The Early Childhood Higher Education Inventory: Taking Stock of the States

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• Dr. Patricia Cantor, Chair, Department of Early Childhood Studies, Plymouth State University
Agenda

1. Welcome and opening remarks

2. Overview and purpose of the *Early Childhood Higher Education Inventory (ECHEI)*

3. Administering the *ECHEI*

4. Taking stocks of the states – moderated discussion
   1. New Jersey
   2. New Hampshire

5. Next steps for the *ECHEI*
ECHEI: Background

• Inform policy debate about the qualifications and competencies for early childhood teachers

• Deeper investigation of identified issues in early childhood higher education RESEARCH?

• Systematic look at a state’s early childhood higher education system
Purpose of the ECHEI

- Establish baseline descriptions of higher education offerings and faculty for early care and education practitioners

- Identify gaps and opportunities in the available offerings

- Assess variation in higher education early childhood programs

- Assess changes in the capacity of the higher education system over time
Mapping Module

• The state context
• The college/university
• The ECE program
  – The department/school
  – Degrees offered
  – Certificates offered
  – Program and faculty contacts
# Program Module

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section 1: Content</th>
<th>Section 2: Clinical experiences</th>
<th>Section 3: Institutional support</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Program goals</td>
<td>Type of experience</td>
<td>From mapping: Institutional characteristics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Topics covered: age group focus and practitioner role</td>
<td>Age group focus</td>
<td>Student characteristics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standards</td>
<td>Sequence and duration</td>
<td>Student supports</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accreditation</td>
<td>Supervision: Faculty, cooperating teachers, field mentors: selection and relationships</td>
<td>Program challenges</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student assessment</td>
<td>Clinical sites: selection and relationships</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pre-service or in-service</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## 3. Teaching Diverse Child Populations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Birth through 2 years</th>
<th>3 years through Pre-K (before kindergarten)</th>
<th>Kindergarten through grade 3</th>
<th>Not required</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teaching children experiencing poverty</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Teaching children with challenging behaviors</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching children from multiple cultural and ethnic backgrounds</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Teaching children with special needs</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching children who are dual-language learners</td>
<td>✓</td>
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</table>
## Faculty Module

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section 1: Employment and general expertise</th>
<th>Section 2: Current teaching experience</th>
<th>Section 3: Own PD and experience in the field</th>
<th>Section 4: Demographics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Employment status</td>
<td>Child development and learning: topic and age group focus</td>
<td>PD experiences</td>
<td>Gender</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Responsibilities</td>
<td>ECE administration and leadership</td>
<td>Additional knowledge needed</td>
<td>Race/ethnicity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content areas of expertise</td>
<td>Provision of PD</td>
<td>Roles in the ECE field</td>
<td>Age</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age group expertise</td>
<td></td>
<td>Faculty expertise needed</td>
<td>Language capacity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level of Education/ECE</td>
<td></td>
<td>Program resources needed</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge about children’s development in different domains (e.g. language development, cognitive development, etc.)</td>
<td>Birth through 2 years</td>
<td>3 years through Pre-K</td>
<td>Kindergarten through grade 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development of children’s early literacy skills</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Development of children’s mathematical and scientific understandings</td>
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<tr>
<td>Understanding the effects of culture, gender, class, and race on child development</td>
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<tr>
<td>Child development theory and its relationship to teaching</td>
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Why States Conduct the *ECHEI*

- Early Learning Councils: Develop coordinated and effective early childhood professional development and preparation system

- Assist higher education institutions optimize degree programs

- Particular state focus on improving professional development and preparation for infant/ toddler teachers

- Helpful for applying for future federal funding streams
Key Findings and Implications: New Jersey
Aging Early Childhood Faculty

Age of Faculty Participating in the New Jersey Early Childhood Higher Education Inventory, by Degree Program

- **Associate Degree Faculty** (N=36)
  - Younger than 40 years: 11%
  - 40-49 years: 34%
  - 50-59 years: 34%
  - 60 years or older: 22%

- **Bachelor's Degree Faculty** (N=37)
  - Younger than 40 years: 11%
  - 40-49 years: 22%
  - 50-59 years: 22%
  - 60 years or older: 46%

- **Master's Degree Faculty** (N=26)
  - Younger than 40 years: 11%
  - 40-49 years: 23%
  - 50-59 years: 38%
  - 60 years or older: 27%
Few Early Childhood Higher Education Leadership Programs
Uneven Focus on Infant/Toddler Care in Course Content

Understanding the Effects of Disability on Child Development:
Age Group Focus, by Degree Program

