ECEI

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION INSTITUTE
The University of Oklahoma-Tulsa

ANNUAL REPORT

JULY 1, 2013 - JUNE 30, 2014

The 2013-14 academic year was both eventful and productive for the OU-Tulsa Early Childhood Education Institute (ECEI). The ECEI conducted several program evaluation projects and applied research studies; disseminated research findings through peer-reviewed publications; delivered numerous professional presentations to local, state, national, and international audiences; and co-hosted early childhood professional development sessions. We enjoyed many accomplishments in our core activities of research, evaluation, and community collaboration. I highlight here key events and activities:

Applied Research and Evaluation

During 2013-14, the ECEI conducted applied research and evaluation in 2 broad areas:

♦ Evaluations of Early Childhood Models and Programs

♦ Research related to the Early Childhood Workforce

Our 2013-14 projects in each of these 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's 3 Educare sites: Kendall-Whittier, Hawthorne, and MacArthur

♦ Educare Randomized Control Trial at Tulsa Educare I: Kendall-Whittier

♦ Community Action Project (CAP) Tulsa Pilot Project

♦ CAP Tulsa Classroom Quality Assessment

Early Childhood Workforce Development Research:

♦ Characteristics of Early Childhood Education Students at Different Levels of Professional Preparation

♦ Statutory Degree and Credential Requirements: Head Start and Early Head Start Teaching Staffs' Responses and Perceptions

♦ Standards-Based Self-Assessment for Early Childhood Teachers of Young Children Birth through Age 8

For each of our research and 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 discussion of use of findings to inform practice. Beyond sharing results with program partners, the ECEI disseminates results and lessons learned to the broader early childhood community through professional presentations and publications. A listing of the ECEI's 2013-14 presentations and publications can be found on page 10 of this report.

Relative to future research initiatives, the OU Vice President for Research designated the ECEI as an OU University Strategic Organization (USO) in 2011 through a highly selective peer-reviewed competition. This was a major step in positioning the ECEI and our *Infants, Toddlers, Twos, and Threes* (IT^3) initiative to be at the forefront of research in the United States with an applied multidisciplinary focus on infants, toddlers, twos and threes in group care settings. Although OU funding for this initiative was initially awarded for 5 years, we learned during 2014 that we will receive 2 additional years of funding for a total of 7 years. In addition to this vote of confidence provided by the university, our IT^3 External Advisory Board provided validation and encouragement for our continued development of the IT^3 research initiative. More details about our IT^3 initiative can be found on pages 11 to 13 of this report.

Community Collaboration

The ECEI hosted the Seventh Annual Early Childhood Leadership Institute (ECLI) on Oct. 24 through 26, 2013, at the OU-Tulsa Schusterman Learning Center. The conference focused on the topic of *Meaningful Assessment and Making Meaning,* with Ellen Frede serving as the keynote speaker. We had numerous co-sponsors and the conference was our largest to date. Attendees included our research partnership sites, community-based child care programs that partner with us to serve as ECEI training sites, at a discount for their staff. Please see page 8 of this report for more details.

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 2013-14. 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

Diane M. Horm, Ph.D.
Director
George Kaiser Family Foundation Endowed Chair of Early Childhood Education
(918) 660-3985
dhorm@ou.edu

ECEI Staff in Action

Our staff clearly love what they do. Pictured are Ashley Gallagher (left) and Brittany Swain (below) conducting assessments.

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.

Growth and University Support

O ver the ECEI's 8-year history, our projects have expanded from being solely Tulsa-based to serving a national audience. During 2013-14, the ECEI continued to work with our local and state partners, including Tulsa's 3 Educare sites and CAP Tulsa's Early Head Start and Head Start programs. ECEI representatives also were increasingly invited to participate in national-level meetings and conferences during 2013-14. For example, Diane Horm assumed a leadership role with the Network of Infant/ Toddler Researchers, a national-level group of researchers, as co-lead of the Professional Development Workgroup. Increasingly, our Tulsa-based early childhood programming and associated research projects are being referenced to inform state and national initiatives and policies.

Not only has the scope of our work expanded, so has our research funding. The following graph shows the steady growth of research expenditures since fiscal year 2008.
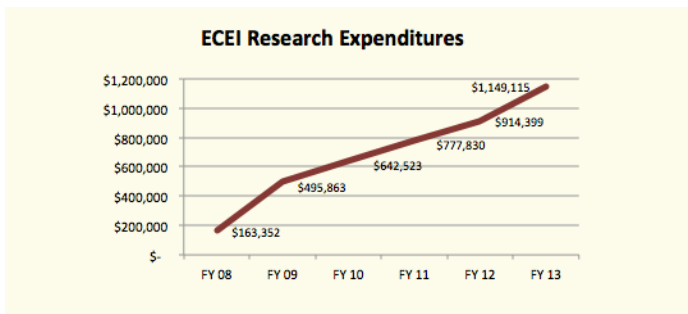
The ECEI received various forms of support through OU during 2013-14. For example, Dr. Horm secured funding to support staff to write grant applications during the summer of 2013. The university again met the ECEI's needs by providing additional office space, assessment rooms, and observation rooms that are supporting enhanced training and research opportunities for the ECEI. Costs for these new offices and research spaces were covered by OU -Tulsa's central administration, OU's Vice President for Research, and OU Jeannine Rainbolt College of Education.

