Creating Research that Informs State Child Care Policy:

Building and Maintaining Child Care Research Partnerships

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About the Child Care Research Partnership Residency Roundtable

In January of 2001, 21 participants representing state administrative staff, child care practitioners, and university-based researchers worked together in Warrenton, Virginia, on the topic of child care research partnerships. Participants included:

- Diane Adams, University of Wisconsin/Extension, Madison, Wisconsin
- Steve BeMiller, Illinois Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies, Bloomington, Illinois
- Sherry Campanelli, Rhode Island Department of Human Services, Cranston, Rhode Island
- Elizabeth Davis, Department of Applied Economics, University of Minnesota, St. Paul, Minnesota
- Patricia Divine, Child Care Bureau, Washington, D.C.
- Arthur Emlen, Regional Research Institute for Human Services, Portland State University, Portland, Oregon
- George Hagenauer, Community Coordinated Child Care 4-C Resource and Referral Agency, Madison, Wisconsin
- Anita Larson, Hennepin County Children & Family Services Department, Minneapolis, Minnesota
- Ivelisse Martinez-Beck, Child Care Bureau, Washington, D.C.
- Lana Messner, Kansas Association of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies, Wichita, Kansas
- Erin Oldham, Muskie School of Public Service, University of Southern Maine, Portland, Maine
- Lee Parker, Family Focus, Brunswick Maine
- Mary Roach, University of Wisconsin/Extension, Madison, Wisconsin
- Madelyn Schultz, Child Care Bureau, Washington, D.C.
- Karen Tvedt, Child Care Bureau, Washington, D.C.
- Catherine Walsh, Rhode Island KIDS COUNT, Providence, Rhode Island
- Rosetta Wangerin, Oregon Department of Human Services, Salem, Oregon
- Roberta Weber, Family Resources and Education, Linn-Benton Community College, Albany, Oregon
- Avisia Whiteman, Minnesota Department of Children, Families & Learning, Roseville, Minnesota
- Ann Witte, Department of Economics, Wellesley College, Wellesley, Massachusetts

About the Residency Roundtables

A Residency Roundtable is a strategy designed to support cross-state learning and research development. Researchers, state staff, and practitioners from different states come together for three days of shared learning and problem solving related to issues on which Oregon partners and invitees bring expertise. The Roundtables help increase understanding of a critical policy-issue.

About the Oregon Child Care Research Partnership

The Oregon Child Care Research Partnership has more than 10 years of experience working together on policy-focused research. Researchers from two major state universities work with staff administering the state child care programs. Other partners include staff from a community college’s family support program, the Oregon Child Care Resource and Referral Network, the Oregon Progress Board, the Head Start Child Care Collaboration Project, Department of Education, the Career Development Center, the National Association of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies, and Parent Voices, a group working to involve parents in child care policy-making. Working with the Child Care Bureau, other federal...
offices who provide leadership on child care, Consortium partnerships, and other national organizations, the Oregon Partnership facilitates sharing and dissemination of knowledge about key child care issues.

About the Child Care Policy Research Consortium

The Child Care Policy Research Consortium is an initiative of the Child Care Bureau in the Administration on Children, Youth and Families, Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/ccb/research/ccprc/index.htm#idxov). In its unique approach to policy-relevant research, the Consortium brings together federally funded research partnerships, other researchers, state child care administrative staff, and child care practitioners.

This paper is a product of the Oregon Child Care Research Partnership, which is supported in part by the Child Care Bureau in the Administration for Children, Youth and Families, Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.
Introduction

Well-informed child care policy decisions call for a marriage of experience and research. Experience brings rich understanding of history, values, priorities, and know-how in dealing with policy and service environments. In a 1998 survey of 47 state child care administrators, practical experience and political realities were reported as the major sources of influence on their policy decisions (Elliot, Emlen, Tvedt, and Weber, 1999). Research studies, while recognized as valuable and objective potential sources of information, received limited consideration in policy-making by state child care administrators. Inability to access or conduct research relevant to the policy questions faced was cited as the major barrier to the use of research.

