

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



JULY 1, 2012 – JUNE 30, 2013

From our Director

The 2012-13 academic year was busy and productive at the OU-Tulsa Early Childhood Education Institute (ECEI).



The ECEI conducted several program evaluation projects and applied research studies; disseminated information through peer-reviewed and invited publications; delivered numerous professional presentations to local, state, national, and international

audiences; and co-hosted several early childhood professional development sessions. We enjoyed many accomplishments in each of our three core activities of research, evaluation, and community collaboration. I highlight here key events and activities:

Research

In 2011, the Vice President for Research designated the ECEI as an OU University Strategic Organization (USO) through a highly selective peer-reviewed competition. This was a major step in positioning the ECEI and its Infants, Toddlers, Twos, and Threes (IT³) initiative to be at the forefront of research and academic programs in the U.S., with an applied multidisciplinary focus on infants, toddlers, twos and threes. During 2012-13, the ECEI hosted two meetings of the IT³ USO Advisory Board—composed of local, state, and national leaders interested in applied research to support optimal development and care of our youngest citizens and their families. The IT³ Advisory Board provided feedback and input on the vision, mission, and goals for the developing IT³ Research Center during our October 2012 meeting. During the Spring 2013 meeting, the Advisory Board assisted in putting the finishing touches on a Strategic Plan for the IT³ Research Center for 2012-2017. Additionally, they complimented our work to date and, importantly, endorsed our future research ideas. They believe we have innovative ideas and encouraged us to continue to

build the IT³ Research Center within the ECEI by developing research proposals focused on the understudied age groups of infants, toddlers, twos and threes. The Advisory Board affirmed that the IT³ Research Center is well-positioned to grow into a leading national center focused on the care and education of infants, toddlers, twos, and threes.

Evaluation

The ECEI conducts applied research and evaluation in three broad areas:

1. Evaluation of Early Childhood Models and Programs
2. Policy-Oriented Early Childhood Applied Research
3. Investigations related to Early Childhood Workforce Development

Our 2012-13 projects in each of these three categories are listed below. You can find additional details about each project later in this report.

Evaluation of Early Childhood Models and Programs:

- Educare Implementation Study at Tulsa Educare I and II; start-up at Tulsa Educare III
- Educare Randomized Control Trial at Tulsa Educare I
- Evaluation of the State of Oklahoma's Early Childhood Program (OECF)

Policy-Oriented Early Childhood Research:

- Assessment of Supply/Demand and Institutions of Higher Education's (IHE's) Capacity to Produce Early Childhood Educators in Oklahoma

Early Childhood Workforce Development Research:

- Self-Assessment of NAEYC Professional Development Standards for Early Childhood Educators
- Does Early Childhood Teacher Education Matter? A Study of Knowledge, Skills, and Attitudes of Students of Different Levels of Educational Preparation

For each of our evaluation projects, the ECEI works closely with program partners to shape meaningful research questions, strategies, and plans. Additionally, the ECEI regularly shares detailed results with ample discussion of use of findings to inform practice. Beyond sharing results with program partners, the ECEI disseminates results and lessons learned to the broader

Our Vision

Advancing Quality in Early Childhood through Research, Evaluation and Community Collaboration

Our Mission

The Early Childhood Education Institute (ECEI) at OU-Tulsa strives to advance and support early childhood programming and policies by generating, disseminating, and applying meaningful research.

Core Values

The Early Childhood Education Institute has identified the following core values as the foundation for our work:

Integrity: We are committed to doing what is right. We are honest and sincere in our relationships in order to build trust and foster collaboration. We practice discipline, consistency, and persistence in our work to ensure the quality of our research.

Responsibility: We are independent professionals who hold ourselves and each other accountable.

Excellence: We go beyond what is expected, as individuals and as an organization.

Respect: We treat others with fairness, dignity, and compassion. We value the diversity of our team and the strengths of each member. We center our research in respect for children, their families, and the early childhood profession. We approach each person with positive intent.

Learning: We are advocates for the continuous pursuit of knowledge both as contributors to the scientific field and as lifelong learners.

Flexibility: We adapt to the needs of our growing organization, its partners, and our employees.

early childhood community through professional presentations and publications. The ECEI's 2012-13 presentations and publications are listed on page 10.

Community Collaboration

The ECEI hosted the Sixth Annual Early Childhood Leadership Institute (ECLI) on November 2 and 3, 2012, at the OU-Tulsa Schusterman Learning Center. The conference focused on the topic of Enthusiastic, Engaged Early Learners with Marilou Hyson as keynote speaker. Multiple guest lectures, conference presentations, and papers served as mechanisms to share research-based knowledge with the broader community, including parents and practitioners.

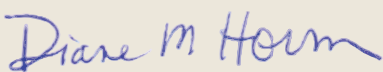
The ECEI also collaborated with partners to collect data to inform their work with young children and their families. Specifically, the ECEI partnered on the following projects:

- Assessing the School Readiness of CAP-Tulsa's Head Start Children
- Career Advance: A Dual-Generation Program's Effects on Families and Children

This Annual Report contains more information about these and other activities of the ECEI during 2012-13. 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 community collaboration.”

We look forward to sharing the ECEI's continued development and growth in future Annual Reports. I invite you to read this report and to contact me with questions, suggestions, or opportunities for collaboration.

Thanks for your interest in the work of the ECEI.



Diane M. Horm, Ph.D.

