

EARLY CHILDHOOD PROFESSIONAL
DEVELOPMENT AND CLASSROOM
QUALITY IN PRESCHOOL
CLASSROOMS

By

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The importance of training and professional development for early childhood staff is widely known and accepted by those in the early childhood profession. For programs serving children and families, knowledge of the features of the early care and education workforce and the professional development experiences that contribute to their skills is vital (Martinez-Beck & Zaslow, 2006). Staff development provides the catalyst for professional growth, staying current in best practices, and overall improvement in a program (Moore, 2000). Proper staff development is an essential and daily part of working with children and families and it must be viewed as an ongoing process. It is about change and renewal and it is a necessary instrument used to strengthen interactions with children and families, improve work experience, enhance the quality of programs, and attain local, state and accreditation goals (Moore).

Saluja, Early, and Clifford (2002) estimate there are 284,277 teachers of three and four year olds in the United States with varying educational backgrounds. Less than 1 % of teachers report no training in early childhood (Saluja, et al.). Early childhood programs that receive state and federal moneys are stressing the importance of professional development of the early care and education workforce and recognizing that children's early experiences with those who provide care for them are crucial to their early development and their readiness for school (Martinez-Beck & Zaslow, 2006). The

emphasis on professional development has resulted in many programs and initiatives with goals to increase the training level of early childhood staff. Professional development is an important component of many states' child care licensing programs. Studies show that professional development is related to classroom quality, classroom interactions, and beliefs about and use of developmentally appropriate practice (Cassidy, Buell, Pugh-Hoese, & Russell, 1995; Fleet & Patterson, 2001; Rhodes & Hennessy, 2000; Snider & Fu, 1990). The need for early childhood teachers with specialized training is documented in the literature (Snider & Fu, 1990).

In *Critical Issues in Early Childhood Professional Development*, the authors Maxwell, Feild, and Clifford conclude that there are no common definitions of professional development terms (Maxwell, et al., 2006). They do, however, identify three components of professional development: education, training and credential (Maxwell, et al.). Education is defined as the professional development activities that occur within a formal education system and most measures address two aspects (Maxwell, et al.). These aspects are overall level of education and content specific education which includes both academic major and coursework (Maxwell, et al.). The authors define training as the professional development activities that occur outside the formal education system that do not lead to a degree and may sometimes be referred to as in-service or informal training (Maxwell, et al.). The third component, credential, does not clearly fall into either of the above two categories because the organizations that grant credentials are typically not the same ones that provide the requisite knowledge (Maxwell, et al.).

The purpose of this study was to examine the association between different types of early childhood professional development and child care quality in preschool classrooms.

Definitions

Center for Early Childhood Professional Development (CECPD): An agency providing statewide services to support those who work in licensed child care settings in Oklahoma to achieve professional growth. It was created using federal child development Block grant funds and reflects Oklahoma's commitment to quality child care.

Child Development Associate Credential (CDA): A national credential awarded to an individual who has successfully completed a CDA assessment by demonstrating competence in 13 functional areas.

Directors Advanced Training (DAT): Training for child care directors that focuses on time management, advocacy for children, and child development. It is provided by the Oklahoma State Child Care Association.

Department of Human Services (DHS): A social service agency providing statewide services to Oklahoma citizens.

Entry Level Child Care Training (ELCCT): An introductory child care training course providing 20 clock hours of training to new child care professionals. It is available through CECPD and provides the knowledge needed to provide quality care for young children. The coursework stresses the importance of the caregiver and child care work.

Infrastructure: Support systems that provide services and facilities that support

the early childhood workforce. It includes such early childhood initiatives as CECPD scholarships, Scholars for Excellence in Child Care Coordinators, DHS training vouchers, REWARD, and TEACH.

National Administrators Credential (NAC): Director training that focuses on developing and maintaining organization within programs, creating a program mission, goals, and objectives, marketing your program, and effectively managing staff. It is provided by the Oklahoma Child Care Association.

REWARD Wage Supplement Program (REWARD): A statewide program that provides education-based salary supplements to teachers, directors, and family child care providers who work with young children in child care settings. It is designed to reward commitment to the field in hopes of providing children with more stable relationships and better educated teachers.

Scholars for Excellence in Child Care Coordinators: Coordinators at each of the Oklahoma two-year colleges that recruit, support, and mentor child care providers returning to school to further their education in early childhood. Providers can earn a credential, certificate, or an associate degree in early childhood education.

Systematic Workshops: Early childhood workshops that are part of a system and have a specific purpose and organizing frame. They include those linked to CDA, Child Care Career courses, DAT, ELCCT, and NAC.

TEACH Project (TEACH): A comprehensive scholarship program for early childhood providers developed by the Child care Services Association in North Carolina. This project encompasses several different scholarship programs that link education and compensation.

Workshops: Early childhood educational seminars or courses such as in-service, those held in the community and at professional meetings, satellite and video training, and training provided by resource and referral agencies.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The following review of the literature begins with a discussion of the regulatory climate related to professional development. Following this will be a review of the nature of the early childhood workforce, amount of education and professional development, and content of education and professional development.

