

**National Title I Association
A National Association of State Title I Directors**

**References for Review in Preparation for the
U.S. Department of Education
2010 Reading Institute: Early Learning and Development
Birth - Third Grade Strand**

Anaheim, California

July 19-21, 2010

Overview

Experts in early childhood education and development who will be presenting at the U.S. Department of Education's (ED) 2010 Reading Institute in Anaheim, California, July 19-21, 2010, were invited to offer selected references they believe to be most relevant to the content of their presentations. Citations for a wide variety of studies, articles, books, and policy documents were submitted. As an introduction to current issues, challenges, and priorities in early learning we have organized this information into the following topics:

- *Instruction, Standards, and Assessment (p. 1)*
- *Workforce and Professional Development (p. 4)*
- *Comprehensive Systems and Program Infrastructure (p. 6)*
- *Family Engagement and Health Promotion. (p. 7)*

By reviewing this information prior to traveling to Anaheim, we hope that participants in the Institute will gain a clearer view of the information to be presented in the sessions at the Institute. For each of the four topic areas there is a selection of summarized references, and a list of additional references is provided through hyperlinks for each topic.

This summary is not intended to be a comprehensive resource. Rather, the information is for informational purposes only, and no endorsement of the content on the following pages by the ED, the Institute organizers or the presenters should be inferred.

I. Instruction, Standards, and Assessment

There is a growing awareness of the benefits of high quality early childhood education. Educators and policy makers are increasingly interested in understanding how early learning contributes to successful literacy development in children. A review of the resources below offers insight into effective curriculum, standards, teaching practices, and assessment for young children.

Instruction

Marulis, L.M., & Neuman, S.B. (in press). *The Effects of Vocabulary Intervention on Young Children's Word Learning: A Meta-Analysis*. The authors' forthcoming meta-analysis sought

to examine the effectiveness of vocabulary intervention in young children. They report that the impact is significant, and that vocabulary interventions led to an overall gain of nearly one standard deviation on vocabulary measures. When examining poverty as a risk factor, though, the authors found little evidence that vocabulary interventions narrow the achievement gap. They theorized that currently available interventions are not powerful enough in dosage and intensity to narrow the gap.

Ramey, C.T., & Ramey, S.L. (2004). *Early Learning and School Readiness: Can Early Intervention Make a Difference?* Merrill-Palmer Quarterly, 50, 471-491. In their research, Ramey and Ramey began with the problem that one-third of American children entering kindergarten are not ready for kindergarten-level work, and remedial programs in later grades are generally not sufficient. The authors have concluded that seven types of experiences are essential to ensure “normal brain and behavioral development and school readiness” (p. 473): *Encourage exploration; Mentor in basic skills; Celebrate developmental advances; Rehearse and extend new skills; Protect from inappropriate disapproval, teasing, and punishment; Communicate richly and responsively; Guide and limit behavior.* The authors have completed numerous studies, beginning in the early 1970s with the Abecedarian Project. These randomized, controlled trials seem to confirm the importance of the seven essential experiences. Not only did early learning experiences containing the seven experiences lead to increased school readiness at age 5, but sustained benefits were apparent through 21 years of age.

Strickland, D.S. (2002). *The Importance of Early Intervention.* In Farstrup, A. & Samuels, J. (Eds.). *What Research Says About Reading Instruction?* (pp. 69-86). Newark, DE: International Reading Association. Strickland notes that, by fourth grade, most children can read with sufficient comprehension and fluency, but that there are varying risk factors for reading difficulties. Research has shown that these risk factors include language impairment, limited proficiency in English, parental history of reading difficulty, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, lack of motivation, and poverty. None of these factors, however, “is an automatic barrier to literacy development” (p. 70). For this reason, the author recommends promoting a comprehensive set of approaches to early intervention. These approaches can occur through family literacy programs, prekindergarten and kindergarten programs, and primary grade programs (grades 1-3). Strickland identifies the following curriculum components of early intervention programs through kindergarten: language development with an emphasis on vocabulary and concepts, understandings about the functions of print, print awareness and concepts about print, literacy as a source of enjoyment, knowledge of narrative structure, storybook reading, and knowledge of the alphabet, phonemic awareness, and opportunities to write. Briefly, early intervention programs should include a balanced and child-appropriate curriculum, flexible grouping, multilevel instruction, ongoing data monitoring, and a strong connection between home and school (p. 83).

