

Child Care Research Scholars: 2014 Grantees

Kate Giapponi

Project Title: Insights into the Black Box of Child Care Supply: Predictors of Provider Participation in the Child Care Subsidy System

Mentor: Dr. Pam Joshi

Project Funding Years: 2014 - 2016

University Affiliation: Brandeis University

Project Abstract:

The proposed dissertation will draw largely on economic theory and strategic management research to model predictors of provider participation in the subsidy system. Specifically, the quantitative portion of the study will utilize administrative data and U.S. Census data to test three empirical models that examine factors associated with provider decisions about 1) whether or not to participate in the subsidy system, 2) how many subsidy recipients to serve and 3) whether to accept vouchers and/or contract with the state for subsidized child care slots. The qualitative portion of the study includes interviews with center-based provider directors to explore pathways to subsidy participation and identify additional factors not examined in the quantitative models that affect providers' subsidy decisions. Results from this dissertation will not only make a significant contribution to the current gap in the child care supply literature by adding new knowledge to the field, but will also provide subsidy policy-makers and administrators with a better understanding of 1) the characteristics of child care providers participating in the subsidy system compared to those that do not, 2) potential sources of motivation for and barriers to participation, and 3) how differential participation may contribute to inequitable access to a full range of care options for subsidy recipients.

Sample: The quantitative methods sample will include administrative data from the Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care on over 8,500 licensed and center-based providers and 3,900 of whom accept subsidies. The qualitative methods samples will include 20 center-based child care provider directors/staff

Measures:

Quantitative Methods Measures

Provider Participation.

- Massachusetts' Child Care Information Management System (CCIMS) and Electronic Child Care Information Management System (eCIMMS)

Provider Characteristics & Types of Services Offered.

- Massachusetts' licensing, NACCRRAware, and QRIS data

Local Child Care Market & Regional Policy/Practice.

- U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey (ACS) 2008-2012 5-year sample
- U.S. Census Bureau's Zip Code Tabulation Area (ZCTA)
- U.S. Census Bureau's Tiger/Line shape files
- Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care licensing data

Qualitative Methods Measures

- A semi-structured interview guide for provider decision-makers

Elizabeth B. Miller

Project Title: Use of Spanish in Head Start and Dual Language Learners' Academic Achievement: A Mixed-Methods Study

Mentor: Dr. George Farkas

Project Funding Years: 2014 - 2016

University Affiliation: University of California, Irvine

Project Abstract:

Current developmental policy reports and empirical articles stress the importance of supporting Spanish (L1) in English-dominant (L2) child care programs as well as promoting the linguistic context in which Dual Language Learners (DLLs) are served. Yet, little is known whether teachers actually use L1 in early care and education (ECE) settings and for what purposes, and prior research has not sufficiently investigated whether the effects of Head Start vary based on such L1 use. This mixed-methods study addresses several kindergarten-readiness topics of interest to the Child Care Development Fund (CCDF). Specifically, the study first seeks to understand the role of linguistic cohesion between staff and Spanish-speaking DLL families to answer: 1) What child, family, and institutional factors are associated with selection into ECE environments that use L1?; and 2) a) Are there main effects of L1 use on academic school readiness skills? b) Does Head Start differentially benefit children spoken to in L1 and/or instructed in L1? To address these research questions, two nationally representative samples of Head Start children, families, and programs – the Head Start Impact Study (HSIS) and the Head Start Family and Child Experiences Survey (FACES, 2009 Cohort) – will be analyzed. Using the results from these secondary data analyses on the role of L1 use in ECE for children's academic skills, classroom observations will then be conducted in local Orange County, CA Head Start centers to better understand the nuanced mechanisms and patterns surrounding such L1 use to answer: 3) How is L1 used in local Head Start classrooms, who uses it, for what purposes, and how does L1 contribute to children's active engagement?

