



2022 CYFS SUMMIT ON RESEARCH IN

Early Childhood

Creating Connections Among Research, Practice & Policy

Research Presentation Summaries



Concurrent Session I	10:30 - 11:15 a.m.
<p><i>Children and Families Birth to Five in Lincoln and Omaha: Findings from the Nebraska Early Childhood Study</i> Abbie Raikes, Marcus Waldman, Katelyn Hepworth</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A new population-based, caregiver-reported measure of children’s development birth through age 5 years was tested in Lincoln and Omaha. • Results provided initial validity evidence of a short, feasible measure of child development that can be used on an online survey platform. • Results also revealed inequities in child development based on family income, education, and extent of family stress during covid.
<p><i>Testing Technology-Delivered Behavioral Health Services: Addressing Rural Child Needs</i> Amanda Witte, Rachel Schumacher, Susan Sheridan</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers and Parents as Partners (TAPP) is an evidence-based intervention that may help ameliorate the service disparity for children in rural areas through family-school partnerships. TAPP is typically delivered by a consultant that travels on-site to provide services. Distance technology offers potential as a method of delivering TAPP (“tele-TAPP”) that bypasses access barriers facing rural communities. • This pilot study found that Tele-TAPP resulted in a decrease in the occurrence of children’s off-task behaviors in the classroom and disruptive behaviors at home. Caregivers and teachers reported tele-TAPP to be highly acceptable and reported high levels of satisfaction with the consultant serving in a distance role. • Tele-TAPP offers promise as an effective and efficient intervention to increase highly trained consultant availability in underserved and under-resourced rural communities. Tele-TAPP may be an especially appropriate tool for rural early childhood educators and has the potential to significantly increase rural schools’ access to evidence-based procedures for addressing students’ behavioral health concerns.
<p><i>An Ecological Framework for Understanding Early Childhood Professional Well-Being</i> Kathleen Gallagher, Alexandra Daro</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Significant research has examined professionals’ personal well-being and its associations with turnover, burnout, and interaction with children. • The Early Childhood Professional Well-Being Ecological Framework was designed to provide an ecological perspective (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2007), expanding on the individual and contextual elements associated with early childhood professional well-being. • The ecological framework addresses the synergistic contributions to professional well-being, including individual elements (job role, personal characteristics, and professional learning) and contextual elements (regulatory, cultural, organizational, and environmental). • The framework can inform research efforts, as well as assist in designing interventions to enhance workforce well-being. • In this session, researchers will review the framework and connect it to recent research in early care and education, and explore applications to other research and implications for interventions.



<p>Reflective Practice as a Support for Early Childhood Professionals Pamela Caudill Jordan, Carrie Gottschalk, Jamie Bahm, Sarah Barker Ladd, Kelli Hauptman</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflective practice shows promise as a workplace tool for early childhood professionals. • After FAN tool training, early childhood education professionals utilize the tool several times a month in their workplace. • They find reflective practice valuable for strengthening workplace relationships, providing a framework and structure for conversations, and working collaboratively to find solutions to problems.
<p>Caregiver-Provided Learning Opportunities Boost Intervention Effects for Infants with Neuromotor Delays Natalie Koziol, Christiana Butera, Kari Kretch, Regina Harbourne, Stacey Dusing</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Young children with neuromotor delays benefited from the START-Play physical therapy intervention that is founded on principles of grounded cognition and promotes caregivers' abilities and confidence in providing "just right" cognitive-motor interactions. However, this effect was only observed for children whose caregivers entered the study demonstrating high levels of cognitive engagement with the child. • Providing targeted training to caregivers of differing abilities/needs may lead to increased information uptake and increased dosage of learning opportunities for the child. • Strategies for improving caregivers' uptake and transfer of START-Play cognitive principles and communicating START-Play principles to other caregivers should be developed and evaluated.
<p>Improving Nebraska Early Intervention Home Visits: Three Linked Strategies Miriam Kuhn</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nebraska rolled out professional development in three evidence-based strategies aimed at improving the quality of Early Intervention services for infants/toddlers and their families. • Strategies selected were: (1) use of Routines-Based Interviews for assessment of child/family strengths, needs, and priorities; (2) training to use RBI information to develop high-quality, functional IFSP outcomes; and, (3) implementation of the Getting Ready framework to strengthen routines-based home visits. • Implications for statewide Early Intervention policy: Routines-Based Interviews of families during assessment was effective for developing quality goals for the children/families, and use of the Getting Ready framework for routines-based home visits reportedly strengthened family capacity to engage in joint-planning of strategies, practice strategies during the home visits, and plan for family-professional communication between visits.
<p>Help Me Grow: Systems Approach to Supporting Early Childhood Development Lorey Wheeler, Kristen Derr, HyeonJin Yoon, Kerry Miller, Marisa Macy</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This presentation provided initial implementation and evaluation data from a pilot of Help Me Grow-Nebraska, a comprehensive, population-level, evidence-based approach designed to address gaps in early childhood systems of support. • The results of this presentation highlight the utility and promise of the HMG, a system approach to promote delivery of family-centered care, increase quality and availability, and families' access to children's health care services and resources. • Findings suggested the importance of early identification of children's developmental and behavioral problems, importance of referrals, and careful collaboration and coordination among a variety of local organizations, agencies, and health care providers for successful implementation.