The university also has 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 6 (out of 18) selected as a USO with $150,000 base support per year expected over the course of 5 years to build the research infrastructure of the ECEI. The 2013-14 year was the third year that the ECEI received USO funding. Based on our initial success, we learned during 2013-14 that we will receive 2 additional years of USO funding for a total of 7 years. One of the ways USO support was used included the hiring of specialized staff to add expertise in infant/toddler content and data analysis skills. The funding of these

positions aligned with the ECEI's overarching goals to increase our research capacity and productivity.

During 2013-14, the ECEI continued to make progress in achieving our 2013-16 strategic goals. Specifically, the ECEI staff focused on the following goals:

♦ *Increase research enterprise and excellence* – The ECEI implemented plans to evaluate and develop the research skills and productivity of staff.

♦ *Increase and diversify funding* – The ECEI maintained excellent stewardship practices with existing funds and explored the potential to diversify funding to include federal grants.

♦ *Advance and promote the ECEI* – Given our dedication to applied research and community partnerships, the ECEI focused on ensuring public understanding of our vision, mission, and goals to facilitate the development of additional collaborative relationships.

♦ *Promote a supportive and innovative organizational culture* – The ECEI renewed its commitment to conducting excellent research through well-trained staff who thrive in a supportive work environment.

Additional support was facilitated by the continued 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 campus. During 2013-14, the Ph.D. Program and the ECEI increased efforts to become mutually supportive. For example, 4 doctoral students actively worked on the ECEI's projects and increased their research skills while contributing to the productivity of the ECEI. The ECEI is excited to expand its role 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.

OU-Tulsa ECE Faculty (from left) Diane Horm, Vickie Lake, Libby Ethridge and Amy Williamson

Research and Evaluation

Two 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 information to programs that serve young children and their families. Our data about program models are used to inform policy and practice at the local, state, and national levels.

♦ **Early Childhood Professional Development Research**

   The ECEI conducts investigations of current practices as well as new initiatives that relate to training and education of the early childhood workforce.

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 5 years of age.

The ECEI is the Local Evaluation Partner for Tulsa Educare 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.

Our 2013-2014 Educare Team (from left) Marsha Barnes, Jennifer Petty, Leah Smith, Shannon Guss, Blanca Gonzalez, Imelda Galvez and Lisa Gleason Eshenour

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 2013-2014:

♦ The evolving partnership with Tulsa Educare, Inc. manifested in data dialogues and the use of data for processing, conceptualizing, and informing high-quality early care and education practice at all 3 Tulsa Educare sites.

♦ Observational measures used in all classrooms found maintenance or improvement of classroom quality across sites.

Paula Berry (right) trains a new staff member on conducting child assessments. Our training team also included Stephanie Farris and Shawn Krehbiel (not pictured).

- Children's school readiness scores significantly improved, and language and vocabulary scores approached national norms.

Principal Investigator: Diane Horm, Ph.D.

Project Director: Shannon Guss

Site Coordinators: Imelda Galvez, Jennifer Petty, Lisa Gleason Eshenour

Funders: Tulsa Educare and the George Kaiser Family Foundation

Educare Randomized Control Trial

The Educare Randomized Control Trial is a longitudinal study designed to evaluate the effectiveness of the Educare program. This study includes a partnership with the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill and 4 other research sites, including Tulsa, and features a randomly assigned control group receiving no Educare services. Children's developmental progress is measured at different points during the early childhood years through assessments conducted by researchers at the ECEI. Areas currently examined include executive functioning, language skills, math concepts, parental involvement, and classroom quality.

Our 2013-2014 CAP Team (from left) Lauren Worley, Ashley Gallagher, Brittany Swain, Emisha Young, Holly Neveu and Melissa Long. Not pictured are part-time staff: Emma Lang-Dirrim, Susan Mensching, Cicely Wilson, Mary Gilford, June Foster, Leah Smith, Patti Southard, Anne Perrine, Rebecca Smith, Nancy Niemeyer, Shakendra Leathers, Sofia Carbone-Castro, Sandy Boyaci, Therese Hubble, Diane Dudley, Kelly Stiller-Titchener and Kelly Wilson. The following graduate students also were team members: Jess Stubblefield, Nicole Pearce and Debbie Laurin.

Highlights for 2013-14:

- New ECEI observation rooms provided a comfortable and functional space for the assessment of children turning 3 years old. Additionally, each study family also continued to participate in phone interviews.

