

Child Care Research Scholars: 2003 Grantees

Scholar:

Lucy Jordan

Project Title:

Child Care Subsidies and Entry to Employment Following Childbirth

Mentor:

Marcia K. Meyers

Project Funding Years:

2003-2005

University Affiliation:

University of Washington, School of Social Work

Project Abstract:

A study of the relationship between child care subsidies and the length of time between the birth of a child and the mother's entry to employment, particularly among lower-skilled women, who typically spend a larger proportion of their earnings on child care than do women with higher skills and education. The study is based on The Fragile Families and Well-Being Study (a nationally representative data set), and a unique data set of local policy indicators, and tests the hypothesis that child care subsidies cause new mothers to enter the labor force more expeditiously by: (1) reducing the cost of employment relative to earnings; and (2) facilitating stable child care arrangements. It predicts that the receipt of subsidies and the timing of entry to paid employment will vary with child care policies, after controlling for individual and family characteristics that influence the benefits and costs of subsidy use, and of paid employment relative to home production (i.e. caregiving) work.

Project Publications and Resources:

<http://researchconnections.org/childcare/resources/12431/related>

Scholar:

Lisa Knoche

Project Title:

Learning Outcomes for Low-income Children: Child Care Quality and Social Knowledge

Mentor:
Carolyn P. Edwards

Project Funding Years:
2003-2005

University Affiliation:
University of Nebraska

Project Abstract:

An examination of the relationship between child care quality, child social knowledge and competence, and child learning outcomes for low-income preschoolers. The first hypotheses examines whether observed classroom quality relates to child social knowledge and competence. The second hypothesis investigates the relationship between social knowledge and competence and learning outcomes. The study aims to inform child care providers and administrators about strategies to enhance children's development, and to inform policy makers interested in implementing cost-effective strategies that might positively relate to low-income children's pre-academic skills.

Project Publications and Resources:

<http://researchconnections.org/childcare/resources/12417/related>

Scholar:
Staci Peckham

Project Title:

Promoting Educational Well-being of Young Children with Out-of-Home Placement Histories: The Protective Influence of Formal Early Childhood Learning Experiences

Mentor:
John W. Fantuzzo

Project Funding Years:
2003-2004

University Affiliation:
University of Pennsylvania

Project Abstract:

A project that seeks to understand: (a) the prevalence of out-of-home placement experiences in a cohort of kindergarten children; and (b) how formal early childhood experiences contribute to resilient outcomes for children in out-of-home placement. The first objective is to examine the

prevalence of out-of-home placement experiences for a cohort of kindergarten children in a large, urban public school system. The second objective is to investigate the relationship between out-of-home placement experience and early academic competence. The third objective involves a similar process to investigate the relationship between out-of-home placement experience and academic engagement. The fourth objective is to determine the extent to which formal early childhood experiences contribute to the resilience of children who have been placed in out-of-home care during their first six years of life. This project provides an opportunity for a dialogue between child welfare and education professionals about identifying strategies to promote the educational well-being of children with out-of-home placement experiences, which could stimulate the development of policies that support access to formal early childhood experiences for young children with out-of-home placement experiences.

Scholar:
Brittany Birken

Project Title:
Research on the Professional Development of Early Childhood Teachers in Florida

Mentor:
Ann K. Mullis

Project Funding Years:
2003-2004

University Affiliation:
Florida State University

Project Abstract:
An inquiry into professional development and articulation as related to early care and education in Florida, including an examination of formal systems of early childhood education, through replication of research first conducted by Early and Winton (2001) with a national sample. The study furnishes accurate baseline data about the number of programs and the kinds of coursework and practicum experiences provided to students; compares the status regarding certain key variables (e.g., faculty race/ethnicity) of early childhood programs with the overall status of the institutions in which they reside; and describes the challenges faced by faculty members in meeting the professional development needs of the early childhood workforce.

Project Publications and Resources:
<http://researchconnections.org/childcare/resources/12367/related>

Scholar:
Sarah Watamura

Project Title:
Stress Reactivity and Immune Function in Preschoolers

Mentor:
Moncrieff M. Cochran & Steven Robertson

Project Funding Years:
2003-2005

University Affiliation:
Cornell University

Project Abstract:
A study of the potential effects of altered patterning of cortisol--a stress-sensitive hormone detectable in saliva, which when elevated can suppress the immune system--among children who attend child care. The study examines the relationship between cortisol patterning across the day and evening and individual caregiving and temperament, as well as the relationship between cortisol patterning and sIgA--a measure of immune function. The study also discusses the implications for child care policy if cortisol elevations are related to suppressed immune function--including the need to weigh the benefits of child care interventions against potentially compromised health in low-income children who may have additional stressors at home, and suggests further research that could explore ways to minimize the stressors of group care to attenuate cortisol elevations and thus prevent any potential negative effects.

Project Publications and Resources:
<http://researchconnections.org/childcare/resources/12361/related>

Scholar:
D. Elizabeth Rigby

Project Title:
Understanding State Early Childhood Education Policy Choices

Mentor:
Sharon Lynn Kagan & Jeanne Brooks-Gunn

Project Funding Years:
2003-2005

University Affiliation:

Columbia University, Teachers College

Project Abstract:

An empirical assessment of the effects of states' political and economic contexts on a range of state policy choices, using a time-series methodology, which pools data on all 50 states over the last decade. Specific considerations include: the role of political values (e.g., ideology, normative nature of child care); institutional structure (e.g., legislative professionalism, strength of the governor); state-level political actors (e.g., support from the governor, proportion of female legislators); economic resources (e.g., tax effort, economic conditions); and the timing of national political developments (e.g., welfare reform). The study provides insight into the strengths and limitations of federal devolution, which will be directly applicable to federal policy debates over the use of block grant programs (e.g., Child Care Development Fund, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families) to provide needed child care assistance for low-income families working toward economic self-sufficiency.

Project Publications and Resources:

<http://researchconnections.org/childcare/resources/12353/related>