

*Building Bridges between
Research and Practice:
Supporting Early Childhood
Education in Connecticut*

University of Bridgeport
May 24, 2016



George introduction.

PEER's History

- In 2014, US DOE Institute of Education Sciences awarded grant to Yale, C.E.S. and EDC form an Early Childhood Research Alliance
- Goal: create the capacity for ECE research in CT that can guide policy and practice
 - Develop partnerships
 - Establish data-sharing agreements
 - Develop long-term research plan based on practitioner interests/needs
- Area of focus: Bridgeport, Norwalk, and Stamford

PEER's Collaborative Process

- In June 2015, PEER held a Research Agenda Workshop
 - Discussed possible types of research
 - Brainstormed possible research topics
 - Grouped topics around themes
 - Shared ideas and experiences
- Diverse stakeholders participated:
 - School and program administrators
 - Teachers and home care providers
 - Child advocates, policymakers, researchers



SLIDE 2

Research involving the **review and/or synthesis of existing evidence**

Literature reviews

Meta-analyses

Original research involving the **collection, analysis, and interpretation of data**

“Original” research

Data could be quantitative or qualitative

Goals of research:

To contribute to our existing knowledge

Basic and “bench” science

How does our research address gaps in the scientific literature?

To determine whether something happened or the extent to which it happened

Summative evaluation research

Was what we did effective?

To guide practice and/or policy for improving outcomes

Formative evaluation, continuous improvement, performance management

How do we use evidence to adjust practices and policies in real time?

Brainstormed Research Topics

Disparities
Compensation

Kindergarten Entry & Transitions

Pedegogy & Curriculum

Dual Language Learners

Family & Community Services

Education Policy

Teacher Training & Professional Development

Absenteeism

Data Systems & Data Use

Social Emotional and Non Cognitive Skills

Quality

Hiring & Retention

Parents & Families

Systems

PEER's Collaborative Process, cont.

- In October 2015, PEER held a follow-up session
 - Discussed and confirmed priority research topics identified at June session
 - Discussed the characteristics of researchable questions and the types of research agendas
 - Reviewed PEER's initial research questions
 - Brainstormed possible research questions
 - Shared ideas
- Again, diverse stakeholders participated

Guidelines about research questions include:

- They are reasonable – That is, exploring the research question is do-able, given time and budget
- They are appropriate – The research question or questions fits with the program or issue being studied; in this case, they questions fit with the alliance goals or purpose
- They are answerable – This means appropriate data can be gathered or found that will actually answer the question or

questions.

- They are specific – This means they include clearly defined and measurable indicators of success or the desired outcome.

Research questions come from many places–

- Issues or questions of stakeholders or the community
 - Previous research or the literature
 - Views of experts
 - Professional standards and guidelines
 - Your own experiences and views
-
- What is a research agenda?
 - Identifies research priorities and questions for group
 - Is coherent
 - Leads to rigorous and relevant research that is actionable
 - May include current or future projects

PEER's Research Topic Areas

- Program Quality, including Pedagogy & Curriculum and Teacher Training & Professional Development
- Preparing for Kindergarten Transition
- Dual language Learners/Learning, and
- Family and Community Services



SLIDE 5

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Refining PEER's Research Agenda

- In fall 2015, PEER drafted the Research Agenda
 - Management Team worked to refine questions within each topic
 - Participants from October session were asked to review and comment
 - Draft research agenda was shared with Core and Participating Members for Feedback
 - Research Agenda was released in January 2016
- Research Agenda was released in January 2016



SLIDE 6

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Proposed Five-Year Research Agenda

Program Quality, including Pedagogy & Curriculum and Teacher Training & Professional Development

1. What are the different criteria used to evaluate program quality?
2. Which program quality criteria appear to be most predictive of child outcomes?
3. What professional development models or practices are associated with positive outcomes for children, families and teachers?

1. Literature review
2. Literature review
3. Literature review or meta-analysis
4. Case study or descriptive study using focus groups or survey
5. Literature review

Proposed Five-Year Research Agenda

Program Quality, including Pedagogy & Curriculum and Teacher Training & Professional Development, cont.

4. How are early learning programs supporting teachers? (e.g. professional development, continued formal education, pay, benefits, mentoring)
5. What instructional practices are associated with improved child outcomes across ECE domains and across diverse groups?

1. Literature review
2. Literature review
3. Literature review or meta-analysis
4. Case study or descriptive study using focus groups or survey
5. Literature review

Proposed Five-Year Research Agenda

Preparing for the Kindergarten Transition

1. How can we quantify children's performance in early language, cognition, social-emotional development, physical development and health, early math, early science and creative arts domains?
2. In order to succeed in elementary school, with what skills should children enter kindergarten in the early language, cognition, social-emotional development, physical development and health, early math, early science and creative arts domains?
3. How are our children performing in the early language, cognition, social-emotional development, physical development and health, early math, early science and creative arts domains?

1. Literature review
2. Literature review
3. Analysis of existing data
4. Original research
5. Literature review or original research

Proposed Five-Year Research Agenda

Preparing for the Kindergarten Transition, cont.

4. To what extent is early childhood education quality related to preparedness for kindergarten or progress toward preparedness for kindergarten?
5. What are promising systemic or programmatic practices for closing performance gaps among diverse students?

1. Literature review
2. Literature review
3. Analysis of existing data
4. Original research
5. Literature review or original research

Proposed Five-Year Research Agenda

Dual Language Learners

1. What are promising assessment practices for DLL children birth to 8?
2. What are promising instructional practices for DLL children birth to 8?
3. What are promising practices for training teachers to work with DLL children birth to 8?
4. What are promising practices for partnering with families of DLL children birth to 8?
5. What are our communities doing to partner with families of DLL children birth to 8? Which practices are associated with positive child outcomes?



SLIDE 11

1. Literature review
2. Literature review
3. Literature review
4. Literature review
5. Original research--mixed methods

Proposed Five-Year Research Agenda

Family and Community Services

1. How are family support service providers (housing, food, healthcare) being connected with public schools and other ECE providers?
2. What are promising practices in coordinating family support services for families with young learners?
3. To what extent are family support services (housing, food, healthcare) associated with child outcomes?
4. How are school districts collaborating with community-based programs to ensure access to family and community services for DLLs, children with special needs, etc. before kindergarten entry?

1. Original research—Descriptive study based on interviews, focus groups or surveys
2. Literature review
3. Literature review
4. Original research—Descriptive study based on interviews, focus groups or surveys

Next steps

- Achieve goals of IES grant
 - Establish research alliance
 - Develop research agenda
 - Address PEER's initial research aims
- Continue to pursue funding to support ongoing research, as outlined in Research Agenda
 - PEER will request support of member organizations when making grant applications

To understand children's school readiness as measured by the Connecticut Kindergarten Entrance Inventory (KEI).

To understand the use of assessment tools in the preschool setting early childhood education.

To understand which teacher- and school-level factors predict kindergarten performance.

For more information, visit PEER at:

<http://peer.yale.edu>



Superintendents Panel

Dr. Steven Adamowski, Norwalk Public Schools
James Connelly, Stamford Public School
Fran Rabinowitz, Bridgeport Public Schools

**Moderator: Bob Rader, Connecticut Association
of Boards of Education**

