



EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION INSTITUTE  
The University of Oklahoma-Tulsa  
**ANNUAL REPORT**



JULY 1, 2010 – JUNE 30, 2011

# From our Director

THE 2010-11 YEAR was an exciting one at OU-Tulsa's Early Childhood Education Institute (ECEI).

We enjoyed numerous accomplishments in each of our three core activities of research, evaluation, and outreach. I highlight here key events and activities.



A primary function of the ECEI is to conduct applied program evaluation research with the goal of improving outcomes, programs, and policies for young children. During 2010-11, the ECEI conducted several evaluation research studies in

collaboration with local, state, and national partners. These projects are described in this annual report. For each of these projects, the ECEI worked closely with program partners to shape meaningful research questions, strategies, and plans.

Additionally, ECEI staff regularly share detailed results with ample discussion of use of results to inform practice. Beyond sharing results with program partners, the ECEI disseminates results and lessons learned to the broader early childhood community. During the 2010-11 year, ECEI staff presented research findings from our evaluation projects at local, regional, and national-level professional meetings.

Regarding outreach, during 2010-11, the ECEI created and co-sponsored the Fourth Annual Early Childhood Leadership Institute (ECLI), held October 8 - 9, 2010, at the Tulsa Zoo. We collaborated with several co-sponsors, including the OU-Tulsa Professional Development and Leadership Academy, Child Care Resource Center, Tulsa Zoo, Tulsa Tech, Tulsa Community College, OU Jeannine Rainbolt College of Education, and OU Center for

Early Childhood Professional Development to develop and offer this two-day conference. The yearly Early Childhood Leadership Institute is one example of the ECEI's dedication to distilling and disseminating research-based practices to early childhood professionals, parents, program leaders, and the general public.

This annual report contains more information about these and other activities of the ECEI during 2010-11. It introduces you to the ECEI staff whose expertise and diligent work make it possible for the ECEI to fulfill our vision of "advancing quality in early childhood through research, evaluation, and outreach."

Although the ECEI's first five years (2006-2011) have been characterized by rapid growth and success, we are looking forward to the next five. On June 29, 2011 we were notified that the ECEI was named a University Strategic Organization (USO) at the University of Oklahoma for our proposal entitled *IT<sup>3</sup>: Research on the Early Care and Education of Infants, Toddlers, Twos, and Threes*. This designation indicates that OU sees our work as a future growth area for the university and provides financial support to further build and strengthen ECEI's research capacity.

The expertise and diligent work of the ECEI staff make it possible for us to fulfill our vision.

We look forward to sharing ECEI's continued development and growth in future Annual Reports. I invite you to read this report and view our website. Please feel free to contact me

with questions, suggestions, or opportunities for collaboration.

Thanks for your interest in the work of the ECEI.

**Diane Horm, Ph.D.**

*Director*

*George Kaiser Family Foundation Endowed Chair  
Early Childhood Education*

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## Our Vision

Advancing Quality in Early Childhood through Research, Evaluation and Outreach

## Our Mission

The two broad missions of the ECEI are:

**RESEARCH AND EVALUATION:** A primary function of the ECEI is to conduct applied research relevant to improving outcomes, programs, and policies for young children. The ECEI designs and conducts both process and implementation evaluations as well as outcome research on a broad range of topics related to young children. Research foci of the ECEI include assessing programs designed for young children and their families, exploring program impacts on young children, and examining systems and policy initiatives related to young children and the people who care for them. In addition, the ECEI investigates the characteristics of the early care and education workforce – an under-researched topic in the existing literature.

**OUTREACH:** For theory and research to impact the field, research findings and implications must be distilled and made accessible to parents, practitioners and policymakers. A major activity of the ECEI is the dissemination of research-based practices to programs, parents, professionals, and the general public. In collaboration with community partners, the ECEI provides research-based professional development opportunities. The ECEI is committed to preparing leaders who advance early childhood programming and policy initiatives at the classroom, program, state and national levels.



# Research and Evaluation

Four lines of research are emphasized at the ECEI:



## Evaluation of Early Childhood Models and Programs

The ECEI utilizes multiple methods of data collection to provide formative information to programs that serve young children and their families. Data about program models are used to inform policy and practice at the local, state, and national levels.

