Secondary Analyses of Data on Early Care and Education Grants
Project Abstracts

Arizona State University

- PI: Dr. Richard Fabes
- *Exclusionary Discipline in U.S. Public School Early Childhood Education*

Although there are many facets to effectively managing early education classrooms, discipline of young children's behavior is one vital element. Discipline is an adult decision, typically in response to a child's behavior or perceived behavior, that is intended to change that behavior. Positive forms of discipline promote academic and socio-emotional development and improve emotional and behavioral regulation. Other forms of discipline are harsh and can harm students' development and catalyze a cascading set of events that negatively impacts a student's life trajectory. In particular, the use of *exclusionary discipline* — defined as discipline that removes a student from the educational setting via expulsion or suspension — has been found to undermine students' health, well-being, and educational achievement and contributes to the "school to prison pipeline" by initiating a transition from the educational to the criminal justice system. Although considerable attention has been given to the use of exclusionary discipline in K-12 schools, less attention has been paid to its use within preschools. This is a critical oversight because young children thrive in a context of stable and supportive relationships with caring adults who teach, nurture, and care for them. Thus, there is a need for more rigorous research to help us better understand its prevalence and the factors that predict its use.

The purpose of this research is to examine the prevalence, disparities, and factors associated with the use of exclusionary discipline in U.S. public school-affiliated preschool programs. We plan to do this by conducting secondary data analyses using data from the 2015-2016 U.S. Department of Education Civil Rights Data Collection (CRDC) as well as secondary datasets from the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), the U.S. Census, and the Children's Opportunity Index (e.g.,**www.diversitydatakids.org**). Exploratory, single-level, and multilevel statistical models will be used to identify the factors that predict the use of exclusionary discipline at the school-, school district-, census tract-, county-, and state-levels. Outputs from these models will be used to create maps to identify the contexts with high and low rates of exclusionary discipline.

Results have revealed that in 2017-2018, there were about 30,000 pre-K public school programs in the U.S. that reported enrollment. Of these, about 5.3% reported using exclusionary discipline. Although the national rate of use of exclusionary discipline in public school pre-K programs was just over 2 per 1,000 pre-K children enrolled, the rates varied when calculated at the state level -- ranging from or near 0 in many states to a high of 13.07 per 1,000 students enrolled in South Carolina. We also examined how rates of pre-K exclusionary discipline compared to those in K-12 in the same school. Across all U.S. public schools with pre-K programs, the average rate of exclusionary discipline for pre-K children was significantly lower (p < .001; controlling for size of enrollment) than the rate for K-12 students at the same school (about 10% the average rate of those K-12 students). However, for those children in pre-K schools that reported at least 1 case of exclusionary discipline, these pre-K students were likely to be suspended or expelled at rates that were not significantly different from those for their fellow K-12 students in the same school. These findings suggest that the use of exclusionary discipline in pre-K likely is reflective of the school culture towards the use of such practices.

We also found that rates of exclusionary discipline in U.S. pre-K programs varied by race/ethnicity and for boys and girls. For all pre-K schools, the rate for Black children (per 1,000 enrolled) was about 2.7 times higher than those for white children and almost 6 times higher than those for Latinx children. Across all PK-schools, the exclusionary discipline rate for American Indian/Alaska Native was about 1.6 times higher than those for white children, whereas the rate for Asian students was the lowest of any of

the groups of children. Additionally, the rate of use of exclusionary discipline for boys was about 4 times higher than those for girls. Rate of exclusionary discipline for children with disabilities was moderately high relative to the other rates.

A national database of exclusionary discipline in U.S. public schools is being developed. These and future data and results will provide a basis for new information and strategies for researchers, educators, practitioners, and policy makers that can be used to reduce and eliminate the use of exclusionary discipline in the context of early childhood education (and beyond). For more information, see our website at https://pedstudy.org.

Child Care Aware of America

- PI: Dr. Kim Engelman
- *Child Care for Low-Income Families During Nonstandard Hours: Characteristics of Supply and Demand*

A significant portion of young children need child care on evenings, nights, and/or weekends while their parents work nonstandard hour (NSH) schedules. Previous research has suggested that children in need of NSH are at a higher risk of poor social-emotional, cognitive, and language outcomes. To date, little is understood about the cross-section of the supply of NSH child care, family characteristics, and neighborhood characteristics. The overall goal of this project is to gain a better understanding of non-standard hours (NSH) of child care within six states: Illinois, Minnesota, Missouri, Oregon, Washington, and Wisconsin. Our aims are the following: (1) describe and compare the characteristics of programs that do and do not provide NSH child care and, (2) describe and compare the characteristics of families living in neighborhoods that do and do not provide NSH child care. We are merging the CCDC (the Child Care Data Center - CCAoA's data on program-level supply) for supply of NSH data and the Child Opportunity Index 2.0 dataset for neighborhood characteristics.

To address the first aim, we are conducting descriptive analysis to identify programs that provide NSH and specifically which hours of care they provide. Then, we will test whether there are significant differences between programs that provide NSH and programs that do not provide NSH in program characteristics (e.g., type of program, tuition, subsidy acceptance, ideal capacity, accreditation, language accommodations, QRIS participation, and QRIS rating) and neighborhood characteristics (e.g., ethnic/racial composition, poverty level, education, marital status, employment rate, and Child Opportunity Index 2.0). Additionally, we will conduct a series of latent profile analyses to derive subgroups (profiles) based on hours of operation of child care providers and use a series of structural equation models to examine whether there are program and/or neighborhood characteristic differences among the profiles. Similar to CCAoA's Mapping the Gap™ work, we will use ArcGIS to create a series of maps so that audiences can visualize the relationships between NSH child care supply and overlay family/neighborhood characteristics at the census tract level.

This will be the first project that will support the field's understanding of the supply of NSH, characteristics of programs offering NSH, and the neighborhoods they are in at the census tract level. This more microscopic unit of analysis will support local stakeholders in using the findings and visual aids to develop innovative solutions that address supply gaps among families and reduce barriers to accessing high-quality, developmentally productive child care for children who may need it most.