Espinosa, L. (2010). *Getting It Right for Young Children from Diverse Backgrounds: Applying Research to Improve Practice.* Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Publishing. As the nation has become more linguistically diverse, interest in the needs of young English language learners has grown. Espinosa’s book (2010) offers research-based recommendations for the education of young children from linguistically diverse backgrounds, as well as young children who are living in poverty. The author writes that educators must attend to the social and emotional development of young children in addition to their literacy development, and they must also build positive relationships with ELL families. In addition, she concludes that young ELLs

should learn English in addition to their home language, not at the expense of their home language. Research has linked loss of home language to poor academic outcomes in later years. Espinosa promotes resiliency training as a necessary aspect of early care and education in children living in poverty. She identifies, “social competence, problem solving, autonomy, and a sense of purpose” (p. 61) as characteristics of resiliency that can be fostered in early care and education programs.

Standards

Scott-Little, C., Kagan, S. L., Frelow, V. S., & Reid, J. (2008). *Inside the Content of Infant-Toddler Early Learning Guidelines: Results from Analyses, Issues to Consider, and Recommendations*. Greensboro, NC: University of North Carolina at Greensboro. Scott-Little et al.’s report declares that the children’s experiences and environments beginning with birth have implications for many years to come, and notes that many states have begun to establish early learning guidelines (ELGs) to improve the quality of early care and education. The report seeks to understand through content analyses how states have organized their infant-toddler early learning guidelines and what content they have addressed. The authors write that they were encouraged by the results of their analyses; states have been addressing the important domains of *physical development and motor skills, social and emotional development, approaches toward learning, language and communication development, and cognitive development and general knowledge*. At the time of publication, less than half of the states had adopted early learning guidelines; the authors offered a series of recommendations to guide states as they adopt and revise their ELGs.

Strickland, D.S., Shanahan, T. (2004). *Laying the Groundwork for Literacy*. Educational Leadership, 61, 74-77. The findings of the National Early Literacy Panel (Strickland & Shanahan, 2004) showed correlations between early childhood activities and skills and later reading outcomes, thus they have implications for the development of early literacy content standards. In particular, the authors identify oral language, alphabetic knowledge, and print knowledge as predictors of later reading achievement.

Assessments

National Research Council. (C. E. Snow, & S. B. Van Hemel, Eds.) (2008). *Early Childhood Assessment: Why, What, and How*. Washington, DC: The National Academies Press. Congress gave that National Research Council the task of studying appropriate assessment of young children in 2006. The resulting report highlights the following principles: **The purpose of an assessment should guide assessment decisions**. The report focuses on the same five developmental domains listed in “standards” above as possible purposes of assessment. **Assessment activity should be conducted within a coherent system of medical, educational, and family support services that promote optimal development for all children**. This system is essential to the effective functioning of the assessment system. Assessment that is planned with these two principles in mind can lead to better informed teaching, program improvement, and better outcomes for students. Poorly designed assessment can have negative consequences for both children and programs. The report’s executive summary offers a series of guidelines for making decisions about early childhood assessment.

[For Additional References See p. 10 or Open This Link](#)

II. Workforce and Professional Development

A foundation of knowledge exists that can support effective practices in early childhood education. Professional development in early care and education is widely believed to be a key approach for disseminating that knowledge in a meaningful and practical way. It is built on the recognition that early childhood educators are engaged in demanding, professional work and can benefit from ongoing training (S. Ramey & Ramey, 2007).

