

April 14, 2010

Session Topic: Early Learning and Development

How does this research connect to practice? How could it be used?

- Executive function challenges can be identified early. There is the possibility of practitioners working to help support the development of executive function in early childhood settings or homes. Teachers need to know how to support and improve executive functioning, and this information could be infused into teacher prep courses.
- There are important rural vs. urban distinctions that need to be made when implementing programming and considering outcomes.
- Teachers can identify attentional concerns beyond hyperactivity. Measures can be used to identify executive functioning/ self-regulation difficulties earlier in childhood.
- Parent's social networks can play a role in children's executive functioning; what is it about social networks that contribute to functioning?

How does this research connect to policy? How could it be used?

- This research has implications for federal funding for home visitation – given positive associations of parent social networks to executive functioning, executive functioning might be an important outcome to consider.
- Programs and curricula need to focus on intentional teaching, in addition to incidental teaching.
- Currently, there is a clear distinction between the periods of 0-3 years, 3-5 years, etc. These seem artificial given children's development and unfortunately these distinctions currently guide funding for programming.
- There is a need to integrate practice and research in the fields of parents/families and children.

What information from the practice/policy community might inform research in this area?

- More needs to be done to integrate information and research being done across disciplines.
- More refined measures are needed to identify concerns that may aid in our ability to intervene earlier; we need to know what interventions can be used.
- Investigations looking at the connections between language, emotions, and behavior are needed.
- Including parents/families in treatment for children (e.g., home visitation programs), particularly in light of information on early literacy, is important. In addition, parents have competing needs/stressors that need to be met and we need to better understand how to do so.
- How do poverty/low SES demographic factors influence emergent literacy?