A key component of a successful research project is to encourage active communication, networking, and collaboration among researchers and policymakers. We envision that outcomes and visual artifacts from this project will serve as assets that early care and education stakeholders, which include researchers, practitioners, and policymakers at state and federal levels, may use in their work to affect data-informed practice and policy advancements.

Child Trends, Incorporated

- PI: Dr. Weilin Li
- *Secondary Analysis of Web-Scraped Data to Examine Effects of the Changing Child Care Market on Parents' Access to Child Care*

Between 2005 and 2017, while the number of licensed child care centers increased by two percent, the number of licensed home-based child care (HBCC) providers dropped by 44 percent. This drop is concerning because HBCC providers often offer settings with characteristics that meet parents' specific needs. As shown by a recent report from the National Center on Early Childhood Quality Assurance (NCECQA; 2019), HBCC providers fill a critical gap in the early care and education (ECE) system for families with lower incomes, parents working nontraditional hours, infants and toddlers, families who speak languages other than English, and children with disabilities.

This study aims to help policymakers understand the implications of the HBCC decline, and hence better understand how to support and regulate the child care market to reduce barriers to ECE access, particularly for families and children most in need of services. Specifically, since families are the direct and ultimate consumers of early care and education, this study aims to examine how families' perceptions of ECE access changed as the number of HBCCs sharply declined. OPRE's framework defines ECE access as a multidimensional construct that involves reasonable effort to locate and enroll a child in an ECE arrangement that is affordable, supports the child's development, and meets parents' needs. Therefore, this study aims to examine how families perceived any of those four dimensions differently in the wake of the decline. The study team has analyzed the Census data to obtain state-level change in HBCC providers. They have also utilized data from Google, Yelp, and Care.com to extract number of reviews and posts as well as ratings and sentiments in those reviews and posts to estimate parents' perception of ECE access. The study team have conducted a residualized change model to estimate how parents' perception of ECE access changed as HBCC declined.

Child Trends, Incorporated
- PI: Dr. Doré LaForett
- *What Can Head Start Do to Interrupt Associations between Poverty and Child and Family Outcomes? A Study of Head Start's Family Support Services and Practices.*

The overall objective of this project was to examine the role that Head Start's family support services and practices play in improving child and family outcomes, which have been largely unexplored to date. Using data from the Family and Child Experiences Survey 2014 (FACES 2014), the research team hypothesized that increased efforts to connect families with support services would result in improvements in parent wellbeing and child school readiness over the Head Start year. Drawing from Head Start's roots in bioecological theory (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006) that underscore its dual-generation approach, the research questions, hypotheses, and analytic plan were also theoretically grounded in the Family Stress Model (FSM; Conger et al., 1994) identifying family processes as mediating the association between economic factors and child outcomes.

The study examined family support services and practices as critical factors that could play a role in the resources families have to cope with the stressors associated with living in poverty. The research team asserted that the quantity, range, and facilitation of Head Start's family support services (FSS) that aimed to relieve financial strain and promote family functioning would be associated with improved parent wellbeing (i.e., self-reported depressive symptoms), and improvements in four of the school readiness outcomes identified in the Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework (HS ELOF; Office of Head Start [OHS], 2015): approaches to learning (e.g., attention, persistence), social and emotional development (e.g., cooperative behaviors in the classroom), language and literacy (e.g., early literacy), and cognition (e.g., early math). The research team also examined whether the relationship, empowerment, and collaboration (REC) practices (e.g., family-specific knowledge, collaboration, responsiveness, communication, family-focused concerns, and respect) of Head Start's Family Service Workers (FSW) played a role in the association between FSS and child and family outcomes. The team conducted a rigorous set of analyses to examine these questions using FACES 2014 data obtained from parents about Head Start FSS and FSWs' REC practices, direct child assessment and teacher report of school readiness skills, and parent report of their own wellbeing, financial strain, and family background. Study results showed that family receipt of income support services was directly associated with reduced parent depression symptoms and improved children's approaches to learning. Other support services (e.g., counseling service) were associated with improved child social skills. In addition, parents' perceptions of FSWs' REC practices were associated with families' greater receipt of health and other support services as well as with reduced parental depression.

These results have direct implications for current initiatives Head Start is implementing to support families' efforts to build economic mobility, including supporting staff such as FSWs to be informed about income supports such as those available through the American Rescue Plan and to help families access these supports. Findings from this study suggest that continuing and expanding these efforts, as well as continuing to connect families with other support services, has the potential to directly benefit children and families by improving children's approaches to learning and social skills, and by reducing parents' psychological distress.

Cornell University
- PI: Dr. John Sipple
- *(In)equities in Early Care and Education Access: Interactions among Policies, Settings, and Community Contexts, 2007-2021*

Not all families have access to the high-quality early care and education arrangements they need to support young children's development and working parents' participation in the labor force. A large contributor to this problem is the uneven supply of child care throughout the United States, especially for infants and toddlers and families in rural communities (Jessen-Howard et al.,2018; Malik et al., 2018). To address the need for access to high quality early care and education, public policies and funding have been created including child care subsidies and prekindergarten. Child care subsidies in particular are among the federal government's largest investments in early care and education, while state funds for prekindergarten have grown in recent years.

Although these policies have roots at the federal and state level, the ways in which they are implemented in individual communities can vary greatly. Most research tends to focus on examining one set of policies (e.g., subsidies or prekindergarten expansion), without taking into account the complex child care landscape where policies are implemented and may interact in (unintended) ways that impact families' experiences of child care choice. More work is needed to better understand how policy interactions and local level variability relate to desired outcomes such as equal access to high quality early care and education programs for all families.

Our research will analyze the equity implications of access to infant and toddler child care in relation to multiple early care and education policies, and across various contexts (including community wealth, geography [e.g., rural, urban]) over time.

