

## *Early Care & Education Workforce Development Initiatives: Program Design, Implementation, and Outcomes*

### *Final Report: Evaluation of the Arkansas Early Childhood Professional Development System (AECPPDS)*

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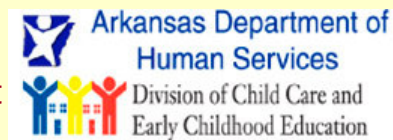
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## Setting the Stage

- **Context:** the Arkansas Early Childhood Professional Development System (AECPPDS).
- **History:** Started in 1997 as a Head Start Collaboration project with the Division of Child Care and Early Childhood Education.



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## Purpose of AECPDS Evaluation

- To assess AECPDS components to determine their impact on outcomes for ECE professionals and their quality of care for children.
- To build the capacity of DCCECE and AECPDS to gather evaluative data over time to continuously assess the impact of quality improvement initiatives.
- To determine the implications of this research for policy and practice.

## AECPDS Components

- Registries—Practitioner, Trainer, and Training
- SPECTRUM
- Training Programs
- Providers of Professional Development Opportunities
- Practitioners
- Overall System

## AECPDS Logic Model

- Created through iterative process with AECPDS stakeholders
- Graphic depiction of AECPDS' flow of inputs, activities, outputs, and outcomes
- Initial step in AECPDS evaluation—provides framework for developing research questions
- See AECPDS Logic Model in Executive Summary



## Types of Research Questions

- **Formative**... help to improve program (i.e., assesses the program design and implementation to determine if the activities and outputs are occurring as planned; such questions are answered routinely so that program improvements can be made).
- **Summative**...help to establish if the program works as planned (i.e., the program produces the outcomes and impact intended; such questions help to determine the value and worth of a program based on its results).

## Research Design—Creating Focus

- Specifies parts of the program to evaluate.
- Identifies the information stakeholders want to know.
- Determines how the information will be used.
- Establishes priorities.
- Recognizes limitations.
- See Research Design in Executive Summary – Appendix 1



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## Research Questions--Registry

- To what extent do the AECPDS registries meet the standards of model registries within the early childhood education field?
- What is the level of satisfaction of practitioners and trainers with the structure and processes of the AECPDS registries?
- To what extent do practitioners use the Training Registry to find out about professional development opportunities?

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## Research Questions--SPECTRUM

- Does the SPECTRUM provide a useful roadmap for practitioners to advance as an ECE professional, in terms of practitioner awareness, availability of training\*, and quality of the career lattice?

\* This question could not be addressed due to limitations of the Training Registry database.

## Training Programs

- What difference have the AECPDS training programs made in the quality of ECE programs in the state, with respect to the rate of completion, retention in the field, and movement up the career lattice?

## Providers of Professional Development

- Do the professional development opportunities offered through AECPPDS training providers match with the PD needs of practitioners?\*
- How effective is the system that evaluates the quality of training/professional development opportunities offered?

\* This question could not be addressed due to limitations of the Training Registry database.

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## Practitioners

- What factors influence the choices that practitioners make when selecting PD offerings?
- What are the outcomes for practitioners who participate in AECPPDS, with respect to completion of AECPPDS training programs and retention in the field?\*

\* Note the question about AECPPDS training programs overlap with the question about outcomes for practitioners.

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## Overall System

- Has AECPPDS made a difference in the way practitioners work with children and families, with respect to quality of care in ECE classrooms, quality of ECE program administration, and the quality of family partnerships in ECE programs?

## Data Collection Methods

- Registry Assessment Tool
- Process Improvement Consultation
- Practitioner and Trainer Surveys
- Practitioner Focus Groups
- Key Informant Interviews
- Content Analysis of Training Programs

## Data Collection Methods

- Training Registry Database
- Content Analysis of Practitioner Transcripts
- Standards & Best Practices for Assessing Trainers and PD Opportunities
- Environment Rating Scales (ECERS-R, ITTERS-R, SACERS, and FCDRS)
- Caregiver Interaction Scale (CIS)
- Program Administration Scale (PAS)

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## Results—Overall System

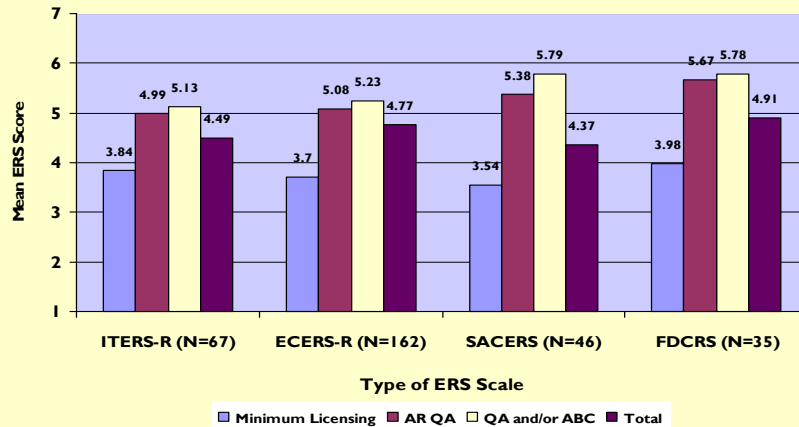
- Outcome measures—ERS, CIS, PAS data
- A number of significant differences on these measures
- Differences by quality level—e.g., minimum licensing, QA only, and QA and/or ABC
- Differences by type of center—e.g., for-profit, private nonprofit, public nonprofit, and college/public school
- See attached tables and graphs