## Evaluation of Programming for Children Under 4

The ECEI conducts formative and summative evaluations of current and innovative practices involving the care and education of infants, toddlers, twos and threes.

## Policy–Oriented Early Childhood Research

The ECEI works in collaboration with local, state, and national partners to assess community needs, inform policy makers, and develop systems to improve the lives of young children and their families.



## Early Childhood Workforce Development

The ECEI conducts outcome and process evaluations of current practices and new initiatives that relate to the training and education of the early childhood workforce.

# Evaluation of Early Childhood Models and Programs

## Educare Implementation Study

Since 2007, researchers employed at the ECEI and other institutions across the nation have administered a common set of measures, using common training and protocols and a shared timeline, to collect data about the Educare early childhood program.

Educare is a research-based program that prepares young children for school. It is an enhanced Head Start program that focuses on children living in poverty who are at risk for school failure. Educare has a strong parent involvement component.



The ECEI is the local evaluation partner for Tulsa Educare, Incorporated, and their programs. The national evaluation study allows us to combine data across sites to evaluate Educare as a program model, and it permits us to use our site-specific data to monitor

child progress and inform local program improvement efforts. This study employs a mixed-methods design to collect data regarding: classroom quality; child development and learning; family support services; teacher practices, attitudes and beliefs; and parent child rearing beliefs, practices, and needs.

### Principal Investigators

Diane Horm, Ph.D.  
Deborah Norris, Ph.D.

### Project Director

Lisa Monroe, Ph.D.

### Site Coordinators

Barbara White  
Shannon Guss

### Funding

9/1/2010 – 8/31/2011: \$404,658  
George Kaiser Family Foundation

## Educare Randomized Control Trial

The ECEI is partnering with the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill and researchers from other sites across the country to conduct the Educare Randomized Control Trial.

This study seeks to evaluate the effectiveness of the Educare program using an experimental design. The experimental design is considered the best approach for drawing meaningful conclusions about a program's effectiveness.

Participants include children less than 19 months of age, their families, and their early care and education providers. This study assesses these children from birth through age 3 and examines the cognitive, language, social-emotional, and executive functioning abilities of children attending Educare in comparison to their peers experiencing other early environments. We are also examining the parenting practices and well-being of parents, along with the quality of care that children experience.



The ECEI procured independent funding to recruit and follow a second cohort of children and their families in the fall of 2011.

### Principal Investigators

Diane Horm, Ph.D.  
Deborah Norris, Ph.D.

### Project Director

Chana Goodno

### Funding

1/15/2010 – 12/31/2010: \$60,000  
Ounce of Prevention  
4/1/2011 – 3/31/2013 (cohort 2): \$50,000  
George Kaiser Family Foundation

## Educare Kindergarten Follow-Up

The purpose of the Educare Kindergarten Follow-Up Study is to examine the differences at the end of the kindergarten year between English and Spanish speaking children who attended Educare Kendall-Whittier.

We are conducting child assessments on former Educare preschoolers who attend Kindergarten at a Tulsa Public School during the 2010-2011 and 2011-2012 school years. We are also collecting data from teachers to assess the social-emotional development of the children as well as from parents to describe parental involvement in school and parent/child activities in the home. The information will be analyzed and used to inform Educare program improvement, including the transition process between Educare and public schools.

### Principal Investigators

Lisa Monroe, Ph.D.  
Diane Horn, Ph.D.

### Study Coordinator

Sarah Freed

### Funding

4/1/2011 – 3/31/2013: \$50,000  
George Kaiser Family Foundation



# Evaluation of Programming for Children Under 4

## State of Oklahoma Early Childhood Pilot Program

In 2006 the Oklahoma State Legislature directed the State Board of Education to establish a pilot infant and toddler program (State Pilot Program) funded through private contribution and state funds to serve at-risk children and their families in at least one rural and one urban area of the state.



The Early Childhood Education Institute designed and conducted a multi-phase evaluation of the State Pilot Program (SPP) that began in 2007.

In 2010-2011, the project entered into year five, where researchers conducted a synthesis of phases (years) 1 through 4, focusing on practice and policy implications.

