C4: *Collaboratively Constructing a Multidimensional Model for Considering Quality*
Wednesday, June 28, 2023
4:00 p.m. – 5:15 p.m. | *Potomac*

1. Descriptive Information

C4: Collaboratively Constructing a Multidimensional Model for Considering Quality
 	
 The early care and education (ECE) landscape is composed of diverse settings and stakeholders. Individuals and groups may vary in how they define what makes a high-quality ECE program. One step toward equitable access and participation in the conversation about quality is ensuring that the voices of diverse stakeholders, including families, ECE professionals, and communities are elevated and heard when in the conversation. A theoretical model can be a useful tool for shaping these shared conversations. In this session, we will share a working theoretical model, currently known as the "cube of quality" that emerged in conversations of the Access and Equity Research Collaborative. We initially developed this model to support shared conversation and decision making about gaps in research, reflection on policy, and enhancing supports for responsive practices within ECE programs. We invite our CCEEPRC colleagues to join in focused "think tank" conversations to refine this model around its three primary axes: (1) quality for whom, (2) quality in what setting, and (3) quality according to whom.
	Presenters
	    Rebecca Swartz, Southern Illinois University Edwardsville
	    Erin Tebben, The Ohio State University
	    Samantha Melvin, Erikson Institute
	 Scribe
	
	 Lindsay Bell, ICF
	
	 Number of Attendees: 4

2. Documents/Presentations Shared
CCEEPRC C4 – Quality presentation
Handout packet

3. Brief Summary of Presentations
Think Tank Session

- **Summary of Presentation #1:**
    - This work came out of the Equity & Access Research Collaborative
    - Met at last year's conference online research collaborative session – started talking about what are we assuming is true when thinking about quality in ECE spaces
    - How to conceptualize quality from a variety of perspectives – what dimensions we assume are important that underlie our research
    - How intersections between perspectives can provide new avenues for conceptualizing and exploring ECE quality
    - Need to figure out who is not represented, need a theory to build from

- 3 axes:
    - Quality for whom – what are characteristics of the children, families, and communities for whom we are interested in understanding ECE quality? Could include age, language, ability, family structure, race, socioeconomic status, etc.
    - In what settings – what characteristics of the ECE settings and the workers within them that may influence understanding of quality ECE? Could include classroom structures, pedagogical philosophies, program types (center-/home-based child care, Head Start, public pre-K)
    - According to whom – from whose perspective is quality assessed and how does considering different perspectives influence our understanding of quality ECE?
- Make sure the settings that are harder to collect data in get their due attention
- Take a kaleidoscopic view: you bring the beads in your kaleidoscopic and that affects what you see; you bring ideas about what quality is and that affects the research
- Know thyself: consider how the personal, social, and professional identities you hold influence your own orientation toward and positionality within the work of ECE quality
    - Bring individual, institutional, societal biases
    - Attitudes and behaviors – conscious and unconscious
    - Identities and biases that influence our research questions and engagement: faith, gender, race, community demographics, research background, goals, role
- Reason for doing critical bias and identity analysis: even our most basic assumptions can be cultural assumptions (example: child at the center of policy & program vs family or community at the center)
- Don't fall into a deficit understanding of characteristics, need to focus on strengths as well
- Positionality includes blinders and contributions; positionality changes, it is not static
- Research is subjective – we have numbers that seem objective but someone created the vectors and chose the measures
- Conception of quality differs at population level – what do the families see as quality, the providers, the county, the federal program?
- What are the big buckets of characteristics? Don't want to get lost in the milieu of the infinite combinations and subdivisions of identities for constructing the theory
- Need to consider what intersections matter to the situation, will differ in every situation
- Where does the concept of quality in policy/research end and actual individual implementation by a teacher begin?
    - Teachers are giving feedback that there's no room for individual choice
    - Younger teachers have come up in a system that doesn't allow for departure from policy, some teachers want a scripted curriculum, others don't
- How to balance respecting parent or policymaker perspective on quality with safety for all children – relevant to current issues on LGBTQIA+ inclusion in curriculum
    - The intersectional lens helps to situate the perspectives – where is it coming from?
    - Can't accommodate all perspectives all the time, analysis helps
- Quality for whom bucket ideas: race, ethnicity, socioeconomics, age, immigration status, child welfare involvement, linguistic background, family structure, religion, family/community culture, geographic location, ability, health status, worker/child/family/policymaker, child temperament, gender,
    - Could divide into within child, within family, within community
- Quality according to whom bucket ideas: family, policymaker – political vs career, researchers, ECE providers, child, general public, community, K-12 teachers,
    - What is their stake in this process? What is their expected outcome? What is their identity/bias?
- What is hard about this exercise?
    - Conceptualizing measuring it
    - Need for balance between general categories and specifics
    - Need for balance centering a characteristics/intersection and not putting into a box
- Where are the groups that we don't study because they're hard to measure?
- The cube can be helpful for making the case for considering intersectional identities
- Can we have a standard of reporting for studies on who is included and who's not?

- o Need to continuously counter the "default" – white, monolingual, two parent home, etc. This can help bring focus to that

4. Summary of Key issues raised

- In any research the attitudes, beliefs, identities, and biases of the researcher will impact the design of the study. Need to create a model for examining those biases to improve equity in research and policymaking.
- Understanding our positionality can help us challenge what we assume to be true and consider multiple perspectives.
- This model can be helpful for understanding the many perspectives of all the stakeholders that a policy will affect, making the case for including statements on bias and who was and wasn't included in research, countering the assumption of a default identity, and determining a balance of stakeholder opinions in policymaking.
- Moving forward, will need to address how to collect the data on these characteristics and biases