Director, Early Childhood Education Institute
George Kaiser Family Foundation Endowed Chair
in Early Childhood Education
University of Oklahoma – Tulsa
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Growth and University Support

Over the ECEI's seven-year history, our projects have expanded from being solely Tulsa-based to now serving a statewide audience. In addition to securing three Oklahoma Smart Start projects in the last three years via



competitive proposal processes, the ECEI leadership staff are also active on statewide committees and task forces.

The ECEI received various forms of support through OU during 2012-13. For example, Dr. Horm secured funding to support staff to write grant applications

during the summer of 2013. The University again met the ECEI's needs by planning for additional office space, assessment rooms, and observation rooms that will be used for training and research. Costs for these new offices and research space will be covered by OU-Tulsa's central administration, OU's Vice President for Research, and the OU Jeannine Rainbolt College of Education.

The University has also continued providing support through the ECEI's designation as a University Strategic Organization (USO). In 2011, the ECEI's Infant, Toddlers, Twos, and Threes (IT³) proposal was one of six (out of 18) selected as a USO with \$150,000 base support per year expected over the course of five years to build the research infrastructure of the ECEI. This is the second year that the ECEI has received USO funding. One of the ways this additional support was used included the hiring of specialized staff. For the first time, funding was available to support a position solely dedicated to data

analysis. The funding and creation of this position aligned with the ECEI's overarching goals developed during 2012-13 through a facilitated strategic planning process.

A major focus of the ECEI during 2012-13 was strategic planning and goal setting for 2013-16. With facilitation supplied by an OU expert, the ECEI staff developed the following goals:

- ❑ **Increase research enterprise and excellence** – The ECEI has implementation plans to evaluate and further develop the research skills and productivity of staff.
- ❑ **Expand collaborations** – The ECEI plans to sustain and expand collaborations with local, state and national partners.
- ❑ **Increase and diversify funding** – As the ECEI has maintained excellent stewardship practices of existing funds, the capacity to diversify funds beyond local and state sources is a high priority.
- ❑ **Advance and promote the ECEI** – Given the ECEI's dedication to applied research and partnership approach, it is important to ensure public understanding of our vision, mission, and goals to forge additional collaborative relationships.
- ❑ **Promote a supportive and innovative organizational culture** – The ECEI is committed to conducting excellent research through well-trained staff who thrive in a supportive work environment.

Additional support was facilitated by the alignment of the ECEI's work and the work of OU students pursuing advanced graduate degrees. In the summer of 2011, the Oklahoma Regents for Higher Education approved a Ph.D. program specializing in Early Childhood Education (ECE) to be offered at the OU-Tulsa Schusterman Center.

The ECE Ph.D. Program and the ECEI are becoming mutually supportive. Two doctoral students actively worked on the ECEI's projects in 2012-13 and utilized the Institute's datasets for course work. The ECEI serves as an applied laboratory for teaching the next generation of ECE researchers, scholars, and college faculty. The presence of doctoral students further increases the ECEI's capacity to contribute significant work with local, state, and national implications.

Research and Evaluation

Three 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. In addition, the ECEI examines links between various aspects of classroom experience and children's development.

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 as well as new initiatives that relate to the training and education of the early childhood workforce.

Evaluation of Early Childhood Models and Programs

Educare Implementation Study

Educare is a research-based program that prepares young children for school. It is an enhanced Head Start program that serves young children living in poverty who are at risk for school failure. Educare has a strong parent involvement component, highly-qualified staff, and full-day year-round services for children birth through five years of age.

The ECEI is the Local Evaluation Partner for Tulsa Educare, Inc. and its programs. 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.

The national evaluation study combines data across sites to evaluate Educare as a program model, and enables use of 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.

Highlights for 2012-13:

- A third site in Tulsa was opened and a partial evaluation of the new site provided baseline data on classroom quality and identified areas for improvement.
- Data showing specific needs of children by site were identified for use in decision making regarding professional development.
- Identification of pervasive family food insecurity and its negative correlation with growth in school readiness scores prompted recommendations for additional intervention in this area.



Principal Investigator:

Diane Horm, Ph.D.

Project Director:

Shannon Guss

Site Coordinators:

Imelda Galvez
Jennifer Petty

Funders:

Tulsa Educare, Inc. and George Kaiser Family Foundation

Educare Randomized Control Trial

The ECEI is participating in a national study to examine the effectiveness of the Educare model.

This study is a partnership with University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill and four other research sites, and includes a randomly assigned control group receiving no Educare services. This control group will allow for a thorough analysis of the effectiveness of the Educare program.

Highlights for 2012-13:

- As study recruitment drew to a close, a total of 75 families were recruited from Tulsa.
- Assessments of children turning three years old were completed. Children's height, weight, and health outcomes were tracked and the following areas were also evaluated: executive functioning, language skills, and math concepts.
- The ECEI continues to seek funding to follow and evaluate children through their early elementary years. Funding would also allow the ECEI to examine child care quality characteristics as they contribute to children's outcomes.

Principal Investigator:

Diane Horn, Ph.D.

Study Coordinator:

Lauren Worley

Funders:

University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill and George Kaiser Family Foundation



Oklahoma Early Childhood Program Evaluation

The ECEI is the external evaluator for the Oklahoma Early Childhood Program, a state-



funded initiative awarded to the Community Action Project of Tulsa (CAP-Tulsa) to support and expand high quality early childhood programs for children who are three years old and younger.

For this project, the ECEI staff visit participating classrooms and observe and document classroom practices using several assessments. In addition, teachers and directors complete questionnaires used to examine relationships among various teacher, classroom, and center characteristics with the observed quality of practice. Information obtained from classroom observations is shared with CAP-Tulsa to guide professional development plans for their classroom teachers.

