Child Care Research Scholars: 2015 Grantees

Alison Hooper

**Project Title:** Identifying and Exploring Profiles of Home-Based Child Care Providers: A Mixed Methods Study of Licensed and Unlicensed Providers

**Mentor:** Dr. Rena Hallam

**Project Funding Years:** 2015 - 2017

**University Affiliation:** University Of Delaware

**Project Abstract:** This project seeks to broaden the understanding of home-based child care providers who receive child care subsidies and the quality of care they provide. It is a mixed methods examination of licensed and unlicensed home-based child care providers. The study will use a national sample of home-based providers from the National Survey of Early Care and Education (NSECE; NSECE Project Team, 2013) to explore national trends, as well as a sample of providers in Delaware to garner a deeper understanding of the results of the analysis of the national data. Connecting the state-specific sample to the national sample will allow a more in-depth exploration of the practices and beliefs of home-based providers and provide insight into how to better tailor quality improvement efforts to meet their needs. Using data on listed and unlisted paid home-based providers from the NSECE, latent profile analysis will be employed to identify profiles of providers based on their caregiving beliefs and practices, perceived social support, professional engagement, and family support. The analysis will also explore how these profiles may differ based on providers’ licensing status and subsidy use. The research questions for the project are as follows: To what extent do home-based providers group into profiles based on key characteristics related to their beliefs, practices, and professional engagement? How do these profiles align with licensing status? How do these profiles align with subsidy receipt? What is the predicted profile membership of home-based providers in Delaware? How do home-based providers in each profile perceive their role and what is the quality of care they provide to children? What is the relationship between providers’ role perceptions and quality of care provided?

**Sample:** The data come from the NSECE. For Phase I, the sample will include listed and unlisted paid providers who care for at least one child aged five or under. The sample for analysis will include approximately 4469 providers. The sample for Phase II will include all listed home-based child care providers in Delaware, including all licensed family child care providers and all unlicensed providers who serve at least one child receiving child care subsidy. The survey will be mailed to approximately 1055 providers. The sample for Phase III will be selected from respondents of the survey in Phase II based upon their probabilities of belonging to each of the profiles identified in Phase I in order to identify a sample that includes providers who represent typical cases for one of the Phase I profiles. The sample will include 15 respondents.

**Measures:**

**Phase I**

- NSECE variables
  - Caregiving beliefs
  - Educational Practices
  - Social Support
  - Professional Engagement
  - Family Support

**Phase II**

- Survey based on the variables from Phase I

**Phase III**

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Observational data using CCAT-R
  o Action/Communication Snapshot
  o Summary Behavior Checklist
  o Health and Safety Checklist
  o Materials Checklist
  o Caregiver Interview
Semi-structured interviews
  o Views on the roles and responsibilities in caring for children

Arya Ansari

Project Title: The Antecedents and Outcomes of Early Care and Education Programs for Latino Children in America: A Mixed Methods Study
Mentor: Dr. Elizabeth Gershoff
Project Funding Years: 2015-2016
University Affiliation: The University of Texas at Austin

Project Abstract: The goals of this study are to address research gaps in the long-term effects of preschool programs for Latino children. It aims to characterize the early care and education utilization behaviors of Latino families in the first five years of life; solicit Latina immigrant mothers’ perceptions of the factors that influence their decisions around preschool, including their personal and perceived barriers; and determine whether and why parents’ decisions about early care and education have implications for children’s short- and long-term school success. The research questions guiding this study are: What are the processes by which Latino families select into formal preschool education? How do these selection factors differ for Latino families versus non-Latino families? What are Latina immigrant mothers’ perceptions of preschool education and what obstacles, if any, do respondents perceive regarding their search for preschool or child care? To what extent are these decisions based on passive versus active agency? Are there short- or long-term associations between different types of preschool programs and children’s school success and, if so, are these moderated by racial/ethnic group membership? Are the associations between early care and education programs and long-term development mediated by child- and adult-focused mechanisms? Are the associations between early care and education programs and children’s short- and long-term functioning moderated by children’s propensity for child care enrollment? To address these questions, this study will use a mixed-method strategy that integrates quantitative data from two nationally representative datasets, the Early Childhood Longitudinal Study Birth (ECLS-B) and Kindergarten Cohorts (ECLS-K), with in-depth interviews with immigrant Latina mothers in the Austin, Texas, community. Research questions will be addressed using regression analysis, growth curve modeling, and propensity score analysis to explore the relationships between children’s child care arrangements at age 4 and their subsequent school success, as well as the factors that are associated with preschool participation. The qualitative data will be analyzed through both a priori themes from the extant literature as well as the themes that emerge more organically throughout the interview process.