- The study received bridge funding to collect classroom observation data in the early education settings of children the year prior to entering kindergarten. As a result, ECEI staff conducted classroom observations in approximately 20 varied settings in May of 2014.

- Efforts are currently underway to secure additional funding to continue the study.

Principal Investigator: Diane Horm, Ph.D.

Study Coordinator: Lauren Worley

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

CAP Tulsa Classroom and Oklahoma Early Childhood Program Evaluation

As part of the ECEI's partnership with the Community Action Project of Tulsa, the ECEI conducts classroom observations in CAP Tulsa's preschool classrooms. Additionally, the ECEI is the external evaluator for the Oklahoma Early Childhood Program (OECP), a state-funded initiative awarded to CAP Tulsa to support and expand high-quality early childhood programs for children who are 3 years old and younger.

The ECEI staff observe and document classroom practices using several assessments designed to measure the quality of teacher-child interactions and the environment. Information obtained from classroom observations is shared with CAP Tulsa to guide professional development plans for their classroom teachers. In addition, teachers complete questionnaires used to examine relationships among various teacher, classroom, and center characteristics with the observed quality of practice.

Highlights for 2013-14:

- A total of 285 classroom observations were conducted: 107 Infant and Toddler and 178 Pre-K classrooms. Additionally, 20 classroom environment observations were conducted at OECP sites across the state.

- Teachers were provided with individualized feedback from classroom and environment observations to help guide their classroom practice and professional development.

- Questionnaire data were collected from 256 staff in the fall and 159 staff in the spring. The information collected included demographics, beliefs about children, temperament, job stress, feelings of depression, and executive function.

Principal Investigator: Sherri Castle
Study Coordinator: Emisha Young
Funder: CAP Tulsa

CAP Tulsa Pilot Project

In addition to the CAP Tulsa Classroom and OECP projects, 350 children were randomly selected across 10 CAP Tulsa sites to participate in a pilot study to further assess the social and academic development of children enrolled at CAP Tulsa. Study results were used for program improvement and to further understand developmental trajectories of children from different backgrounds, including dual language learners.

Highlights for 2013-14:

- Sample selection and randomization began in early fall, and children were assessed in both English and Spanish in the fall and spring.

- Child assessments measured multiple areas, including English language proficiency, executive functions, cognitive development, math skills, and vocabulary.

- Teachers completed questionnaires regarding the children's social and emotional development as observed in the classroom.

Principal Investigator: Sherri Castle
Project Coordinator: Lauren Worley
Funder: CAP Tulsa

Early Childhood Professional Development

Characteristics of Early Childhood Education Students at Different Levels of Professional Preparation

The purpose of this ECEI study is to gain a better understanding of the characteristics of early childhood students at different levels of professional preparation. The four levels of professional preparation examined are (1) students working toward a Child Development Associate (CDA) credential; (2) students working on an associate's degree in early childhood; (3) students working on a bachelor's degree in early childhood education; and (4) graduates with a bachelor's degree in early childhood education.

Research findings using multiple measures indicate that students with higher levels of formal education in the area of early childhood education show enhanced knowledge of child development, more developmentally appropriate beliefs, and higher self-esteem. With increases in programming for young children and the current calls for accountability, this study provides initial evidence that the differentiated levels of higher education are associated with measurable differences in early childhood teachers' knowledge and beliefs.
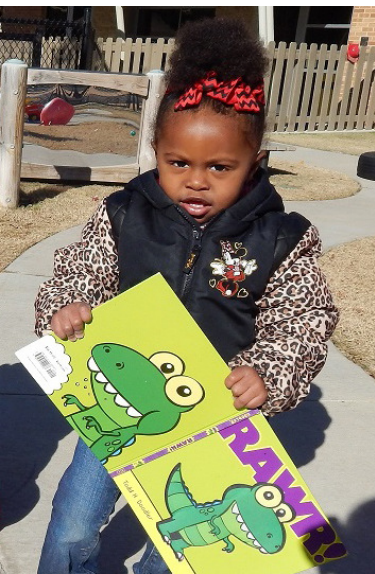
- A manuscript based on this research project has been accepted for publication in the *Journal of Early Childhood Teacher Education*.

- A research poster showing the results of this research was accepted for presentation at the 2014 Zero-To-Three National Training Institute, Fort Lauderdale, FL.

- Research continues with ongoing data collection with early childhood education associate degree students at Tulsa Community College and early childhood education bachelor's degree students at OU-Tulsa.