Demma, R. (2010). *Issue Brief: Building an Early Childhood Professional Development System*. Washington, DC: NGA Center for Best Practices. This issue brief examines research around early childhood professional development. This research indicates that the quality of early childhood care and education significantly impacts school readiness and later outcomes, and that the quality of an early care program is largely determined by the quality of its workforce. Research also shows, however, that most educators in “the current early child workforce are not adequately prepared, [and] attracting and retaining well-qualified early childhood professionals continues to be a challenge” (p. 1). In response to this challenge, the author recommends statewide early childhood professional development systems that provide access to ongoing education and professional development, collect data for purposes of quality improvement, implement professional development standards, and coordinate professional development policies.

LeMoine, Sarah. (2008). *Workforce Designs: A Policy Blueprint for State Early Childhood Professional Development Systems*. Washington, DC: National Association for the Education of Young Children. LeMoine offers a detailed policy blueprint which examines those public policies that support state professional development systems. Specifically, the blueprint connects the principles of integration, quality assurance, access, and compensation parity to the following six policy areas: *State professional standards* integrate and align existing licensing and credential standards, meet research-based criteria, integrate general and special education, and address compensation requirements as part of the system’s rating criteria. *Career pathways* encourage higher levels of educational attainment, include career and academic advisement for educators, include targeted supports, and should reward investment in professional advancement. *Articulation policies* support qualification requirements for all sectors, implement changes carefully over time, and help ensure that educators’ financial investments in their education result in career advancement. *Advisory structures* include representatives from all early childhood education sectors, engage in strategic planning and review, represent the diversity of the early care field, and understand “the nexus of compensation and policies that will enhance the quality of the professionals as well as their retention” (p. 20). *Data policies* define methods for collecting, sharing, and disseminating data, establish standards for monitoring and accountability, focus on barriers to access and supports, and also include a focus on retention and compensation. *Financing policies* coordinate federal, state, and private sources ensure that all stakeholders know what resources are available and how they are being directed, ensure access to financial aid and scholarships, and adequately finance all sectors of the system.

Kinzie, M., Whitaker, S., Neesen, K, Kelly, M., Matera, M., & Pianta, R. (2006). *Methods and Principles of Professional Development for Teachers of Young Children: Innovative Web-Based Professional Development for Teachers of At-Risk Preschool Children*. Educational Technology & Society, 9 (4), 194-204. This study suggests the potential of educational

technology to help provide professional development on a large scale. The *My Teaching Partner* program was used in Virginia to deliver a targeted, research-based professional development program online to early childhood educators. The program offered video demonstrations of quality teaching practice, sample lesson plans, and other professional development materials. Teachers in one treatment group also had access to a *My Teaching Partner* consultant through videoconferencing. The article summarizes the advantages and disadvantages of this web-based model, noting strong perceptions of value and usefulness among the participating teachers.

Ramey, S.L., & Ramey, C.T. (2007). *Establishing a Science of Professional Development for Early Education Programs: The Knowledge Application Information Systems (KAIS) Theory of Professional Development*. In L.M. Justice & C. Vukelich (Eds.), *Achieving Excellence in Preschool Language and Literacy Instruction*. (pp. 41-63) New York: Guilford Press. The authors developed the *Knowledge Application Information Systems* theory of professional development “as a practical tool in conceptualizing, planning, providing, and evaluating the effectiveness of PD” (p. 42). The theory is built on the following three strands: *Knowledge Application*: Applying scientific knowledge about learning and family engagement to professional development. *Information*: Gathering information about whether professional development activities are actually improving job performance and supporting children’s development. *Systems Theory*: Thinking about children’s learning from a systems framework. In other words, there are many factors beyond an educator’s knowledge and skills that influence that educator’s behavior and contributions. The authors provide a case history for the KAIS theory, and conclude that the modest cost of information gathering, analysis, and reporting associated with implementing the theory compares favorably to the potential benefits to educators and children.