An implementation evaluation was also conducted in year 5. The implementation study utilized on-line surveys from various stakeholders in an effort to get a clearer picture of how each site was implementing the program and their experiences with the State Pilot Program in their work with children and families.

### Principal Investigator

Deborah Norris, Ph.D.

### Principal Investigator, Implementation Study

Lisa Monroe, Ph.D.

### Funding

10/10/2010 – 9/30/2011: \$181,551  
Community Action Project of Tulsa County

# Policy-Oriented Early Childhood Research

## Statewide Early Childhood Data System Workgroup

The use of data has been identified as a key factor in improving the quality of early childhood education.

The Oklahoma Partnership for School Readiness is leading an initiative to develop a “unified data collection system for public early childhood education and development programs throughout the state.” The ECEI is part of this team and contributes its expertise in identifying key questions that will be most beneficial to improve the care and education of young children.

# Early Childhood Workforce Development

## Tulsa Community College and OU-Tulsa Student Research Project

The objective of this research is to gain a better understanding of early childhood students' knowledge, skills and attitudes at different levels of educational attainment.

The levels of educational attainment include the Child Development Associate Certificate (CDA), associate's degree, bachelor's degree, and teacher licensure. This research is longitudinal in nature and employs mixed-methods for gathering data. Measures are administered to each student upon entry into an identified plan of study at Tulsa Community College (TCC) or OU-Tulsa.

As students complete and/or transition to the next higher level of education, the study assessments are re-administered to gain a measure of knowledge, skill, and attitudes attained at each level of education.

### Principal Investigators

Carla Goble, Ph.D., George Kaiser Family Foundation Professor, Tulsa Community College  
Diane Horm, Ph.D.

Graduate assistant provided by  
OU Jeannine Rainbolt College of Education



## SECC Mentoring Project Random Assignment Study

The Scholars for Excellence in Child Care (SECC) program recruits employees of child care facilities to take courses in early childhood at local community colleges in order to improve the quality of child care in the state.

A mentoring pilot project was created to assist Scholars (child care teachers) with the application of course material in their classrooms at their child care facilities. In 2009 the ECEI began a comprehensive evaluation of the Mentoring in Motion intervention, assigning Scholars randomly to receive the enhanced mentoring services or typical SECC services. The study employs a mixed-methods design and collects data from all participants. An implementation study began in 2010 to provide data from various stakeholders to better understand the mentoring process. Insights gained from analysis will inform programmatic decisions regarding continuation and implementation of this project on a larger scale.

### Principal Investigator:

Deborah Norris, Ph.D.

### Project Coordinator:

Beth Sullins

### Principal Investigator, Implementation Study:

Lisa Monroe, Ph.D.

### Funding

07/01/2010-06/30/2011: \$199,999

Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education

## Research Partnership Program

The ECEI launched a partnership program in 2011 with 12 local child care programs. In exchange for allowing ECEI staff to practice assessments in their child care setting, the ECEI delivers professional development and support. This initiative helps support the work of the ECEI and provides high quality professional development to centers.

## Early Childhood Leadership Institute



The 2010 focus for the annual ECLI was on “outdoor classroom experiences.” The ECEI invited Rusty Keeler, renowned gardener and landscaper, to work with early childhood educators to create wonderful and creative outdoor environments for children to discover and play. In addition to creating outdoor spaces, those in attendance were able to view creative spaces from around the world and discuss how to creatively encourage children to explore their natural environment. Breakout sessions included other topics such as, “Five Senses” Video Journaling, “Taking the Children Outside for Science” and “Creating Natural Playscapes.” In addition to presenting to the participants attending the 2-day ECLI, Rusty also delivered a community

presentation, a “Seed Sower Lecture,” during his visit to Tulsa on the topic of natural playscapes, and was Rich Fisher’s guest on a segment of KWGS’s Studio Tulsa.

## Jeannine Rainbolt College of Education Research Day

The ECEI participated with the faculty of the Jeannine Rainbolt College of Education for “Research Matters,” a poster display of research and creative projects. It was an opportunity for the ECEI to share our current research projects with faculty of the college and with some invited guests, including the Vice President for Research, Kelvin Droegemeir and the Dean of the Graduate College, Lee Williams.