Sample: This study will utilize a subsample of 6,250 children from the ECLS-B who remained in the study for all waves of data collection and 11,906 children from the ECLS-K who remained in the study through eighth grade. Two focus groups with immigrant Latina mothers in the Austin, Texas, community. The first will include 10-15 Latina mothers who have not enrolled their children in a formal child care program. The second focus group will be 10-15 Latina mothers from Uphaus Early Childhood Center.

Measures:
Quantitative Measures
- Family necessity
- Cultural factors
- Systemic connections
- Human capital factors
- Family functioning
- Child elicitation factors
- Child care subsidy side
- Preschool enrollment
- Children’s academic achievement
- Covariates (child gender, age during preschool, mother’s age at birth, household income, region, urbanicity, child age at first care)

Qualitative Measures
- Focus groups with Latina mothers will cover demographics, parents’ search for early care and education programs, obstacles faced in finding early care and education programs, parents’ decision making, parents’ views on the role of child care in facilitating school readiness, and the most important aspect of their child care search for preschool education.

Katie Dahlke

Project Title: Improving Caregiver Quality through Observation and Individualized Instructional Feedback

Mentor: Diane Whitmore

Project Funding Years: 2015-2017

University Affiliation: Northwestern University

Project Abstract: The study will expand the research base regarding the effects of one particular early childhood education (ECE) quality improvement strategy – providing individualized instructional feedback to ECE staff on the basis of classroom observations. It will use rigorous, econometric methods to identify treatment effects – exploiting the random selection process for receiving observations and feedback as part of the Ohio Department of Education (ODE) Early Language and Literacy Classroom Observation (ELLCO) study. The outcome variables of focus include both ECE staff outcomes (i.e., staff retention and participation in professional development) and child outcomes (i.e., early language and literacy skills and social-emotional development). The study is highly relevant given state efforts as well as state and federal resources expended toward improving child care quality. As state policy makers determine how to implement the “I” of Quality Rating and Improvement Systems (QRIS), understanding the effectiveness of particular quality improvement efforts is imperative. Evidence of the effectiveness of lower cost, light touch strategies is especially relevant for quality improvement efforts implemented on a statewide scale.

Sample: Across eight rounds of observations between Spring 2008 and Spring 2012, stratified random samples of staff were selected for observations within the Early Learning Initiative (ELI), Early Childhood Education Program (ECE), and Preschool Special Education program (PSE). Specific strata and randomization procedures varied across programs and rounds. There were 248 valid lotteries across rounds that met the following criteria: (1) there was at least one treatment staff and one control staff in the lottery, and (2) these staff had an identification (ID) number to link to outcome data. The sample includes 4960 staff – 942 treatment and 4018 control staff.

Measures:
- Staff Retention
  - Return in terms of midyear staff turnover
Retention in terms of remaining in the field in the long run

- Professional Development Participation
  - Whether staff who had been with the school district for at least 120 days had participated in high quality professional development

- Get it! Got it! Go! Assessment (also known as Individual Growth and Development Indicators)
  - Direct, standardized formative preschool assessment used to measure and track children’s progress in early language and literacy development

- Ages and Stages Questionnaire: Social Emotional (ASQ:SE)
  - Developmental screening assessment of social and emotional behavior of children ranging from 6 to 60 months.
    - Self-regulation
    - Compliance
    - Communication
    - Adaptive Functioning
    - Autonomy
    - Affect
    - Interaction with people

- Kindergarten Readiness Assessment-Literacy (KRA-L)
  - Direct, diagnostic, standardized kindergarten entry assessment of early literacy skills
    - Oral language
    - Phonological awareness
    - Awareness of print