Highlights for 2012-13:

- This was the ECEI's largest classroom observation data collection to date, including 160 Infant/Toddler classroom observations and 87 preschool classroom observations for the year.
- Teachers were provided with individualized feedback from the observations to help guide their classroom practice and professional development.
- The ECEI staff partnered with seven CAP-Tulsa Instructional Coaches (IC) to ensure quality and support the program's utilization of the Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS) measure.

Principal Investigator:

Sherri Castle

Study Coordinator:

Krista Blanche

Funder:

CAP-Tulsa

Policy-Oriented Early Childhood Research

Assessment of Supply/Demand and Oklahoma's Institutions of Higher Education (IHE) Capacity to Produce Early Childhood Educators

The ECEI was contracted by Smart Start Oklahoma to assess the capacity of Oklahoma's IHEs to meet the demand for degreed early educators.

This demand has increased greatly in recent years due to a number of policy changes and initiatives. State School Readiness Partnerships were commissioned to evaluate their state's progress in meeting these demands. The ECEI staff gathered administrative data from multiple agencies including the Oklahoma State Regents, State Department of Education and Head Start.

Highlights for 2012-13:

- Results indicated that Oklahoma's IHEs are sufficiently meeting the demands for early educators needed in public school pre-K and Head Start.
- A larger issue placing a great deal of demand on the IHE capacity is turnover within the early education workforce. Results indicated that the high amount of turnover increased the demand of employees to a point that the state's IHE are not meeting the demand with the recent counts of degrees awarded. Results indicate that turnover causes employers to continually recruit degreed staff.
- These findings underscore the importance of considering these larger, systemic issues rather than focusing solely on relatively short-term increases in demand. These results were shared with the Oklahoma Partnership for School Readiness to inform their policy work.

Principal Investigators:

Diane Horm, Ph.D.
Sherri Castle

Funder:

Oklahoma Partnership for School Readiness

Early Childhood Workforce Development

Self-Assessment of NAEYC Professional Development Standards for Early Childhood Educators

The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) has articulated six standards for early childhood professionals across the career ladder.

The ECEI developed a measure of early childhood educators' understanding of best practice to align with NAEYC's six Professional Development Standards.

Highlights for 2012-13:

- The instrument is designed as a self-assessment of key practices related to effective early childhood teaching that can be used to inform the professional development and preparation of both pre- and in-service early childhood educators.

- The ECEI researchers collaborated with CAP-Tulsa to test and further refine the Early Childhood Educator Standards-Based Self-Assessment.
- Preliminary analyses suggest the Early Childhood Educator Standards-Based Self-Assessment is a reliable assessment tool. Plans are in place to collaborate with additional early care and education providers to establish validity. With established reliability and validity, the Early Childhood Educator Standards-Based Self-Assessment will be available to all teachers in the field of early childhood education to self-assess and guide their continuing professional development.

Principal Investigators:

Carla Goble, Ph.D.
Diane Horm, Ph.D.

Funder:

ECEI and OU (graduate assistants' time)

Does Early Childhood Teacher Education Matter? A Study of Knowledge, Skills, and Attitudes of Students of Different Levels of Educational Preparation



Highlights for 2012-13:

- ECEI researchers scored assessments and prepared data for analysis.
- “Next steps” in the research were planned.
- Preliminary plans were made to collect data as students move into their professional teaching roles.

Principal Investigators

Carla Goble, Ph.D.
Diane Horm, Ph.D.

Funder:

ECEI and OU (graduate assistants' time)

The objective of this research is to investigate how early childhood teacher preparation students are affected by their educational experiences as they move from one level of educational attainment to another.

This research is longitudinal in nature and employs mixed-methods for gathering data. Measures have been administered to early childhood teacher preparation students at Tulsa Community College (TCC) and OU-Tulsa. As students completed and/or transitioned to the next higher level of education, the study assessments were readministered to measure knowledge, skills, and attitudes. To date, this study has collected data from 286 teacher preparation students at the Child Development Associate Certificate (CDA), Associate's degree or Bachelor's



degree levels of teacher education. The next phase will be to capture data from study participants who have achieved additional levels of education and teacher licensure.



Community Collaboration

Early Childhood Leadership Institute

The Early Childhood Leadership Institute (ECLI) is an annual two-day professional conference hosted by the ECEI and numerous co-sponsors, including OU-Tulsa's Professional Development & Leadership Academy, Child Care Resource Center, Oklahoma State University's Human Development and Family Science Department, Tulsa Tech, Early Childhood Association of Oklahoma, and OU's Jeannine Rainbolt College of Education and Center for Early Childhood Professional Development. The Sixth ECLI, held November 2-3, 2012, focused on "Enthusiastic Engaged Early Learners." The keynote speaker was Marilou Hyson, Ph.D., a consultant in early child development and author of *Enthusiastic and Engaged Learners*. A variety of workshops were offered, including topics such as autism and young children, temperament, music, challenging behaviors, math, and service learning for young children. More than 150 participants attended this year, and several of the ECEI staff and OU-Tulsa ECE faculty delivered presentations. In addition to the two-day professional conference, the Seed Sower free public lecture at OU-Tulsa was held on November 1. The public lecture is one of the highlights of the ECLI, offering a university-level learning opportunity for all early childhood professionals, parents, program leaders, and the general public.