Principal Investigators: Carla Goble, Ph.D., Amy Atanasov, Ph.D., Amy Williamson, Ph.D., Diane Horm, Ph.D.
Funders: OU and ECEI

Statutory Degree and Credentialing Requirements: Head Start and Early Head Start Teaching Staffs' Responses and Perceptions

This research project focuses on Head Start/Early Head Start teachers' and directors' responses and perceptions associated with the 2007 federally mandated degree and credentialing requirements for Head Start teaching staff. A total of 235 Early Head Start/Head Start teaching staff completed a survey. Analysis indicates that teaching staff who acquired additional education as a result of the mandate perceived increases in their ECE knowledge as opposed to staff who did not return to school. Participants who returned to school as a result of the mandate report receiving financial support as well as encouragement and support from family and co-workers more often than those who did not return to school.

♦ Research results help to identify potential areas for future research to better inform and guide policy makers and others regarding the attainment of enhanced credentials for Head Start and Early Head Start teachers.

♦ A manuscript based on this research project was submitted to the journal *Early Childhood Research and Practice* for possible publication.

♦ A research poster based on the research was accepted for presentation at the 2014 Head Start Research Conference, Washington, DC.

Principal Investigators: Carla Goble Ph.D., Diane Horm, Ph.D., Amy Atanasov, Ph.D., Dayton Crofut, M.S.
Funders: OU and ECEI

Standards-Based Self-Assessment for Teachers of Young Children Birth Through Age 8

This work focuses on the development of a self-assessment for teachers of young children birth through age 8. The assessment contains applied practices that operationalize the National Association for the Education of Young Children's *Standards for Early Childhood Professional Preparation* and *Developmentally Appropriate Practices*. Individualized age-based sections address the unique needs of children across the period of early childhood. The assessment is designed to help inform the ongoing professional development of early childhood teachers and the enhancement of classroom teaching practices and improved child outcomes.

♦ Pilot study research results suggest the Standards-Based Self-Assessment is a reliable assessment tool.

♦ A grant proposal was developed and submitted to the U.S. Department of Education Institute of Education Sciences to further develop and refine the Standards-Based Self-Assessment tool.

♦ A manuscript based on the Standards-Based Self-Assessment was submitted for potential publication.

Principal Investigators: Carla Goble, Ph.D., Diane Horm, Ph.D., Amy Atanasov, Ph.D.
Funders: OU and ECEI

Community Collaboration

Early Childhood Leadership Institute

The Early Childhood Leadership Institute (ECLI) is an annual 2-day professional conference hosted by the ECEI and numerous co-sponsors, including OU-Tulsa's Professional Development and Leadership Academy, Child Care Resource Center, Oklahoma State University's Human Development and Family Science Department, Tulsa Community College, Tulsa Tech, Early Childhood Association of Oklahoma, Tulsa Early Childhood Association, Smart Start Oklahoma, Tulsa Metro Chamber, and OU's Jeannine Rainbolt College of Education and Center for Early Childhood Professional Development.

The Seventh Annual ECLI, held Oct. 25 and 26, 2013, focused on developmentally appropriate assessment in early childhood. "Meaningful Assessment and Making Meaning" featured keynote speaker Ellen Frede, Ph.D., a developmental psychologist specializing in early childhood education. Over 20 workshops were offered, including use of child assessments and classroom observations, using technology in assessment, high-stakes testing advocacy, number sense, NAEYC Accreditation Program Assessment, and infant mental health. More than 250 early childhood professionals attended this year — our largest attendance to date. Presenters included ECEI staff, OU-Tulsa ECE faculty, and graduate students.

Every year, we offer a Seed Sower free public lecture, and this year was no exception. Dr. Frede presented "Handle with Care: The Uses and Abuses of Assessment for Young Children." Over 100 interested parents and early childhood professionals attended this free learning opportunity hosted by OU-Tulsa.

Research Partnership Program

Child care centers that 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 2013-14, 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 2013-14 included *Fostering Language Development and Encouraging Creative Thinking, Working with Families, Block Play in ECE Classrooms,* and *Understanding the ERS and CLASS Observation Tools.*

Our current partners include:
- Angel Academy Early Learning Centers I & II
- Boston Avenue Weekday School
- Christ United Methodist Church Early Learning Center
- Crosstown Early Learning Center
- Destiny Learning Academy
- Holland Hall Preschool Program
- Jenks Early Learning Center
- 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 Stegall HeadStart
- 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

Contracted Data Collection

The ECEI also collaborated with partners by collecting data for agencies or other research groups. During 2013-2014, the ECEI had 2 projects.

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 tool designed for use with preschool-age children. The information from this assessment allows teachers and program administrators to better understand the developmental level of children in their classrooms so they can better tailor instruction, interactions and activities to each child's needs.

Highlights for 2013-14:

- Approximately 1,800 preschool children enrolled at one of the 12 Head Start-funded programs throughout Tulsa were individually assessed, both fall and spring, with a commonly used school readiness tool.

- During the 7-week data collection timeline, preschool children were assessed on 5 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 5 skills considered important for school readiness.

