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SRCD State Policy Fellow Portfolio Abstracts: Kylie Bezdek

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Portfolio Entry 1: Analyses of State Child Care Data

Project Overview:

Background – QRIS for Infants and Toddlers in NC: The Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS) in North Carolina awards participating child care settings with a star rating. These ratings determine amounts of child care subsidy payments and help parents to make decisions about their child care. The QRIS is made up of several indicators of quality, and rarely are those indicators examined individually. Additionally, not much is known about the access and quality of child care for infants and toddlers. The state's regulatory data includes the scores on the QRIS components so that quality can be examined in more detail.

Background – Examining Patterns of Emergency Child Care Availability: During the COVID-19 pandemic, North Carolina set up an emergency child care system so that child care settings could choose to remain open to support essential workers. In order to set up a system for helping essential workers find child care, the state required emergency child care settings to submit daily surveys of their capacity to serve additional children. While this process was for logistical purposes, it provided rich data that could be examined to identify patterns of emergency child care availability.

Goal(s): To describe the different aspects of quality of the child care settings for infants and toddlers in North Carolina and, when priorities shifted during the COVID-19 pandemic, examine patterns of emergency child care availability in the state.

Contributions of Fellow:

- *QRIS for Infants and Toddlers in NC:*
  - Analyzed QRIS data to describe the individual quality indicators that contribute to the star ratings of child care settings to examine the quality of infant-toddler care in the state.
  - Created a presentation to provide this information to the DCDEE policy division to hopefully guide their future initiatives and funding priorities.
- *Examining Patterns of Emergency Child Care Availability:*
  - Processed and merged daily emergency child care data to analyze patterns of availability by star rating, setting type (e.g. family child care home and child care center), and by county.
  - Created graphs to present these data to the policy team and provide pertinent information for future decisions for the emergency child care system.

Activity Focus Keywords: Data Analysis; Policy Analysis; Presentation
Policy Area Keywords: Center-based Child Care; Family Child Care; Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS)

Portfolio Entry 2: Request for Applications for Project Supporting the ECE Workforce

Project Overview:

Background: When funds are available in a state agency, they will often put out a request for applications (RFA). An RFA is often how statewide programs and initiatives are funded. The RFA outlines the funding

amount, the scope of services the contract will provide, timeline for the project, applicant qualifications and capacity, and the selection process.

Goal(s): To strengthen North Carolina's child care infrastructure by writing an RFA to distribute funds to innovative projects that focus on recruiting and sustaining the ECE workforce to build child care program capacity.

Contributions of Fellow:

- Co-wrote sections of the RFA including the scope of services, timeline, applicant qualifications and capacity, and selection process, particularly expectations for the evaluation plan.
- Review drafts of RFA and RFA scoring rubric to ensure that wording of both documents would lead to more innovative projects with clearly articulated theories of change.
- Was asked to sit on selection committee, however the RFA process was put on pause when funds were redirected to helping child care settings recover during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Activity Focus Keywords: RFA Development
Policy Area Keywords: Professional Development; Workforce

Portfolio Entry 3: North Carolina Technical Assistance Community of Practice

Project Overview:

Background: North Carolina supports Technical Assistants (TAs) that assist child care programs with quality improvement. TAs work for different agencies throughout the state, and these institutional siloes make it difficult for TAs to share information with one another and have a professional community.

Goal(s): To create a community and space for sharing information, resources, and updates from DCDEE, and provide educational opportunities for the TA community in NC.

Contributions of Fellow:

- Managed the online platform used for archiving webinar recordings and slides, additional resources, upcoming events, and announcements.

- Co-created a survey to ask the group how to proceed with virtual webinars such as frequency, topics, and purpose of the webinar series.
- Based on survey results, planned a monthly webinar series by choosing topics, inviting speakers and panelists, coordinating logistics, and facilitating the July meeting about health and safety protocols in child care during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Collaborated with panelists each month to plan the focus of discussions and contributed to introductory presentations to provide background information

Activity Focus Keywords: Professional Development; Survey Design; Community Collaboration
Policy Area Keywords: Community of Practice (COP)

Portfolio Entry 4: Practice-Based Coaching Statewide Implementation Planning

Project Overview:

Background: During Race to the Top, North Carolina defined Technical Assistance (TA) as coaching, mentoring, and consultation. To make improvements to the TA system in North Carolina to further advance child care quality throughout the state, DCDEE is collaborating with the Early Childhood Learning & Knowledge Center (ECLKC) to implement Practice-Based Coaching (PBC). PBC is a coaching framework and professional development strategy that uses a cyclical process of creating shared goals, focused observations, and reflection and feedback. This process takes place in the context of a collaborative process between a teacher and coach.

Goal(s): To create an assessment tool for teachers and coaches to identify their shared coaching goals and support the policy team with activities related to implementing this coaching framework.

Contributions of Fellow:

- Attended the Leadership Academy in October 2019 to learn about PBC and network with the TA leaders from various agencies across the state.
- Based on feedback from the Leadership Academy participants, created a presentation for DCDEE leaders with short- and long-term goals related to PBC implementation.
- Translated learning goals and teacher practices from the North Carolina Foundations of Early Learning and Development into assessment items to create a “Coaching Companion”.

- Supported the policy team throughout this work by providing feedback and content knowledge on plans and documents.

Activity Focus Keywords: Professional Development; Document Review; Presentation
Policy Area Keywords: Classroom Quality; Professional Development; Self-Assessment; Workforce

Read more about Kylie's Fellowship Experience