The specific objectives for this work are as follows:
1. Explore how local supply of infant and toddler child care relates to multiple, interacting factors including early education policy variation (prekindergarten implementation and subsidy administration), community characteristics (rural/urban), and large-scale economic fluctuations; and
2. Better understand how local child care capacity relates to elementary academic outcomes for regular- and special-education, and poor and non-poor children over time.

We investigate these objectives with 15 years of data from four organizations including the NYS Education Department, the NYS Office of Children and Family Services, the National Center for Education Statistics, and the U.S. Census Bureau. The time frame of data includes significant economic challenges, including a national recession and the COVID-19 pandemic, meaning that these large-scale events can be taken into account. Through a novel linking of these data, this research builds on previous research by exploring these patterns in relation to multiple early care and education policies, how these patterns vary for different segments of the early care and education system (especially family child care), and for rural communities. The findings will inform "community aware" early education policy development.

Education Development Center, Inc.
- PI: Dr. Clare Waterman
- *Child Care Coverage and Parents' Work Schedule Alignment: How Do Parents Address Gaps?*

In this secondary analysis of the 2012 and 2019 National Survey of Early Care and Education (NSECE) data, we plan to conduct rigorous research that will address key questions of interest to federal and state Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) leaders and child care decision makers. We will provide analyses to address questions about variations in parents' access to child care that meets the needs of their work schedules, the choices parents make about how to address gaps between child care coverage and work schedules, and the factors that influence the presence of coverage gaps and the ways parents choose to address them.

Our study will focus on the child care coverage needs of low-income working parents, who face a greater number of challenges to accessing child care that supports their workforce participation, including unpredictable work schedules, nontraditional hours of employment, and availability of care. In particular, we will examine the association between a parent's receipt of child care subsidy and the existence of coverage gaps as well as the choices parents make about addressing such gaps. Given that the 2014 reauthorization of the Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG) Act included a number of provisions aimed at increasing access to care and helping parents make informed choices about child care, we will analyze whether trends related to coverage gaps and choices about how to address such gaps changed between 2012 and 2019.

Importantly, our analyses will address the full range of ages served by CCDF and included in the NSECE data, including school-age children (kindergarten through age 12), who are often omitted from studies examining child care access and working parents' needs. In so doing, our study will address a key gap in existing knowledge; namely, how families of children ages *birth through 12* are able to access child care that aligns with their work needs, and the factors that influence the choices they make about addressing coverage gaps. Findings from this study can help inform CCDF administrators' and other child care decision makers' knowledge about barriers to access and promote the development of policies that can reduce such barriers. Findings will also help address a gap in the literature related to the child care needs of the school-age population.

Georgia State University Research Foundation, Inc.
- PI: Dr. Ann DiGirolamo
- *Understanding Factors that Influence Referral-Making and Referral Uptake with Early Head Start*

The Early Head Start (EHS) program is now in its 25th year of implementation as a national early care and education (ECE) initiative under the leadership of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families (ACF). Over the course of more than two decades, EHS has served millions of low-income children and their families and supported high quality ECE within extraordinarily diverse communities across the country. This study will fill a critical gap in the literature related to referral activities of EHS programs.

The 2018 Baby FACES presents a renewed chance to reveal the inner workings of EHS programs, gain insights into the experiences of families and staff, and develop policy, program and funding responses to address best practices and areas of need. The research team at Georgia Health Policy Center (GHPC) has conducted secondary data analysis of the Baby FACES 2018 data set in order to support ACF in furthering its research and programmatic goals and inform the broader field of early care and education (ECE). The study focuses on referral-making processes and referral connections among children and families who are at-risk within EHS programs.

This study seeks to understand which EHS families are being referred to services based on level and type of risk, particularly around family risk events (e.g., absent parent, parent with substance use issue). This study examines the prevalence of family risk events and whether those families experiencing these events are referred to and connect with services differently than those families not reporting adverse events. The study finds that those families experiencing risk events are slightly *less* likely to be referred for behavioral health services, though they were more likely to receive referrals to entitlement programs.

Additionally, the study found variables that predicted referral to behavioral health services. There was a large effect shown for the type of EHS program, with families receiving in-home services much more likely to be referred for behavioral health services. Several factors moderated the link between family risk events and behavioral health services, including caregiver depression, the supportiveness of the parent/caregiver-EHS staff relationship, and family conflict predicting a stronger link between risk events and referrals. There were no moderator findings for referrals to entitlement programs. Higher levels of caregiver depression did predict lower uptake of entitlement services.

The findings have several implications. Contrary to expectations, those who had family risk events were less likely to receive referrals to behavioral health services and there appears to be a large effect for the type of program on the frequency of referrals. EHS workers may be missing identifying some children and families who may benefit from behavioral health services to address potential trauma reactions. Further research concerning the reasons for these effects, and whether they represent unmet needs among families served by EHS is warranted.

Iowa State University
- PI: Dr. Ji Young Choi
- *Head Start Children's Multiple Care Experiences: Patterns, Partnerships, and Effects on School Performance*

Care multiplicity, defined here as more than one concurrent early childhood education (ECE) experience, is common among children attending Head Start (HS). Yet, we know little about who experiences it nor what effects such experiences have for children's school performance. Understanding HS children's utilization of other publicly-funded center-based ECE programs has particular policy relevance given the capacity of such information to inform systematic collaboration and coordination to improve outcomes.

For over three decades Iowa has invested in coordinated early childhood services, including universal state-funded preschool, a comprehensive two-generation program for low-income families, and an integrated data system (IDS) designed to use administrative data in a systematic approach for social problem solving and continuous quality improvement through data-driven decision-making. This IDS was recently used for a comprehensive statewide needs assessment conducted with funding from a Preschool Development Grant B-5 (PDG) to document unduplicated counts of children across multiple ECE programs with administrative data from public health, education, and child welfare to study gaps in ECE access.

