An Annotated Bibliography 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.

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Dr. Mariajósé 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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This annotated bibliography includes 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.

There has been in the past two decades a proliferation of efforts to: 1) establish policies that promote teachers’ development of skills and knowledge to work with diverse children and families; attract a highly qualified, diversified early childhood workforce; 2) improve their working conditions and compensation; 3) equalize access to high quality ECE experiences; and 4) bridge the gap in child outcomes among racial, ethnic, and income groups. Equally important have been efforts to promote the formation of diversified leadership in the ECE field. These efforts are aimed in varying degrees at infusing a SI & RD perspective in ECE. Questions remain, however, regarding the quality of the research foundation in which those efforts rest; the extent to which their implementation is consistent with their underlying principles; their impact and cost-effectiveness at various levels (that is, child, peer group, family, teacher, classroom, organization, and community); their applicability and viability in different contexts; or how various policy levers are interrelated and could be used in a coordinated way to support SI & RD goals.

The bibliography 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;

- **Policies that Impact on the Early Childhood Education Setting:** Provider program licensing; Provider program accreditation; Quality Ratings and Improvement Systems;

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

Training and Certification

♦ Dennehy, Julie. 2006. Setting the Stage for a Youth Development Associate Credential. Houston, TX: Cornerstones For Kids. A review of efforts to create a professional credential for workers in out-of-school time child care programs.


♦ Lekies, Kristi. 2007. Preparing Qualified Teachers for Infants and Toddlers: The Role and Function of Higher Education Teacher Preparation Programs. Cornell Early Childhood Program Policy Brief No. 2. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University, College of Human Ecology, Early Childhood Program. A discussion of the background and results of the New York Early Childhood Teacher Preparation Study in terms of recruiting early childhood education students to work with infants and toddlers, preparation for these students, and specific coursework required by programs to help these students develop specific skills.

♦ Lim, Chih-Ing. 2009. Cultural and Linguistic Diversity in Early Childhood Teacher Preparation: The Impact of Contextual Characteristics on Coursework and Practica. Early Childhood Research Quarterly 24(1): 64-76. 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.


education programs that prepare practitioners at the initial licensure or certification level (usually a baccalaureate or master's degree).

A study of whether early childhood teacher bachelor's degree requirements meet the developmental and educational needs of children with special needs, racial and ethnic minority children, children from low-income families, immigrant children, and second language learners.

A discussion of the role of early childhood credentials in qualifying the early childhood workforce, the relevance of higher education programs to quality caregiving, and the ability of higher education programs to adapt and meet the needs of the early childhood workforce.

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.

A survey of institutions of higher education that train adults to teach children under the age of five in California.

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

A child care provider's personal reflections on the pursuit for professionalism (that is, child care provider training, qualifications, and ethics) in the child care field.

A description of the development of professional ethics in the child and youth care field in North America.

A description of a code of ethics developed by North American Child and Youth Care to address the psychological, social, cultural, spiritual and biological needs of children and their families.


Professional Development


Recruitment and Retention


♦ Enochty, Marie; Farris, Marcia; Sockabasin, Lisa; St. Victor, Nicole. 2005. Essential to Quality: Supporting Cultural Competence in the Department of Early Education and Care Regulated Workforce. Cambridge, MA: The Schott Fellowship in Early Care and Education. A discussion of the implications of increasing cultural and ethnic/racial diversity in Massachusetts for the cultural competence, training and professional development requirements of the child care and early education workforce.


A framework for determining the infrastructure cost of universal early care and education for young children and adequate compensation for caregivers.


An overview of research on the importance of a diverse and culturally competent child care and early education workforce for healthy child development, with policy recommendations for recruiting, maintaining, and supporting a diverse and culturally competent child care and early education workforce.


A survey of issues related to the limitations of existing measures of early childhood professional development, with preliminary recommendations for addressing areas of difficulty.


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.


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.

Policies that Impact on the Early Childhood Education Setting

Provider Program Licensing and Regulations


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.


A comprehensive study of national health and safety standards for children enrolled in out-of-home settings with child care providers.


A discussion of family child care home environments, with recommendations for regulations and the improvement of quality.


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


Ochshorn, Susan., Kagan, Sharon L.; Carroll, Jude; Lowenstein, Amy E.; Fuller, Bruce. 2004. Child Care and Early Education: The Effects of Regulation on the Quality of Early Care and Education. Policy Brief III. Denver, CO: National Conference of State Legislatures. A review of recent research and policy on child care and early education program regulation, including information on current state regulatory strategies and processes in areas such as staff child ratios, staff training, safety, and physical environments.

Provider Program Accreditation


Quality Ratings and Improvement Systems


Ellicker, James. 2007. Paths to QUALITY: A Child Care Quality Rating System for Indiana: What is its Scientific Basis?. West Lafayette, IN: Purdue University, Center for Families. An analysis of the potential for quality standards in Paths to QUALITY, a proposed child care quality rating system for Indiana, to increase child care quality and improve child development outcomes, based on results from pilot sites and a review of research literature related to quality indicators in the standards.
A guide for implementing a community-wide or statewide Quality Rating System (QRS), including guidance for the early planning stage, the development and assessment of standards, the use of incentives to encourage quality improvement, the financing of the system, and the outreach to promote parental awareness of the system.

An overview of the features of child care and early education quality rating and improvement systems, with a discussion of issues to consider in their development.

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

A discussion of child care and early education quality, with a focus on quality in inclusive programs, and incorporating dimensions of program quality into professional development efforts.

A draft synopsis of the proceedings of a roundtable discussion, convened by the Child Care Bureau in December, 2006, in Washington, DC, about emerging issues in the area of state child care quality measures.

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 the aspects of quality included in the system; the development of each state's system; and challenges facing system designers and lessons learned from these states, all based on in-depth interviews with 4 key stakeholders in each state.
Early Learning Standards and Guidelines


An overview and discussion of Washington State’s and Alaska’s experiences addressing cultural and language issues in the development of early learning standards.


A survey-based investigation of West Virginian prekindergarten directors’ perceptions of the importance of the National Association for the Education of Young Children’s developmentally appropriate assessment guidelines and their practices in terms of guideline implementation.


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 the need for the shift in early childhood services from care to education to be accompanied by a subsequent change in accountability measures and the revision of educational policies.


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.


A series of recommendations for state policymakers creating infant and toddler learning guidelines.


A content analysis of early learning standards documents developed by state-level organizations.


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.


An analysis of the organization and content of state early learning guidelines (ELGs) for infants and toddlers, based on coding ELG documents.
A discussion of how lessons learned from the UNICEF-funded Going Global Project can contribute to the advancement of the standards movement in early care and education in the U.S.

A description of states’ recognition of cultural and language components of early education as reflected in early learning standards in nine states.

State Assessments

♦ Hardy, Phyllis. 2007. *Initiating Statewide Assessment in Early Education and Care: Opportunities and Challenges*. Cambridge, MA: 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

A discussion of definitions of leadership in early childhood education, in light of organizational leadership theories and considerations of diversity and equity.

An edited collection of articles on definitions, constraints, possibilities, and the actual challenges of creating leadership capacity in early childhood education.

A descriptive study of each state’s kindergarten, first grade, and second grade content standards and mandatory assessments.

A discussion of developmental outcomes for children from birth to age five and a review of instruments used in developmental assessment.

The report of a symposium gathering professionals working with state assessment systems to discuss common challenges and share ideas.

A description of the Educational Leadership Project (ELP), a professional development program supporting the educators implementing Te Whariki, New Zealand’s early childhood curriculum, and an account of the cultural inspiration for ELP’s development.