Principal Investigator: Sherri Castle
Project Coordinator: Lauren Worley
Funder: CAP Tulsa

Career Advance: A Dual-Generation Program's Effects on Families, Children

The Career*Advance* study is a partnership among CAP Tulsa, the 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 Career*Advance* program and their matched comparison group.

Highlights for 2013-14:

- 97 children were assessed on 3 different instruments used to measure receptive vocabulary, cognitive development, and executive functioning.

- 55 classrooms were visited during the fall and spring.

- Collaborations were strengthened across multiple agencies.

Principal Investigator: Diane Horm, Ph.D.
Study Coordinator: Lauren Worley
Funder: Northwestern University and CAP Tulsa

Publications

Alley-Melchior, K., Guss, S.S., & Horm, D.M. (2014), Common themes impacting quality of early care and education environments for toddlers. *Zero to Three*, 34 (3), 21-27.

Eggum-Wilkens, N., Fabes, R., **Castle, S.**, Zhang, L., Hanish, L., & Martin, C. (2014). Playing with others: Head Start children's peer play and relations with kindergarten school competence. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly*, 29(3), 1.

Frampton, A.M., Sisson, S.B., **Horm, D.M.**, Campbell, J.E., Lora, K., & Ladner, J.L. (2013). What's for lunch? An analysis of lunch menus in 83 urban and rural Oklahoma child-care centers providing all-day care to preschool children. *Journal of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics*, 114 (9). 1367-1374.

Presentations

State:

Guss, S., *Conversations about observations*. Early Childhood Leadership Institute, Tulsa, October 25, 2013.

Gonzalez, B., **Gleason, L., Dirrim, E., & Alley-Melchoir, K.**, *Making the most of child assessments: Ideas for the preschool teacher*. Early Childhood Leadership Institute, Tulsa, October 25, 2013.

Young, E., Galvez, I., & Mcclish, L., *Watch me play! The importance and benefits of assessing through play*. Early Childhood Leadership Institute, Tulsa, October 26, 2013.

Horm, D.M., *Preventing the income-linked achievement gap*. JRCOE Diversity Scholar's Event, Norman, January 16, 2014.

Farris, S., *Building your infant/toddler outdoor classroom*. Tulsa County Family Childcare Assoc, Tulsa, April 14, 2014.

Horm, D.M., *Educare: Preventing the income-linked achievement gap*. JRCOE Food for Thought Lecture, Norman, April 25, 2014.

Dudley, D., *Working with families*. Partnership Site Training, Tulsa Teach Training Center for Play and Learn Preschool and Taylor's Tool Box, Tulsa, April 29, 2014.

National:

Horm, D.M., *Connecting the pieces: What does it mean to be a birth to three early care and education professional?* Invited presentation delivered at the 9th Annual Infant/Toddler Specialists of Indiana Institute, Indianapolis, IN, August 1, 2013.

Farris, S., & **Krehbiel, S.,** *Environment Rating Scales: Making the most of a perfect tool in a NOT so perfect world!* Zero to Three, San Antonio, TX, December 12, 2013.

Horm, D.M., *Tulsa as a test lab*. Comments delivered to the Committee on the Science of Children Birth to Age 8: Deepening and Broadening the Foundation for Success; Institute of Medicine and National Research Council of the National Academies, National Academy of Sciences, Washington, DC, February 28, 2014.

Norris, D.J., Monroe, L., **Sullins, B.**, & **Worley, L.**, *Examining successful participation in an early childhood scholarship program.* Biennial meeting of the Society for Research in Human Development, Austin, TX, March 2014.

Horm, D.M., *Educare as a model of multisite, collaborative, policy-relevant research*. Annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, Philadelphia, PA, April 2014.

Norris, D.J., & Horm, D.M., *Infants, toddlers, and their caregivers: Current research on interactions and implications for professional preparation.* Annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, Philadelphia, PA, April 2014.

Horm, D.M., *What about all infants and toddlers?* Invited presentation delivered at the National Institute for Early Childhood Professional Development, Minneapolis, MN, June 11, 2014.

Research Award

Dr. Diane Horm—Co-winner, along with Marilou Hyson and Pam Winton, of the Taylor & Francis Distinguished JECTE Article of the Year. The award was presented in November 2014 for the following article:

Horm, D.M., Hyson M., & Winton, P.J. (2013). Research on early childhood teacher education: evidence from 3 domains and recommendations for moving forward. *Journal of Early Childhood Teacher Education*, 34 (1), 95-112.

Grant Proposals

NIH R13 Proposal submitted August 9, 2013 - **Horm, D.M., & Norris, D.J.** *IT^3 through PPCT*. Request of $54,763 for 1 year.

IES Measurement Proposal submitted August 30, 2013 - **Horm, D.M., Goble, C.B., Anatansov, A.**, Hennessey, M., & Terry R. The development and refinement of a standards-based pre-k to Grade 3 teacher evaluation instrument. Request of $1,600,000 for 4 years.

