D4: Using State Child Care and Early Education Workforce Data to Advance Process Implementation and Evaluation in Early Care and Education

Thursday, June 29, 2023
10:45 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. | *Potomac*

1. Descriptive Information

D4: Using State Child Care and Early Education Workforce Data to Advance Process Implementation and Evaluation in Early Care and Education This presentation and Data Party session will focus on discussing the current state of child care workforce data and on enhancing the knowledge and capacity of workforce data sets to answer policy-relevant questions and future use. Attendees will participate in a dialogue on what to consider in building and enhancing workforce data for future use in research. The discussion also will identify key obstacles and requirements for the effective use of state data systems for researchers and administrators using other data sources. This session will explore the following key questions: What data elements should be included in workforce data systems to support longitudinal data analysis and in process and impact evaluation? How can we ensure that data is kept up-to-date and accurate over time? How can we ensure that equity components are included in workforce data to support diversity, inclusion, and fairness in the workforce? How can we promote collaboration among data building agencies, researchers, and other stakeholders to maximize the potential of workforce registries? What are some potential ethical concerns surrounding the collection and use of workforce data and how can we ensure that data are used in a responsible and transparent manner?	**Presenters** **Neda Senehi,** Society for Research in Child Development **Nathan Burroughs,** Public Policy Associates **JoAnn Hsueh,** MDRC **Cynthia Miller,** MDRC **Kimberlee Belcher-Badal,** National Workforce Registry Alliance **Beth Rous,** University of Kentucky **Scribe** **Hannah Reutter** **Number of Attendees:** 20

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.***
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3. Brief Summary of Presentations Neda opened and introduced speakers

Summary of Presentation #1: Understanding the Child Care and Early Education Workforce: A Review of Existing Data Sources - JoAnn Hsueh - MDRC

- Understanding the Child Care and Early Education Workforce: A Review of Existing Data Sources
  - The BASE project is sponsored by the Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluation with a contract awarded to MDRC. MDRC is leading the BASE project with partners: MEF Associates, Chapin Hall, and Decision Information Research, Inc. We also are working in collaboration with Erikson Institute and Butler Institute and Diana Schaack, Aisha Ray, Debra Pacciano, Juliet Bromer, and Amy Roberts with strong substantive expertise in home-based child care, CCEE working conditions, the pipeline into CCEE, mental health, and racial equity in CCEE.

- The BASE project has two main goals:
  - To increase knowledge and understanding of factors that drive workforce turnover in ECE; and
  - To build and evaluation evidence on current initiatives underway to recruit, support, and retain qualified ECE workers at state, local, and provider levels across the country.
- Designed to increase knowledge and understanding about child care and early education (CCEE) 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.
- Knowledge Review Activities
  - Literature review
  - Environmental scan
  - Data scan
  - Conceptual framework
- Analysis of Existing Data
  - Three secondary analyses addressing gaps in the research
- Evaluation, Implementation, and Cost Study
  - Evaluation of salary increase pilot initiative in Colorado

- Data Scan
  - This work is guided by several broad research questions that guide the BASE project, but also specific gaps in existing knowledge about the CCEE workforce. Examples of several overarching research questions that drive the BASE project also guided the data scan, include:
    - What conditions and practices drive CCEE workforce turnover? How do these differ by ages of children served, worker characteristics and roles, program context, and by community and state context?
    - What program- or system-level policies, activities and characteristics support the recruitment and retention of the workforce within Head Start and subsidized child care programs?
    - What program- or system-level policies, activities and characteristics support the recruitment and retention of the CCEE workforce?
  - In addition, the data scan sought data sources that contextualize CCEE workforce dynamics or provide supplemental information about educators' characteristics and their work settings. The data scan was also informed by the research gaps identified by the BASE project's literature review and environmental scan. Specifically, this included:
    - The need for longitudinal data to track CCEE educators over time, as they enter and exit CCEE jobs and the CCEE field more broadly, and to track their advancement over time.
    - The need to examine how CCEE workforce dynamics vary by role (e.g., assistant teacher versus lead teacher); age of the children served (e.g., infants or toddlers versus preschool-aged children); and setting (e.g., home-based, center-based, or school-based child care).
    - The need to assess the effects of multilevel factors on workforce dynamics, including factors at the teacher level (e.g., age, experience, race, or ethnicity), provider level (e.g., type of setting, working conditions), policy level (e.g., subsidy rates, credential requirements), and community level (e.g., unemployment rates, earnings in other sectors).
  - Research with a diversity, equity, and inclusion lens and that examines the effects of systemic bias and the experiences of marginalized groups.
  - More information about the psychological well-being of the CCEE workforce and the factors that affect it.
  - The need for rigorous evidence on the effects of existing strategies—such as offering wage supplements or scholarships—on workforce dynamics.
  - Information about the take up of existing strategies, their reach within the CCEE workforce, and their effectiveness.
  - The data scan was focused primarily on the first three items above, although the ability of the data to speak to each of these issues is discussed when possible.
- Data Scan Method
  - Through the process 126 data sources identified. These data sources were identified with a multi-pronged process, which included the following – Drawing on existing content knowledge, including data sources identified via the literature review and environmental scan, and recommendations from internal and external experts and federal sponsors.
  - These data sources were catalogued, along several key dimensions including:

        - -source/type of data (these data sources are grouped in the following broad categories: national surveys, state and local surveys, state workforce registries, state Unemployment Insurance (UI) wage records, Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS) data, program data, policy databases, and integrated (or linked) data sources),
        - -accessibility of the data (e.g., can this data source be accessed via restricted access, public use, etc.),
        - -coverage (who is represented in the data source),
        - -unit of analysis (is data source captured at individual/worker level, setting level (e.g., child care center/provider), and
        - -keywords (keywords relevant to CCEE, such as "setting," "workforce characteristics," "funding sources," "workforce dynamics," "working conditions," and "worker well-being." These key words were not a part of the inclusion criteria for the primary assessment; they are intended to function primarily as a resource for future projects focusing on the CCEE workforce that may use the catalogue as a guide for identifying data sources for slightly different research questions.
    - Selected subset
        - Primary unit was CCEE educator or educator could be identified, collected within past 12 years, were selected for an in-depth assessment.
    - This in-depth assessment
        - Capacity to measure workforce dynamics, population coverage, contextual factors, researcher access, and linkability with other data
    - For the primary assessment, the team analyzed these data sources based on the following questions:
        - What is the capacity of the data to measure CCEE workforce dynamics, including metrics such as turnover, recruitment, and retention?
        - What is the population coverage (including when and where data were compiled and which programs were included) for each data source?
        - What contextual factors—such as the characteristics of educators, programs, and communities—are captured in each data source?
        - Is it possible to link data to other data sources at individual, program, or community levels in order to augment available contextual information?
        - How accessible are the data for research purposes?
- Information collected for in-depth assessment
    - Data description: Sample vs. universe, availability of job and employer characteristics (e.g., role, setting, licensing status), availability of workforce demographics (e.g., gender, race/ethnicity), smallest level of geography available, data quality
    - Time period: Years of data available, temporality (e.g., point-in-time, longitudinal)
    - Linkability: Availability of individual and setting identifying information (e.g., name, DOB, address, employer name) to link the data sources with each other
    - Access: Data accessibility and process, availability of identified data to researchers
    - Use: Use of data in other research, sources for data documentation, strength for measuring workforce dynamics, ability to address key research gaps identified by BASE knowledge review
- QRIS Data
    - Though every state has QRIS data, the data alone is not optimal for understanding the CCEE workforce. This is because the data is collected at the provider level. Because of this QRIS data were not prioritized as part of the data scan. Two data sources were identified.
- Integrated data sources
    - Integrated data sources contain two or more different types of data sources that have been linked and that are structured and documented to support analysis of the data. Integrated data sources can link data such as registry data, education records, public benefit data, training participation data, and UI wage records. Structured and documented to support analysis.
- Looking Forward
    - The current landscape of CCEE data provides intriguing possibilities, but also significant gaps. Data sources vary widely in terms of the frequency, depth of data, and types of identifiers:
        - Lack of longitudinal data and limited data that follows educators across employers/settings
        - Coverage of data is inconsistent with variation in data across geographic locations and settings

        - Data is richest for licensed providers, for those participating in QRIS, and for those receiving public funding through child care subsidies or Head Start
        - Lack of information about educators and workforce dynamics in home-based child care settings
    - Future work in the field could focus on seeking ways to link existing data, such as through the creation of more integrated data sources, and ways to streamline this approach.
    - Future work could focus on standardizing the type of and frequency of data collected through the state workforce registries. Currently, quality and coverage vary across states, and updates to educator status are not always required.
    - Future work could explore ways to collect data on groups that are underrepresented in existing data sources, such as unlicensed providers and home-based child care providers.

