Key Readings on Policy Levers to Promote Social Inclusion and Respect for Diversity in Early Childhood

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The National Center for Children in Poverty (NCCP) is the nation’s leading public policy center dedicated to promoting the economic security, health, and well-being of America’s low-income families and children. Using research to inform policy and practice, NCCP seeks to advance family-oriented solutions and the strategic use of public resources at the state and national levels to ensure positive outcomes for the next generation. Founded in 1989 as a division of the Mailman School of Public Health at Columbia University, NCCP is a nonpartisan, public interest research organization.

KEY READINGS ON POLICY LEVERS TO PROMOTE SOCIAL INCLUSION AND RESPECT FOR DIVERSITY IN EARLY CHILDHOOD

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Dr. Mariajose Romero is associate research scientist at NCCP, where her research examines the intersections of class, race, ethnicity, gender, immigration status and ability in structuring disparities in early education and early school processes – specifically, early chronic school absenteeism, student mobility, teacher absenteeism and mobility – and child outcomes, as well as ways to redress those disparities through a social inclusion and respect for diversity framework.

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Overview

This resource includes a sample of research and policy books, articles, reports, and other resources reporting findings and lessons learned on the viability and effectiveness of various policy strategies to infuse a social inclusion and respect for diversity (SI & RD) perspective in early childhood education in the U.S.

Since the 1960s we have seen growing efforts to articulate early childhood education with the realities of a diverse, multicultural society, as well as to make early education responsive to the learning and development needs of disadvantaged groups in the U.S. Some of these initiatives have aimed at expanding the provision of learning-oriented early childhood experiences (for instance, Head Start and Early Head Start programs): whereas others have attempted to transform the preparation, recruitment, retention, and compensation of teachers; the nature and quality of the early childhood curriculum; and the function of early education towards preparing young children for formal schooling. Embedded to varying degrees in these efforts have been concerns to ensure that the content of the early education experience represents and validates diverse cultures of U.S. society and an increasingly globalized world; is meaningful to the culture and language of children and their families and strengthens their cultural capital and skills; and lays the foundation for children to be respectful of diversity and inclusive of difference. Also present in these efforts have been concerns for the prevalence and impact of disparities at a more structural level: specifically, the differential representation of racial, ethnic, income and gender groups in different sectors of the early childhood education market and industry, which vary in terms of teachers’ educational credentials, working conditions and compensation as well as of the quality of the educational experience and the level of child outcomes.*

This resource constitutes an effort to provide a broad overview of the policy context surrounding early childhood education in relation to issues related to social inclusion and respect for diversity. The resource is intended for researchers new to the field of SI & RD, as well as for professionals and stakeholders in early childhood education. The list presents each citation followed by a brief description, organized according to the following broad topical categories:

♦ Policies that impact on the early childhood education workforce: training and certification; training program accreditation; professional standards of ethics; recruitment and retention; professional development;

* It is unclear how children understand and interpret those structural disparities or how their views of those disparities affect their learning. Research suggests, however, that from a very young age children are not oblivious to the character of and messages from their structural contexts.
♦ **Policies that impact on the early childhood education setting:** provider program licensing; provider program accreditation; quality ratings and improvement systems;

♦ **Policies that impact on the early childhood education outcomes:** early learning standards and guidelines; state assessments; and

♦ **Leadership in early childhood education.**

Because of the complexities of the issues involved, this resource does not include the literature on policy levers related to language of instruction and home language, nor those related to access to and financing of early childhood education in the U.S. For a more exhaustive list of publications see Romero, Mariajosé. 2010. *An Annotated Bibliography on Policy Levers to Promote Social Inclusion and Respect for Diversity in Early Childhood.* New York: National Center for Children in Poverty, Columbia University Mailman School of Public Health.


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**Policies that Impact on the Early Childhood Education Workforce**

**Training and Certification**


A study of the association between the amount of diversity coursework/practica in early childhood teacher preparation programs and the diversity of the area in which the program is located, the governance and type of program, the presence of non-white faculty, and the accreditation status of the program, based on existing data about 449 Bachelor’s level teacher preparation programs.