University Strategic Organization

As defined by OU, 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, based on their alignment with OU's mission and potential for research productivity. The ECEI competed for and was granted the status of USO for the IT³ initiative — *Research on the Care and Education of Infants, Toddlers, Twos, and Threes* — in June of 2011. The USO designation indicates our topic of early care and education of young children birth through age 3 is viewed as an area of future growth by OU for research and academic programming. Additionally, USO designation provides base research funding for up to 5 years to build research capacity. As was noted earlier in this Annual Report, we learned during 2013-14 that we will receive 2 additional years of USO support, for a total of 7 years, based on our initial success.

During 2013-14, 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 2 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 summer of 2013 and in developing manuscripts submitted for potential publication during 2013-14. Also, for the first time during 2013-14, plans were developed to add a full-time post doctoral researcher funded through USO monies.

To expand the disciplines and research topics considered, 7 IT³ Research Fellows were recruited during 2013-14 to join our growing ranks of diverse professionals interested in research related to infants, toddlers, twos, and threes. These individuals, their disciplines and degrees, and current work roles are listed below:

♦ Michael Gomez, M.D., Pediatrics; Daniel C. Plunket Chair in Pediatrics, University of Oklahoma School of Community Medicine

♦ Doug Imig, Ph.D in Political Science; Resident Fellow, The Urban Child Institute, and Professor, Department of Political Science, University of Memphis

♦ Iheoma Iruka, Ph.D. in Developmental Psychology; Associate Director, Frank Porter Graham Child Development Institute, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

♦ Amanda Morris, Ph.D. in Developmental Psychology; Bryan Close Endowed Chair in Early Childhood Development and Professor of Human Development and Family Science, Oklahoma State University

♦ Shawn Schaefer, M.A. in Architecture, Certified Planner; Director of the Urban Design Studio, University of Oklahoma-Tulsa

♦ Kent Teague, Ph.D. in Immunology; Director of Integrative Immunology Center and Associate Professor, University of Oklahoma School of Community Medicine

♦ Glade Topham, Ph.D. in Marriage and Family Therapy, Associate Professor, Department of Human Development and Family Science, Oklahoma State University

This 2014 cohort of IT³ Research Fellows join our inaugural cohort of Fellows that includes:

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

♦ Jennifer Hays-Grudo, Ph.D. in Developmental Psychology; Department Head of Human Development and Family Science at Oklahoma State University

♦ Julie Miller-Cribbs, Ph.D. in Social Work; Associate Professor and Director of the OU Anne and Henry Zarrow School of Social Work

♦ Su An Phipps, Ph.D. in Human Ecology, M.S Nursing, R.N.; 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 also were used to support 2 multi-disciplinary research projects through our IT³ Mini-Grant program. During 2013-14 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.

IT³ Research Initiative

The IT³ Steering Committee, the senior-level researchers affiliated with the IT³ USO, engaged in strategic planning during the winter of 2013 and developed a 5-year Strategic Plan for 2012-2017. This planning resulted in the vision, mission, and goals of the IT³ Research Center listed below. During 2013-14, the ECEI made progress on all 6 of our strategic goals.

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.

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

Goals

The IT³ Research Center will be a:

♦ Catalyst to launch and utilize interdisciplinary strategies and approaches to address questions regarding infants, toddlers, twos, and threes — especially within group care

♦ Contributor to and incubator for 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

Advisory Board

During 2013-14, the ECEI hosted one meeting 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 our progress in actualizing our vision, mission, and goals.

Additionally, the IT³ Advisory Board conducted our annual USO evaluation. Specifically, the IT³ Advisory Board noted the following as part of our 2013-14 evaluation:

♦ The depth and breadth of the ECEI's work is impressive.

♦ The ECEI is incredibly responsive to board and other stakeholders' feedback and suggestions.

♦ The ECEI Team is passionate about their work and vision.

♦ New staff members, including the data analyst and senior scholars, strengthen topical focus and research capabilities.

♦ Theoretical and conceptual framework is sound; research questions are relevant and important.

♦ Senior staff are doing excellent mentoring and scaffolding for junior staff.

♦ Staff are competent, task oriented, well-organized and intentional. Staff has energy, synergy, and excellent morale.

♦ The ECEI is strengthening ability to leverage funding streams. Staff have made good contacts in DC and state- and local-levels.

♦ Interdisciplinary activities funded through IT³ mini-grants have paid off well.

♦ Collaborations with community are excellent and robust.

♦ With OU's support, research infrastructure has been strengthened and facilities expanded.

♦ Staff are actively participating in national-level conferences and meetings.

Overall, they complimented our work to date and, importantly, endorsed our future research ideas.

IT³ Advisory Board Members

Research Appointments

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. 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.

