebrate successes in ECE.