Building child care research partnerships that bring together the resources and expertise of stakeholders is a promising strategy for strengthening policy-relevant state-level and cross-state research. Commonly, partnerships include stakeholders such as state child care administrators, university researchers, child care practitioners, parents, and advocacy groups. Partnerships define a shared research agenda. They maximize resources by utilizing existing state administrative data and child care resource and referral data. Additionally, many partnerships collect survey and observational data.

Currently, nine research partnerships composed of policy-makers, practitioners, and researchers are conducting research with the support of the Child Care Bureau and other funders. The Child Care Bureau began funding such partnerships in 1995 with the goal of improving policy-relevant research and assisting policy-makers in their use of research. These partnerships, representing 20 states, are providing information on the demand for subsidized child care, utilization patterns, elements of parent choice, effects of welfare reform, and the quality of care. Three partnerships focus on statewide issues, one focuses on the city of Chicago, and five partnerships represent cross-state efforts (see Appendix for complete list of Child Care Partnerships sponsored by the Child Care Bureau).

In January of 2001, 21 research partnership members came together for a Residency Roundtable, a three day in-depth discussion of how partners can work together to produce objective, valid, and reliable information on which policy can be built and progress monitored. Representatives of seven of the nine partnerships involved in the Child Care Policy Research Consortium participated. The participants included state child care administrators from Illinois, Minnesota, Oregon, and Rhode Island, and university researchers from Maine, Massachusetts, Minnesota, Oregon, and Wisconsin. Practitioners and advocates represented the states of Kansas, Illinois, Oregon, Rhode Island, and Wisconsin. The Roundtable began with a discussion of individual projects and proceeded to an articulation of lessons learned. This paper represents the wealth of information gathered at the Roundtable. It is designed to inform individuals about current practice of child care research partnerships and to promote and support emerging partnerships.
The research being pursued by the nine Child Care Research Partnerships is clustered in key areas:

Quality and child outcomes

- How strongly do the effects of neighborhood, family, and child care factors relate to child outcomes?
- How does the quality, continuity, availability, and cost of child care relate to family characteristics and to child outcomes?
- What are the dynamic relationships among the level of flexibility in home, work, and caregiving arrangements and parental perceptions of quality?

Child care workforce

- What are the characteristics of the child care workforce?
- What are the characteristics of the child care workforce among providers who accept families eligible for child care subsidies and those who do not?

Child care supply and demand

- How does the provision of child care subsidies impact the market for child care in terms of supply, price, and quality?
- What is the availability and distribution of subsidized care for low-income families in different states and communities?

Supporting families

- How do child care subsidies and family support policies affect the economic self-sufficiency of low-income families?
- How do subsidies affect family outcomes in terms of earnings or employment stability?

(See Appendix for a more complete list of major research questions of the Child Care Partnerships sponsored by the Child Care Bureau.)
Reflections of a Residency Roundtable

Current Practice

There is no one model of how partnerships organize; each grows out of its own unique context. Partnerships differ in how they are organized, who is the “lead,” and the research questions and methods they are using. The vision and energy to start a research partnership can come from any one of the stakeholder groups. Participants in research partnerships are state administrators, child care practitioners, parents, and researchers. They bring different perspectives and skills yet strive for shared understanding and common purpose. In the normal course of things, child care administrators tend not to use research, child care practitioners fail to see the big picture that research informs, and researchers often ask the wrong questions. Working as a partnership enhances the relevance, strength, and credibility of research products. The core value in a research partnership is respect for the unique contributions, views, and vital interests of all parties. The core focus is on generating research that is relevant to child care policy.