Sample:

- Spanish-speaking DLLs from HSIS (N = 1,141) and FACES-2009 (N = 512) study samples
- Orange County Head Start classrooms in which Spanish-speaking DLLs interact with lead teachers, assistant teachers, aides, parent volunteers, and other children (N ≈ 3,400).

Measures:

Spanish-speaking DLL Status

- The HSIS (baseline Fall 2002 child's primary caregiver and child) and FACES-2009 (Baseline Fall 2009 & Spring 2010 child language screener) datasets

L1 Use

- Child's teacher/caregiver from the HSIS (Spring 2003) and FACES-2009 (Spring 2010) datasets

Academic Achievement Baseline

- Woodcock-Muñoz (WM) Identificación de letras y palabras (Woodcock & Muñoz-Sandoval, 1996)
- WM Problemas aplicados
- Test de Vocabulario en Imágenes Peabody (TVIP; Dunn, Lugo, Padilla, & Dunn, 1986)

Academic Achievement Outcomes

- Woodcock-Johnson (WJ) III Letter-Word Identification (Woodcock, McGrew, & Mather, 2001)
- WJ III Applied Problems
- HSIS: Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test (PPVT), 3rd Ed. (Dunn & Dunn, 1997) FACES-2009: PPVT, 4th Ed. (Dunn & Dunn, 2007)

Selection Variables

- Maternal Proficiency with English
- Lead Teacher Speaks L1
- Lead Teacher of Hispanic Ethnicity
- % of Spanish-speaking DLL Students Per Center
- Maternal Immigration Status
- Child's Previous ECE Experiences
- Availability of Other ECE Options

Demographic Covariates

- Child Gender
- Child Classified as Special Needs
- Child Age (weeks)
- Child Age (years)
- Maternal Depression
- Highest Level of Maternal Education
- Whether Both Biological Parents Live with Child
- Maternal Marital Status
- Whether Mother was Teenaged at Child's Birth

Belle A. Scheef

Project Title: Investigating Leverage Points in Quality Rating and Improvement Systems: Profiles of Quality and Parent and Professional Perspectives

Mentor: Dr. Julia Torquati

Project Funding Years: 2014 - 2016

University Affiliation: The Board of Regents, University of Nebraska for the University of Nebraska-Lincoln

Project Abstract:

Investing in Quality Rating and Improvement Systems (QRIS) is based on assumptions that programs will strive to raise their quality ratings and parents will use ratings to select higher quality programs. However, research examining these potential levers of quality within QRIS is limited. Therefore the purpose of the proposed study is to examine processes by which QRIS may drive improved quality in early childhood education (ECE). Two approaches will be taken to accomplish this goal. First, a secondary analysis of qualitative and quantitative data, and will be using the Nebraska QRS Pilot Study data and the SWEEP (Multi-State Study of Pre-Kindergarten and Study of State-Wide Early Education Programs), will provide insight about the configuration of quality within programs as well as information about predictors of membership in different quality profiles. Second, qualitative data from focus groups with parents and teachers/providers who are participating with the newly implemented Nebraska QRIS will provide valuable information about the key aspects of theory of change undergirding the QRIS. This research project will coincide with the first two years of the Nebraska QRIS (NEQRIS), during which programs receiving substantial CCDF subsidy funding are required to participate.

Sample: The quantitative study will include the Midwest Childcare Research Consortium QRS Pilot Study and the State-Wide Early Education Programs (SWEEP) data sets. The qualitative study will include professionals and parents who participate in the first two years of NEQRIS implementation.

Measures:

Quantitative

The following measures from the Midwest Childcare Research Consortium QRS Pilot Study and the SWEEP data sets will be used.

ECE Quality Measures

- ITERS-R
- ECERS-R
- SACERS
- ECERS-E
- ELLCO
- Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS)
- Emerging Academics Snapshot (SNAPSHOT)

Teacher/Provider Characteristics

- Demographic Surveys
- KONTOS Scale
- Modernity Scale

Qualitative

Focus Group questions will be open ended in nature and designed to give voice to parents and their experiences and perceptions of the NEQRIS.