Research Partnership Program

Child care centers who have agreed to be community partner sites provide essential opportunities for the ECEI staff to practice child assessments and classroom quality observations. These training and reliability sessions ensure that the ECEI can maintain high standards when administering child assessments and classroom quality measures. In turn, the community partners receive professional development opportunities such as workshops and discounts to the ECLI, as well as materials specific to using research tools to improve services to young children. During the past year, the ECEI continued our partnership



program with local child care centers. In 2012-13, 21 local providers signed partnership agreements with the ECEI and participated as training sites. This initiative not only helps support the ECEI's work, but also provides high quality

professional development that might otherwise be a financial burden to centers. Workshops offered during 2012-13 included Fostering Language Development and Encouraging Creative Thinking, Working with Families, and Block Play in ECE Classrooms.

Our current partners include:

- ❑ Angel Academy Early Learning Center I
- ❑ Angel Academy II
- ❑ Boston Avenue Weekday School
- ❑ Christ United Methodist Church Early Learning Center
- ❑ Cornerstone Child Development Center II
- ❑ Country Club Gardens Head Start/Early Head Start
- ❑ Crosstown Early Learning Center
- ❑ Destiny Learning Academy
- ❑ Holland Hall Preschool Program
- ❑ Mannford Little Pirates Child Development Center, LLC
- ❑ Monte Cassino Early Childhood Learning Center
- ❑ Native American Coalition of Tulsa Head Start
- ❑ Play & Learn Preschool, Inc.
- ❑ Sapulpa Early Head Start/Head Start
- ❑ Sapulpa Stegall Head Start
- ❑ Small World Learning Center
- ❑ Solid Foundation Preparatory Academy
- ❑ Taylor's Tool Box, LLC
- ❑ TCC Child Development Center
- ❑ The Preschool at Jenks Church
- ❑ W. L. Hutcherson YMCA

CareerAdvance: A Dual-Generation Program's Effects on Families and Children

The CareerAdvance study is a partnership among CAP-Tulsa, Institute for Policy Research at Northwestern University, and the Ray Marshall Center for the Study of Human Resources at the University of Texas, Austin.



The purpose of this study is to better understand whether and how participating in career training may influence: (1) family economic well-being; (2) parent self-confidence, self-efficacy, stress, and career success; and

(3) child outcomes, including social, emotional, and cognitive development. The ECEI is contracted by Northwestern University to assess outcomes for children whose parents participate in the CareerAdvance program and their matched comparison group.

Highlights for 2012-13:

- Ninety-seven children were assessed on three different instruments used to measure receptive vocabulary, cognitive development, and executive functioning.
- Fifty-five classrooms were visited during the fall and spring.
- Collaborations were strengthened across the multiple agencies.

Principal Investigator:

Diane Horm, Ph.D.

Study Coordinator:

Emisha Young

Funder:

Northwestern University

Assessing the School Readiness of CAP-Tulsa's Head Start Children

The school readiness of Head Start children enrolled in CAP-Tulsa's early childhood centers was assessed through the use of a standardized, norm-referenced assessment designed for use with this age group.

The information from this assessment allows teachers and program administrators to better understand the developmental level of children in their classrooms so that they can better tailor classroom practices to individual children's needs.

Highlights for 2012-13:

- Approximately 1,600 preschool children, enrolled at one of the 12 Head Start-funded programs throughout Tulsa, were assessed both in fall and spring, with a commonly used school readiness tool.
- During the seven week data collection timeline, preschool children were assessed on five basic skills: colors, letters, numbers and counting, size and comparisons, and shapes.
- Results were shared with teachers who provided feedback to parents to show child progress on these five skills considered important for school readiness.

Principal Investigator:

Sherri Castle

Project Coordinator:

Emisha Young

Funder:

CAP-Tulsa



Publications

The ECEI staff were active in disseminating research-based information through publications in peer-reviewed journal articles and book chapters in 2012-13.

Peer-reviewed journal articles:

Monroe, L., & **Horm, D. M.** (2012). Using a logic model to evaluate undergraduate instruction in a laboratory preschool. *Early Education and Development, 23*(2), 227-241.

McBride, B., Groves, M., Barbour, N., **Horm, D.M.**, Stremmel, A., Lash, M., Bersani, C., Ratekin, C., Moran, J., Elicker, J., & Toussaint, S. (2012). Child development laboratory schools as generators of knowledge in early childhood education: New models and approaches. *Early Education and Development, 23*(2), 153-164.

Sisson, S.B., Campbell, J., May, K., Brittain, D.R., Monroe, L., **Guss, S.**, & Ladner, J. (2012). Assessment of nutrition and physical activity practices in Oklahoma child care centers. *Journal of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics, 112*(8), 1230-1239.

Norris, D.J., & Horm, D.M. (2013). Introduction to the special issue on the use of data to inform early childhood practice and policy. *Early Education and Development, 24*(1), 1-3.

Guss, S., Norris, D. J., Horm, D. M., Monroe, L.A., & Wolfe, V. (2013). Lessons learned about data utilization from classroom observations. *Early Education and Development, 24*(1), 4-18.



Guss, S., Horm, D.M., Lang, E., Krehbiel, S.M., Petty, J., Austin, K., Bergren, C., Brown, A., & Holloway, S. (2013). Using classroom quality assessment to inform teacher decisions. *Young Children, 68*(3), 16-20.

Horm, D. M., Hyson, M., & Winton, P. J. (2013). Research on early childhood teacher education: Evidence from the three domains and recommendations for moving forward. *Journal of Early Childhood Teacher Education, 34*(1), 95-112.

Book chapters:

Hyson, M., **Horm, D.**, & Winton, P. (2012). Higher education for early childhood educators and outcomes for young children: Pathways toward greater effectiveness. In R. C. Pianta (Ed.), *Handbook of Early Childhood Education* (pp. 553-583). New York, NY: Guilford Press.

