

# **C1: Uplifting the Well-Being of the Child Care and Early Education Workforce: Conceptual Framework, Evidence, and Strategies**

Wednesday, June 28, 2023

4:00 p.m. – 5:15 p.m. | *Archives*

## **1. Descriptive Information**

### **C1: Uplifting the Well-Being of the Child Care and Early Education Workforce: Conceptual Framework, Evidence, and Strategies**

The early care and education (ECE) workforce experiences health disparities and concerning levels of stress and depression, which affect their well-being and contribute to a critical shortage in this essential workforce. Efforts to support educators entering and remaining in the ECE field and strengthening ECE quality would benefit from targeting the well-being of the workforce more comprehensively. This session assembles several research projects highlighting a more expansive focus on the well-being of early educators. First, we will introduce a comprehensive conceptual model of ECE educator well-being and a review of existing research validating the model. Second, an analysis of the 2019 National Survey of Early Care and Education will describe staff-level and community predictors of stress and depression among center-based educators. Third, a scan of current strategies in the United States to build and sustain the workforce will present the range of support efforts underway, where educators' psychological well-being and workplace demands or supports are the least common targets. Finally, we will describe the unique challenges of supporting the well-being of family child care (FCC) educators, including a pilot initiative focused on FCC embedded within a state system.

#### **Presenters**

**Alexandra Bernardi**, MDRC

**Tiffany Burkhardt**, Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago

**Rena Hallam**, University of Delaware

**JoAnn Hsueh**, MDRC

**Lieny Jeon**, University of Virginia

**Kyong-Ah Kwon**, University of Oklahoma

**Laura Lessard**, University of Delaware

#### **Scribe**

**Katie Caldwell**

**Number of Attendees: 65**

## **2. Documents/Presentations Shared** (Please list any electronic documents, PowerPoint presentations, or web links used during the session.) ***Collect presenter PowerPoints or other documents on the flash drive provided.***

- Insights from an Environmental Scan of Child Care and Early Education Workforce Development Strategies
- Uplifting the Well-Being of the Child Care and Early Education Workforce: Conceptual Framework, Evidence, and Strategies
- Stress, Depression, and the Role of Racial and Ethnic Concordance in the Early Care and Education Workforce
- Shining the Light on You: Integrating wellbeing focused supports for family child care professionals into existing systems

## **3. Brief Summary of Presentations**

- **Summary of Presentation #1: Lieny Jeon, *Building a conceptual framework of holistic ECE workforce wellbeing using an AI-assisted systematic review***
  - Conceptual framework of holistic ECE workforce wellbeing using AI-assisted systematic review developed by the Early Head Start/Head Start Workforce Well-Being Consortium
  - Large number of members in the consortium and came to 100% consensus on the framework
  - Well-being domains decided upon
    - Psychological
    - Professional

- Physical
    - Health behaviors
  - AI assisted literature review
    - Studies from 1990-2021
    - 351 quantitative studies included
    - Explosion of articles related to provider well-being as pandemic highlighted need to focus on this topic
    - There needs to be more studies around work environment
- **Summary of Presentation #2: Tiffany Burkhardt, *Stress, Depression, and the Role of Racial and Ethnic Concordance in the Early Care and Education Workforce***
  - Stress, depression and the role of racial and ethnic concordance
  - ECE workforce is experiencing concerning levels of stress and depression
  - Racial and ethnic concordance has been shown to be a positive effect on children (concordance is the matching between caregivers and children)
  - This hasn't been examined in the effect on providers
  - Used NSECE data and focused on center-based providers
  - Summary of teacher statistics
    - 96% female
    - Mean wage: \$13.92
  - Summary of center statistics
    - 69% urban
    - 20% suburban
    - 11% rural
  - Concordance and diversity
    - Asian teachers- lowest level of concordance
    - Hispanic
    - Black
    - White- highest level of concordance
  - Findings:
    - Racial concordance between ECE teachers and children in their classroom predicted lower levels of teacher depression.
    - For Black teachers, racial concordance predicted lower job demands stress.
    - Working full time, being a lead teacher, receiving professional development (PD) on working with children from different cultures, and teaching at a center in Class 1 (large pre-k classrooms in suburban or rural settings) all predicted higher levels of job demands stress.
  - Next Steps
    - Further explore Latent Class Analysis center types as predictors of ECE teacher stress and depression
    - Examine classroom diversity as a predictor of ECE teacher stress and depression
    - Explore policy and practice implications (e.g., supporting ECE workforce in concordant and discordant classrooms)
- **Summary of Presentation #3: Alexandra Bernardi, *Insights from an Environmental Scan of Child Care and Early Education Workforce Development Strategies***
  - Building and Sustaining the Child Care and Early Education Workforce (BASE) project- designed to increase knowledge and understanding of the CCEE workforce by documenting factors that drive turnover in the field and by building evidence on current initiatives to recruit, advance and retain a stable and qualified CCEE workforce.
  - Environmental scan conducted
    - Conducted March 2021 through January 2022
    - Strategies target sustaining current workforce instead of growing new workers
    - Found that the strategies currently underway to build and retain the CCEE workforce are diverse and target five levers of change that influence recruitment and retention among CCEE educators. Strategies generally focused on targeting one or more levers of change. These levers include:

- Educator qualifications and competencies (e.g., credentialing, competencies working with children, job knowledge)
  - Educator economic well-being (e.g., income, wages, health care benefits, paid leave, smoothing or ensuring appropriate CCEE provider-level resources)
  - Educator psychological well-being (e.g., efforts to support stress management, cope with existing job demands)
  - Workplace demands or supports (e.g., structural, social, and provider-level factors and job characteristics and conditions that are job stressors or resources that support educators in accomplishing work-related goals)
  - CCEE system alignment and inequities (e.g., efforts to align, create parity and bring cohesion across different CCEE settings; integrate and align data systems; or address system inequities in opportunities and barriers for historically marginalized racial, ethnic, indigenous, immigrant, or multi-linguistic groups of educators)
  - Existing strategies tend to focus on individual and setting-level factors more than community or systems level factors.
- **Summary of Presentation #4: Laura Lessard and Rena Hallam, *Shining the Light on You: Integrating wellbeing focused supports for family child care professionals into existing systems***
    - One of the strongest predictors of well-being is income
    - Consequences of low income are associated with a host of negative outcomes
    - Case study: Delaware FCC educators have strengths and face challenges to their well-being
      - There were found to be high rates of positive health behaviors
      - Poor worker health negatives impact children and ECE systems
      - Despite the need there is very little focus on wellbeing for FCC in ECE systems
    - Shining the Light on You project
      - Purpose is to improve the health and wellbeing of family child care educators
      - Integrates health coaching
        - Coaches that are board certified to provide health support
      - 15 weekly sessions that are educational presentations on wellbeing topics
      - Individual health coaching
      - Check-in group chats
      - Run within the state's professional development system
        - This makes this sustainable
        - Receives 15 professional hours- so it counts for their required professional development
      - Findings:
        - Reduction in the # of poor health days
        - Reduction in the # of poor mental health days
        - Increase in the # of days per week of being physically active
      - Think this model could work in other systems such as universal Pre-K, CCR&R

#### 4. Brief Summary of Discussion

- Q: Have you looked at the concordance between teachers and coworkers?
  - A: Tiffany- we have not. The data set does include the data for all the workers in the classroom so that metric could be further investigated
- Q: The racial and ethnic characteristics are reported by the teacher not the children- how does that impact the data?
  - A: This is a major limitation of the data.
- Q: How were the participants selected for the Shining the Light on You program? How do you deal with stigmatizing questions?

- A: Open call to all licensed family child care educators. Health coaching is non-judgmental, and we use approachable language. And some people do come with real health challenges that they do want to work on.
- Q: what topics get the most demand?
  - A: making healthy choices in fast food, mindful eating, mindfulness and yoga. Stress and healthy eating are usually big topics.
- Q: What are one or two things that organizations can do to help with ECE provider's well-being?
  - Adult size chairs, paid breaks/daily break, paid time off
  - In family childcare- having a substitute so they can go to the doctor
  - More mindful to create an environment that is comfortable for children and adults
  - Paperwork- some providers reported spending too much time on paperwork
  - Asking teachers what would be helpful to them

**5. Summary of Key issues raised** (facilitators are encouraged to spend the last 3-5 minutes of sessions summarizing the key issues raised during the session; bullets below are prompts for capturing the kinds of issues we're looking for)

- The pandemic has helped highlight the need to focus on ECE provider well-being and there has recently been a great deal of research on this topic to advance the knowledge of the field.
- Racial concordance between ECE teachers and children in their classroom predicted lower levels of teacher depression.
- Future work needs to be completed on strategies that target educator psychological well-being or workplace demands and supports.
- Health coaching has had a positive impact on ECE provider's well-being in Delaware and could be a replicable strategy in other settings and states.