Capitalizing on these investments and the momentum generated by Iowa's PDG, this study will integrate HS enrollment and program partnership data into the representative cohort study of over 27,000 Iowa kindergartners used for PDG that already includes administrative datasets covering birth through grade 1. Using these data, this study will provide the following information for Iowa's children who attended HS: (1) patterns of care multiplicity; (2) child and family characteristics relating to care multiplicity experiences; (3) effects of care multiplicity on children's school performance (risk vs. on-target status) at kindergarten and first grade (i.e., literacy, math, attendance, and suspension history); and (4) the role of program partnership between HS and co-serving ECE programs on school performance.

Our study sample (expected N = 2,800) will represent children who were born in Iowa, attended HS the year prior to kindergarten and attended kindergarten in Iowa in 2017-2018 (SY 2018). Analytic approaches include basic descriptive statistics as well as logistic regression and propensity score analysis to address selection bias in ECE programs.

Understanding the nature and extent of care multiplicity among HS enrollees will inform strategic approaches to improve quality programming for low-income children by highlighting patterns of care that best relate to school readiness outcomes in kindergarten. Specifically, findings from this research could be used to inform ACF priorities topics including (a) building the supply of high-quality care and education, and (b) improving coordination and collaboration across early childhood and other social service programs. Our study is also situated within a strong partnership of state stakeholders across program types, with experience in cross-systems communication and collaboration among ECE program leaders, researchers, and policymakers. Such networking capacity means that our findings have strong likelihood of influencing direct changes in state programs in the immediate and long-term future.

Johns Hopkins University
- PI: Dr. Lieny Jeon
- *Reducing Young Children's Chronic Absenteeism: How to Maximize Collaboration across Early Childhood Programs*

Children's regular attendance in early childhood programs is critical, in particular for those living in poverty, who are less likely to have resources for learning at home. Many cities in the U.S. devote considerable financial and human resources to early childhood programs to improve disadvantaged children's school readiness. However, there is a lack of research investigating how barriers to access, coordination across programs, and effectiveness of collaboration associate with children's long-term chronic absenteeism. This is essential, as chronic absenteeism is associated with long- and short-term detriments in and out of school, and is more common among disadvantaged children, who stand to gain the most from early childhood program attendance.

To address this gap, the project analyzes secondary data from the Baltimore City's Early Childhood Data Collaborative (ECDC), which houses multiple entities' early childhood longitudinal data. The ECDC comprises data from the Baltimore City Health Department (including vital records and infant and toddler program participation), Early Head Start, Head Start, and Baltimore City Public Schools (including attendance, public prekindergarten enrollment, and the prenatal period to age five wraparound service participation). By integrating secondary datasets from the ECDC entities, the goals of this project are (a) to understand children's patterns of usage in various early childhood service programs from the prenatal period to age five, and (b) to explore how those experiences are related to children's chronic absenteeism from early childhood through 6th grade. The ECDC partners, including Head Start, are committed to addressing early chronic absenteeism because they see it as a critical strategy to reduce the achievement gap between low-income and racially minoritized learners and their peers. Using a cohort of children from birth (born between 2007-2008) through 5th grade (*n* = 7,447), we found that:

- Publicly funded early childhood services and programming successfully reach families and children who are most at need. For example, families living in concentrated poverty areas participated in these services most often.
- About 70% of children in the cohort attended Head Start or public PreK programs. There were 14% of children who attended both Head Start and public PreK programs.
- After accounting for demographics, children's enrollment in Head Start and/or PreK was related to a decrease in their later school absenteeism from kindergarten to fifth grade. The effects of Head Start and/or PreK enrollment on school absenteeism were consistent over time from kindergarten to fifth grade, indicating that the effects did not fade out in later years.

To understand how early childhood programs better support children's attendance in the earlier years, we will further investigate potential factors that predict higher rates of chronic absenteeism among Head Start participants. The findings will be disseminated in multiple formats to help researchers, practitioners and policymakers understand how to maximize collaboration across early childhood programs and reduce chronic absenteeism in the short and long term.

University of Arizona

- PI: Dr. Melissa Barnett
- *Typologies of Family Partnerships in Head Start: Links to Children's School Readiness*

Children from economically disadvantaged families are at risk for starting school behind their more affluent peers. Early Care and Education (ECE) settings, especially Head Start, provide support and resources that contribute to positive developmental outcomes for many preschool age children. The positive impacts of Head Start programs on young children's development may be strengthened when programs engage with families. Family engagement, including collaborative family-school partnerships, is increasingly the focus of ECE policy, professional development, and quality improvement systems. However, teacher, center, and child and family characteristics linked to variability in the quality of these partnerships, and how family-school partnership quality is associated with children's acquisition of school readiness skills, remains largely unexamined.

We examine data from the Head Start Family and Child Experiences Survey (FACES) 2014-2015 to focus on the quality of partnerships between teachers and families, as a key potential resource to improve the school readiness of children enrolled in Head Start. Our original study goal included examining typologies, or profiles, of family partnership quality, as reported by parents and teachers. However, distinct profiles failed to emerge, pointing to the need for more psychometric work on this new measure of family-school partnerships. We then conducted factor-analyses to understand the structure of parent reports of partnership quality and used these results to address revisions to our original project goals to (a) examine center, teacher, and child and family characteristics associated with family partnership quality dimensions; and (b) identify the extent to which family partnership quality is linked to academic school readiness skills. Findings indicate variability in family-school partnership relations that is associated with family and center characteristics, but there was little evidence that the quality of these relationships was directly associated with children's academic school readiness skills.

This project has the potential to identify critical levers for future policy and program development aimed at implementing the Head Start Parent Family and Community Engagement Framework (PFCE) to promote positive goal-oriented family engagement, and ultimately to facilitate children's school readiness. To help meet this goal, this project includes a number of specific dissemination activities aimed at practitioners, policy makers and researchers.