Rachel Chazan Cohen, Ph.D.
Rachel Cohen is an Associate Professor of Early Care and Education in the College of Education and Human Development at the University of Massachusetts-Boston. Previously, she was a senior research analyst and the Coordinator of Infant and Toddler Research in the Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation in the Administration for Children and Families, U. S. Department of Health and Human Services. Her research has focused on the biological, relational, and environmental factors influencing the development of at-risk children and on the creation and evaluation of intervention programs.

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

Tammy L. Mann, Ph.D.
Tammy Mann is the President and CEO of The Campagna Center in Washington, DC. 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 frontlines as a psychologist, providing home visiting services to low-income pregnant women and families with children under 3.

Helen Raikes, Ph.D.
Helen Raikes is the Willa Cather 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 Systems. She was a state-level principal investigator in the 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 multiple settings and states. From 2003 to 2013, she served as an instructor, Administrative Director of Child Development Laboratory, Coordinator of Field Placements, Early Childhood Education Program Coordinator, and Executive Director of the Center for Early Childhood Teaching and Learning at Oklahoma State University. She designed training for the *Fire Safety for Young Children: An Early Childhood Curriculum* that was grant funded by the Federal Emergency Management Act.

IT³ Advisory Board Members

Standing Appointments

Debra Andersen
Debra Andersen, M.A., is the Executive Director of Smart Start Oklahoma and the Executive Director of the Oklahoma Partnership for School Readiness Foundation. Andersen has extensive experience in organizing collaborative efforts within both community- and state-level systems, specifically on issues related to early childhood, service coordination and early intervention services. Currently, Andersen has a priority in moving policy through data-informed decisions.

Lawrence Baines, Ph.D.
Lawrence Baines is Associate Dean for Research and Graduate Studies in the College of Education at OU. Previously, he served as the Judith Daso Herb Chair in Education at The University of Toledo and the J. Leland Green Chair in Education at Berry College. His focus is on developing innovative strategies to improve the quality of adolescents' writing, reading, and thinking. An advocate for effective, humanistic, transformative teaching, he has worked with teachers and students in over 400 schools.

Lu Ann Faulkner-Schneider
Lu Ann Faulkner-Schneider is the Coordinator for Professional Development and Quality Initiatives at the Oklahoma Department of Human Services. For the past 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, she works to improve child care programs.

Patricia L. Hardre, Ph.D.
Pat Hardre is Associate Dean for Research and 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, program evaluation, and design of formal and informal learning environments.

Susan Kimmel, Ph.D.
Susan Kimmel is 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, she 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.

Terry Smith
Terry Smith has worked with Oklahoma's children, youth and families in multiple leadership roles. He is the President/CEO of the Oklahoma Institute for Child Advocacy. For three decades, the institute has informed and educated state policymakers and other citizens on the Importance of investing in children and families. Smith is partnering with Smart Start Oklahoma to develop an Early Childhood Collaborative to advocate for early childhood programs in Oklahoma.

Dorinda Silver Williams
Dorinda Williams is 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, she 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.

ECEI Staff

ECEI Leadership Team

Pictured (from left) Sherri Castle, Beth Sullins and Diane Horm.
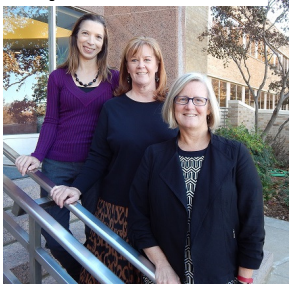
Dr. Diane Horm is the Founding Director of ECEI. In addition to her role as director, she also is the George Kaiser Family Foundation Endowed Chair of Early Childhood Education. She is the Principal Investigator for the Educare Implementation and Educare RCT studies.

Sherri Castle joined the Institute staff in 2012 as a Senior Policy and Research Associate. Currently, she serves as Principal Investigator for the CAP Program Evaluation Project. Her responsibilities include collaborating on project design, data collection, analysis, and dissemination of findings. She also chairs the Research Infrastructure Team and the Project Leadership meetings.

Beth Sullins joined the Institute staff in 2008. As the Assistant Director of Administration, she oversees personnel, staffing, budgeting, and HR duties for the Institute and chairs the Organizational Infrastructure Team. 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.

Amy Atanasov joined the ECEI in 2013 as a Data Analyst. She works with various projects to manage data and conduct analysis as needed to prepare publications, presentations, and grant proposals.

Flavia Carbone-Castro conducts child assessments and classroom observations as Research Associate for the Educare Implementation Study.

Lisa Eshenour joined the ECEI in 2012, and is the Site Coordinator at the Educare MacArthur site. Her responsibilities include coordinating and conducting data collection at the site, maintaining a collaborative relationship with Educare staff, and facilitating use of data.

Stephanie Farris has been with the ECEI since 2008. She is the Training Coordinator, and her responsibilities include training ECEI staff on all child assessments and classroom observations in current use. She also heads the Research Partnership Program.

Ashley Gallagher joined the ECEI in 2013, and is a Research Associate with the CAP Program Evaluation Project. She conducts classroom observations and child assessments.