Reasons to Participate in a Child Care Research Partnership

The collaboration involved in research partnerships is demanding. It requires communication among partners at every stage of the research process, from design and data collection to analysis and interpretation of findings and finally to dissemination, publication, and reporting to the public. As Shankoff (2000) explains, science, policy, and practice represent three related yet distinct cultures. Consortium partnerships often engage yet another culture—that of the families for whom the services are designed. Partnerships require individuals to bridge these cultural differences. Partners must commit to understanding the strengths and limitations of each other’s knowledge and expertise. The benefits of this hard work are many. In addition to the primary goal of providing quality, credible, and timely policy-focused research, research partnerships are creating understanding between stakeholders and building the child care data and research capacity at the state and national level.

The research resulting from research partnerships differs significantly from other research in that it brings together the expertise from a variety of disciplines and individuals (Chopyak, 1999). Parents, child care practitioners, and state child care administrators bring understanding and insight about child care based on knowledge and experience grounded in how policies and programs affect children and families. State administrative and resource and referral staff bring access to data sets. Both insight and access to data are key to ensuring that the most important issues are addressed.

Parents Can Improve the Quality of Research Efforts

The “Mothers Group” advises the Harvard Project on Human Development in Chicago Neighborhoods research teams. This group of mothers has met regularly with researchers Maya Carlson and Tony Earls throughout the design and implementation stages of this multifaceted longitudinal research project.

In Oregon, the Policy Council advised Arthur Emlen throughout his research on Quality of Child Care from a Parent’s Point of View. Parents reviewed and critiqued survey instruments and helped interpret survey findings.
One of the major benefits of a research partnership is the relevance of the research questions. Lack of relevance to the issues with which they deal was the major reason given by state child care administrators when they were asked why they did not use research findings to inform their decision making (Elliot et al., 1999). Researchers bring knowledge of how to articulate questions so that valid and reliable findings can be generated. They also bring the methods needed to answer questions. The objective methods and independence of university researchers add to the credibility of the findings. The great strength of partnerships is found in the marriage of these diverse kinds of knowledge, expertise, and experience. Out of this marriage flows the articulation of important, relevant questions which research can help answer.

Relationships are enhanced when nontraditional partners share perspectives, agendas, and limitations as they work toward common goals. Parents and practitioners become partners, not just a source of data. As understandings and trust develop, individuals begin to push the envelope and generate new ideas, new programs, and new funding opportunities. The shared sense of investment and accomplishment strengthens collaboration and benefits the child care system as a whole.

Data are collected by many state agencies and local R&Rs in the course of operating programs. Resources are maximized and duplication minimized when these data are utilized to answer important policy questions (in addition to their use for client eligibility and program evaluation). Assessing and improving existing data and transforming it into a format that can be analyzed are key projects of child care research partnerships. As the Joint Center for Poverty Research’s Advisory Panel on Research Use of Administrative Data noted, partnerships are important if “both the development and quality of administrative data for research is to be assured and improved in the coming years” (Hotz, Goerge, Balzekas, and Margolin, 1998). Linking administrative data sets from different agencies increases the power of the data. Linking enables partnerships to address important policy issues. For example, when subsidy data is linked with TANF and Unemployment Insurance data partnerships can identify associations between employment, subsidy use, and enrollment in TANF. The addition of R&R data makes it possible to see associations of the child care supply with parental patterns of employment and child care usage.

Efforts of cross-state partnerships to develop consistent data across state lines are increasing our research infrastructure. Development of common data definitions and methods and the application of these to administrative data provide state and regional pictures of child care. States can then compare findings. The ability to compare findings across states increases an individual state’s understanding of its own child care programs. Similarities and differences in policy can be examined, as can exploration of the same issue in different social, political, and cultural contexts. The creation of a body of research that can validly be compared across states also begins the building of a national child care picture. Over time, trends can be identified. Partners from the six New

### Benefits of a Child Care Research Partnership

- Provides timely, respected, and relevant research
- Improves policy-making by providing solid information
- Engages stakeholders
- Develops a shared language among partners
- Builds cooperation, coalitions, and relationships
- Provides a holistic approach to complex problems
- Provides opportunities to leverage resources
- Improves use of existing data resources
- Improves data infrastructure
England states are working together collecting and analyzing data that will help address the critical issues of developing and maintaining a qualified early childhood workforce. The Midwest Child Care Research Consortium, coordinated by the Center on Children, Family and the Law at the University of Nebraska, features both similar and different approaches to state-specific research within identified cross state themes. Even a single state partnership is likely to want to participate in cross-state studies to put their state findings in context.