University of Connecticut

- PI: Dr. Caitlin Lombardi
- *Early Experiences of Ecological Risk and Children's Development: Understanding the Moderating Role of Early Head Start on Children and Families*

A large body of research has documented the developmental risks associated with economic disadvantage during early childhood. Growing evidence from neuroscience, psychology, and economics suggests that these income-based gaps in children's development emerge by age 3 (Heckman & Masterov, 2007; Johnson et al., 2016). The Early Head Start (EHS) program was designed to support disadvantaged families in an effort to reduce these gaps. Understanding how the EHS program can support children and families living with different types of ecological risks offers the opportunity to inform the targeting and delivery of services to best support children and families.

Led by Dr. Caitlin Lombardi at the University of Connecticut and Dr. Kyle DeMeo Cook at St. John's University, the goal of this project is to strengthen our understanding of the ecological risks facing children from low-income families, and the implications of EHS to support these families. We will accomplish this goal by addressing three aims. First, utilizing a person-centered approach, we will identify patterns of family ecological risks among the EHS population when children were 1 year old and examine how child characteristics and EHS experiences (type, dosage, and quality) are differentially associated with the identified risk profiles. For this question, we are particularly interested in how EHS experiences vary among children experiencing different types of family ecological risks. Second, we will examine how the ecological risk profiles are associated with children's development and parenting quality at age 3. This longitudinal view will provide an understanding of how the ecological risk profiles are differentially associated with aspects of child and parent outcomes. Third, we will consider how EHS experiences from ages 1 to 3 moderate associations between the ecological risk profiles and children's development and parenting quality. Here, our goal is to understand how EHS supports children and families in the context of different family ecological risks.

The research will use data from the EHS Family and Child Experiences study (Baby FACES; Vogel & Boller, 2009-2012), a longitudinal dataset providing information on EHS children, families, EHS professionals (teachers and/or home visitors), and programs. Baby FACES is especially strong for understanding children's earliest developmental contexts and provides multifaceted, longitudinal data on their home and EHS contexts consisting of direct observations of children's development and parenting quality, observational assessments of EHS quality using reliable and well-validated measures, and rich descriptive reports of children's home environments. Importantly, Baby FACES focuses exclusively on low-income families with young children, a population that is of critical interest for developmental science and public policy. This interdisciplinary study will seek to contribute to our understanding of children's development and parenting within low-income families while illuminating the specific roles that EHS may play in best supporting children and their families. Findings will inform the design and targeting of EHS services and help to inform other programs and policies aimed at supporting low-income children's development and the capacities of their parents.

University of Missouri
- PI: Dr. Irma Arteaga
- *Policy Influences on Early Care and Education*

In this study, we compare early care and education arrangements from 2012 to 2019 using two waves of the National Survey of Early Care and Education (NSECE). While awareness of the importance of early education has been growing over the last two decades, concerns about affordability, quality, and access, especially for children from economically-disadvantaged families and English language learners, continue to challenge policy makers at the federal, state, and local levels. We take advantage of the release of the 2019 NSECE data to examine the consequences of a policy change that has occurred between 2012 to 2019.

Specifically, we focus on the reauthorization of the Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) in 2014. CCDF provides federal money to states and territories to subsidize the cost of child care for low-income families. The new law made significant changes to eligibility requirements and redetermination criteria for child care subsidies, making it likely that more families might be eligible and participate. Three aspects of the new law will be examined: decrease in monthly copayments, longer recertification periods, and fewer barriers for Hispanic and non-native English speakers. Because some states were already implementing some of these policies, the new law creates state variation in policy implementation between 2012 and 2019. Our work extends recent descriptive and correlational literature on the 2014 CCDF law by leveraging the longitudinal nature of the data and using quasi-experimental techniques. The main questions to be answered are (1) What effects these changes have made to the characteristics of children enrolled in various early care and education settings and (2) Is there evidence of differential impact among children from the lowest-income families or those speaking a language different than English?

To answer our research questions, we first document and compare the characteristics of young children attending various early care and education settings for both the 2012 and 2019 cohorts, and document trends in primary care arrangement, comparing 2012 with 2019 data, for children 0-11 months, 12-35 months, and 36-59 months of age for the overall sample, for Hispanic households, for households who speak any Spanish at home, and for households who speak a language different than English at home, as well as for low-income families. We then use regression analyses including multinomial probit equations, and difference-in-difference analyses to better understand the factors predicting the family's choice of main care setting. Investigations allow us to test whether the policy change had effects on the decision to primarily use parental-based, relative-based, home-based/non-relative, or center-based early care setting. We also look at whether these policies are associated with families' use of any center-based care. Answers to these questions will assist the Administration for Children and Families in learning more about changes in the early care environment over time especially for economically-disadvantaged and English learning children.

University of Washington

- PI: Dr. Holly S. Schindler
- *A Portrait of Fathers in Early Head Start: Two Decades Later*

In 1997, the Early Head Start (EHS) Father Study took place in an effort to better understand the characteristics of social and biological fathers in EHS communities, fathers' roles in families and child development, and the ways fathers participated in EHS services (Boller et al., 2006). Findings from that historic study led to notable shifts in programmatic and policy efforts aimed at including fathers in early care and education. In the two decades since the original evaluation, EHS has been a leader in working to make programs more father friendly, and the Administration for Children and Families has supported several father-focused initiatives (e.g., ACF, 2018; Burwick, et al., 2004; Fatherhood Research and Practice Network, 2013). There has also been a growing effort to increase father engagement in a wide range of home visiting programs (Bellamy et al., 2020; Guterman et al., 2018; Schindler et al., 2017). In spite of these efforts, challenges engaging fathers in early care and education programs remain, and up-to-date data about EHS fathers is critically needed. This study will extend previous research by examining the characteristics and experiences of present-day fathers in EHS using nationally representative data from the EHS Family and Child Experiences Survey 2018 (Baby FACES 2018). As a first step, this project will use descriptive analyses to produce a comprehensive portrait of fathers in EHS families. Second, lessons from this study will reveal the program experiences of fathers in EHS. The third set of analyses will investigate predictors of fathers' participation in EHS home-based programs using multilevel logistic regression. Findings from this study will provide insights into how the early care and education community could further reduce barriers to access for fathers, support fathers' unique strengths, and design effective strategies for meeting the needs of fathers and their families.

