

Defining and Measuring Early Childhood Professional Development State and Systems Perspectives

Description

This session focused on current efforts to define and measure professional development in state-level systems (spearheaded by the Definitions and Measurement of Professional Development Workgroup sponsored by the Child Care Bureau). Discussants shared the status of those efforts, explored how they have helped us better understand the early care and education (ECE) workforce in terms of professional development and needs, and discussed areas where additional coordination and alignment are needed. Session participants were asked to react to current work and to share their own experiences and barriers in pushing this effort forward.

Facilitator

Ivelisse Martinez-Beck, Child Care Bureau

Discussants

- Marty Zaslow, Child Trends
- Cathy Grace, National Center on Rural Early Childhood Learning Initiatives
- Bobbie Weber, Oregon State University
- Diane Adams, University of Wisconsin
- Mousumi Sarkar, National Association of Resource & Referral Agencies
- Sarah LeMoine, National Child Care Information Center
- Kathy Thornburg, University of Missouri

Scribes

- Doug Clark, Pepperdine University
- Tamara Halle, Child Trends

Issues

- How are states tracking professional development?
- How are efforts to track professional development working at the state level?
- Which infrastructures are needed to track professional development?

Handouts in Session Folder

- Measuring Professional Development: Working toward a Common Core

- Defining and Measuring Early Childhood Professional Development: State and Systems Perspective

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Discussion Notes

I. Summary of Presentations:

Ivelisse Martinez-Beck

Ivelisse made brief introductory remarks to focus the session on what is happening at state and systems levels regarding collection of data about professional development.

Bobbie Weber

- The timing for starting a web-based data system in Oregon was fortuitous because child care partners had been independently exploring how to expand their databases to capture person-level data and all have now agreed to collaborate in building a state-level system.
- Benefits of an electronically linked system of databases will be plentiful once the system is developed and in place:
 - * Only one entry of information into a single, web-based system will be needed.
 - * All relevant groups will be able to access the data.
 - * Providers will be able to use the information like a transcript with articulation to higher education.
- The system will link multiple, individual databases by utilizing a unique, common identifier for each provider.

Diane Adams

- Naturalistic data in Wisconsin show, over time, a trend for directors to have more qualifications.
- Three major areas of quality are being tested in the Wisconsin QRS:
 - * Educational levels of staff (saturation concept: What percentage of classrooms are staffed with people with various levels of education or degrees, using registry as grounding: 6 credits or more, 12 credits, 18 credits, AA degree, BA degree);
 - * Program elements;
 - * Business and professional elements (including staff benefits).

Kathy Thornburg and Cathy Grace

- Common ID's should be consistent across states, so that we can compare data across jurisdictions.

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- The “some college” category is too broad; we need to break it out to make some meaning out of it.
- We really do need to verify information in the registries, especially when that information is important for making policy.
 - * The providers themselves often supply inaccurate data. For example, they may report having an associate’s degree when in fact they have a CDA (Child Development Associate degree), with or without college credit.
 - Credits or degrees in early childhood need to be verified.
 - It’s not cheap to verify data, but states need to do it.
 - * We need a tool to identify providers with special training in mental health for use in emergency situations.
 - Confidentiality must be balanced with helping those in critical human need.
 - * We need centralized and multiple data repositories for use in regional or national emergency situations:
 - Shared data and easily transferred data elements;
 - Where backup data can be easily accessed in case one data file is damaged or destroyed.

Sarah LeMoine:

- It’s good we’re not just saying that “more is better.” We have to look at professional progression within a framework of education rather than just the number of credits.
- Pre-service ECE-related qualifications have declined since 1986 for center teachers and family child care providers.
- Ongoing training has increased since 1986 for all.
- There are five inter-related features of a high quality professional development system:
 - * Core knowledge;
 - * Access and outreach;
 - * Qualifications, credentials, and pathways;
 - * Funding (financial assistance linked to standards);
 - * Quality assurance.

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Mousumi Sarkar:

- Community-based training is a realistic way to increase child development, safety, and higher quality.
- However, we don't have good, consistent information on community-based training: for instance, who is being trained, who the trainers are, what the content of the training is, or whether standards are being met.
- NACCRRRA has completed:
 - * A literature review on community-based training;
 - * A survey on CCR&R training;
 - * Specifications for training tracking system that we hope to test the system in fall 2006.
- We're now working on:
 - * A technical assistance piece;
 - * A system for CCR&Rs to use.

