

A Closer Look: Child Care, Pre-K, and Head Start Collaboration

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Purpose of Project

This newly funded project will analyze secondary data from Ohio's child care subsidy and early education databases in order to address questions about the nature and impact of child care, pre-K, and Head Start collaboration.

Background

CCDF, pre-K and Head Start all serve low-income children under the age of 5, but each of these programs is guided by different goals, standards, delivery models and operational hours, resulting in unique strengths as well as differences in quality. Qualitative studies have found that child care providers in collaboration with other early education programs report benefits of the collaborative relationship, and existing quantitative research reveals benefits for child care centers in partnership with Head Start. However, questions remain about whether multi-program collaborations (for example, a child care provider that is engaged in a collaborative relationship with Head Start and pre-K) are associated with improvements in classroom quality and corresponding enhancements in children's school readiness.

Research Questions

We will analyze state, provider- and child-level data provided by the Ohio Department of Education (ODE) and Ohio Department of Job & Family Services (ODJFS) to address the following research questions:

- 1) Do specific aspects of multi-program collaborations relate to classroom quality?
- 2) Do specific aspects of multi-program collaborations relate to child outcomes?
- 3) How does the state of Ohio promote local-level collaborations? Do state efforts to promote local-level collaborations support the CCDF goals of enhancing quality and parents' workforce participation?

Data Sources

To address these questions, we will analyze four levels of existing data from the 2008/2009 academic year: state, provider, classroom, and child level. We will create master datasets from these existing datasets using unique provider, classroom, and child identifiers so that data can be linked. Table 1 below provides a summary of the data provided by ODE and ODJFS.

Table 1. Construct, Measure, Level, and Data Source

Construct	Measure/Dataset	Level	Data source
Collaboration between or among ELI, Head Start, and school-based pre-K	(1) State reporting forms (2) R&R dataset	Provider	ODE ODJFS
Structural indicators of quality	(3) State reporting forms	Provider Classroom	ODE ODJFS
Dosage of service	(4) State reporting forms	Child	ODJFS
Observed quality	(5) <i>ELLCO</i> (6) <i>ECERS-R</i>	Classroom	ODE ODJFS
Child and family characteristics	(7) <i>State reporting forms</i>	Child and parent	ODE ODJFS
School readiness measures	(8) <i>Get it, Got it, Go!</i> (9) <i>Kindergarten Readiness Assessment in Literacy</i>	Child	ODE
State-level collaboration Supports for provider-level collaboration	(10) <i>State documents including regulations, policy guidance, training and technical assistance reports, grantee proposals, and MOUs at the state and provider-level</i>	State level	ODE ODJFS

Data Analysis Plan

To address **research questions 1 and 2**, we will employ **Hierarchical Linear Modeling (HLM)**. Our sample size is sufficient to support our proposed analysis as the database consists of 168 classrooms nested within 168 providers (one classroom per provider) and 15 children on average nested within each classroom, resulting in a sampling design with lower-level units nested within higher-level units. HLM will allow us to take into account the interdependencies among levels and permit the variance in outcomes to be decomposed into multiple sources. (e.g., child, classroom, and provider characteristics).

To address **research question 3**, we will conduct an **exploratory qualitative analysis** utilizing the case study method to address how the state is supporting local-level collaborations to enhance quality of services, while also supporting parents' workforce participation.

Expected Benefits

We expect that this research will provide information that could be used by Ohio policymakers to improve collaboration at the state and provider levels, thereby creating higher-quality, more seamless services for low-income working parents and their children.

Citations (Bibliographic References)

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Website:
<http://ccf.edc.org/pubs/partnerships.asp>