Concurrent Session II	11:30 a.m. - 12:15 p.m.
<p><i>Closing Gaps for Children in Poverty: The Role of Play</i> Susan Sheridan, Lisa Knoche, Natalie Koziol, Amanda Witte</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • By the time Nebraska children reach third grade, there is little variability across classrooms in the amount of time allotted to indoor and outdoor play. School- and district-level policies, rather than teacher decision making, appear to determine the amount of time students spend in socialization activities. • A range of contextual variables may be useful in closing gaps for primary grade children experiencing low income. The amount of time dedicated to free play is one variable among many that may be related to children's academic outcomes, social-behavioral skills, and interactions. • Given that free play has the potential to close skill gaps for third grade children experiencing low-income, more nuanced understandings are necessary regarding how play uniquely supports children's performance and interactions.
<p><i>Measuring Program Quality Using Sensors: Child Care Staffs Experiences, Perceptions, Needs</i> Danae Dinkel, Abbie Raikes, Erica Ryherd, Dawn Davis</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Previous research suggests that sensors may provide new insights into environmental influences on childcare quality. For example, indoor environmental quality (e.g., sound, light, thermal) significantly impacts health and learning for other types of settings such as K-12, but they are understudied in the early childcare domain. • A mixed method study of childcare staff's experiences and perceptions revealed privacy and security issues such as data storage, access, and use are critical to address. • There is a need for clear communication with parents and childcare professionals on reasons for using sensors and the documentation of the value of sensor data in supporting child development. • Findings highlight the need to include childcare staff and parents in the design of sensors and to consider how information will be shared and used.
<p><i>The Long-Run Effects of Head Start</i> Brenden Timpe</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our project uses newly linked, large-scale data to study whether Head Start's preschool programs improve children's outcomes in the long run. • We find that Head Start provided substantial long-term benefits to its first generation of participants, who achieved 0.65 more years of schooling on average and were 2.7 times more likely to finish high school, 8.5 percent more likely to enroll in college, 39 percent more likely to earn a four-year degree, and less likely to live in poverty or receive public assistance in adulthood. • These estimates imply sizable, long-run returns to investments in large-scale preschool programs.



<p><i>Ready for School! Assessment-Based Planning Approach for Parental Partnerships When Children Transition from Rural Head Start Preschool to Public School Kindergarten in Nebraska</i> Marisa Macy, Mark Reid, Lisa Gibboney, Lana Horn</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This study aims to examine: (1) practices that could support preschool children in rural Nebraska who are enrolled in Head Start program(s) who are transitioning into a public-school kindergarten setting, and (2) the psychometric properties of a newly developed school readiness measure for professionals and parents of young children. • The information from this presentation can advance transition practices with the rapprochement of multiple stakeholders coming together to create an assessment framework that leads to a better understanding of the child's skills from multiple perspectives. It has the potential to create a smooth transition as children grow and develop. • Results from this session may be used to inform: 1) individualized transition practices, and 2) group transition practices for supporting children on their journey from preschool Head Start in rural areas to public kindergarten.
<p><i>Urban, Rural and Tribal EC Evaluation Data: Similarities and Differences</i> Amanda Prokasky, Jolene Johnson, Amy Encinger</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Context influences the amount and types of evaluation data we can collect. • Early childhood evaluation data should reflect the needs and interests of the community(ies) that it serves. • Evaluation of early childhood programs and systems need to be mindful of the political contexts in which EC programs and systems are operating.
<p><i>Using a Systems Lens to Evaluate Early Childhood Efforts</i> Kathleen Gallagher, Jolene Johnson, Katherine Sutton</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nebraska early childhood partners, supported by the federal Preschool Development Grant Birth to Five (PDG B-5) funding, developed a strategic plan designed to increase families' access to quality early childhood services through enhanced collaboration and alignment. • A goal of the PDG B-5 evaluation is to increase capacity at the state and local level to evaluate early childhood efforts using a systems lens. • Incorporating a relational systems approach, researchers examined changes in evaluative thinking (Urban, et al., 2021) among stakeholders leading grant efforts and organizations. • Interviewed in each year of the grant about anticipated and ongoing systems change, early childhood leaders' thinking was most developed in identifying assumptions, pursuing understanding through perspective taking, and making informed decisions. • Ongoing analysis suggests that stakeholders are increasing capacity to think about applying a systems lens, including evaluative thinking, to early childhood efforts.
<p><i>Same Family, Different Emotions: Comparing Mothers and Fathers</i> Patty Kuo, Kejin Lee, Victoria Johnson, Emily Starr</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Among coupled parents with young children, marital quality shapes both mothers' and fathers' parenting experiences. Marital dissatisfaction and a negative marital emotional climate increases parenting stress and negativity in the parent-child relationship. • The additional protective and vulnerability factors impacting parenting stress and parent-child relationship are distinct between mothers and fathers.



