

Professional Development Partnerships

Chair: Diane Schilder

Discussant: Ivelisse M. Martinez-Beck

Presenters: Barbara Jacobs, Constance Counts, Diane Schilder, Susan Catron

Presenters discussed critical issues around creating tailored, integrated, and linked professional development systems to address the unique needs of Head Start teachers, staff and parents working in classrooms that serve low-income, diverse populations.

- **Professional Enrichment in Early Childhood Education**

Barbara Jacobs, Constance Counts

To address the critical need for professional development, Action for Boston Community Development (ABCD) in collaboration with Urban College of Boston (UCB) and Lesley University have created a tiered professional development model for Boston-area early care and education teachers and staff: Professional Enrichment in Early Childhood Education (PEECE). The project stakeholders have articulated a model designed to provide tailored supports depending upon the educational needs of early childhood educators in seven different tiers, ranging from Tier I: receive basic skills with no credential, Tier III: receives ECE credential, to Tier VII, where the person receives a Master's Degree.

The educational levels of the staff demonstrate a need for additional education and professional development. Preliminary qualitative analysis reveals that the project has developed the infrastructure to sustain a tiered professional development model and project leaders have taken steps to overcome initial challenges. Given the need for information about how to link and improve professional development systems, the tiered professional development model could provide a useful approach for others to consider developing linkages that can ultimately lead to improvements in the quality of early childhood education.

- **Evaluation of a Tiered Professional Development Model**

Diane Schilder, Ashley Smith

To address the need for research on the relationship between specific teacher professional development and desired outcomes, the Program Evaluation and Research Group (PERG) at Lesley University has engaged in a two-year formative and summative evaluation of the Professional Enrichment in Early Childhood Education (PEECE) initiative. The first step in the evaluation was to develop a project logic model that demonstrates the relationship between the project inputs, outputs, short-term outcomes, and longer-term outcomes. The model moves from: 1) **INPUTS** –High quality tiered professional development to ECE educators; to 2) **ACTIVITY**--Teachers across tiers participate in professional development and access supports; to 2a) **OUTPUT**--600 COURSES will be

taken by participants; to 3) SHORT-TERM OUTCOMES--Participants' knowledge, behavior and reported practice improves; to 4) SHORT-TERM OUTCOME--Participants' observed classroom practice improves; to 5) LONG-TERM OUTCOME--Children receive higher quality learning opportunities. Context variables, including demographics, resources, etc., are embedded at each point in the model.

The research has been designed to examine changes over time and progress toward desired targets. Data have been collected using multiple methods, including a participant survey and classroom observations. Data will be analyzed using multiple regression analysis to determine the relationships between participation in the intervention and changes in teacher attitudes, practices, and behaviors. In addition, to examine changes in classroom quality related to levels of participation in the intervention, researchers will use hierarchical linear modeling. Growth modeling will also be used to examine growth over time.

- **The Importance of Rigorous Professional Development and Continued Teacher Support: Lessons From Springfield Early Reading First**

Judith Schickedanz, Susan Catron, Louisa Anastasopoulos, Nancy Clark-Chiarelli

The Springfield Early Reading First (ERF) project, a partnership between public preschools, Head Start, and child care agencies in Springfield, Massachusetts, provided rigorous professional development and training on the Opening a World of Learning (OWL) curriculum in a total of 10 classrooms over 3 years. The professional development provided features fully integrated professional development and curriculum training provided by one literacy consultant. Teaching teams are included together in professional development and curriculum training activities. Videotaping is used extensively to support coach-teacher reflection and debriefing, as well as the work of the literacy consultant in workshops and study groups.

Data collected on 81 children from ERF classrooms (2004-2005) indicate statistically significant improvement on measures of receptive vocabulary and auditory comprehension, as well as measures of pre-literacy and phonological awareness. Preliminary analyses also indicate that, on average 4-year-olds met or exceeded benchmarks for entering kindergarten on all subscales of the PALS, and children who scored lowest in the fall showed the most gains on all measures. In addition, pre-literacy skills and phonological awareness are easier to affect than vocabulary and special attention must be paid to initially high performers to ensure that they continue to show growth in receptive vocabulary.