

**Child Care Policy Research Consortium Annual Meeting
Renaissance Washington, D.C. Hotel
April 13–16, 2004**

SESSION 17

Using indicators to track children's well being and public policy.

What important issues need to be considered by states when planning to assess children's development and school readiness in relation to child care policies? What can we learn from the National School Readiness Indicators Initiative? How do policy-level indicators relate to supply, demand, and quality? What indicators are states using for early care and education? What data challenges have states encountered in their development of indicators? Are there valid and reliable tools that states can use to measure children's development with respect to socio-emotional, cognitive, and linguistic skills? How can child care indicators be used to complement and fill out a holistic perspective of children's progress? How can indicators be used to effectively monitor and influence public policy on child care?

Themes: Children, Workforce, Families, Methodologies

Facilitator: Catherine Walsh, Rhode Island KIDSCOUNT

Discussants: Rod Southwick, Massachusetts Office for Child Care Services
Sue Wilson, Child Health & Development Institute of Connecticut

Scribe:

Summary of Session

There was a presentation by Cathy Walsh of the School Readiness Indicators Project (SRIP) in 17 states and discussion of some of the indicators that were common across the states. Cathy also showed the Rhode Island Kids Count 2004 book.

Sue Wilson presented the Connecticut SRIP experience.

Rod Southwick presented the planning and organization of the SRIP in Massachusetts, including coordination among seven state agencies. The establishment of an early child care and education council consisting of the Office of Child Care Services, the state Departments of Education and Public Health helped to facilitate the coordination.

Discussed the difficulty of measuring child outcomes at the preschool level. How to give teachers an assessment tool to identify strengths and weaknesses of children without stigma. Whether the tool could be used to aggregate the outcomes of children to determine general progress of preschool classrooms. In particular, How to measure the social / emotional development of children, the literacy and cognitive development and what methods are used to ease transitions of children between child care settings and from child care to kindergarten.