Urban Institute

- PI: Dr. Erica Greenberg
- *Gateway to a Qualified Workforce: The Role of Minimum Preservice Qualifications Requirements in Early Care and Education*

This project aims to inform efforts to recruit a qualified early care and education (ECE) workforce with new evidence on the most widely used tools available: minimum preservice qualifications requirements. Set by state child care regulations, the Head Start Act of 2007, and prekindergarten policies nationwide, these requirements cover all sectors of early care and education and predate Quality Rating and Improvement Systems (QRIS), large-scale coaching initiatives, and other contemporary quality investments. Literature has documented substantial variation in requirements across states and sectors. But little is known about how much the *relative* stringency of requirements—within states, among ECE sectors and K–12 education, and over time—shapes the ECE workforce.

This study will link data from the 2012 and 2019 waves of the National Survey of Early Care and Education with an innovative 50-state qualifications database constructed for this study. The research team will use these sources to answer the following questions: (1) How much do minimum ECE preservice qualifications requirements vary? (2) How do minimum preservice qualifications requirements in child care relate to those in state prekindergarten and K–12 education? (3) How do minimum preservice qualifications requirements relate to the training and experience, diversity, motivation, and compensation of the ECE workforce?

Analyses for the first two questions will focus on rich quantitative description, including summary and distributional statistics, while the third research question calls for more advanced methods, including multivariate regression and quasi-experimental modeling to provide causal evidence on how minimum preservice qualifications requirements shape the ECE workforce. Main findings will be nationally representative. Analyses will also be replicated to focus on educators in programs funded by the Child Care and Development Fund, Head Start, and Early Head Start, given the importance of these programs for vulnerable children and families and concerns that differences in entry requirements across sectors leave these programs with the least qualified workforce.

Answers to these research questions are relevant to federal and state policymakers and administrators, including those considering the costs and benefits of changes to state licensing regulations and those involved in future reauthorization of the Head Start Act. The study will be pre-registered and will result in a comprehensive report of findings, a user-friendly policy brief, and broad dissemination through a blog post and conference presentations. With extensive expertise in the ECE workforce, diverse populations of children and families, and research dissemination, the study team is well qualified to put findings into the hands of those who need them while contributing to the broader network of grantees conducting secondary analyses of data on early care and education.

Urban Institute
- PI: Dr. Heather Sandstrom
- *More Than Babysitters: An In-Depth Look at the Characteristics, Work Experiences, and Retention of Infant-Toddler Teachers in the US*

Most children under age 3 with working mothers are in some form of non-parental care. Although the majority are in home-based care settings, in recent years, more families have turned to center-based care for their infants and toddlers. Although young children spend a significant amount of time in non-parental care, and during a critical period in their development, past studies show infant-toddler care is of low-to-moderate quality and difficult to access in many communities. The supply of high-quality care cannot keep up with demand. At the heart of the issue of quality care is the early childhood workforce. A healthy and stable workforce is a critical component of high-quality early care and education. Yet studies examining the well-being of child care workers show high levels of economic insecurity, depression, anxiety, and stress. Many also suffer from poor physical health because of constant exposure to infectious diseases, environmental hazards, and musculoskeletal injury. High staff turnover is common, often attributed to low pay and poor benefits. The concern is that teachers' own well-being can affect the quality of their interactions with children and children's engagement in learning.

We use restricted-use data from the 2019 National Survey of Early Care and Education (NSECE) to closely examine the characteristics, qualifications, and job experiences of this understudied population: infant and toddler teachers in child care centers. The NSECE included a nationally representative sample of child care centers and surveyed center-based classroom staff. We will perform descriptive analyses to examine the qualifications and diversity of infant-toddler teachers in 2019 compared with 2012. During this period, states rolled out extensive efforts to improve the supply and quality of infant-toddler care under CCDBG reauthorization, as well as other efforts to professionalize the broader early childhood workforce. Multivariate analyses aim to predict factors associated with infant-toddler teachers' health, mental health, and turnover intentions. Predictors include teacher qualifications and training, aspects of job quality (e.g., work environment, professional development supports, and job stressors), center characteristics (e.g., funding sources, accreditation, participation in a quality rating and improvement system), and community characteristics (e.g., poverty density, female employment rate). We also examine characteristics of centers with high staff retention (i.e., no turnover) and characteristics of centers with high turnover to identify possible policy levers.

The findings will provide important information to federal policymakers, state administrators, and local service providers as they seek to recruit and retain a qualified infant-toddler workforce.
As state child care administrators work to address the concern about infant-toddler care supply and quality to comply with new federal regulations, we will disseminate our research in user-friendly products to provide them with critical evidence to inform their decision-making.

Urban Institute
- PI: Dr. Diane Schilder; Project Manager/Lead Analyst: Cary Lou
- *Potential Demand for Nontraditional Work Hours Secondary Analysis Research*

Key goals of the Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG) Act of 2014 are "to increase the number and percentage of low-income children in high-quality child care settings" and "to promote parental choice to empower working parents to make their own decisions regarding the child care services that best suits their family's needs" (Sec. 658A.b.1). Despite this, a 2018 study led by Urban Institute showed that in the District of Columbia (DC) a large portion of families need nontraditional hour (NTH) child care but lacked access to it. With the current crisis resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic, the need for research on the potential demand from families such as health care workers with NTH work is even more urgent. Yet, limited research had been available beyond the DC study on the gaps between supply of and demand for NTH care. Moreover, little was known about the preferences and uses of families with NTH care needs. Our study is designed to address these gaps and to provide evidence about the match between families' preferences, the types of care they use, and how preferences and access are affected by family and child characteristics.

Our study is producing policy-relevant information for the Office of Child Care and state child care administrators that describes the potential demand for NTH care in all 50 states and DC as well as planned state policies to increase the supply of NTH care. We are also examining the match between parents' preferences and use of care during specific NTH time periods. We are designing our products to produce policy-relevant findings to inform state child care administrators about the potential needs of families to inform policy decisions related to increasing access to NTH care.