**Common Challenges for Child Care Research Partnerships**

Major characteristics of child care research partnerships are the involvement of individuals from different fields, shared identification of research questions, the utilization of existing administrative data, and the production of research that informs policy. Each represents challenges as well as benefits.

**Development and Maintenance of the Collaborative Relationship**

Successfully involving individuals from different fields in a shared endeavor requires a commitment to developing and maintaining collaborative relationships. When professional values and life experiences differ, collaboration is not a simple thing to accomplish. Each member of the partnership brings to the table her or his own set of skills, needs, and constraints. For example, the incentives and priorities for a state administrator differ from those for a university researcher. Failure to identify and consider each person’s needs and perspectives can result in misunderstandings and mis-steps. Important issues to consider include:

- How will the group move beyond self-interest to common understandings and to a vision of what might be?
- How will decisions be made that take into consideration different incentives and priorities?
- How will the partnership facilitate smooth communication for all members throughout the research process from inception to dissemination and follow-up?
- What will the products be?
- How will credit be given for authorship, work, and participation?
- Are the organizations committed to the partnership, or is the commitment limited to only one of its members?
- Who has authority to speak or sign off on behalf of participating organizations?
- Which decisions will be made by the group and which will be made by persons with expertise in different areas?

Maintaining the partnership over the long term through funding and staff changes is a major hurdle. Relationships are the cornerstone of research partnerships; the loss of a key individual can set the partnership back as new relationships are developed.

**Identification of Research Projects**

Given that identification of important and relevant research topics and questions is a major strength of child care research partnerships, it follows that full engagement of members in identification of the questions is a major challenge. Parents, practitioners, and state child care administrators may have limited expertise regarding research methodology. State adminis-
Administrators know better than anyone else what data means to those who collected it and why it was collected, and they can always add to a researcher’s understanding from that perspective. Researchers often know little about child care policy or the working of a large state agency or the legislature. It takes respect on everyone’s part to take advantage of the knowledge and expertise of each player. This respect and patience with one another is probably most critical at the stage of identification of research questions. For example, the Wisconsin Research Partnership found that it took identification of the “right” research questions by all partners including university researchers, state subsidy staff, and child care resource and referral staff in order to move forward.

Use of Existing Data

State agencies and child care resource and referral organizations collect data in order to operate programs. Before these partnering organizations turn over their data for research use, they will need to know:

- How will confidentiality of individuals be protected?
- Who will get the data and when?
- Who will have access to the data?
- What are acceptable uses for the data?
- How will the process ensure review of the findings throughout the research process?

Turning these data into a usable format for research is one of the first major challenges confronting the research partnership. The partnership will need to address the following:

- What is the level of analysis (i.e., individual, county, zip, planning districts)?
- How will the data be made ready for analysis?
- Can data from different sources be integrated?

Another major set of issues revolves around creation of public use data sets. Researchers need to consider archiving final data sets or otherwise ensure that their work contributes to the general body of child care research and is easily accessible by future investigators. Issues of privacy and confidentiality must be resolved before state administrators and R&R agencies agree to the creation of public use data sets. In addition, the partnership will have to identify who will pay the costs involved in getting the data ready to be shared with other researchers.

Dissemination

Research takes time, and policy-makers want information yesterday. What strategies will be employed in order to get information to decision makers in a timely manner? There is no greater test of a research partnership than when findings are reported to the public. At a moment filled with great time pressures, many issues are faced. These include:

- Is there a shared understanding of the meaning of the findings?
- How can you ensure that all partners are on board for the release of the findings?
- How do you ensure that no collaborator, sponsor, or official within a collaborating organization will be caught by surprise?
- How will you ensure that findings are credible and any policy recommendations or advocacy are plausibly related to the findings?