Matsumura, L., Sartoris, M., Bickel, D., & Garnier, H. (2009). *Leadership for Literacy Coaching: The Principal’s Role in Launching a New Coaching Program*. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 45(5), 655-693. This study investigated the relationship between school leadership and teacher participation in instructional coaching. The study found a strong association between principal leadership and frequency of teacher participation. When principals actively participated in coaching, publicly endorsed the expertise of coaches, and held positive beliefs towards the role of the coach, teachers were significantly more likely to open their classrooms to the coaches. An implication of this research is the importance of strong principal or program director support in implementing professional development.

Shanklin, N. (2006). *What are the characteristics of literacy coaching?* Literacy Coaching Clearinghouse. Retrieved from <http://www.literacycoachingonline.org/briefs.html>. This research-based brief defines six characteristics of effective instructional coaching: 1) involves collaborative dialogue for teachers at all levels of knowledge and experience; 2) facilitates development of a school vision about literacy that is site-based and links to district goals; 3) data-oriented student and teacher learning; 4) ongoing, job-embedded professional learning that increases teacher capacity to meet students’ needs; 5) classroom observations that are cyclical and that build knowledge over time; and 6) supportive rather than evaluative approaches.

[For Additional References See p. 11 or Open This Link](#)

III. Comprehensive Systems and Program Infrastructure

“America’s future success is directly tied to the healthy development of today’s youngest children. The early experiences of our young children will shape the architecture of their brains in enduring ways and build the foundation—whether strong or weak—for their own development and that of our nation” (Gebhard, 2009, p. 1). A review of recent publications on the topic of early learning program infrastructure reveals some potential insights for building a strong foundation for young children.

Elements of a Comprehensive System for Early Learning

Gebhard, B. (2009). *Putting the Pieces Together for Infants and Toddlers: Comprehensive, Coordinated Systems*. Washington, DC: ZERO TO THREE. The model system will include physical and mental health services and family support services for infants and toddlers and their families, in addition to child care and education. Services will be high quality, culturally responsive, accessible and affordable, and seamlessly integrated. The following core elements support these services: **Coordinated Governance and Leadership** to set policy direction; **Quality Improvement** through high quality *program standards*, early learning *guidelines* that clarify what young children are expected to know and do, *Quality Rating and Improvement Systems* that award ratings and funding based on quality standards, networks of *infant-toddler specialists*, and *health and mental health consultants*; **Accountability and Evaluation** that includes cross-system planning, data collection and analysis, and evaluation; **Coordinated Funding Sources** to assure comprehensive, standards-based services; **Public Engagement** to build support and political will; **Regulations** that establish minimum standards and track performance; and **Professional Development** for the early childhood workforce.

Lower, J. K., & Cassidy, D. J. (2007). *Child Care Work Environments: The Relationship with Learning Environments*. *Journal of Research in Childhood Education*, 22(2), 189-204. This study sought to understand the relationship between work environment (program administration and organizational climate) and global quality (a holistic view of child care quality) by collecting data from early childhood educators at 30 centers across North Carolina (Lower & Cassidy, 2007, pp. 190-191). The study found that program administration and organizational qualities are correlated with overall program quality for young children in early learning environments.

Whitebook, M., Ryan, S., Kipnis, F., & Sakai, L. (2008). *Partnering for preschool: A study of center directors in New Jersey's mixed-delivery Abbott Program*. Berkeley, CA: Center for the Study of Child Care Employment, Institute for Research on Labor and Employment. This study examined New Jersey’s statewide Abbott Preschool Program, in part by interviewing preschool center directors. Established in the 1999-2000 school year as a result of a series of state Supreme Court decisions, Abbott, “can now be considered a mature, established program” (Whitebook et al., 2008, p. 1). For this reason, the authors’ findings can inform other states in the following program areas: **Initial participation in a statewide program:** Most of the 40,000 children served by the Abbott Preschool program in 2008 were enrolled in private child care centers that chose to participate in the program. Preschool directors became involved in the program for the opportunities to increase access for children, improve training and compensation, improve overall quality, and fulfill their organizational mission. Monetary benefits were also a rationale for participation for some directors (p. 8). **Benefits of participation:** All directors cited positive