♦ Whitebook, Marcy; Sakai, Laura; Kipnis, Fran; Almaraz, Mirella; Suarez, Esther; Bellm, Dan. 2008. *Learning Together: a Study of Six B.A. Completion Cohort Programs in Early Care and Education: Year 1 Report.* Berkeley: University of California, Berkeley, Center for the Study of Child Care Employment.

Findings from the first year of a five-year longitudinal study of six cohorts of students participating in California early childhood education B.A. completion programs, in which small groups of students pursue a bachelor’s degree together and receive support services.

**Training Program Accreditation**


A study of the diversity-related content and language in state boards’ of higher education and professional accreditation organizations’ early childhood teacher standards.
Professional Standards of Ethics


Recruitment and Retention

♦ Whitebook, Marcy. 2003. Turnover Begets Turnover: An Examination of Job and Occupational Instability among Child Care Center Staff. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly* 18(3): 273-293. A longitudinal study in California looks at the high turnover rate of child care center staff and professional characteristics that may add to this problem.

♦ Marcy Whitebook; Fran Kipnis; Dan Bellm. 2008. *Diversity and Stratification in California's Early Care and Education Workforce*. Berkeley: University of California, Berkeley, Center for the Study of Child Care Employment. A policy brief discussing the stratification by educational level and job role of the ethnic and linguistic diversity of California's ECE workforce, based on data from the Workforce Study.


Professional Development


Policies that Impact on the Early Childhood Education Setting

Provider Program Licensing

♦ Hotz, V. Joseph; Xiao, Mo. 2009. The Impact of Regulations on the Supply and Quality in Child Care Markets. Unpublished manuscript, Department of Economics, Duke University, Durham, North Carolina
An analysis of the impact of state child care regulations on the supply and quality of child care services in high and low income markets, addressing questions of accreditation, labor intensiveness, supply of and access to formal and informal child care, and benefits to center workers and owners, based on data from the United States Census of Services Industries for 1987, 1992, and 1997, state regulation data, and child care center accreditation data for 1987 through 1997 from the National Association for the Education for Young Children (NAEYC).

An analysis of states’ licensing standards for infant/toddler child care centers, examining if regulations mandate an educational program.

A description of the challenges facing after school child care programs’ attempts to comply with state child care licensing regulations, as well as ways in which licensing regulations can be used to promote program quality.

An analysis of the relationship of child development outcomes to child care center accreditation systems, staff training, and licensing standards.

Provider Program Accreditation

An overview of the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) early childhood education program accreditation process and the ways in which the accreditation process can support improvements in child care and early education quality.

A study assessing the value of military Child Development Center accreditation over the benefits associated with Department of Defense certification.

Quality Ratings and Improvement Systems


A guide for incorporating culturally competent practices into state child care quality rating and improvement systems.

An evaluation of the Colorado Qualistar Early Learning quality rating and improvement system.
(QRIS): including: an assessment of system components and the relationships between them; a comparison of Qualistar measures to other established quality measures; and an examination of the association between quality improvements as measured by Qualistar components and children’s socioemotional and cognitive outcomes.


A study of the quality rating and improvement systems (QRIS) in five early QRIS-adopting states, including descriptions of: the theory of action underlying QRISs; each state’s system, including

Policies that Impact on the Early Childhood Education Outcomes

Early Learning Standards and Guidelines


A discussion of how the question of “What should students know and be able to do?” shaped the era of standards and accountability and impacted on the education of young children.


A discussion of recent federal efforts calling states to develop early learning standards for preschool children in language, literacy and mathematics, the standards formulated by 43 states, and the need to ground those efforts in research as well as to reflect age-appropriate outcomes.


State Assessments


An exploration of the development and implementation of early learning guidelines, outlining the expectations for what preschool children should know and be able to do prior to entering kindergarten, based on data from a national survey.

♦ Hardy, Phyllis; Kozma, Barbara; Welch, Adrienne; Werley, Susan. n.d. Initiating Statewide Assessment in Early Education and Care: Opportunities and Challenges. Cambridge: the Schott Fellowship in Early Care and Education.

A summary of a study of participants’ experiences in a Massachusetts pilot program for preschools to develop or create child assessment systems.
Leadership in Early Childhood Education