The Urban Institute study team has produced state snapshots describing the potential demand for NTH care and planned policies to increase the supply of NTH care in all 50 states and DC. To develop the snapshots, the study team analyzed data from the American Community Survey (ACS), the Survey of Income and Program Participation (SIPP), and each state's Child Care and Development Fund Plans from 2019-2021. We also produced an accompanying brief comparing potential demand for NTH child care and planned policies across states as well as a technical appendix.

We found substantial variability in potential demand for and policies related to NTH care across states. Across the US, 36 percent of children under age 6 in working families had parents who worked NTH schedules. Yet the range varied substantially by state. Mississippi had the highest share of young children in working families that have NTH-working parents (47 percent), and North Dakota had the lowest share (24 percent). Although parents of all types and income levels worked NTH schedules, these schedules were much more common among families who have faced structural barriers to employment, education, and good wages. States also varied in their planned actions to increase access to NTH care. The study team is currently analyzing the 2019 National Survey of Early Care and Education (NSECE) to explore the match between parents' preferences for NTH care and the types of care parents use as part of a research brief. We are examining differences in parents' preferences and uses of child care for families with NTH schedules versus traditional hour schedules and examining differences based on different NTH time periods, child and family characteristics, and different types of preferred and used child care. Our descriptive analysis shows variation in the types of care parents are accessing and using by time period. We plan to perform regression analysis exploring the factors that predict different types of child care that are used and preferred.

Utah State University

- PI: Dr. Lisa Boyce
- *Investigating Child Learning: Understanding Dual-language Environments (INCLUDE)*

Bilingualism has practical benefits in an increasingly globalized world, as well as cognitive benefits essential for academic achievement. Children who are Dual Language Learners (DLLs) in the Head Start program may develop English and their home language in distinctly different patterns. Think, for example, of a DLL student who excels at communicating in both English and Spanish compared to a child with strong Spanish and emerging English skills. While Head Start program policy clearly requires classrooms to support DLL students, a "one-size-fits-all" approach to support DLL students will not meet the needs of this diverse group.

Research indicates there are meaningful differences in school readiness indicators between groups of children who have different patterns of Spanish-English dual language development. Findings indicate that children who have the most even proficiency between languages reap the most benefits. While this reiterates the importance of maintaining home languages while supporting English growth, it is unclear how early care environments influence the joint development of English and Spanish.

Individually testing environmental impacts on each language separately may inadvertently miss critical information about the "whole" DLL student. The approach in this project is innovative as it considers the impacts of early care environments on both English and Spanish development simultaneous rather than inspecting each language individually. Understanding the complex interplay between home and classroom influences and the simultaneous development of two languages will provide opportunities for programs and families to work together to individualize services by *supporting strengths and needs* for this unique population.

The current project will use an existing data set that is nationally representative of Head Start programs to achieve the following objectives:

> 1. Identify aspects of home and Head Start environments that impact the simultaneous development of English and Spanish language and later impacts on behavioral outcomes.
> 2. Engage in active conversation with policy makers and practitioners at a local Head Start partner site, to develop and disseminate person-centered approaches that engage, support, and meet the unique needs of DLL students.

Wellesley College
- PI: Dr. Nancy L. Marshall
- *Parental Work Schedules, CCDF Policies & Child Care Arrangements in Low-Income Families*

CCDF's primary goal is to support the economic security of low-income families and the health, safety and positive development of young children by providing resources that help eligible low-income families to access quality child care. When parents in these families are employed, they are more likely to be in low-wage jobs characterized by nonstandard schedules and/or unpredictable schedules. Formal child care programs most often offer care during standard hours and rely on predictable schedules to maintain ratios and manage costs. This creates a potential mismatch with the parental work schedules of many low-income families seeking to access quality child care, which can be a barrier to their employment and to their children's health, safety and positive development. CCDF policies can potentially ameliorate these challenges, by including relatives as eligible providers, including job search as a qualifying activity, continuing subsidies after a job loss and providing more notice for adverse changes to a subsidy, by not requiring minimum work hours for eligibility, and by subsidizing child care to cover travel to/from work and to allow overnight workers to rest during the day.

This project uses data from the NSECE 2019 and the CCDF Policies Database to provide updated information on the extent of the challenges posed by parental work schedules, the implications of parental work schedules for low-income families' ability to access quality child care and the impact of parental decisions around type of child care and subsidy use on child-care-related work disruptions and child care stability. In addition, combining the NSECE 2019 and the CCDF Policies Database allows us to examine the potential role of state variations in CCDF policies and practices after the 2014 Reauthorization in ameliorating the barriers faced by low-income families. The results of this research can inform state-level policies and practices and contribute to our knowledge base with respect to low-income working families in need of child care for their children under the age of 6.

University of Delaware

- PI: Dr. Martha J. Buell
- *Preventing Expulsion and Suspension through Policy Alignment and Cohesion (PEASPAC): Linkages between Federal Guidance, State CCDF Plans, State Child Care Licensing, QRIS, and State Pre-K Policies*

The Preventing Expulsion And Suspension through Policy Alignment and Cohesion (PEASPAC): Linkages between Federal Guidance, State CCDF plans, State Child Care Licensing, State QRIS, and State Pre-K Policies project provides an analysis of vertical policy alignment and horizontal policy cohesion between federal, state, and program specific regulations, standards and policies addressing exclusionary discipline. Specifically, the project is assessing 1) the vertical alignment of state CCDF plans with the CCDF 2019-2021 state funding template and the federal guidance on key policy components for preventing exclusion through suspension and expulsion, and the vertical alignment of the state CCDF plan with state child care licensing regulations, state Quality Rating and Improvement Systems (QRIS) standards, and state Pre-K policies; and 2) the horizontal cohesion across the state-level units.