- Demographics
  - Child
    - Ever identified as having a special need
    - Low-income
    - ELL status
    - Age
    - Gender
  - Staff
    - Age at baseline
    - Years of teaching experience at baseline
    - Gender
    - Ethnicity
    - Bachelor’s and Masters’ degree attainment
    - Salary at baseline

Benjamin Brumley

*Project Title:* Child-Centered Assessment of Approaches to Learning: Development and Validation of a Measure for Use in Preschool Child Care Classrooms

*Mentor:* John Fantuzzo

*Project Funding Years:* 2015-2017

*University Affiliation:* The Trustees of the University of Pennsylvania

*Project Abstract:* This study will use advanced statistical methods to develop and validate a scientifically-based, practical teacher-report assessment of young children’s Approaches to Learning for use in early child care classrooms. It will accomplish this goal through four objectives: (1) determine the
amount of assessor variance in the Learning-to-Learn Scales (LTLS), the most highly developed multidimensional assessment of Approaches to Learning; (2) illustrate the psychometric advantages of removing assessor variance and focusing only on child variance to determine validity; (3) design and validate a shorter version of the LTLS based on child variance, and (4) disseminate research findings to policymakers, child care professionals, and parents to stimulate a discussion about purposeful assessment in early childhood and determine ways to improve assessment for preschool children from low-income households. This work has significant implications for policy, practice, and research. An assessment that can be implemented for routine use by assessors in early child care programs is needed to monitor children’s Approaches to Learning skill development. The use of advanced psychometric methods will create a pathway for improving early childhood assessment research. Furthermore, communicating results with all stakeholders including parents will increase the dynamic use of assessments to improve school readiness beyond mere program reporting compliance.

Sample: Participants include 1,980 children across 80 Head Start preschool classrooms. These 80 preschools were randomly selected from over 250 preschool classrooms operated by the School District of Philadelphia. These classrooms comprised of a representative sample of Philadelphia’s low-income preschool population, including students aged 35 to 69 month (M=43.4, SD=6.8) of which 51% were girls. Seventy-four percent of the children were Black/African American, 14% Hispanic/Latino, 5% White/Caucasian, and 7% mixed-race or other minorities. Approximately 12% of the sample identified as dual-language learners and 10% demonstrated special needs. The 80 teachers in the study had 2 to 44 years of experience in teaching (M=15.7, SD=10.2), most of this being in a child care setting (M=9.7, SD=8.3).

Measures:

- Learning-to-Learn Scales
  - 55-item, three-point teacher rating instrument, which includes seven specific dimensions and one general dimension of approaches to learning.
- Learning Express
  - Children’s academic performance based on federal and state indicators of academic readiness and includes the following subscales:
    - Alphabet
    - Knowledge
    - Vocabulary
    - Listening comprehension
    - Mathematics

Teresa Sumrall

Project Title: Early Learning and Development Standards: An Examination of Caregivers’ Knowledge, Practices, and Professional Development Support and Needs

Mentor: Catherine Scott-Little

Project Funding Years: 2015-2016

University Affiliation: The University of North Carolina at Greensboro

Project Abstract: This research study examines the amount and types of professional development North Carolina caregivers have received, and whether their participation varies by sector. Furthermore, the study explores caregivers’ knowledge of The North Carolina Foundations for Early Learning and Development (Foundations), as well as their use of standards in their work with families and children, including children with disabilities and dual language learners (DLL). These topics will be further explored to examine whether caregivers’ knowledge and use of Foundations vary by the type and amount of professional development they receive. Additionally, the study will identify caregivers’ self-
reported barriers or challenges to using Foundations as well as supports they believe will help them to use standards more effectively. Using a community engaged research approach, this descriptive study will use mixed methods design to explore these topics using survey data collected from 150 caregivers and interview data collected from nine caregivers who have engaged in different forms of Foundations professional development within the last year. Data generated from this study can be used to inform CCDF Administrators as they plan for Early Learning and Development Standards (ELDS) implementation as well as make decisions about requirements and resources to support ELDS implementation.