Book reviews:

Sullins, E. (2013). [Review of the book *Managing legal risks in early childhood programs: How to prevent flare-ups from becoming lawsuits*, by H.E. Bruno & T. Copeland]. *Journal of Educational Administration, 51*(5), 737-740.



Other publications:

ECEI. (2013, July 2). Summertime and Our Role Models [Web blog]. Retrieved from <http://www.smartstartok.org/summertime-our-role-models>.

ECEI. (2013, April 30). Taking Care of Mom [Web blog]. Retrieved from <http://www.smartstartok.org/blog/taking-care-mom>.

ECEI. (2013, March 26). Behavior-Guiding Strategies [Web blog]. Retrieved from <http://www.smartstartok.org/blog/behavior-guiding-strategies>.

Presentations

The ECEI staff delivered multiple presentations at the local, state, and national levels.

State:

Adamic, R., Sisson, S.B., Thomas, B., Frampton, A.F., Sitton, L.K., Campbell, J.E., Anderson, M., **Horm, D.**, & Ladner, J. Macronutrient and micronutrient intake of young children in child care in Oklahoma: Preliminary findings. Graduate Research and Education Technology Symposium, Oklahoma City, OK, April 2, 2013.

Guss, S., & Calhoun, C. Educare—A catalyst for change. Smart Start Oklahoma 2nd Annual Conference, Norman, OK, August 29, 2012.

Farris, S. Assessing environments with ITERS-R: Easy ways to boost your scores. Early Childhood Association of Oklahoma Conference, Del City, OK, February 9, 2013.

National:

Horm, D.M. Strengthening higher education programs' focus on infant/toddler content. Invited presentation delivered at the Annual Meeting of the Network of Infant/Toddler Researchers, Washington, DC, January 17, 2013.

Goble, C. Essential elements for moving articulation forward: Leadership and partnership. Invited presentation delivered at the 2013 T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood National Articulation Summit, Chapel Hill, NC, April 25, 2013.

Horm, D.M. Invited panelist for session entitled, Finding Our Professional Pathways: Advice from Senior Members. Delivered at the Annual Meeting, American Educational Research Association, San Francisco, CA, April 29, 2013.

Castle, S., & Horm, D.M. Capacity of higher education to meet increased demands for early childhood educators. Presented at the Annual Meeting, American Educational Research Association, San Francisco, CA, May 1, 2013.

Goble, C., & Horm, D.M. Standards-Based Self-Assessment: A holistic approach to preparing and fostering resiliency, agency, and advocacy in early childhood teacher candidates. Presented at the NAECTE Professional Development Institute, San Francisco, CA, June 10, 2013.

Horm, D.M. Invited panelist for Closing Plenary entitled: Developmentally Appropriate Practice: The Next Era. Delivered at the NAEYC's 2013 National Institute for Early Childhood Professional Development, San Francisco, CA, June 12, 2013.

International:

Horm, D.M., & Norris, D.J. Oklahoma's Pilot Early Childhood Program Birth through Three Years: Description, evaluation, and policy implications. Presented at the 22nd European Early Childhood Education Research Association meeting, Oporto, Portugal, August 31, 2012.

Frampton, A.M., Sisson, S.B., **Horm, D.**, Campbell, J.E., Lora, K., & Ladner, J. What's for lunch? An analysis of Oklahoma child care menus. International Society of Behavioral Nutritional and Physical Activity Annual Meeting, Ghent, Belgium, May 22-25, 2013.

University Strategic Organization

University Strategic Organizations (USOs) 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 selected by the Vice President for Research's office based on their alignment with OU's mission and potential for research productivity. In June 2011, the ECEI competed for and was granted USO status for its proposal: *Research*

on the Care and Education of Infants, Toddlers, Twos, and Threes (IT³). The USO designation indicates that our topic of early care and education of young children birth through age three is viewed as an area of future growth for research and academic programming. Additionally, USO designation provides base research funding for up to five years to build research capacity.

During 2012-13 a portion of the USO funds were used to support several staff to strengthen the ECEI's expertise in infant/toddler content and data analysis. For example, the USO funds supported a half-time data analyst and two part-time senior scientists with expertise in infant/toddler research and professional development. These staff were instrumental in developing and submitting several small and large grant proposals during the spring and summer of 2013.

To expand the disciplines and research topics considered, six IT³ Research Fellows were recruited during 2012-13. These individuals, their disciplines and current work roles are:

- Nancy File, Ph.D. in Child Development & Family Studies; Associate Professor, Department of Curriculum & Instruction, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee

- Jennifer Hays-Grudo, Ph.D. in Developmental Psychology; George Kaiser Family Foundation Chair in Community Medicine at OU-Tulsa
- Julie Miller-Cribbs, Ph.D. in Social Work; Associate Professor, OU Anne and Henry Zarrow School of Social Work
- Su An Phipps, Ph.D. in Human Ecology, M.S Nursing, RN; Assistant Professor, OU College of Nursing
- Susan Sisson, Ph.D. in Exercise and Wellness; Assistant Professor, OUHSC Department of Nutritional Sciences
- Paul Spicer, Ph.D. in Anthropology; Professor of Anthropology and Director of OU's Center for Applied Social Research

The USO funds were also used to support two multi-disciplinary research projects through our IT³ Mini-Grant program. During 2012-13 the IT³ Mini-Grants included:

- *Educare Data Expansion: Linking Adult and Child Data* by Julie Miller-Cribbs, Ph.D., and Jennifer Hays-Grudo, Ph.D.
- *Child Care Classroom Observation: Ability to Predict an Obesogenic Environment* by Susan Sisson, Ph.D.