Ayonda Dent, Bridget Lavelle, and Tamara Halle:

- Child Trends has outlined a project to develop a common core of professional development measures.
- We are in the process of comparing items and measures of professional development from existing data sources in five categories.
- We have illustrated the wide variability of information gathered across data sources for constructs and sub-constructs.
- Next steps include building consensus for:
 - * A taxonomy of constructs used in data collection on the child care workforce and professional development;
 - * A glossary of key terms;
 - * Highest priority constructs for data collection;
 - * Strongest measures of each construct.
- We expect to prepare a white paper with a recommended common core of measures, rationales for the importance and usefulness of each construct, and information on items identified as highest priority during the consensus-building process.

Open Discussion

Comment: We need constructs of professional development while developing systems. Registries have just finished such efforts, in conjunction with states. We

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also need feedback on where this type of work is already going on, so we don't have to duplicate efforts.

Comment: As more international people enter the U.S. with degrees from abroad, we've had problem confirming their education, especially when we have self-report data. We need transcripts from many countries, and we need to work with people on campus to figure out what exactly things mean and verifying the degrees.

Comment: A lot of coursework in early childhood education is counted, but other content areas like early numeracy and literacy are also very important. Our initial cross walk is with business & administrative courses and with youth development. We have the infrastructure for counting transcripts four different ways for different purposes.

Burning Issues and Key Points:

- We need measures that indicate how professional development is linked to state standards and core competencies.
- We need to look at integrity of the data sources (e.g., Head Start's Program Information Report - PIR).
- We need better ways to evaluate foreign degrees and transcripts.

II. Discussion of State Systems and Professional Development

Bobbie Weber:

- Surveys are done in the state of Oregon every 10 years. We can't answer even the most basic questions, such as:
 - * How many work in early childhood education?
 - * What is the average education level of the workforce?
 - * On average, how long have they worked in child care and education?
- The solution:
 - * Create a common identifier for workforce members (data of birth and last 5 digits of SSN) – concern about identity theft, though.
 - * Create web-based data systems in each organization.
 - * Develop protocols that give appropriate access to participating organizations and define ways of operating.
- Current status:
 - * Multiple databases are under construction and work groups are meeting.

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- * Organizations are working on how to share pieces of data with each other across systems.
- Training records from the resource and referral agencies will automatically go into the registry system.
- For other training and education, the workforce member will have to provide the information to the registry.
 - * There will have to be incentives for this to happen.
 - * The workforce members are critical – they are the primary recipients of the system.
 - * Once in the registry, it's as good as having a transcript. Colleges and universities can then access the system and give providers college credit for their training efforts.
- The licensing agency was just about to develop a new database to capture training and education. We were close to having multiple data sets of the same information. Now we have one system that everyone can access.

Diane Adams:

- A naturalistic improvement in professional qualifications has occurred in Wisconsin:
 - * About half of directors (48%) have a BA degree;
 - * 42% of directors have a Child Care Administrator Credential (18 credit course).
- Good things go together: Good directors with degrees or high levels of education hire good teachers, have good salary scales, and have ways to keep the teachers – all are associated with good scores on the ECERS (Early Childhood Environmental Rating Scale).
- Bad things also go together: High turnover of staff, more regulation violations.
- Our data support findings from the Cost, Quality, and Outcomes Study:
 - * 15% of centers are really high quality;
 - * About 11% are dangerous centers;
 - * The rest are of “mediocre” quality.
- Key features of the Wisconsin quality rating system:
 - * Efficiently collected data;
 - * Easy to understand ratings;

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- * Tied to reimbursement system.
- Three major areas of quality are being tested:
 - * Educational levels of staff;
 - * Program elements;
 - * Business and professional elements (including staff benefits).
- How are we doing?
 - * The registry is very active, but only about half of the 10,000 providers are in the registry.
 - * Tracking down providers who have moved is a challenge.
 - * T.E.A.C.H./Reward now has a \$6 million budget with thousands of scholarships awarded for credit-based training.
 - * Professional development is connected with public school systems training.
 - * We are experiencing increases in technical college system enrollments.
 - * CCR&Rs are providing continuing education, but we need to have training verified.
 - * “Grow in Quality” is our measurement process.