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## ERS Data (see Table 29)

Figure 4: Environment Rating Scale Scores by Quality Level



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## Implications from ERS Data

- Minimum licensing—only had 2 of the possible 27 subscale scores across all ERS instruments in the 5's
- QA only and QA and/or ABC—only had 4 scores out of possible 54 across all ERS instruments in the 3's
- Points to content areas where additional evidence should be placed for training/education (e.g., personal care routines).

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## CIS Data

- Not the same level of consistent **significant** differences across quality levels
- But expected direction of scores exists—e.g., teachers in higher quality level programs are more likely to have CIS scores falling in the “good” range
- Cognitive and socio-emotional subscales: even the QA only and QA and/or ABC do not fare well on these; therefore implications for training/education (Table 36)

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## PAS Data

- Staffing patterns and turnover significantly different at centers differentiated by quality level and type of center—i.e., fewer part-time staff and lower turnover in the QA and/or ABC programs (Table 40 and Figure 9)
- Overall PAS scores significantly higher in QA only and QA and/or ABC programs (Table 41)

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## PAS—Family Partnerships

- Two items in PAS used to assess family partnerships: Family Communication and Family Support/Involvement
- Table 43 shows mean scores and significant differences
- Significant differences among programs by quality level (e.g., higher quality levels have higher family partnership scores), as do public nonprofit centers.
- Family support/involvement, on average, fares better than family communication

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## Implications from PAS Data

- Staffing items had lowest scores on PAS for all quality levels—particularly for the administrative staff (see Figure 11)
- All scores, regardless of quality level, fell between 1.58 (minimum licensing score for administrators) to 3.42 (QA and/or ABC score for lead teachers)
- All quality level centers do best in areas of technology and family support/involvement
- Highest scores by QA and /or ABC for screening for special needs (6.69) and assessment in support of learning (6.55)

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## Registry Operations

- Table 7 shows results from the assessment of AEC PDS registries, using the Registry Assessment Tool
- Strengths of registries:
  - Infrastructure in place with the development of their web-based Practitioner, Trainer, and Training Registries
  - Administrative organization has number of written policies, procedures and practices in place
  - Administrative office making progress in establishing stable set of staff that are cross-trained

## Registries— Opportunities for Improvement

- **Functionality and accuracy of registry databases**
  - Training titles and hours not consistent within databases and on transcripts
  - Degrees, endorsements, certifications, and credentials are not listed on transcripts
  - Transcripts had same training more than once on transcripts
  - Training Registry does not have consistent method of listing multiple session SPECTRUM training
  - Analysis of 885 transcripts resulted in 1129 instances of anomalies (as noted above)—this is an average of 1.3 problems per transcript

## Registries— Opportunities for Improvement

- **Guidelines for membership in AECPDS registries**
  - Only 21.9% of practitioners completed required 15 hours of training each year and only 31.3 % had training activity every year (based on transcript analysis)
  - Between 20.4%-36.7% of trainers did not know about the various responsibilities of verified trainers (based on Trainer Survey)
- **Training organization access to database to run reports**
  - Training organizations maintain their own separate account of training delivered and practitioner completion of training programs (based on Key Informant interviews)
  - Duplication of record keeping is non-value added work, which is a result of lack of administrative access to registry databases, as well as the structural and accuracy issues of databases

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## Practitioners & Practitioner Registry

- Satisfaction with Practitioner Registry ranged between 7.06 and 8.01 (on scale of 1 to 10)
- Most satisfied with ability to obtain transcript (8.01). Least satisfied with time it takes to post training (7.06) and accuracy of training record (7.12)
- Awareness of Practitioner Registry requirements and use of on-line features is low (based on responses to these questions were from approximately 50% of respondents)

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## Practitioners & Training Registry

- Use of Training Registry as source of information about training is low, compared to other sources of information (4.91 on frequency of use scale of 1 to 10)
- Satisfaction with Training Registry ranged between 6.57 and 8.01 on a scale of 1 to 10