**Sample:** A stratified purposeful sampling technique will be used to recruit 150 caregivers working with children between the ages of 3 and 5 years, who have participated in training (i.e., one-time training/workshops and training series) and technical assistance/coaching that are the focus of the study. Using stratified purposeful sampling is designed to ensure that each of these types of professional development is represented within the sample, but not designed to create mutually exclusive groups. Qualitative interviews will be completed with a sub-set of nine caregivers who completed the survey and indicated they have participated in one of the professional development opportunities. Selection procedures for different types of professional development groups have been developed so that each of these groups are distinct, but that does not necessarily indicate caregivers’ would have only participated in one type of professional development. The selection of caregivers for interviews will be based on two criteria: 1) self-reported proficiency with Foundations (i.e., novice, intermediate, and proficient) and 2) type of professional development (i.e., one-time training, training series, technical assistance/coaching).

**Measures:**

**Survey**
- Preschool caregivers’ demographic information
- Foundations professional development and supports
- Knowledge of Foundations
- General implementation of Foundations
- Implementation of Foundations with children who are DLL
- Implementation of Foundations with children with disabilities
- Foundations professional development needs

**Interview Protocol**
- Caregivers use of Foundations in their everyday work in the classroom
- Experiences with professional development related to Foundations
- Challenges experienced when trying to use Foundations

**Document Review**
- Lesson plans
- Bulletin boards
- Family resources

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**Jenn Weglarz-Ward**

**Project Title:** Collaborative Care: How Child Care Providers and Early Intervention Providers Support Infants and Toddlers with Disabilities in Child Care Settings

**Mentor:** Rosa Milagros Santos

**Project Funding Years:** 2015-2016

**University Affiliation:** Board of Trustees of the University of Illinois

**Project Abstract:** The purpose of this project is to develop the field’s understanding of the current knowledge and experiences of child care and early intervention providers with infants and toddlers with developmental disabilities and delays in child care settings. Specifically, it will examine how child care
and early intervention programs collaborate to support these young children. Additionally, it will identify training needs of child care and early intervention providers to better support infants and toddlers with disabilities and their families in child care settings as well as find and create opportunities to support collaboration between these groups. This study will employ a sequential mixed method approach and include both quantitative factor and comparative analysis as well as qualitative thematic analysis. Participants will be recruited through statewide professional development entities of child care and early intervention providers in a Midwestern state. Participants will be invited to take part in a survey about their knowledge, beliefs, attitudes, and experiences related to infants and toddlers with disabilities in child care as well as their experiences collaborating with other professionals. Participants will also be asked to describe their interests in professional development opportunities. Results of this study will begin to address the need for information about high quality, inclusive care for very young children with disabilities and their families in child care settings. By developing a better understanding of the experiences, barriers, and needs of child care and early intervention providers who serve this unique population, programs and policy leaders at the local, state, and national level can begin to address the professional development needs of child care, early intervention, and other related service providers to enhance lifelong outcomes for children and families.

**Sample:** The target state for this study is a large Midwestern state with a population of approximately 13 million that mirrors the ethnic representation of the U.S. Using purposeful sampling, participants will be recruited statewide in cooperation with our collaborative partners in child care and early intervention (EI). Surveys will be distributed via the collaborative partners’ social media sites and listservs. Participants from the survey will be invited to self-nominate for participation in one of four focus groups of child care and EI providers. Each focus group will include up to eight participants in equal portions of child care and EI providers. If more nominations are received, participants will be randomly selected to participate.

**Measures:**

- **100-item Survey**
  - **Demographics**
    - Child care providers
      - Gender
      - Age
      - Location
      - Education level
      - Degree type
      - Years of experience in child care
      - Current role in program
      - Years in current program
      - Program type
      - Ages served
      - Acceptance of subsidy
      - Additional fees for children with disabilities
      - Presence of children with disabilities
      - Types of disabilities present
    - EI providers
      - Gender
      - Age
- Location
- Education level
- Years of experience in EI
- Current role in EI
- Percentage of case load in EI
- Percentage of EI cases in child care settings

- Beliefs and attitudes of inclusion
  - Potential benefits and drawbacks of inclusion for children with disabilities, families of children with disabilities, typically developing children, and families of typically developing children
  - Systemic barriers
  - Collaboration with different stakeholders
  - Training