## CAPTC Bracken Training

ECEI Research Associates presented an overview and presentation concerning the administration of the Bracken School Readiness Assessment at Community Action Project of Tulsa County.

## Studio Tulsa Radio

Drs. Diane Horm and Deborah Norris were interviewed October 5, 2010 on Studio Tulsa, the KWGS public radio talk show, about the importance of outdoor play and learning for young children.

# Contracted Data Collection

## Learning Games

The ECEI partnered with Dr. Joseph Sparling of the University of North Carolina and Teaching Strategies, as well as the Community Action Project of Tulsa County to conduct a baseline measure of children enrolled in Head Start. It incorporated curriculum intervention strategies shown to be effective in the widely known Abecedarian study.



These centered on activities parents can do at home with their child which support the classroom curriculum.

### Funding

1/1/2010-9/30/2010: \$23,110  
The Spencer Foundation/UNC-CH

### Project Coordinator:

Chana Goodno



# Publications

- Bass, L., Garn, G., & Monroe, L. (2010). Using JCEL case studies to meet ELCC standards. *Journal of Cases in Educational Leadership*, XX(X), 1-12.
- Goble, C., & Horm, D. (2010) Taking charge of your personal and professional development. *Young Children*, 65(6), 86-91.
- Horm, D., Goble, C., & Branscomb, K. (2011), Infant toddler curriculum: Review, reflection, and revolution. In N. File, J.J. Mueller, & D.B. Wisneski (Eds.), *Curriculum in early childhood education: Re-examined, rediscovered, renewed*. NY: Routledge.
- Horm, D., & Yazejian, N. (2010). Educare: Program description, current implementation study, and future research goals. *Early Education and Child Development SIG Newsletter*, 5(1), 3-4.
- Monroe, L., & Horm, D. (in press). Using a logic model to evaluate undergraduate instruction in a laboratory preschool. *Early Education and Development*.
- Norris, D. (2010). Raising the educational requirements for teachers in infant toddler classrooms: Implications for institutions of higher education. *Journal of Early Childhood Teacher Education*, 31, 146-158.

# Presentations

JULY 1, 2010 – JUNE 30, 2011

## Local

- Farris, S., & Petty, J. (2010). Building your infant/toddler outdoor classroom. [Presentation]. Paper presented at the Early Childhood Leadership Institute. Tulsa, OK.
- Fox, M., Hays-Grudo, J., & Horm, D. (2010). The social determinants of health. [Invited lecture]. Lecture delivered at the OU School of Community Medicine Summer Institute. Tulsa, OK.
- Norris, D. (2010). Outdoor play opportunities in Oklahoma child care: Research findings. [Presentation]. Paper presented at the Seed Sower Series at the University of Oklahoma. Tulsa, OK.
- Norris, D., & Ehlers, V. (2010). The role of the teacher in engaging outdoor play. [Presentation]. Paper presented at the Early Childhood Leadership Institute. Tulsa, OK.

## State

- Freed, S. (2010). Safe & sanitary: Sensible solutions for the infant/toddler classroom. [Presentation]. Paper presented at the Early Childhood Association of Oklahoma Annual Conference. Oklahoma City, OK.
- Horm, D. (2011). School readiness definition and assessment: Issues and guidelines. [Invited presentation]. Paper delivered to the Quality, Access, Standards, and Accountability Workgroup, Oklahoma Partnership for School Readiness. Oklahoma City, OK.
- Jackson, M., & Monroe, L. (2010). Diversity: Building partnerships with families. [Presentation]. Paper presented at the Early Childhood Association of Oklahoma Annual Conference. Oklahoma City, OK.

## Regional

- Farris, S., & Petty, J. (2011). Building your infant/toddler outdoor classroom. [Presentation]. Paper presented at the Southern Early Childhood Association Annual Conference. Savannah, GA.
- Jackson, M. (2011). Using research to assess, build, and collaborate with partners in child development. [Presentation]. Paper presented at the Southern Early Childhood Association Annual Conference. Savannah, GA.