## Practitioners & Training Registry

- Least satisfied with:
  - Scheduling and availability of PD opportunities (e.g., location = 6.67; date = 7.11; topics = 7.28)
  - Ability to provide feedback to Registry staff about availability of training (7.26)
- Most satisfied with:
  - Ability to provide feedback to Training Registry staff regarding: quality of trainers (8.01); quality of training (7.99); registering for training events (7.80)
  - Ease in registering for training events (7.64) and accuracy of information about training events (7.64)

## Practitioners & Professionalism

- Practitioner involvement in AECPPDS and their PD goals:
  - 73.4% indicated that SPECTRUM helps them understand how to move through career lattice;
  - 66.6% indicated they would become member of Registry if not required
  - 39.1% indicated plans to advance in career role
  - 37.9% indicated plans to increase involvement in ECE professional organizations
- Low level of awareness of SPECTRUM's features (5.39-6.26) and its usefulness in advancing as ECE professional (6.17)

## Trainers & Training Registry

- Satisfaction with Training Registry ranged between 7.02 and 8.34, on scale of 1 to 10
- Least satisfied with amount of information provided on-line about each training (7.02) and process to modify training information once it is listed (7.24)
- Most satisfied with ability of practitioner to register on-line (8.34) and ability to view preliminary training rosters (8.06) and evaluations (8/04)\*
- Low frequency of use by trainers (on scale of 1 to 10) of the various Training Registry capabilities (e.g., review evaluations on-line, 5.39; review practitioner registrations on-line, 6.30; check on-line listing of training for accuracy, 6.58)

\*However, only 26 (26.5%) of trainers responded to this item about viewing evaluations on-line.

## Trainers and Trainer Registry

- Satisfaction with Trainer Registry ranged between 6.17 and 8.67, on scale of 1 to 10
- Higher levels of satisfaction with 5 of the 7 trainer responsibilities (7.94-8.67), trainer levels (8.15), and all the criteria for trainer verification (7.84-8.25)
- Least satisfied with:
  - Responsibility to submit renewals as required (6.27); 15-hour annual PD requirement (7.36)
  - Registry follow-up (6.17)
  - Time to process application (6.25)
  - Ease of completion of application (6.25)
  - Amount of information required on application (7.11)

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## Training Programs

- Completion of SPECTRUM training programs was low—only 26.7% of practitioners completed one or more (based on transcript analysis)
- Programs most likely completed: AR Children’s Program Administrator Orientation, Child Care Orientation Training, and Pre-K ELLA
- Movement up career lattice low—only 13% of practitioners completed additional training programs
- AECPPDS competency areas C1-C3 in areas of child development and developmentally appropriate practices most covered in SPECTRUM training programs; C4-C9 not as frequently addressed

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## Providers of PD Opportunities

- AEC PDS system for assessment of trainers in place (80% of standards and best practices fully or partially met)
- AEC PDS system for assessing SPECTRUM training and other registered training not in place (89% - 100% of standards and best practices not met)
- See Table 27

## Results—What is Working?

- Committed network of professionals
- Positive outcomes related to ERS, CIS, and PAS assessments\*
- Core set of training developed
- Registry infrastructure in place



\* See attached tables and figures

## Results—What is Working?

- Career lattice established in the SPECTRUM
- Cross-system efforts initiated
- Established capacity for future data collection and process improvement

## Recommendations

- **Registries:**
  - Use consistently the SPECTRUM training titles and number of hours for each training
  - Develop standardized method of registering multi-session training
  - Include degrees, endorsements, certificates and credentials earned on transcripts
  - Use Registry data for reports regarding the delivery of PD opportunities and needs of ECE workforce
  - Establish more incentives and/or requirements for becoming a member of the Practitioner Registry

## Recommendations

- **Registries:**

- Practitioner and Trainer Registries to reflect “active” practitioners and trainers
- Division to provide direction to Registry office to further streamline operations and work to meet the standards and best practices identified



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## Recommendations

- **SPECTRUM:**

- Develop clearer guidelines and decision rules used to place practitioner at a level
- Continue outreach to practitioners and trainers to increase awareness and benefits of the system
- Explore avenues for more practitioners to take on leadership roles

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## Recommendations

- **SPECTRUM:**

- Use ERS, CIS, and PAS data—especially subscale scores—to identify content areas where additional training and education are needed

## Recommendations

- **Cross-system efforts**

- Address the issue of dual professional development systems for some ECE practitioners—e.g., the Department of Education’s ECE Works registry
- Find avenues/possibilities for data transfer, rather than duplicate, parallel systems operating

## Recommendations

- **Data collection and process improvement:**
  - Assess evaluation findings and determine what is doable, along with the short-term vs. long-term strategic objectives
  - Develop cycle to collect ERS, CIS, and PAS data to document changes over time
  - Continue to support the process improvement work

## Conclusions

- Number of strengths and positive outcomes already in place
- Arkansas is moving in right direction
- Number of identified areas where improvements are to be made
- Can move to the level where it needs to be to have the fullest impact on positive outcomes for ECE professionals and children

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