Summary of Presentation #2: Professional Registry Data Hold Key to Informing Sustainable ECE Workforce Preparation, Policies, & Investments - Kimberlee Belcher-Badal - National Workforce Registry Alliance

- The National Workforce Registry Alliance (NWRA)
    - In the field of Early Learning, we do not license individuals (as we do in public instruction or many other professions).
    - Instead, we license programs, facilities or buildings.
    - The most important element in delivering quality child care is a well-prepared caregiver.
    - Professional Registries exist in nearly every state to support child care professionals. The Preparation, Recognition, and Representation of the child care workforce is the core of their purpose. In that capacity, registries provide over a dozen common functions (plus another 12 which vary); as a by-product of those functions and support services, they collect data through self-managed professional profiles.
    - The NWRA exists to strengthen registries, with best practices and to generate shared learning across registries, leveraging the power of their collective data and driving more equitable outcomes for the nation's most critical, but often invisible workforce.
    - The NWRA is a public non-profit membership organization serving Early Childhood Professional Registries, with 46 state members, who collectively reach 1.8 million users/members through their registries.
- Registry Focus
    - THE PROBLEM:
        - Despite 1.8 million members/users in the collective network of Professional Registries, their data collections remain underutilized, under valued, and even reported as non-existent.
        - Too often, leveraged data lacks recognition for the source for the data collection and mechanism making it available.
        - We want to know how to leverage the interest and demand for a resource we have in ways that sustain and enrich it and leverage it to impact the people it represents over time.
- Registry Data Landscape and Data Saturation
    - Existing Landscape:
        - Professional registries exist in 44 states, with four actively building them
        - We represent 46 of them, as we are the membership home for professional registries, their staff and leadership
        - In 20 states, professionals working in licensed settings are required to register for Child Care Licensing. Which gives us a really good picture of the licensed care workforce in those states.
        - For 38 states, professionals must register if they are working in a program participating in a Quality Improvement Initiative
        - 32 of the states collecting data can identify professionals as School-Age only or as Mixed Ages Providers, and by setting or program.
    - So, historically speaking, registries were created initially to support and strengthen the Early Learning Workforce. They do that by providing more than a dozen common functions nationwide. Some of those common functions are listed here at the bottom of this screen, which may be a tiny bit hard to see. But the big ones most people are familiar with include:
        - Career Pathway Placement on the state's Career Ladder or Lattice
        - Training and Trainer Approvals, as well as Learning Records or Training Transcripts
        - Processing Scholarship applications, Hero Pay, or any variety of direct pay to providers
        - Within that professional profile, then, they also verify information about the individual such as their preparation, experience, role and setting, etc.
    - The bi-product of that effort then, is that they are a pretty rich source for workforce data

