

Child Care Research Scholars: 2008 Grantees

Scholar:

Anne Douglass

Project Title:

Strengthening Families Illinois and Child Care Quality Improvement

Mentor:

Lorraine Klerman

Project Funding Years:

2008 – 2009

University Affiliation:

Brandeis University

Project Abstract:

A study of the Strengthening Families through Early Care and Education (SF) initiative and its influence on the quality of parent-teacher partnerships, this multiple case study examines (1) how the SF initiative influences organization and management practices in four large child care programs in one state, and (2) how those practices influence the quality of supportive partnerships with families. The study utilizes theories about relationship-based and bureaucratic organizational systems, and tests the hypothesis that distinct management systems influence the quality of parent-teacher partnerships. Data sources include interviews with child care program staff, observations, document review, and a program survey. Findings may be used to inform policy and management interventions to improve the quality of professional-parent partnerships and the implementation of family strengthening initiatives in child care programs.

Scholar:

Joanna Lower

Project Title:

Social and Economic Disparities in North Carolina Communities: Issues of Access and Quality in Licensed Child Care

Mentor:

Deborah Cassidy

Project Funding Years:
2008 – 2009

University Affiliation:
University of North Carolina at Greensboro

Project Abstract:
The study will evaluate access to high-quality child care across North Carolina communities. Multiple data sources will be used in hierarchical linear models utilizing two and three levels to inform future state and national policies that promote equitable access to high quality child care across community contexts. The study includes three aims: (1) to estimate the availability of high quality licensed child care programs in communities throughout North Carolina; (2) to examine the relationship between the socioeconomic context of communities and child care quality; and (3) to compare community socioeconomic contexts of child care programs participating in voluntary Environment Rating Scale assessments with child care programs not participating.

Scholar:
Kate Tarrant

Project Title:
A Mixed Methods Investigation of Quality Rating Systems' Influence on Program, Classroom, and Teacher Quality

Mentor:
Sharon Lynn Kagan

Project Funding Years:
2008 - 2010

University Affiliation:
Teachers College, Columbia University

Project Abstract:
In an effort to improve and unify early care and education (ECE), policymakers and advocates in numerous states have developed quality rating and improvement systems (QRIS). This policy approach provides a mechanism to assess, improve, and communicate ECE program quality. Although this reform has shown improvements in the overall quality of ECE programs, research has done little to examine how this reform targets the various dimensions of program quality. This study will explore the way that one state's QRIS influences program, classroom, and teaching quality and how it unifies the ECE system. This mixed methods analysis will combine

quantitative administrative data and qualitative data from teachers, program directors, and system stakeholders to address the following three research questions: (1) In what ways, if any, has the QRIS influenced program improvements to process quality? (2) In what ways, if any, has the QRIS influenced program improvements to structural quality? (3) In what ways, if any, has the QRIS unified the ECE system around a common definition of quality?