Washington Research-Practice Partnership Project (RPP) Summary

The Washington Research-Practice Partnership (WA RPP) began in 2018 as part of the Partnership for Pre-K Improvement (PPI) project and is a collaboration between researchers from Cultivate Learning and Education Northwest and state partners from the Department of Children, Youth and Families (DCYF) responsible for Washington's state funded pre-k program, the Early Care Education Assistance Program (ECEAP).

A learning agenda was developed to guide the work of the WA RPP. A learning agenda is a set of prioritized research questions.

The WA RPP learning agenda was co-constructed by the state and research partners in the fall of 2018 and refined throughout 2019 with input from work group leads, PPI project partners, and other stakeholders.

A co-created learning agenda generates data and provides Washington stakeholders with key information needed to improve ECEAP.

Progress on the data generated from the learning agenda is shared during state and PPI project meetings and broader dissemination occurs semi-annually through conferences and reports.

LEARNING AGENDA
Research Question 1: Workforce Education and Training

How can the state best support and incentivize the early childhood education (ECE) teaching and professional workforce to continue their education/training?

1A. Current Workforce

What are the current educational qualifications and training levels of the ECE workforce?

Research Plans
- Conduct scan of existing workforce reports
- Discuss with DCYF to understand additional workforce/training aspects they want to examine
- Conduct analyses and examine education and training levels by workforce characteristics

1B. Supports

What supports and incentive programs are available to the ECE workforce related to completing their education/ degree in the state, what are the characteristics of these supports/programs, and who accesses them?

Research Plans
- Conduct scan of available incentives and support programs
- Discuss with DCYF to understand where they want to focus analysis
- Conduct analyses on participation by workforce characteristics

1C. Strategies

What strategies can be implemented to increase equitable use of supports and incentives for ECE degree and credential attainment?

Research Plans
- Conduct literature review to identify effective strategies used to overcome barriers in other states and settings
- Collect qualitative data to understand barriers to access for different demographic groups in workforce (new data collection)
- Conduct research on existing or new incentives/support programs to understand effectiveness and improve programs.

1D. Lead Learn Excel Implementation

How is the Lead Learn Excel pilot implemented?

Research Plans
- Analyze data collected from the Ounce of Prevention Fund related to implementation
- Collaborate with the Ounce of Prevention Fund and DCYF to add implementation questions to existing surveys
- Collect and analyze information from Lead Learn Excel participants (new data collection)

LEARNING AGENDA
Research Question 2: Using Data for Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI)

To what extent are ECEAP directors, site directors, coaches, and teachers using data for improvement plans and goals?

2A. Current Contractor/Site CQI Practices

How do leadership, relationship-based professionals, and teaching staff who manage ECEAP programs use child, teacher, and classroom data to self-monitor and improve?

Research Plans
- Review and conduct analyses on existing data on CQI practices
- Co-develop working definition of CQI practices and how to measure effectiveness/success; potentially focus on contractor data tracked in action plans (e.g., curriculum, dual language approaches, and inclusion practices)

2B. Successful Contractor/Site CQI Practices

What are the effective processes that contractors and staff use and what are the characteristics of the program staff who are using it?

Research Plans
- Collect qualitative data to understand how sites implement effective CQI practices (new data collection)
- Analyze qualitative data and develop CQI practices survey
- Collect quantitative data on CQI practices across contractors/sites (new data collection)

2C. Data Analysis Training Content Support

What skills, information, and practices are important to include in developing a data analysis training?

Research Plans
- Review qualitative and quantitative data on CQI practices from 2A and 2B
- Develop recommendations on what to include in pilot data analysis training
- Collect and analyze data and support revision of DCYF pilot data analysis training (new data collection)

2D. Early Achievers Data

How is the DCYF ECEAP team currently using Early Achievers data for statewide technical assistance planning?

Research Plans
- Conduct preliminary analysis with site/child characteristics and CLASS data
- Conduct additional analyses with Early Achievers components (e.g., CLASS, ERS, overall rating)
- Discuss with DCYF and review Early Achievers tracking sheet to improve how data is summarized and used

2E. Current Coaching Data

How is the DCYF ECEAP team currently using coaching information for continuous quality improvement?

Research Plans
- Review available coaching data (e.g., practice-based coaching, coach consultation notes, and ERS-3 and curriculum training)
- Collect and analyze qualitative data on a sample of coaches to further understand how to support their needs (new data collection)
- Develop a coaching survey to understand how to better support coaches

LEARNING AGENDA
Research Question 3: Individualizing Instruction for Children with a Range of Abilities

What training and support do teachers receive to help them individualize child goals, curriculum, and guidance, and to what extent do teachers do this individualization?

3A. Curriculum Supporting Individualized Instruction

How do certain curricula and combinations of curricula support individualized instruction for children with a range of abilities?

Research Plans
- Analyze administrative data to understand different combinations of curricula used
- Review Creative Curriculum materials on individualizing instruction for children with special needs and dual language learners
- Discuss with DCYF their definition and understanding of successful implementation of individualization practices

3B. Teacher Guidance and Training on Individualization and Inclusion

What trainings and supports have teachers received on inclusion and individualization, and what percentage of teachers have received training and support?

Research Plans
- Review literature on effective strategies to support teachers in individualizing instruction
- Provide research support for DCYF inclusion survey (new data collection)
- Collect and analyze qualitative data related to training on inclusion and individualization (new data collection)

3C. Teacher Implementation of Individualization and Inclusion Practices

What percentage of teachers report regularly using inclusion and individualization practices?

Research Plans
- Collect and analyze qualitative data on how coaches support teachers in implementing practices that support inclusion and individualization (new data collection)
- Collect and analyze qualitative data on how teachers implement individualization and inclusion in the classroom (new data collection)