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National Child Care Research Collaboration and Archive

The Child Care Bureau funded the development of a National Child Care Research Collaboration and Archive. The goals for the CCRCA are:

1. to improve access to child care data
2. to facilitate the use of research findings by policy-makers, practitioners, parents, and other stakeholders.

More information is available on their Web site: http://www.acf.dhhs.gov/programs/cb/research
How can the results be presented that will garner attention without overly simplifying or overstating the findings?

What procedures will be followed if the results show a member organization in a bad light?

**Special Challenges of Research Across States**

When research and research partners cross state borders, an additional layer of challenges is created. Child care policies, practices, and data vary across states (Collins, Layzer, Wener, Glantz, and Kreader, 2002; Meyers et al., 2002). This variation creates opportunities for naturally occurring experiments. Policy-makers are interested in associating differences in policies and practices with differences in populations served, services delivered, and outcomes. Much can be learned from comparison of research findings across states if researchers are careful to ensure consistency and comparability.

Special care is needed when researchers use administrative data from more than one state. Variables may appear to be comparable and actually have different meanings. For instance, states vary in which income sources are included in household income. Types of care that are regulated in one state are not in another. Thus, household income and regulated child care are examples of variables that can appear to be comparable when they are not.
Guiding Principles for Creating and Reporting Research in a Research Partnership

Ann Collins and Arthur Emlen headed a committee of the Child Care Policy Research Consortium that drafted the following guiding principles for building collaborative research (personal communication October 31, 2001).

**In General**

The research process should be respectful of each party’s knowledge, expertise, code of conduct, and institutional responsibilities.

**Planning the Research**

In the initial stage of the research, the partnership should come together and come to an agreement on the different needs of each of the partners, the role of the research funders, research questions, data sources, and analysis and dissemination plans.

- The roles and expectations of the partners should be made clear, including those of the funders. (In some cases, funders are also research partners.) An initial discussion among the partners can help identify the partners’ potentially multiple needs for research findings with national, state, and/or local implications, as well as the need for the research to be relevant to different constituencies. It is the responsibility of the lead researcher to ensure that other research partners understand all of these expectations for the research. These discussions can foster the development of the research in ways that make it relevant at local, state, and national levels and to multiple audiences.

- Research questions should be developed jointly so that the answers will be informative to policy-makers, practitioners, and families. The data sources and even the variables should be reviewed by all parties, each of whom has an important perspective to contribute. Policy-makers and practitioners can bring insights regarding the data sets or the research subjects necessary to ensure that the right questions are being asked and the right data are being used. Families bring vital knowledge. They have access to privileged information about their lives and their child; and families have the most enduring investment in the well-being of their children. Researchers can determine whether the data are sufficient to answer the research questions or if different questions need to be formulated.

- Researchers need to ensure that all team members have a conceptual understanding of the methodology to be used.

- The audiences for research should be identified as well as the number and format of reports. Different types of publications are frequently used to communicate to different audiences, including short, clearly presented policy briefs, longer reports, and interagency memoranda. Refereed journal publications include a peer review process and facilitate communication with the broader research community, but require lengthy timelines.

- A timeline for the research should be developed and agreed upon. The timeline needs to allow for input from all parties during design and analysis of the data as well as in review of draft reports, yet ensure that research will be released in a timely fashion.

- At the onset of the research, after thorough discussion, principal investigators and other partners should make explicit mutual commitment to reach consensus on the
meaning and validity of research findings
and their wording. Although principal
investigators customarily have final respon-
sibility for the language or research reports,
they also have an obligation to elicit the
thinking of other partners.

Data Collection and Analysis
Collaborative research is enhanced by
frequent communication as the data sets are
established and reviewed, key variables are
selected, analysis is conducted, and early
findings are reported. The research partners
should determine the appropriate points in
time to come together and review progress to
date. A key time to come together is after data
have been assembled and early analysis has
been done.