## National

- Crofut, D., Horm, D., & Goble, C. (2011). Credentialing requirements for Head Start teachers: A study of backgrounds and experiences. [Presentation]. Paper presented at the National Association for the Education of Young Children Institute for Early Childhood Professional Development. Providence, RI.
- Goble, C., & Horm, D. (2011). Standards-based teacher self-assessment: Using NAEYC's 2009 standards to inform in-service and pre-service professional development. [Presentation]. Paper presented at the National Association for the Education of Young Children Institute for Early Childhood Professional Development. Providence, RI.
- Horm, D., & Goble, C. (2011). Using standards to bring faculty together to shape common goals. [Invited panel]. Presented at the National Association for the Education of Young Children Institute for Early Childhood Professional Development. Providence, RI.
- Monroe, L., & Horm, D. (2010). Evaluation of a laboratory preschool. [Presentation]. Poster presented at the Annual Meeting of the National Association of Early Childhood Teacher Educators. Anaheim, CA.
- Norris, D., Sullins, B., & Monroe, L. (2010). "Flying the plane while building it": The ins and outs of planning and implementing pilot projects in this age of evidence-based practice. [Poster]. Presented at the National Association for the Education of Young Children Institute for Early Childhood Professional Development. Providence, RI.

## International

- Calhoun, C., & Horm, D. (2011). Educare: A catalyst for change. [Presentation]. Paper presented at the International Infant and Toddler Conference. Tulsa, OK.
- Norris, D., & Ehlers, V. (2011). Enriching outdoor play opportunities for infants, toddlers, and twos. [Presentation]. Paper presented at the International Infant and Toddler Conference. Tulsa, OK.

# University Strategic Organization

University Strategic Organizations (USO) are organized scholarship units involving multiple disciplines, as well as mature linkages with industry and government, that represent core strategic activities of the University.



USOs are expected to promote the incubation of creative ideas and

innovative/disruptive technologies within a mature, structured framework and mission directly aligned with University and/or State strategic research directions.

Owing to their strategic importance, USOs receive a portion of their funding as ongoing base support from the Office of the Vice President for Research, though in all cases the majority of funding will come from external sources. Any non-academic unit or



informally organized activity is eligible to apply for USO classification. However,

those having the greater likelihood of selection are longstanding entities that reflect core strategic directions of the University.

In June 2011, it was announced that the Early Childhood Education Institute would be one of the 6 university organizations honored with the designation of USO status. With the addition of this support from the University of Oklahoma, the ECEI's research on the Early Care and Education of Infants, Toddlers, Twos, and Threes will expand throughout our existing 4 lines of research over the coming years. As a USO, the ECEI will be able to accomplish its goal of becoming the nation's foremost center for translational research on these understudied age groups of young children.

## Staff



### **Diane Horm, Ph.D.**

Endowed Professor  
and Founding Director

Dr. Horm is the George Kaiser Family Foundation Endowed Chair of Early Childhood Education and Founding Director of the Early Childhood Education Institute (ECEI) at the University of Oklahoma at Tulsa.

Through the ECEI, Horm is leading several applied research initiatives including program evaluation research in collaboration with Tulsa's Educare programs and other community partners.

Prior to her 2006 appointment at the University of Oklahoma she held faculty and administrative positions at the University of Rhode Island including Associate Dean of the College of Human Sciences, Professor of Human Development and Family Studies, and Director of the URI Child Development Centers.

Horm was a visiting scholar at the U.S. Department of Education's National Institute on Early Childhood Development and Education and is a graduate fellow of Zero to Three's Leaders for the 21st Century Fellowship Program.



### **Deborah Norris, Ph.D.**

Associate Director  
of Research

Dr. Norris is currently leading the evaluation projects for the state's Scholars for Excellence in Child Care professional development initiative and the Oklahoma State Pilot Program, a public private partnership supporting quality early care and education for children under 4 years of age. Prior to joining the ECEI in the fall of 2007 she was an Associate Professor of Early Childhood at Oklahoma State University in Stillwater. In her 35 years in the field of early childhood Dr. Norris has been a classroom teacher, center director, teacher educator, and researcher.