Concurrent Session III	1:45 - 2:30 p.m.
<p><i>Communication in Toddlers with Autism Spectrum Disorders</i> Philip Lai</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two sets of children with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) were examined: a group of children who are verbal and a group of minimally verbal children. Results indicated that children who were minimally verbal did not gesture as much as their verbal peers. • When examining the parents, children who were minimally verbal with ASD required more physical contact than verbal children with ASD. This was connected to the greater negative affect being displayed by the children who were minimally verbal. • Taken together, we did observe significant differences in communicative behaviors in our two groups of children with ASD. Knowing how children communicate can provide parents with information on how best to reciprocate back to their children.
<p><i>Enhancing Preschool Teachers' Reflection on Science Teaching and Learning in the U.S. and Brazil</i> Soo-Young Hong, Yao Yao, Sarah Roberts</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preschool teachers were more likely to use higher-level reflections when provided with higher-level facilitation questions in facilitator-teacher reflection sessions (both in the U.S. and in Brazil). • Interesting differences were observed in the patterns of facilitator-teacher interactions, which may provide implications for how facilitators could engage teachers for more productive reflections. • An understanding of cultural and educational contexts provides a more insightful and meaningful interpretation of the data.
<p><i>Development of an Instructional Toolkit through Research Practice Partnership</i> Greg Welch, Kristen Cunningham, Amy Schmidtke, Dalhia Lloyd, Melissa Cleaver</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Instructional Toolkit will be designed to support teacher practices that intentionally center and leverage children's experiences. • Utilizing the framework of a Research-Practice Partnership provides a powerful approach to elevating the voice of early childhood practitioners in research. • Practitioners engaged as partners in this project will bring forth knowledge and experiences that are crucial for developing the Instructional Toolkit.
<p><i>Understanding Composing-Related Writing Opportunities in Early Childhood Classrooms</i> Clairebelle Gabas</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A diversity of composing-related writing activities was observed (e.g., writing during play, note-taking, writing notes and cards). This suggests that there is potential for teachers to leverage meaningful writing experiences within activities that are already happening in early childhood classrooms. Incorporating writing across different learning activities affords opportunities for children to write and for teachers to scaffold children's writing. • Children's opportunities to write for meaning were generally limited in scope and focus. Name writing and writing that primarily involves single words was frequently observed but may not be sufficient to promote children's composing skills. Teachers should incorporate more writing opportunities that help children to learn about and engage with different types of compositions. • Grouping configuration (e.g., whole group, small group) and activity context may matter for writing interactions. That is, teachers' supportive strategies for writing may differ according to the structure and



	content of activities and who is involved in the writing. Further investigation is needed to understand how teachers' writing practices and children's participation in writing events are facilitated by different types of activities.
<i>Understanding College Completion Factors in the Early Childhood Workforce</i> Dawn Mollenkopf, Guy Trainin, Kelley Buchheister, Anne Karabon, Marisa Macy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy, opportunity, and economic factors are influencing early childhood teachers in the workforce to enter college to complete BA degrees. Many are non-traditional students who transfer in credits from other colleges. • Little is known about which early childhood teachers thrive in four year-college programs and what conditions impact their ability to access, persist, progress, and complete these programs. • Archival data analysis of Early Childhood Inclusive Endorsement students indicate that transfer students take fewer credits per semester, take summer classes (no summer break), are more likely to stop out or drop out of college, and take longer to graduate. However, if they persist, their GPAs are similar.

Concurrent Session IV	2:45 - 3:30 p.m.
<i>Supporting Relationships with Children and Families: Outcomes from Getting Ready</i> Lisa Knoche, HyeonJin Yoon, Sandra Scruggs, Susan Sheridan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Getting Ready is an evidence-based family engagement approach comprised of eight strategies and a collaborative structure for use by educators during family contacts. Getting Ready strengthens adult-child relationships and parent-educator partnerships. For more information: https://gettingready.unl.edu/ • Getting Ready promotes positive outcomes in children and families when used across early childhood settings, including home visiting and center-based programs. Three randomized trials have provided evidence of the intervention's effectiveness. • In infant/toddler center-based programs, educators who used the Getting Ready approach showed significantly greater gains in their observed responsive caregiving practices and greater growth in parent-teacher collaboration than educators in the comparison condition.
<i>Developing Strong, Courageous Early Childhood Education Leaders</i> Debora Wisneski	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Early Childhood Education Leaders are needed now to not only guide the delivery of quality services and education to young children and families, but to also help re-examine and re-create the field of ECE at this time. • When cohorts of ECE Leaders are provided professional development on leadership through a holistic lens that includes reflecting on personal identity, building community, and employing the inquiry process, transformation in leadership was collectively achieved. • Areas of growth for leaders included: applying self-care, improved communication and relationships, confidence in leadership, promoting leadership in others, and a heightened awareness and sensitivity to diversity and inclusion issues.