Development of Reports and
Other Products
Ample time, agreed upon in advance, needs
to be included in the research process for
review of all drafts by all funders and research
partners. To ensure that research is released in a
timely fashion, there is an expectation that, in
many cases, the review periods are short,
typically 30 days. It is the responsibility of the
researcher to solicit feedback from the other
research partners as early in the process as
possible. It is the experience of the research
partners that in cases where there is concern
about the wording of findings, it is possible to
find wording that maintains the accuracy of the
findings yet avoids misleading connotations
and puts the findings in a more appropriate
policy and program context.

Dissemination of Reports
The dissemination plan should take into
account any sensitivities that might be affected
by the research findings, as well as the potential
relevance of those findings for other states and
communities. It may be important to reach out
to key policy-makers who may not be involved
in the research, providing them with advance
notice of reports and their contents and the
implication of findings for families and chil-
dren. This is critical if the findings have impli-
cations for any of the partner organizations.
If a research report is likely to be perceived
as having wide policy implications or political
relevance, then before it is released publicly
investigators should consider circulating em-
bargoed copies to colleagues who may be asked
to comment on the research.
If findings are reported, multiple audiences
can be reached through stand-alone executive
summaries and policy briefs directed to the
specific needs, questions, and concerns of
various groups. Electronic media are also used
to release reports quickly.
Conclusion

How are welfare families selecting different types of child care? How are these decisions related to children’s growth and development? Who provides care for children whose care is subsidized? How well does the child care system serve special populations? States are charged with assessing and developing policies and programs to meet the needs of their own populations. They face unprecedented pressure to use their dollars effectively and show that their expenditures result in positive outcomes for families and children. Research is critical to understanding these complex issues in order to help guide decisions and to inform policy debate.

Current research partnerships are strengthening research capacity at the state and national level. Research partnerships require that individuals and organizations develop new ways of working together. The outcomes of this work have included adaptation and expansion of administrative data, greater compatibility among data sets, greater understanding among partners, and most importantly better understanding of the effects of state and local policy on families. Opportunities for new partnerships can be found at the state and local level. Much work remains to be done in providing the information needed to build a child care system that meets the needs of children, families, and communities. Building and maintaining child care research partnerships is a strategy that provides relevant, timely findings that inform state and local child care policy-making.
References


Appendix

Child Care Research Partnerships Sponsored by the Child Care Bureau

California Child Care Research Partnership

**Grantee:** California Child Care Resource and Referral Network


**Major Research Questions:**

1. How is the availability of licensed child care changing as state governments in California and Florida seek to expand supply?

2. What is the impact of these changes on the overall quality of licensed child care?

3. How are welfare families in Connecticut selecting different types of care?

4. How are these decisions related to children’s early learning and development?

5. How do the contextual dynamics of child care supply within the community affect family decisions?

**Partners:** California Child Care Resource & Referral Network, University of California, Yale University, and the Florida Children’s Forum, state- and community-level agencies and organizations

**States Involved:** California, Connecticut, and Florida

**Contact Person:** Shelly Waters Boots, 415.882.0234, shelley@rrnetwork.org

**Web site:** http://www.rrnetwork.org

Harvard Project on Human Development in Chicago Neighborhoods Child Care Research Partnership

**Grantee:** Harvard Medical School

**Project Title:** Neighborhoods, Parent Involvement, and Child Outcomes for Low-Income Families

**Major Research Questions:**

1. What is the actual supply of pre- and after-school care at the neighborhood level, and how is it utilized by representative families across city neighborhoods?

2. How does the quality of early childhood care, in center- or home-based settings, vary within and between neighborhoods?

3. How do quality, continuity, availability, and the cost of preschool child care relate to family characteristics and to child outcomes?

4. How well do neighborhood and family characteristics predict parent involvement and parent advocacy?

5. How strongly do the effects of neighborhood, family, and child care factors relate to child outcomes?

6. How many low-income families use the State of Illinois child care subsidy, what are the characteristic of families who do and who do not use the subsidy, and is there variation in use of subsidized care as a function of neighborhood characteristics?