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Degree Program</th>
<th>Birth to 2</th>
<th>3 to 4 years</th>
<th>K-3 or above</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Associate Degree (N=17)</td>
<td>88%</td>
<td>94%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor's Degree (N=14)</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>93%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Master's Degree (N=16)</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>81%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Uneven Alignment of Course Content with State ECE Standards

**Early Childhood Higher Education Degree Alignment with Early Care and Education Standards, by Degree Program**

- **The NJ Early Intervention System Standards**
  - Master's Degree (N=17): 15%
  - Bachelor's Degree (N=13): 18%
  - Associate Degree (N=17): 6%

- **The NJ Preschool Special Education Standards**
  - Master's Degree (N=17): 31%
  - Bachelor's Degree (N=13): 35%
  - Associate Degree (N=17): 12%

- **The NJ Core Knowledge and Competencies for Working with Children Birth through...**
  - Master's Degree (N=17): 31%
  - Bachelor's Degree (N=13): 35%
  - Associate Degree (N=17): 12%

- **The NJ Core Curriculum Content Standards**
  - Master's Degree (N=17): 94%
  - Bachelor's Degree (N=13): 85%
  - Associate Degree (N=17): 77%

- **The NJ Preschool Teaching and Learning Standards**
  - Master's Degree (N=17): 82%
  - Bachelor's Degree (N=13): 100%
  - Associate Degree (N=17): 71%
• Revise Core Knowledge and Competencies and expand alignment with degree programs

• Advocate for mandating participation of all members of the ECE workforce in the NJ workforce registry, including infrastructure staff and higher education faculty

• Develop strategies to expand the focus on infants and toddlers in Bachelor’s and Master’s degree programs

• Develop strategies to expand the focus on leadership development in course content
Key Findings and Implications: New Hampshire
Conflicting Responses

• 1 in 4 faculty members reported wanting more professional development related to helping practitioners work with children with special needs
  – None of the deans/coordinators reported that lack of faculty expertise in teaching young children with special needs was a challenge for their degree program

• 1 in 4 deans/coordinators (associate and bachelor degree programs) reported that lack of articulation between 2-year and 4-year college early childhood degree programs is a challenge for their degree program
  – articulation agreements are in place between almost all two and four-year institutions
Uneven Focus on Course Content: Health and Safety and Leadership

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percent of programs reporting offering various topics related to:</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teaching and curriculum</td>
<td>95% to 100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child development and learning</td>
<td>95% to 100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administration and leadership</td>
<td>29% to 95%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health and safety for young children</td>
<td>29% to 91%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Differences in Quality: Student Teaching vs. Practicum Experiences

Criteria for Selecting Cooperating Teachers in New Hampshire Early Childhood Higher Education Degree Programs

- Certified/certificated mentor or master teacher
  - Student teaching (N=11) 55%
  - Practicum (N=17) 29%
- Cooperating teacher is tenured
  - Student teaching (N=11) 55%
  - Practicum (N=17) 12%
- Cooperating teacher selected by school district or school
  - Student teaching (N=11) 64%
  - Practicum (N=17) 29%
- Experience working with field students
  - Student teaching (N=11) 73%
  - Practicum (N=17) 53%
- NH state credential or equivalent
  - Student teaching (N=11) 82%
  - Practicum (N=17) 47%
- Other*
  - Student teaching (N=11) 9%
  - Practicum (N=17) 41%
Lack of Racial/ethnic Diversity Among the Early Childhood Faculty

Race/Ethnicity of Faculty Participating in the New Hampshire Early Childhood Higher Education Inventory, by Degree Program

- Associate Degree Faculty (N=34): 97% White/Caucasian, 3% Multi-racial
- Bachelor's Degree Faculty (N=23): 91% White/Caucasian, 4% Multi-racial
- Master's Degree Faculty (N=15): 93% White/Caucasian, 7% Multi-racial
Data to Action

- Make recommendations to the NH Early Childhood Higher Education Roundtable
- Inform professional development offerings, including the first ever NH Early Childhood Leadership Institute
- Inform the Early Childhood Advisory Council Strategic Plan and the projects of the Workforce and Professional Development Committee, including the development of common core competencies
- Coordinate with other research to advocate for more early childhood coursework in family support, health and mental health degree programs
- Inform program improvement efforts within individual institutions of higher education
National Policy Implications

• Federal role in ensuring faculty participation in state early childhood workforce registries

• Federal resources, including incentives, to recruit ethnically and linguistically diverse early childhood leaders, creating a pipeline for early childhood faculty

• Stronger federal standards for early childhood teachers creating an incentive for more rigorous higher education course content
Center for the Study of Child Care Employment

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