- In fact, in 2022, there were over 1.8 million people in the collective of registries.
  - And while their local data does inform state decisions, policy, priorities, and investments, they wanted to have a larger impact and see if they couldn't also create a national picture of the workforce.
  - So, in 2012, the NWRA created a pathway to do that. States who have demonstrated that they meet the NWRA's standards and criteria for quality in data collection, can also pool their data to create what we hope will one day be a national workforce dataset.
  - The collective dataset has grown by 700% over the past ten years
  - In 2023,16 states are contributing to an aggregate dataset; in 2021, our last round, 14 states participated, representing over 466,000 people caring for children in that dataset.
  - About ½ of that dataset was composed of people working in home-based care programs.
  - Roughly speaking, around 10% of that dataset was people doing School-Age care only, and 28% reflected multi-age care professionals
  - By 2025, we anticipate 25 states will meet the requirements for participation and the dataset will represent over 800,000 workforce members.
- Of particular interest to this conversation is that much of these data elements are, in fact, valuable to equity planning and accountability.
  - Race and Ethnicity data are collected in 34 states
  - SES & Wage data in 29
  - Languages spoken are collected in 38 states, as well as the preferred learning language in many
- To help frame the challenge/opportunity, the data collected by registries can be a vital resource to understand and address systemic inequities facing the child care workforce (and then name them). Unfortunately, as this data is unknown at worse and underutilized at best - but NWRA can change that toward the mission of more equitable practices for child care providers.
- Registry Data Elements and Data Verification
  - To reach all children with quality care and optimal experiences, we believe we need to reach all of the people who care for them. To really understand the workforce, we need to be in relationship with them; and not just some of them, all of them.
  - Registry infrastructure allows us to be that entry point to the profession, guiding them on that journey, and supporting them as they grow. Within our systems we can look at historical data to find out where there may be readiness, past success, and identified interests. Within the data collection we have Demographic, Experience (current place of employment, hire date, departure date, hours worked per week/month, position title, employer's address, license number, wage, etc.), Preparation such as Training and Competencies, Highest level of education, ECE Specific Coursework, Credentials and their exp dates/types/specializations as well as any Identified Needs, and interests.
  - It is especially important to the registries to stress that the data collected, is done so in relationship with the workforce. The profile is created and managed by the professional themselves. They self-identify their role and setting. Registry staff verify items such as education, training, employment, and wages. So the provider, and in some states, employer are working together with the registry to ensure the system is as accurate as possible.
  - Ideally, records are updated annually in optimal cases; for the NWRA we consider active to mean activity within the past two years.
- What's Next?
  - Data Quality Assurance
  - Aggregate Eligible Data
  - State Data Dashboards and Data Profiles
  - National Workforce Dataset and ECE Workforce Census

4. Brief Summary of Discussion

- Increased utilization and Continuous Quality Improvement of the NWRA registry data system
  - What are the most critical questions about early care and education that we can answer using the NWRA registry data system?
  - How can increased utilization of the NWRA registry data system help us answer these questions?
  - **Data Elements:**
    - What are the key data elements in the NWRA registry data system that can help us answer these questions?

- Are there any additional data elements that we need to answer these questions, and if so, how can we incorporate these into the NWRA registry data system?
- **Data Accessibility:**
  - How accessible is the data in the NWRA registry data system for those who need it to answer these questions?
  - What steps can we take to improve the accessibility of this data?
- **Data Gaps and Improvements:**
  - Are there any gaps in the NWRA registry data system that could hinder our ability to answer these questions?
  - What improvements can we make to the NWRA registry data system to fill these gaps and better answer these questions?
- **Quality Improvement:**
  - How can we ensure the quality of data in the NWRA registry data system?

- What can administrative data tell us about the Early Care and Education workforce?
  - What are the most important questions to answer about the ECE workforce?
  - What are the key data elements required to answer those questions?
  - Which administrative data sets have the data we need? Is there access to that data?
  - Which administrative data could (should) have the data we need?
- Equity Gaps in Workforce Data
  - What does equity in the workforce look like?
  - How can we improve equity in the workforce through data access?
  - What improvements can we make to increase equity in access to workforce data?
  - What are administrative barriers to equity in workforce data?
- What data elements should be included in the workforce data system to support longitudinal data analysis, process and impact evaluation, and how can we ensure that data is kept up-to-date and accurate over time?
- How can we ensure that equity components are included in the workforce to support diversity, inclusion, and fairness in the workforce?
- How can we promote collaboration between the data building agency, researchers, and other stakeholders to maximize the potential of the workforce registry?
- What are some potential ethical concerns surrounding the collection and use of workforce data, and how can we ensure that data is used in a responsible and transparent way?
- Discussion:
  - NWRA: whether we can use the registry data to measure child care. Co-state related research related questions.
    - Talked about how data systems are categorized
    - The theme seems to be around access and equitable access to data
  - Admin: In the workforce space, a lot of the questions are really specific. There's a lot of key elements that we just don't have in these states.
  - Equity: how to get states to buy in to asking demographic based questions

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)

- *Emerging findings that may be of particular interest to policymakers and ACF?*
- *Methodological issues including innovative methodologies that may help maximize resources available for research and evaluation?*
- *Follow-up activities suggested addressing questions and gaps (e.g., secondary analyses of data, consensus meetings of experts, research synthesis or brief, webinar, etc.)?*
- *Recommendations about future ACF child care research directions and priorities?*