**Partners:** Project on Human Development in Chicago Neighborhoods, Child Care Program of the Illinois Department of Human Services, Children’s Services of the Chicago Department of Human Services, and the Early Childhood Education Department of the Chicago Public Schools

**States Involved:**

**Contact Person:**

**Web site:**
City Involved: Chicago, Illinois

Contact Person: Maya Carlson, 617.495.5381, mary_carlson@hms.harvard.edu

Web site: http://phdcn.harvard.edu/

Midwest Child Care Research Partnership

Grantee: University of Nebraska, Center on Children, Families and the Law

Project Title: Building a System for the On-Going Assessment of Quality

Major Research Questions:

1. What is the level of child care quality across four Midwestern states?

2. What is the quality of child care in licensed centers, in licensed or registered family child care, and in homes approved for subsidy but not licensed?

3. What is the quality of infant/toddler and preschool child care?

4. What is the quality of child care for children whose parents receive child care subsidies and those who do not?

5. What is the quality of child care in rural and non-rural areas of the four states?

6. What are the characteristics of the child care work force in licensed centers, in licensed or registered family child care, and in homes approved for subsidy but not licensed?

7. What are the characteristics of the child care work force among providers of infant/toddler and preschool care?

8. What are the characteristics of the child care work force among providers who accept families eligible for child care subsidies and those who do not?

9. What are the characteristics of the child care workforce in rural and non-rural areas of the four states?

10. What are the provider and teacher perceptions of the child care subsidy system within their states?

11. How do parents perceive the adequacy of the child care they use in providing quality and support their needs to balance work and parenting?

12. What are the parent perceptions of the child care subsidy systems within their states?

Partners: Center on Children, Families and Law at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, Gallup Organization, Iowa State University, University of Missouri-Columbia, Juniper Gardens Children Center, University of Kansas, state-level partners in Nebraska; Iowa, Missouri and Kansas, Resource and Referral agencies and the Marion Ewing Kauffman Foundation.

States Involved: Nebraska, Iowa, Missouri, Kansas

Contact Person: Brian Wilcox, 402.472.3479, bwilcox@unl.edu

Web site: In development

Minnesota Child Care Research Partnership

Grantee: Minnesota Department & Children Families and Learning

Project Title: Minnesota Child Care Research Partnership

Major Research Questions:

1) How does the quality of child care vary for different subgroups, including families receiving subsidies and families from various cultural groups?

2) How do subsidies affect parents’ choice of type of care, the quality of that care, and the outcomes from the family in terms of earnings or employment stability?

3) How does tiered reimbursement affect quality and the decisions about accreditation made by providers?

4) How does the provision of child care subsidies impact the market for child care in terms of supply, price, and quality?
Partners: Minnesota Department of Children, Families & Learning, the Department of Human Services, the Department of Economic Security, several county child care units CCR&Rs, the University of Minnesota, and Child Trends

State Involved: Minnesota

Contact Person: Deb Swenson-Klatt, 651.582.8450, deb.swenson-klatt@state.mn.us

Web site: http://edicatopm.umn.edu/ceed/projects/mccprp/default.html

National Center for Children in Poverty Child Care Research Partnership

Grantee: National Center on Children in Poverty, Mailman School of Public Health, Columbia University, New York, New York

Project Title: NCCP Child Care Research Partnership

Major Research Questions:

1. What is the availability and distribution of subsidized care for low-income families in different states and communities?
2. What are the interrelationships between child care and welfare policies, child care services, children’s development, and parental outcomes?
3. What role does license-exempt child care play in the larger market and what are the implications for children and families?
4. What methodologies can most adequately define and assess communities’ child care needs?

Partners: State-level partners in Illinois, Maryland, and New Jersey; city-level partners from New York City, the Manpower Demonstration Research Corporation, the National Center on Children in Poverty, and Rutgers University.

States Involved: Illinois, Maryland, New Jersey, New York

Data Sharing Agreement: An agreement is available upon request.