The IT³ Steering Committee, the senior-level researchers affiliated with the IT³ USO, worked during the winter of 2013 to develop a 5-year Strategic Plan for 2012-2017. This led to the birth of the IT³ Research Center within the ECEI during 2012-13. The vision, mission, and goals of the IT³ Research Center are summarized on page 12.





IT³ Vision

The IT³ Research Center strives to understand and inform the distinct development and learning of infants, toddlers, twos, and threes within early care and education settings through research, dissemination, and application.

IT³ Mission

As a university-based research center, the IT³ Research Center uses an interdisciplinary approach to

- ❑ Expand knowledge of the under-studied group care context for infants, toddlers, twos, and threes
- ❑ Examine experiences, processes, and outcomes for children, families, and staff at the intersection of practice, policy, and programs
- ❑ Enact a partnership approach to inform research questions and translate knowledge into action through active engagement with community partners
- ❑ Promote dissemination of research-based knowledge to professional, policy, practitioner, and public audiences
- ❑ Prepare the next generation of scholars and practitioners with IT³ knowledge and research skills

IT³ Goals

The IT³ Research Center will be a

- ❑ Catalyst to launch and utilize interdisciplinary approaches and strategies to address questions regarding infants, toddlers, twos, and threes – especially within the realm of group care
- ❑ Incubator for and contributor to cutting-edge research on the experiences of children, families, and staff at the intersection of practice, policy, and programs
- ❑ Conduit to promote the dissemination of research-based knowledge to professional, policy, practitioner, and public audiences
- ❑ Forum to engage partners in a bi-directional, dynamic exchange of research questions, findings, interpretations and meanings in applied settings
- ❑ Partner to OU-Tulsa academic programs in the preparation of the next generation of scholars with IT³ knowledge and research skills
- ❑ Successful steward of fiscal and human capital necessary to achieve the vision, mission, and goals of the IT³ Research Center

During 2012-13, the ECEI hosted two meetings of the IT³ USO Advisory Board, composed of local, state, and national leaders interested in applied research to support optimal development and care of our youngest citizens and their families. The IT³ Advisory Board provided feedback and input on the vision, mission, and goals for the developing IT³ Research Center during our October meeting. During the May meeting, the Advisory Board assisted in putting the finishing touches on a Strategic Plan for the IT³ Research Center for 2012-2017. The Advisory Board also provided input on the Implementation Plan developed to ensure the goals of the Strategic Plan are realized.

Additionally, the IT³ Advisory Board conducted our annual USO evaluation. Overall, they complimented our work to date and, importantly, endorsed our future research ideas.

Specifically, the IT³ Advisory Board noted the following strengths for our 2012-13 evaluation:

- ❑ Leadership of the center is excellent and impressive.
- ❑ Work is cutting edge.
- ❑ A data analyst and research faculty member have been added. New staff members strengthen topical focus and research capabilities.
- ❑ Senior staff are doing mentoring and scaffolding for junior staff.
- ❑ Staff are competent, task oriented, well-organized and intentional. Staff has energy, synergy, and excellent morale.
- ❑ The Center has a more refined vision. Strategic plan is written and implementation is underway.
- ❑ Interdisciplinary activities funded through IT³ mini-grants have paid off. Maximizing on small investment has been a strength.
- ❑ Collaborations with community are excellent.
- ❑ Innovative approaches have been implemented such as translating research into practice, feedback to teachers, coaching and hosting leadership conference.
- ❑ National outreach through presentations and attendance at national conferences has been achieved.
- ❑ Strong organization, transparency and accountability is evident.



IT³ Advisory Board

The Advisory Board affirmed that the ECEI is well-positioned to grow into a leading national center focused on the care and education of infants, toddlers, twos, and threes. The IT³ Advisory Board includes:

Chair: Aletha C. Huston, Ph.D.

Aletha C. Huston is the Priscilla Pond Flawn Regents Professor of Child Development Emerita at the University of Texas at Austin. She specializes in understanding the effects of poverty on children and the impact of child care and income support policies on children's development. She was the Principal Investigator studying the effects of a poverty intervention program (the New Hope Project) on children and families, and she was an investigator in the NICHD Study of Early Child Care and Youth Development.

Margaret Erling

Margaret Erling is president of Erling and Associates, a full-service legislative and consulting firm in the Oklahoma State Legislature. She strives to build relationships through various projects and clients for the betterment of others, focusing on education for young children.

Lu Ann Faulkner-Schneider

Lu Ann Faulkner-Schneider is currently the Coordinator for Professional Development and Quality Initiatives at the Oklahoma Department of Human Services. For the last 23 years, Ms. Faulkner-Schneider has worked for Oklahoma Child Care Services with a variety of initiatives including the OK Early Learning Guidelines and Core Competencies for Early Childhood Practitioners. As Professional Development Coordinator, Ms. Faulkner is involved in contracting, training and group work to move child care programs towards improvement.

Patricia L. Hardre, Ph.D.

Pat Hardre is the Associate Dean for Research & Graduate Programs, OU's Jeannine Rainbolt College of Education. Her research areas include: motivation for learning, rural education, faculty work and evaluation, computer-based assessments, HIV-AIDS education, education and human services program evaluation, and design of formal and informal learning environments.

Susan Kimmel, Ph.D.

