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SRCD Federal Policy Fellow Professional Portfolio Abstracts: Lorena Aceves, Ph.D.

2021-2022 SRCD Federal Executive Branch Policy Fellow at the Office of Child Care (OCC), Administration for Children and Families (ACF), U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

AUTHOR

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Introduction: This portfolio highlights the work of Dr. Lorena Aceves' in the second year of fellowship at the Administration for Children and Families' Office of Head Start (OHS). In the 2021-2022 fellowship year, Dr. Aceves had the opportunity to work on a range of projects within the Comprehensive Services and Training and Technical Assistance (TTA) division, the OHS Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility (DEIA) Commission and finally a small detail with the Institute of Education Sciences (IES), National Center for Education Research (NCER). All these projects demonstrate the complex and rewarding nature of working in a program office to gain experience in how research and policy intersect to guide change in practice. This experience at OHS revealed the important demands that program offices such as Head Start face, especially in the light of a pandemic, to continue to provide to services and care for children and families who need it the most. Finally, Dr. Aceves' briefly discusses how this experience has shaped her future career goals.

Portfolio Entry 1: Head Start Child Incidence Data

Project Overview:

Background: Child incidence data is regularly collected as a monitoring protocol for Head Start programs. A data set had been previously developed that addresses Head Start's child incidence priorities. These priorities include physical abuse, verbal aggression, lack of supervision, threat/use of expulsion/suspension, and challenging behaviors. The main purpose of this data analysis was to inform training and technical assistance (TTA) that Head Start grantees receive related to preventing and managing child incidents. The main goals to be addressed was to make this data more digestible for my TTA colleagues so that they are able to apply it to their work related to child incidences.

Goal(s): 1) To reevaluate child incidence data 2) To break-down the child incidence data so it is easy to understand and apply 3) To develop materials that could be shared with diverse stakeholders

Contributions of Fellow:

- Reviewed and analyzed data based on the needs of colleagues
- Shared and presented data with colleagues and diverse stakeholders across ACF
- Developed and shared a brief report that summarizes the data

Activity Focus Keywords: Child Incidence; Data; Analysis; Translation; Dissemination
Policy Area Keywords: Child Incidence; Training and Technical Assistance

Portfolio Entry 2: Head Start Family Engagement Data

Project Overview:

Background: Head Start has a strong commitment to making their program a holistic model, where they ensure the well-being of families, as well as the children they serve. As part of this model, when children join Head Start, information on the family's well-being is also collected. This data is then inputted into a monitoring data dashboard for Head Start staff to review. Working closely with the federal program office of the National Center for Parent, Family, and Community Engagement, guiding questions were developed to understand what Head Start grantees are doing to support the economic mobility of Head Start families.

Goal(s): 1) To analyze 3 years of family engagement data 2) To determine what strategies grantees, use to support the economic mobility of families 3) To understand which program types, implement successful strategies

Contributions of Fellow:

- Entered, cleaned, and analyzed 3 years of family engagement data
- Developed and presented the data to diverse stakeholders

Activity Focus Keywords: Family; Early Childhood; Data; Management; Analysis; Presentation
Policy Area Keywords: Family Policy; Family Engagement; Economic Mobility; Resources; Head Start; Family Well-being

Portfolio Entry 3: Institute of Education Sciences State of the Early Childhood Portfolio

Project Overview:

Background: For the 2021-2022, I was on a 4-5 hours per week detail with the Institute of Education Sciences (IES), National Center for Educational Research (NCER). As part of this detail, I was tasked with analyzing 20 years of grant data within the Early Childhood Portfolio. Through this process, I became very familiar with the data available on the grants awarded by IES in early childhood. I also had a specific focus on looking at the state of grants funded on dual language learners.

Goal(s): 1) To analyze 20 years of grant data 2) To understand the state of the early childhood portfolio with regards to dual language learners as well as additional metrices determined by IES 3) To recognize gaps in grants funded by IES 4) To understand how data management can be improved

Contributions of Fellow:

- Entered, cleaned, and analyzed 20 years of grant data
- Developed protocol for data management of an entire IES portfolio
- Presented main data findings to IES/NCER colleagues and the Office of English Language Acquisition
- Developed and authored 3 brief reports based on this data

Activity Focus Keywords: Education; Early Childhood; Data; Management; Analysis; Presentation
Policy Area Keywords: Dual Language Learners; Education; Funding; Diversity; Research; Grants

Portfolio Entry 4: Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, & Accessibility Content

Project Overview:

Background: For the 2021-2022 year, I have been an active member of the DEIA commission. In this role, it was integral that all members of the commission be actively involved in planning different events and initiatives led by the DEIA commission. The initiatives that were on the forefront for me included the planning of Hispanic Heritage Month, Black History Month, and general content creation needs of the commission.

Goal(s): 1) To develop general DEIA marketing content 2) To develop flyers, presentations, and zoom backgrounds for special events 3) To provide an eye for how material is presented and disseminated by the DEIA commission

Contributions of Fellow:

- Developed marketing materials for Hispanic Heritage Month and Black History Month
- Created and developed the general marketing flyer about the DEIA commission for the Office of Head Start
- Provided technical assistance to team members developing presentations and marketing content for various commission initiatives

Activity Focus Keywords: Marketing; Diversity; Equity; Inclusion; Accessibility; Content
Policy Area Keywords: Diversity; Equity; Inclusion; Accessibility

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