benefits for participation, largely aligned with their rationales for initial participation. They also cited other benefits, including “being able to help children who were otherwise at risk of entering kindergarten substantially behind their peers... [and] developing productive partnerships with their school districts” (p. 15). **Challenges of participation:** All directors also identified general challenges that resulted from participating in a statewide early childhood education program. These included challenges related to the ambitious scope of the program, administrative issues (budgeting, paperwork, regulations), and governance (conflicting expectations and regulations between Abbott and other funding sources, collaboration with school districts).

Technical Assistance and Quality Improvement

Mitchell, A. (2009). *Quality Rating and Improvement Systems as the Framework for Early Care and Education System Reform*. BUILD Initiative. This brief promotes the use of Quality Rating Improvement Systems (QRIS), which had been launched in 19 states and the District of Columbia at the time of publication, in early childhood education. The author describes the existing early care and education system as a “hodge-podge” (p. 2) of programs, each operating with different standards, regulations, funding, and culture, and examines how states are attempting to use QRIS as a framework to unite those varied programs: QRIS is a system for rating early care programs according to research- and best practice-based quality standards. Based on these ratings, programs can receive support in their efforts to improve through technical assistance and professional development. The ratings are made publicly available in an easily understood manner, allowing parents and guardians to compare early care programs based on quality. Once a QRIS is established, benchmarks can be defined for system-wide improvement and alignment of early care programs across all settings.

National Association of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies (NACCRRA). (2007). *Knowledge into Practice: NACCRRA’s Survey of Child Care Resource and Referral Onsite Technical Assistance*. Arlington, VA: Author. NACCRRA’s survey of on-site technical assistance asked local child care resource and referral providers (CCR&Rs) about the technical assistance they provide to early childhood programs. The survey results revealed that 30 percent of the CCR&Rs’ on-site technical assistance helped the programs meet licensing requirements or compliance deficiencies, 26 percent of the technical assistance helped programs achieve a higher state quality rating, and 18 percent of the time was used to work toward accreditation. The survey suggests that the existing infrastructure of the CCR&R network can provide “badly needed support to community child care effectively and efficiently” (NACCRRA, 2007, p. 9).

[For Additional References See p. 12 or Open This Link](#)

IV. Family Engagement and Health Promotion

Family Engagement

Edwards, P. A. (2009). *Tapping the Potential of Parents: A Strategic Guide to Boosting Student Achievement through Family Involvement*. New York: Scholastic. Edwards defined *parents* as all adults who perform an important role in a child’s education and upbringing, and *parent involvement* as “the participation of parents in every facet of children’s education from birth to adulthood” (p. 8). The author suggested that teachers can improve parental involvement,

as well as student performance, in their teaching practice through *differentiated parent involvement*. This requires teachers to recognize parents' varying levels of capability, willingness, and responsibility.

Weiss, Heather and Lopez, Elena (2008). *Promising Practices for Engaging Families in the Early Years*; IAP -Information Age Publishing, Charlotte, NC. This monograph focuses on research to practice issues related to partnering with families of children ages birth to five. The review underscores the importance of considering three family involvement processes as early childhood practitioners endeavor to create systemic, developmental and comprehensive programs for all young children: (1) parenting; (2) home-program relationships and responsibility for learning; and (3) responsibility for learning. These are critical to developmental milestones during the early childhood years. Collectively, the chapters discuss several themes on the principles of family centered partnerships: (1) recognizing and respecting one another's knowledge and expertise; (2) sharing information through two-way communication; (3) sharing power and decision making; (4) acknowledging and respecting diversity; and (5) creating networks of support. Individual chapters offer a variety of practical strategies and recommendations that families, pre-service early childhood students, early childhood practitioners, teacher educators, policymakers, and researchers can use to enhance their knowledge and strengthen their skills for partnering effectively.