Susan Kimmel is the Director of the Center for Early Childhood Professional Development (CECPD) at OU. Dr. Kimmel has implemented large projects and led change efforts across the state to promote school readiness and early literacy and works extensively in culturally diverse urban and rural communities. In addition, Dr. Kimmel is a former early childhood classroom teacher, lead literacy coach in Heidelberg, Germany, and the principal investigator and director of multiple Early Reading First grants.

Tammy L. Mann, Ph.D.

Tammy Mann is currently President & CEO of The Campagna Center in Washington, DC. For more than 20 years, Dr. Mann has worked in the nonprofit sector in agencies devoted to improving outcomes for minorities and low-income children and families. At the outset of her career, she worked on the front lines as a psychologist, providing home visiting services to low-income pregnant women and families with children under three. Throughout much of her career, she has worked at the senior management level in organizations to shape strategic direction and to develop and expand programs.

Helen Raikes, Ph.D.

Helen Raikes is the Willa Cather Professor and Professor in the Department of Child, Youth and Family Studies and an associate of the Center on Children, Families and the Law at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. She was the principal investigator for the five-state Midwest Child Care Research Consortium to study child care quality, workforce characteristics and Quality Rating System intervention. She was one of several state-level principal investigators in a five-state Quality Intervention in Early Care and Education study.

Linda R. Sheeran, Ed.D.

Linda Sheeran began her career as a classroom teacher in a variety of settings in multiple states. From 2003 to 2013, she has served as an instructor, Administrative Director of Child Development Laboratory, Coordinator of Field Placements for Early Childhood Education, Early Childhood Education Program Coordinator, and the Executive Director of the Center for Early Childhood Teaching and Learning at Oklahoma State University. She was instrumental in designing training for teachers to use the Fire Safety for Young Children: An Early Childhood Curriculum that was part of a grant from the Federal Emergency Management Act.

Dorinda Silver Williams, LCSW-C, ACSW

Dorinda Williams is the Director of Military Family Projects at ZERO TO THREE and has worked extensively with the military population throughout her career. Through her work at ZERO TO THREE since 2004, Ms. Williams has developed print materials, produced audio-conferences, created web-based content, provided consultation, and developed trainings, all focusing on the unique needs of military families and their young children in the context of military-specific stressors and trauma. Ms. Williams developed Research and Resilience, an initiative designed to promote research that specifically focuses on the needs and interests of military families with very young children.



ECEI Leadership Team



Dr. Diane Horm is the Founding Director of the ECEI, a role she has served since the ECEI's inception in 2006. She also is the George Kaiser Family Foundation Endowed Chair of Early Childhood Education. In her faculty role, Diane teaches courses on child development, assessment, and research for both the undergraduate and doctoral ECE Programs offered at OU-Tulsa. She is the Principal Investigator for the Educare Implementation and Educare RCT studies; and the Co-Principal Investigator for the Smart Start Capacity Assessment and Bracken School Readiness Assessment. Additionally, Diane provides leadership in forging community partnerships, providing administrative oversight for the ECEI, and developing the university-supported IT³ Research Center.



Sherri Castle joined the Institute staff in January 2012 as a Senior Policy and Research Associate. Currently, she serves as Principal Investigator for the Oklahoma Early Childhood Program Evaluation and Co-Principal Investigator for the Smart Start Capacity Assessment and Bracken School Readiness Assessment. Her responsibilities for these projects include overseeing project staff and collaborating on project design, data analysis, and dissemination of findings. Sherri also leads the ECEI Research Infrastructure Team, Project Leadership Team, and Writing Club.



Beth Sullins joined the Institute staff in September 2008. As the Assistant Director of Administration, she oversees personnel, staffing, budgeting, contracts, and HR duties for the Institute. She leads the ECEI Organizational Infrastructure Team, serves on the OU-Tulsa Staff Senate, and works closely with campus administration. She also coordinates the Early Childhood Leadership Institute, a yearly conference on early childhood research and practice. Previously, she served as Project Coordinator for the Scholars for Excellence in Child Care project.

ECEI Staff

Kari Alley-Melchior joined the Institute in July 2012 as a Research Associate for the Oklahoma Early Childhood Program Project.

Dr. Amy Atanasov joined us in February 2013 as a part-time Research Data Specialist for multiple projects.

Paula Berry is a part-time Research Associate working across several projects at the ECEI, including the Educare Randomized Control Trial and the School Readiness Project. She also assists with training new staff on child assessments and classroom observations.

Krista Blanche has been working at the ECEI since April 2012. She joined the Institute as a part-time Research Associate and currently is the Study Coordinator for the Oklahoma Early Childhood Program (OCEP).

Flavia Carbone-Castro is a part-time Research Associate who uses her bilingual skills and rapport with children on multiple projects. She assesses children for the Educare Implementation Study, the Randomized Control Trial, and the School Readiness Project. She joined the ECEI in April 2012.

April Crew joined the ECEI in August 2012. She is a part-time Research Associate for the School Readiness Project and the Oklahoma Early Childhood Program Project.

Diane Dudley, who has worked at the ECEI since September 2011 is currently working as a Research Associate on the School Readiness Project. This past year she served as presenter of Continuing Education Trainings with the staff of our Partnership Schools.

Stephanie Farris has been working at the ECEI since 2008. She is the Training Coordinator, and her responsibilities include training the ECEI staff on all child assessments and classroom observations in current use. She also maintains the Research Partnership Program. Previously, she served as a Research Associate on the Educare Implementation, Scholars, and SPP projects.

Kris Foyil has been with the ECEI since April 2012. She is a part-time Research Associate conducting child assessments for the School Readiness Project.