Imelda Galvez has been working at ECEI since 2011. She is the Site Coordinator for Educare Kendall-Whittier. Her responsibilities include coordinating and conducting data collection at the site, maintaining a collaborative relationship with Educare staff, and facilitating use of data.

Dr. Carla Goble joined the ECEI in 2012 as a Research Fellow. She and Dr. Horm are collaborating to develop a new measure of teachers' use of developmentally appropriate practices. She also is working to prepare grant proposals and write journal articles.

Blanca Gonzalez has been working at the ECEI since 2012, and is a Research Associate on the Educare Implementation Project at all 3 Educare sites, but primarily Educare Kendall-Whittier. She conducts child assessments and classroom observations.

Shannon Guss has been with the ECEI since 2008. She is the Project Director for the Educare Implementation Study and oversees processes and protocols across Tulsa's 3 Educare sites. Her responsibilities also include data analysis and reporting, as well as enhancing ECEI's collaborative relationship with Educare.

Melissa Long is a Research Associate on the CAP Program Evaluation Project, conducting classroom observations and child assessments. She joined the Institute in 2013.

Holly Neveu joined the ECEI in 2013, and is a Research Associate with the CAP Program Evaluation Project.

Dr. Deborah Norris has worked with the ECEI since 2007. In 2012, she moved to Colorado and her work with the ECEI shifted to in-depth analysis of several ECEI projects to prepare data for publication. She also continues to work with the IT^3 USO Initiative.

Jennifer Petty has been working at the ECEI since 2009. She is the Site Coordinator at Educare Hawthorne. Her responsibilities include coordinating and conducting data collection at the site, maintaining a collaborative relationship with Educare staff, and facilitating use of data.

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

Cristy Roberts joined the ECEI in June 2014. As the Training Director, she organizes, implements and tracks training needs for all ECEI staff. In addition, she works with the ECEI staff and Research Partners to coordinate and deliver professional development opportunities.

Brittany Swain joined the ECEI in 2013, and is a Research Associate with the CAP Tulsa Program Evaluation Project. She conducts classroom observations and child assessments.

Lauren Worley has been working at ECEI since 2011. She is the Study Coordinator for the Child Assessment component of the CAP Tulsa Program Evaluation. She oversees all child assessments for this project, including assessments for the Northwestern University CareerAdvance project. She continues to oversee the Educare Randomized Control Trial Project.

Emisha Young joined the ECEI in 2012, and is the Study Coordinator for the Classroom Observation component of the CAP Tulsa Program Evaluation Project at both CAP Tulsa sites and OECP sites.

None of ECEI's projects would be possible without the help of the following part-time staff:

Marsha Barnes	Susan Mensching
Paula Berry	Dolores Moorman
Sandra Boyaci	Gail Mosley
April Crew	Nancy Niemeyer
Diane Dudley	Anne Perrine
June Foster	Wendelene Rios
Mary Gilford	Tracy Shepherd
Chana Goodno	Leah Smith
Lilia Hernandez de Paul	Rebecca Smith
Therese Hubble	Patti Southard
Shawn Krehbiel	Kelly Titchener
Emma Lang Dirrim	Cicely Wilson
Shakendra Leathers	Kelly Wilson
Ronda Marfechuk	Tara Wyatt

Our "super" staff

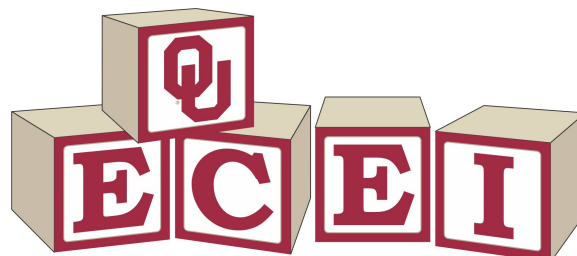Schusterman Center
University of Oklahoma

4502 East 41st St.

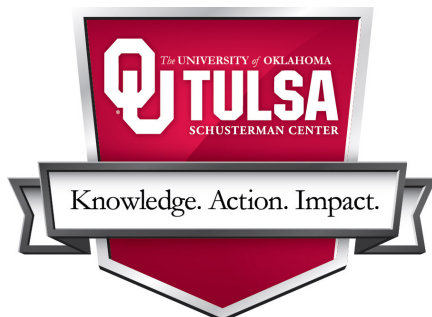Tulsa, OK 74135-2512

Phone: (918) 660-3907

Fax: (918) 660-3911

Website: education.ou.edu/ecei

ECEI

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION INSTITUTE
The University of Oklahoma-Tulsa

This publication was printed in April 2015 at no cost to the taxpayers of the state of Oklahoma.

The UNIVERSITY of OKLAHOMA
OU TULSA
SCHUSTERMAN CENTER

Knowledge. Action. Impact.