### **Lisa Monroe, Ph.D.**

Senior Research  
and Policy Associate

Dr. Monroe focuses her research on the implementation of early childhood programs and policies. This year she was the Project Director for the Educare Implementation Study and she also conducted process studies of the State Pilot Program and the

Scholars for Excellence in Child Care Mentoring Project. Dr. Monroe represents the ECEI at state policy meetings and participates in various workgroups charged with improving the care and education of Oklahoma's youngest children. Before joining the ECEI in 2009, Dr. Monroe served as the Director of the University of Oklahoma Laboratory Preschool in Norman and as an instructor in the Early Childhood Education undergraduate program.

### Assistant Director of Administration



**Beth Sullins** was the Project Coordinator for the Scholars for Excellence in Child Care Mentoring in Motion Pilot Project evaluation and has been with the ECEI since 2008. As Project Coordinator she managed data collection, analysis and reporting. Along with Dr. Deborah Norris, she presented at NAEYC's Professional Development Institute in 2011. Her other duties include community outreach and coordinating work on the annual "Early Childhood Leadership Institute" each fall. She was appointed Assistant Director of Administration in May 2011.

### Staff Support Specialist



**Sherry Phillips** joined the institute in 2009. She provides administrative support by handling travel arrangements, coordinating office projects, and maintaining filing systems.

### Technology and Database Specialist



**Chana Goodno** has been with the ECEI since 2009. She works with the study and site coordinators to design databases specific to project needs. She also provides technology support for the ECEI, maintains the website and participates in the design and production of Institute publications. Chana was also the Project

Coordinator for the Educare Randomized Control Trial, recruiting and interviewing families in English and Spanish.

### Training Coordinator



**Stephanie Farris** has been a Research Associate with the ECEI since 2008. She conducts child and classroom assessments and works across projects to support our various research initiatives. In March of 2011, Stephanie assumed the role of Training Coordinator, and is responsible for managing the professional development and training on assessment instruments for our staff, and also provides training for our community partners. She manages our Research Partnership Program and works on ECEI publications as part of our Dissemination Team.

### Educare Site Coordinators



**Shannon Guss** is the Site Coordinator at the Tulsa Hawthorne Educare and the Data Analyst for the Educare Implementation Study. She has been with the ECEI since 2008. Her responsibilities include coordinating all assessment data at Hawthorne, disseminating data findings to teaching leadership, analyzing data, and creating power point presentations based on data analyses from both Educare sites. Shannon is also an active participant on the Infrastructure team, assisting in the creation of policies and procedures for the growing ECEI.



**Barbara White** is the Site Coordinator at the Tulsa Kendall-Whittier Educare. She has been with the ECEI since 2007. Her responsibilities include coordinating the collection of all the assessment data, conducting child assessments in English and Spanish and classroom assessments, and disseminating data findings to teaching leadership at the center.

### Research Associates



**Sarah Freed**, a Research Associate II, has been with the ECEI since 2008. She works across several evaluation projects conducting child and classroom assessments. She is the Study Coordinator for the Educare Kindergarten Follow-Up Study and is a member of the ECEI Infrastructure team. Sarah presented at the Early Childhood Association of Oklahoma conference in 2010.



**Imelda Galvez** joined the ECEI in 2011. Her primary responsibility is conducting child assessments in English and Spanish at Educare Kendall-Whittier and scoring and entering data. She also assists with the Educare Randomized Control Trial and the State Pilot Program evaluation studies.



**Malia Jackson** has been with the ECEI since 2009. She works across several of our evaluation projects and her primary responsibilities include conducting child and classroom assessments, scoring and entering data, and designing publication materials for the ECEI. Malia has presented at state and regional conferences.



**Jennifer Petty** joined the ECEI in 2010. She has worked across several projects conducting child and classroom assessments, compiling data reports, and organizing literature reviews. She also coordinated a four-county needs assessment project. Jennifer has presented at state and regional conferences.



**Lauren Worley** is a Research Associate II who joined the ECEI in 2011. She is the new Study Coordinator for the Scholars in Excellence in Child Care evaluation project, and is the new study coordinator for the Educare Randomized Control Trial. In addition, she conducts child assessments in English and Spanish for the Educare Kindergarten Follow-Up Study.



EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION INSTITUTE  

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