Marzano, Robert J. (2001). *A New Era of School Reform: Going Where the Research Takes Us*. Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning, ERIC: ED 454255 <http://www.mcrel.org>. This monograph attempts to synthesize and interpret the extant research from the last four decades on the impact of schooling on students' academic achievement. The central thesis is that educators stand at the dawn of a new era of school reform. The discussion, which is somewhat technical in nature, relies on five indices to describe the relationship between student achievement and various school, teacher, and student-level factors. The first section of the paper presents a review of previous attempts to identify the variables impacting student achievement. The second section presents a discussion of the research on school level variables. The final section considers the implications of the findings for school reform. Findings indicate that schools can influence student achievement profoundly. The conclusions suggest that student achievement can be affected strongly if schools provide teachers with well-articulated curricula. They should optimize their use of instructional time, establish achievement goals for students and monitor those goals, and they must communicate a clear message that high academic achievement is the primary goal of the school. In examining student-level effects on their achievement, four factors are commonly considered – socio-economic status (SES), prior knowledge, interest and aptitude. There is a strong belief among some researchers that home atmosphere correlates higher with academic achievement than any single or combined group of traditional indicators of SES. Interventions can be designed and implemented that provide parents with information and resources to establish a home environment that can positively affect students' academic achievement. It is important to involve parents, maintain an orderly and cooperative environment, and involve staff in all key decisions.

National Family, School, and Community Engagement Working Group: Recommendations for Federal Policy (2009). This policy brief offers a definition of family, school, and community engagement that builds on the definition in the No Child Left Behind Act (Title IX, section 9101, 32) and is based on research about when and how children learn and the relationships among families, schools, and communities in supporting that learning. We also lay out some of the

elements we believe are necessary to enable states, districts, schools, families, and community organizations to develop effective approaches to family engagement from birth to young adulthood. <http://www.hfrp.org/publications-resources/browse-our-publications/national-family-school-and-community-engagement-working-group-recommendations-for-federal-policy>

Health Promotion

Mendelsohn, A.L., Mogiler, L.N., Dreyer, B.P., Forman, J.A., Weinstein, S.C., Broderick, M., Napier, C. (2001). *The Impact of a Clinic-Based Literacy Intervention on Language Development in Inner-City Preschool Children*. *Pediatrics*, 107(1), 130-134. The authors suggest that pediatricians can intervene to improve the home literacy environment of children from low socioeconomic backgrounds. The experimental study investigated a literacy intervention which occurred in the waiting rooms and examination rooms of pediatric offices. First, waiting room staff or volunteers read to children and discussed the importance of reading with parents. Then, pediatricians counseled parents on the importance of reading to children and distributed an age-appropriate book at each visit. The study found an increase in both frequency of home reading and children's vocabulary scores.

Herman A., Young, K.D., Espitia, D., Fu, N., & Farshidi, A. (2009). *Impact of a Health Literacy Intervention on Pediatric Emergency Department Use*. *Pediatric Emergency Care*, 25(7), 434-438. This study suggests that simple health literacy interventions with parents can have a notable impact. The author identified overcrowded hospital emergency rooms as a serious national problem, and aimed to measure the impact of a "parent health literacy intervention" on emergency room visits and primary care clinic usage (p. 434). Parents were recruited for the study when they brought their children to an emergency room for non-urgent complaints. Participants were given a free copy of the book *What to Do When Your Child Gets Sick*, along with training in how to use the book. After this simple intervention, significant reductions occurred after six months in the percentage of parents who stated they would go to the emergency room first if their child became sick, and in actual visits to the emergency room. A forthcoming study (Herman & Jackson, in press) involved training of parents at Head Start sites using a low-literacy childhood health book. This intervention resulted in a dramatic reduction in ER and doctor visits, work days missed by caregivers, and school days missed by children.

[*For Additional References See p. 13 or Open This Link*](#)

Additional References

I. Instruction, Standards and Assessment

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II. Workforce and Professional Development

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