Imelda Galvez has been working at the ECEI since March 2011. She is the Kendall Whittier Site Coordinator on the Educare Implementation Study. Previously, she worked on the Randomized Control Trial Study.

Mary Gilford has been working at the ECEI since August 2011. She is currently working as a part-time Research Associate on the School Readiness Project.

Lisa Gleason is a full-time Research Associate on the Educare Implementation Project. She joined the ECEI in August of 2012.

Dr. Carla Goble joined the Institute in October 2012 as a Research Fellow. Two of her current projects are the development of a standards-based assessment for early childhood educators and longitudinal research on the personal attributes, dispositions, skills and knowledge of early childhood teachers at different levels of educational preparation.

Blanca Gonzalez is a full-time Research Associate on the Educare Implementation Project. She joined the ECEI in August 2012.

Chana Goodno has been working at the ECEI since August 2009 and is currently a part-time Research Associate.

Shannon Guss has been with the ECEI since September 2008. She is the Project Director for the Educare Implementation Study and oversees all aspects of data collection at the Educare sites.

Lilia Hernandez de Paul has been working at the ECEI since September 2011. Lily is currently working as a Research Associate on the Educare Randomized Control Trial, the School Readiness Project and the Kindergarten Follow-Up.

Lori Kelly is a part-time Research Associate. Lori joined the team in August 2012. She has collected classroom and child data for the Oklahoma Early Childhood Program Project and School Readiness Project. Lori is a graduate assistant in the Ph.D. program.

Shawn Krehbiel joined the ECEI staff in 2011 as a part-time Research Associate. She has collected classroom and child data on various projects for the Institute, coordinated data collection for the School Readiness Project, and assists with training new employees to do classroom observation and child assessments.

Emma Dirrim is a part-time Research Associate. She conducts child assessments for the School Readiness Project and the Educare Implementation Study. She also assists with data management on the Educare Implementation Study. She previously assisted with data analysis on the Scholars Project.

Shakendra Leathers is a part-time Research Associate for the School Readiness Project. She joined the ECEI in February 2013.

Ronda Marfechuk has been with the ECEI since April 2012 and is a part-time Research Associate, conducting child assessments for the School Readiness Project.

Delea Meeker joined the ECEI in February 2013 as a part-time Research Associate for the School Readiness Project.

Susan Mensching is a part-time Research Associate. She has worked for the ECEI since July 2011. She has worked on the School Readiness Project, collecting child assessment data, and assisted in a review of NAEYC standards as they relate to learning guidelines.

Dolores Moorman is a part-time Research Associate. She joined the team in September 2012 to conduct child assessments for the School Readiness Project. Dolores also works on the Oklahoma Early Childhood Program Project as a classroom assessor.

Gail Mosley joined the ECEI in August 2012 as a part-time Research Associate. She conducts classroom assessments for the Oklahoma Early Childhood Program Project. Gail also works on the School Readiness project.

Nancy Niemeyer joined the ECEI in August 2012 as a part-time Research Associate. She is currently working on the School Readiness Project.

Dr. Deborah Norris has been working at the ECEI since October 2007. As a Senior Scholar within the IT³ Research Center, her responsibilities include contributing to the development of the research and organizational foundation of the center. She has previously served the Institute as Principal Investigator for previous research projects with the early childhood quality initiatives Scholars for Excellence in Child Care and the pilot phase of the Oklahoma Early Childhood Program for infants, toddlers, twos, and threes.

Mollie Nunn joined the ECEI in August 2012 as part-time Research Associate and later became a full-time Research Associate for the Oklahoma Early Childhood Program. Her responsibilities include classroom data collection, entering and checking data.

Jennifer Petty has been working at ECEI since January 2010. She is currently working as the Hawthorne Site Coordinator on the Educare Implementation Study. Previously, she served as a Research Associate on the Educare Implementation Project, State Pilot Program, Smart Start Needs Assessment and Scholars.

Sherry Phillips has been working at ECEI since October 2009. As the ECEI Staff Assistant, she provides administrative support by handling travel arrangements, processing travel, copying, faxing, scanning, ordering office supplies, and coordinating office projects.

Melissa Ruiz has been working at ECEI since August 2011. She is currently working as a part-time Research Associate on Educare Implementation Study. Previously, she served as a blind assessor on the RCT project and conducted assessments for the School Readiness Project.

Tracy Shepherd joined the ECEI in April 2012 as a part-time Research Associate, conducting child assessments for the School Readiness Project and the Educare Implementation Study.

Jess Stubblefield joined the ECEI staff in August 2012 as a part-time Research Associate. She assists on the School Readiness Project and Oklahoma Early Childhood Program Project. Jessica is a graduate assistant in the Ph.D. program.

Danelle White joined the ECEI in February 2013 as a part-time Research Associate. She conducts child assessments for the School Readiness Project.

Stephanie Wills is a part-time Research Associate. She joined the Institute in February 2013 to collect data for the Oklahoma Early Childhood Program and School Readiness Projects.

Cicely Wilson is a part-time Research Associate. She joined the ECEI in February 2013 to work on the School Readiness and Oklahoma Early Childhood Program projects. Her responsibilities include conducting child and classroom assessments.

Lauren Worley has been working at the ECEI since March 2011. She is currently working as a Bilingual Study Coordinator on the Educare Randomized Control Trial Project.

Tara Wyatt has been working at the ECEI since September 2011. She is currently working as a Research Associate on the School Readiness Project.

Emisha Young is a Study Coordinator for the School Readiness Project and the CareerAdvance: A Dual Generation Program's Effects on Families and Children Project. She joined the Institute in August 2012.

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