Kathy Thornburg:

- What should we collect?
- How comparable are we across the four Midwestern states?
- Child Care Registries:
 - * Collect data about professionals;
 - * Provide recognition;
 - * Inform communities and states about the ECE workforce.
- National Registry Alliance (Maine, Missouri, Montana, Wisconsin)
<http://www.registryalliance.org/regmap.html>
- Challenging issue: There is no common definition of professional development.
- Ideas for improving the data system:
 - * Use unique personal ID's (4 states use birth year and last 4 numbers of SSN)

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- * Breakout “some college” category (what has driven policy?)
 - Over 1/3 of providers had “some college,” ranging from 1 – 142 college credits.
 - If providers had 60 + hours of college credits plus XX credits in early childhood, we put them in the AA category.
 - This adjustment fit with salary data, even when controlled with years in field).
- * Combine early childhood and related hours (a lot, few, none).
- * To verify or not to verify (we need to verify).
- Core Data Elements:
 - * Demographics (gender, race...)
 - * Education (degree, major...)
 - * Professional Certifications (CDA...)
 - * Employment (program type, age group...)
 - * Experience (length of time, administrative...)
 - * Training (clock hours, CPR, curriculum...)
- Early Childhood Atlas:
 - * Maps the state in terms of information from the registry;
 - * Serves as a tool for states to target recruitment efforts and where to locate new training centers;
 - * More information available at: <http://earlychildhood.msstate.edu/atlas>.
- Data on individuals in ECE field who have specialized training such as mental health or experience with children having special needs for use in emergency situations.

Sarah LeMoine:

- The National Child Care Information Center (NCCIC) does a lot of system development work for the Child Care Bureau.
- NCCIC shares information with states and states share with NCCIC.
- We work through regional onsite staff rather than by surveying states.
- A quality professional development system is driven by standards.
 - * What is quality?
 - Core knowledge;
 - Aligning our standards across sectors.
 - * Why does it matter?
 - Need access and outreach;

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- Need to have standards that have an impact on outcomes;
- System reform never works unless you have access and use it well.

- * How can we work toward it?
 - Qualifications;
 - Credentials;
 - Pathways.

- Pre-service credentials have decreased. There are some good and some debatable reasons for this decrease.
 - * How are hours in ECE connected?
 - * What was the progression? Is there a framework for progression?
 - * Is having hours really equivalent to an associate's degree?

- How can we afford it?
 - * Funding is flat;
 - * States are grappling with what to keep and what to cut;
 - * Compensation piece is important.

- Registries do a lot of quality assurance.
 - * About 49% of states have either training or trainer approval systems.
 - * It's best to have both training and trainer approval systems together.
 - * Anecdotally, these make a big difference.

- What is the threshold for impacting on quality? Where should we focus funding?

- Quality rating systems are wonderful tools; 13 states have statewide QRS.

Mousumi Sarkar:

- Community-based training is a realistic way to improve child development, safety and quality.

- NACCRRRA is trying to develop a national competency-based training system that:
 - * Includes quality assurances and accountability;
 - * Links required state licensing training to certification and college.

- Strategies:
 - * Establish standard definitions for community-based training provided by the child care resource and referral agencies (CCR&Rs);
 - * Establish training requirements for ECE providers and trainers;
 - * Establish core training requirements;
 - * Develop training tracking software for CCR&Rs;
 - * Develop best practices for CCR&R training and technical assistance.

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- Potential Issues:
 - * We lack information on the providers who are being trained;
 - * Providers don't know the training they're completing.
 - * Who are the trainers and their background?
 - * Is there a center for training? How is training offered?
 - * Is there a tracking system for training?
 - * Are there training standards?

- NACCRRRA Training Tracking System:
 - * Conducted literature review on community-based training
 - * Completed survey on CCR&R training
 - * Developed specifications for training tracking system
 - * Hope to test the system in fall 2006
 - * Working more on technical assistance piece

End of Session

Breakout session notes are brief summaries of issues, findings and ideas discussed by participants and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Child Care Bureau or other members of the Child Care Policy Research Consortium.

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