Nationally, studies have demonstrated that suspension and expulsion are approaches to discipline that are overly applied to boys, children of color and children with disabilities, with devastating consequences. Additionally, a joint statement from the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) and the Department of Education (DoE) outlined 10 policy strategies, five at the state level and five at the Early Care and Education (ECE) program level that can help eliminate or prevent expulsion and suspension. Thus, in 2016, the CCDBG template for states' funding plans included the addition of section 2.5.6. "Describe the Lead Agency's policies to prevent the suspension and expulsion of children from birth to age 5 in child care and other early childhood programs receiving CCDF funds (98.16(ee)1), including how those policies are shared with families, providers, and the general public." This addition was the first time states were asked to address their policies preventing "suspension" in ECE programs, and it added a second mention of plans to prevent expulsion in the CCDF state planning template. Previously only section 7.3.1 subsection a, second exemplar "Describe how the state/territory funds the training and professional development of the child care workforce subsection a) Check and describe which content is included in training and professional development activities and describe who or how an entity is funded to address this topic. Implementing behavior management strategies, including positive behavior interventions and support models that promote positive social-emotional development and early childhood mental health and that reduce challenging behaviors, including a reduction in expulsions of preschool-age children from birth to age five for such behaviors (See also section 2.5.)" required states to address the issue of expulsion.

Despite the CCDF state funding plan template, how states addressed the new section of their state plans has proved to vary widely. Furthermore, while the state plans provide guidance for spending federal funds, how these plans will be actualized depends on the regulations, standards, and policies in place in up to three different state-level policy units - child care licensing, QRIS, and state Pre-K - creating a complex policy context where policy alignment and cohesion will be key to meeting the federal goal of reduced suspension and expulsion.

Therefore, the intent of this secondary data analysis is threefold:

> 1. Analyze state CCDF plans according to the elements of the CCDF funding template

language and the Joint Statement from HHS/DoE regarding 10 key policy components (five at the state and five at the ECE program level) that support eliminating suspension and expulsion for evidence of programming that prevents exclusion. In addition, since sections 2.4.6 and 7.31 section a) second option are not the only places in the CCDF state funding plan template where states can demonstrate their plans to use federal funds to offer programming, resources and supports in an effort to prevent suspension and expulsion, the analysis is expanding to examine each state's entire CCDF plan for evidence of suspension and expulsion prevention.

2. Assess the vertical alignment between the state CCDF plan and state child care licensing regulations, state QRIS' standards, and state pre-K policy. Just as we are expanding our analysis to assess the entire CCDF plan for evidence of efforts to prevent or limit exclusion, we are also expanding our assessment of state level documents according to the presence of the components outlined in the HHS/DoE policy guidance document.

3. Assess and rate the cohesion of state plans and state-level child care licensing regulations, state QRIS' standards, and state Pre-K/preschool policies regarding discipline practices including exclusionary discipline with a focus on suspension and expulsion. The work on the individual sectors has expanded to differentiate regulatory difference across state designated child care licensing auspices, for instance center versus home based differences, and the accompanying differences in auspice within the QRIS system, and the multitude of auspices that may be included in a state's Pre-K system.

University of Massachusetts Boston

- PI: Dr. Songtian Zeng
- *Challenging Behavior and Social-emotional Competence for Children in Head Start Classrooms: Is there Evidence of Teacher Implicit Bias?*

Head Start teachers serve a population of young children from low socioeconomic and increasingly diverse backgrounds. They have reported needing support responding to challenging behavior and promoting positive social-emotional development. Despite recent efforts from the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) to provide evidence-based social-emotional interventions and curriculum, teachers' own perceptions and expectations toward children may affect the fidelity of implementation and Head Start's social justice mission. Preliminary evidence suggests teacher implicit racial bias may be prevalent in preschools. However, these insights are neither based on updated national representative datasets, nor specifically focused on the unique circumstance of Head Start teachers. New insights are needed to verify if potential teacher bias is prevalent at the national level.

The goals of this study are to 1) understand to what extent implicit teacher bias exists in the context of challenging behavior and social-emotional competence in classrooms; and 2) to identify malleable factors that may promote Head Start teachers' equitable perception toward students' challenging behaviors and social-emotional competence. This study is based on the 2014 Head Start Family and Child Experiences Survey (FACES) dataset, which is the most updated dataset available with a diverse sample of children from historically marginalized groups. FACES 2014 is ideal as it provides a national, representative sample of Head Start teachers' perceptions about children's challenging behaviors and social-emotional competence in their own classrooms for the first time. Methodologically, applying weighted descriptive analysis and hierarchical modeling with a large national Head Start sample enables us to model the dynamic and interacting factors, and provide more precise estimates of Head Start teachers' potential implicit bias toward subgroups of students.

Results suggested that teachers perceived Hispanic students to have lower social skills compared to White students (*Est* = -1.19, *SE* =0.50, *p*= .021). Also, Hispanic students were perceived to have more aggressive behavior compared to white students (*Est* = 0.44, *SE* =0.17, *p*= .014). Meanwhile, students with male identity (*Est* = -2.11, *SE* =0.25, *p* < .001), younger age (*Est* = -2.72, *SE* =0.71, *p* < .001), and disability status (*Est* = -0.14, *SE* =0.02, *p*< .001) tended to be perceived with lower social emotional skills and more aggressive behavior. Black teachers reported fewer aggressive behavior for Black children than did White teachers for White children (*Est* = -1.96, *SE* =0.50, *p* < .001). No significant differences were observed for Black and other race compared to White students. Also no significant differences were observed for race and gender interaction.

This investigation provides new insights related to the Administration for Children and Families' (ACF)'s concern regarding potential policy and practices to "improve teacher and caregiver practice through professional development"; and to "support the unique strengths and needs of diverse and traditionally understudied populations of children, families, and early care and education teachers/providers." This study not only expands our knowledge of other potential bias beyond the racial dimension, but better estimates the malleable factors that contribute to Head Start teachers' perception about children's challenging behaviors and social-emotional competence in the social-ecological context.