Contact Person: J. Lee Kreader, 212.304.7112, jk821@columbia.edu

Web site: http://www.nccp.org

New England Child Care Research Partnership

Grantee: Muskie School of Public Service, University of Southern Maine, Portland, Maine

Project Title: New England Workforce Partners for Early Care and Education

Major Research Questions:

1. What does the early care and education workforce look like in New England (e.g., size, demographics, salary, benefits, education, training)?
2. What data resources are available in New England?
3. What policy innovations are underway in New England?
4. What effect do these policy innovations have on the quality and stability of the early care and education workforce?

Partners: Institute for Child and Family Policy of the Edmund S. Muskie School of Public Service at the University of Southern Maine, Associated Day Care Services/Boston EQUIP, the Alliance for Children’s Care, Education and Support Services, and the United States Association of Child Care.

States Involved: Connecticut, New Hampshire, Maine, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Vermont

Contact Person: Erin Oldham, 207.780.5838, eoldham@usm.maine.edu

Web site: http://www.muskie.usm.maine.edu/newpartners
Oregon Child Care Research Partnership

Grantee: Linn-Benton Community College

Project Title: Oregon Child Care Research Partnership

Major Research Questions:

Oregon’s research questions cluster in three areas: parent child care choices, community and state needs assessments, and welfare reform. Questions include:

1. What are the dynamic relationships among the level of flexibility in home, work, and caregiving arrangements and parental perceptions of quality?

2. Who provides care to the children whose care is subsidized? How are these arrangements like and unlike those of the general population?

3. What are the dynamics of child care subsidy use in rural areas?

Partners: The Child Care Division in the Employment Department, Department of Human Services, Family Resources and Education at Linn-Benton Community College, the Regional Research Institute at Portland State University, the Family Policy Program at Oregon State University, the Head Start Collaboration Project, the Oregon Child Care Resource and Referral Network, National Association of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies, and other child care stakeholders.

State Involved: Oregon

Contact Person: Bobbie Weber, 541.917.4897, bobbie_weber@msn.com

Web site: http://www.lbcc.cc.or.us/familyresources/researchpartner

Wellesley Child Care Research Partnership

Grantee: Wellesley College, Department of Economics

Major Research Questions:

1. How do child care subsidies and family support policies affect the economic self-sufficiency of low-income families?

2. How do child care subsidies and changes in family support policies affect the quality of care received by low-income children?

3. How do child care subsidies and other family support policies affect the availability, cost, and quality of child care?

4. How do child care subsidies, after-school programs and family support policies affect the school readiness and school performance of children?

Partners: Wellesley College, child care researchers, state and local child care administrators, elected and appointed officials, resource and referral agency personnel, child development specialists, employers, and researchers with specialty in labor markets, industrial organizations, and social welfare.

Project Title: Child Care Needs and Outcomes for Low Income Families

States Involved: Massachusetts, Florida, Rhode Island, Alabama

Contact Person: Maggie Queralt, 781.283.2163, mqueralt@wellesley.edu

Web site: http://wellesley.edu/Economics/partner
Wisconsin Child Care Research Partnership

**Grantee:** University of Wisconsin-Extension

**Project Title:** Wisconsin Child Care Research Partnership

**Major Research Questions:**
1. What does child care look like?
2. What are the characteristics of child care?
3. What is the quality of child care purchased for low-income children?

**Partners:** University of Wisconsin-Extension, Department of Workforce Development/Office of Child Care, and Wisconsin Child Care Resource & Referral Network.

**State Involved:** Wisconsin

**Data Sharing Agreement:** An agreement is available upon request.

**Contact Person:** Mary Roach, 608.262.6041, mroach@facstaff.wisc.edu

**Web site:** www.uwex.edu/ces/flp/ece/wccrp.html

For more information on the Consortium or individual partnerships, see the Child Care Bureau Web site at http://www.acf.dhhs.gov/programs/ccb/research/ccprc