

## Child Care Research Scholars: 2012 Grantees

### Anamarie Auger

**Project Title:** Child Care and Community Services: Characteristics of Service Use and Effects on Parenting and the Home Environment

**Mentor:** Greg J. Duncan

**Project Funding Years:** 2012-2014

**University Affiliation:** University of California, Irvine

**Project Abstract:** The study aims to improve the field's understanding of the features of child care services that are most critical to support children's development and identify family-level processes that might be influenced by child care. Specific research questions are: (1) What characteristics of parents predict usage of supports and services offered through the child care center and the community? (2) What types of services and supports do parents use? (3) Do the services and supports provided or referred to parents from the child care or preschool setting positively affect the home environment and parenting practices? To address these questions three national data sets (Head Start Impact Study, National Evaluation of Early Head Start, and National Institute of Child Health and Human Development Study of Early Child Care and Youth Development) are being analyzed. The results of the study can further inform the field of the parental characteristics related to service take-up and whether the services have a positive effect on the home, in addition to providing practitioners and policymakers with evidence to design early child care and education programs that improve the environments and relationships vital for children's academic and social development.

### Katherine M. Barghaus

**Project Title:** The psychometric quality of the Preschool Child Observation Record: Does it pass the test for use in child care programs?

**Mentor:** John Fantuzzo

**Project Funding Years:** 2012-2013

**University Affiliation:** University of Pennsylvania

**Project Abstract:** The study aims to provide high quality evidence on the second most used assessment tool in Head Start—the Preschool Child Observation Record, 2nd edition (COR-2). To that end, this study has five objectives: (1) determine the dimensionality of the COR-2, (2) determine whether or not the optimal factor structure is the same for boys, girls, Whites, African Americans, Latinos, English language learners, and across time, (3) assess the extent to which the COR-2 is related to other validated measures of development captured at the same time and in the future, and (4) test the assumption that the five skill points of each COR-2 item are in fact in order of skill complexity. The study analyzes a subset of data from the Evidence-Based Program for the Integration of Curricula (EPIC) project, a comprehensive early childhood program specifically designed for preschool children from an underserved, minority urban population. This study uses the COR-2 data collected from a large

representative sample of preschool children from low-income households to examine the validity and quality of the COR-2 to inform child care services using rigorous psychometric methods. The project will interpret the research findings collaboratively with policymakers, child care professionals, and parents to stimulate a discussion about purposeful assessment in early childhood and to determine ways to improve assessment for preschool children from low-income households.

## Rebecca E. Gomez

**Project Title:** Exploring the Potential of State-level Consolidated Governance for Bringing Coherence to Early Childhood Education Systems

**Mentor:** Sharon Lynn Kagan

**Project Funding Years:** 2012-2013

**University Affiliation:** Teachers College, Columbia University

**Project Abstract:** The purpose of this research is to explore the decisions states make about the form and function of governance, the ways governance has impacted the Early Childhood Education (ECE) system, and opportunities and limits of governance for bringing coherence to the complex and fragmented ECE system. Of the states that have consolidated governance for ECE, this study focuses on three: Pennsylvania, Massachusetts, and Delaware. The research is being conducted using a phased approach to data collection and analysis. Each research question, designed to test the hypotheses regarding the importance of governance to improving the field of ECE, is addressed in each phase of data collection. This study can, by exploring the form and function of state-level governance, help bring much-needed definitional clarity to a term and a concept that has been defined as many things over the past decade. It can also articulate the potential benefits accorded to a state ECE system via governance, as well as make explicit the limits of governance on system development.

## Todd Grindal

**Project Title:** Caring for the Caregivers: Estimating the Causal Impact of Allowing Home-based Child Care Workers to Form Labor Unions on the Cost, Type, and Availability of Subsidized Child Care in Illinois

**Mentor:** Hirokazu Yoshikawa

**Project Funding Years:** 2012-2013

**University Affiliation:** Harvard College

**Project Abstract:** This study investigates the impact of granting Illinois home-based child care providers the right to form a labor union on the per-child cost of subsidized child care for infants and toddlers, the type of child care (home-based vs. center-based) used by subsidy-receiving Illinois infants and toddlers, and the percentage of Illinois infants and toddlers who use child care subsidies. These analyses are conducted using a comparative case study method with social, economic, demographic, and housing data from the *American Community Survey* and records of the Child Care and Development Fund on U.S. infants and toddlers whose families received child care subsidies during the period from 2002-2008. Results are expected to reveal whether the unionization of Illinois home-based child care providers increased, via the collective bargaining process, the per-child amount of vouchers paid to providers; and the level of influence, if any, this action affords the unions to influence bureaucratic and regulatory processes encouraging subsidy-receiving families to choose home-based, as opposed to center-based, care for their young children.

## **Kathryn M. Squibb**

**Project Title:** Quality Profiles in Early Childhood: An Example from Virginia's Quality Rating Improvement System

**Mentor:** Andrea Debruin-Parecki

**Project Funding Years:** 2012-2013

**University Affiliation:** Old Dominion University

**Project Abstract:** This study examines data collected on the quality of centers participating in Virginia's Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS) to identify patterns and profiles of quality in these settings using a clustering technique. Identified patterns are compared with the composite quality level assigned by the state to determine associations with existing quality profiles across Virginia's 290 participating centers. It is expected that two profiles represent "high overall" and "low overall" patterns of quality, in addition to profiles that demonstrate differential levels or relative strengths and weakness among settings with regard to quality. If patterns of quality features do not bear significant associations with the star ratings, this information can be used by state leaders to reexamine thresholds for determining between star levels.