<p><i>Early Childhood Coaching: Research Strengths and Needs</i> Rachel Schachter, Lisa Knoche, Molly Goldberg, Junrong Lu</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We describe a systematic review of 374 unique studies of coaching in early childhood settings (birth-3rd grade). Findings highlight the strengths of the research regarding study designs as well as the content, process, and structure of coaching. • Specifically, we identified multiple strengths of the literature base including a rising number of studies focusing on child outcomes and strong base regarding coaching to support language and literacy and social emotional development in preschool. • Findings indicate that more policies and practices should be aimed at using coaching in birth to age three settings; and the need for coaching projects to collect more information and report on coaching structure. Findings also support the need for better efforts to document coaching processes and structures.
<p><i>Kindergarten Teachers' Use of Assessments and Data</i> Amy Napoli, Rachel Schachter, Pearl Avari</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kindergarten teachers used a variety of assessment types; standardized and teacher-created were the most common. Most teachers reported assessing language/literacy and math, and few teachers reported assessing other domains. Teachers primarily used assessments to plan instruction, monitor student progress, and share information with others. • Teachers used far more assessments than what was required by their district or state. Mandated assessments are likely not meeting teachers' needs or providing them with data that they find useful when they need it. • Better aligning mandated assessments with teachers' needs may reduce the burden of assessment for both teachers and students.
<p><i>Chronicity of Household Stress and Children's Behavioral Problems during the COVID-19 Pandemic</i> Jenna Finch, Kimia Akhavein, Erika Boohar, Emily Starr, Jenna Barnes</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The ongoing COVID-19 pandemic has led to significant stress for families with young children, with implications for children's social-emotional development. • Our study shows over half of the parents of early elementary school students indicated clinical levels of depression and anxiety in Spring 2020, with a third of parents continuing to report clinical levels of mental health challenges a year later in Spring 2021. • The chronicity of parental mental health distress and household financial stress are longitudinally linked to higher levels of children's behavioral problems. • This work has important implications for the provision of social services to support parents' mental health and targeted behavioral interventions for young students whose families are most strongly impacted by the pandemic.



<p><i>Child Care Provider Well-Being in the Shadow of an Ongoing Pandemic</i> Kathleen Gallagher, Alexandra Daro</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Considering the importance of warm, responsive, supportive caregivers and care settings, and the importance of provider well-being to quality care, it has been essential to understand how the COVID-19 pandemic has impacted childcare providers and their businesses (Gallagher, Roberts & Rousseau, 2018). • Researchers collaborated with state agency and organization partners to develop and distribute three surveys during the pandemic, with efforts focused on learning how state policy shifts, increased resources, and legislative efforts might better support the workforce. • Even with access to federal and private financial assistance, providers were struggling from economic impacts to their business and physical and mental health stressors. • The 3rd Provider survey, released in early 2022, expanded questions to more deeply understand provider resilience and direct impacts of the COVID-19 virus on the lives of providers, and is intended to distinguish differential impacts of the pandemic on providers working in different setting types (center vs. home-based) and geographical locations (rural vs. urban).
<p><i>Parent and Teacher Experiences During Initial Pandemic-Related School Closures</i> Amanda Witte</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This study's purpose was to document parent and teacher experiences during the spring of 2020. • Results revealed parents' primary source of stress was their child's education. Teacher stress significantly increased following the transition to remote instruction. • This study may inform policy and practices for maintaining positive student trajectories and for supporting parents and teachers during crises. • Study results have implications for early childhood workforce development, pandemic-related teacher support, home-school partnerships development, and parent services.
<p><i>Something Had to Give During Shutdown, and It Was Schoolwork</i> Gwen Nugent, Emily Wilson</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rural parents of young children stated that during school closure, their needs, values, and priorities were often different from the schoolwork requirements and educational benchmarks set by the school. • In response to challenges like transition to remote learning, work from home, increased domestic responsibilities, and lack of access to technological resources, parents shifted priority from maintaining pre-pandemic educational progress, toward a holistic focus on social and emotional well-being. • Pandemic-related constraints fostered rural families' use of social-emotional skills, novel problem-solving strategies, openness to change, opportunities to spend time together and to build stronger family relationships.