Regulatory Climate

Based on a report by LeMoine and Azer (2005) published in November 2005 by the National Child Care Information Center (NCCIC), all states in the United States with the exception of Michigan require some level of training for teachers and master teachers working in child care centers. This requirement is part of each state's center child care licensing requirements and varies among the states by preservice and ongoing, type of training and amount of hours required. The state of Idaho was not included in this report due to not having statewide child care licensing requirements. It should also be noted that thirty four of the states included in this report do not have a master teacher classification. In *Licensing Requirements for Child Care Centers* published by the Oklahoma Department of Human Services Division of Child Care in 2005 a master teacher is defined as "a staff person who supports other teaching staff with responsibilities such as program development, weekly lesson plans, use of space and

equipment, interactions with parents, and program evaluation (p.2).”

Regarding teachers and minimum ECE preservice qualifications (see Table 1), the NCCIC report reflects that six states require a CDA or CCP. Delaware, Massachusetts, and New Hampshire require completion of a vocational child care course. California requires a Regional Occupation Program certificate of training in child care plus 95 clock hours in child care and development. Maryland requires 90 clock hours in early childhood development and programming. Wisconsin requires two non-credit, department approved courses in ECE. Thirty-eight states have no preservice training requirement for teachers. Alabama, Tennessee, and Virginia all however, require some type of training within one month of employment. In Oklahoma, staff must participate in an approved 20 clock hour entry-level training course within three months of hire. Florida requires enrollment in a 40 clock hour introductory training course within three months of employment. New staff members in New Mexico must complete a 45 hour entry level course or an approved equivalent within six months of employment.

The ongoing training requirements for teachers (see Table 1) on the NCCIC report range from three clock hours per year (Louisiana and Maryland) to 30 clock hours per year in Maine. The state of Connecticut’s requirement is 1% of hours worked. Minnesota requires 2% of hours worked. The District of Columbia requires an unspecified number of hours. The three states of California, Hawaii, and Michigan have no ongoing training requirement for teachers in child care centers as based on this report.

Of the 16 states shown in the NCCIC report that do have a master teacher classification, eight require a CDA as a minimum ECE preservice qualification for master teachers (see Table 2). New Jersey, Rhode Island, and Vermont all require a Bachelor’s

degree. Oklahoma requires an Oklahoma Competency Certificate in ECE while Oregon requires a state or national credential. The state of Pennsylvania has a preservice requirement of an Associate's degree with 30 credits in ECE or other related fields for master teachers.

For a master teacher's ongoing training (see Table 2), the NCCIC report shows a range in required clock hours from six (Pennsylvania and New Hampshire) to 22 ½ hours in Alaska. Connecticut requires 1% of hours worked. The report shows no ongoing training requirement for master teachers in California.

For an international perspective, a study by Moss (2000) examined the training of early childhood education and care workers in center based services in six countries, and noted that even though countries are taking different training routes there is a widespread movement towards longer and higher-level basic training. Education and training play a key role in determining the make-up of the early childhood workforce (Moss).

In Denmark, where standards are determined by the local authority often in negotiations with the trade unions there are both pedagogues and untrained staff working in center based services. A pedagogue has completed a three and one half year course that takes place in a specialized college and they are qualified to work across a range of services for children, both school age and younger, and with adults. Nearly two-thirds of staff are pedagogues (Moss, 2000).

In New Zealand where all centers have to be licensed to operate, the main relationship is between national government and individual services or the private organizations that manage the services. Between 1986 and 1989 New Zealand became the first country in the world to integrate responsibility for the whole range of early

childhood education and care services within the education system. This reform of the system and the reform of training that preceded it have attempted to provide a single staffing framework with the core of this framework being a three year integrated early childhood training leading to a Diploma of Education (Early Childhood Education). This training was intended to train students to work across the full range of early childhood settings (from child care centers to kindergartens) and with children from birth to five years. Developments since 1990 have complicated this by use of a system of points for each of the many different types of qualifications now referred to as the Early Childhood Points System. The National Qualifications Framework was introduced later and this may eventually replace the Early Childhood Points System (Moss, 2000).

In Sweden, there are no national standards for early childhood education and care services. The matter is left to individual local authorities to determine. Pre-school teachers and child care assistants are the two types of workers in center-based services. Courses for pre-school teachers are three years. Basic training is at a post-18 level, in the higher education sector, either in universities or university colleges. Courses lead to a university Diploma in Child and Youth Studies with a specialization either in early childhood education or leisure-time education. The training for child care assistants consists of a three year post-16 training, within upper secondary school (16 to 19 age group). These schools are organized into different national programs, one of which is “child care and leisure time education”. All students take eight core subjects plus subjects specific to each group (Moss, 2000).

Nature of the Early Childhood Workforce

A study done by Saluja et al., (2002) summarized demographic information on the

early childhood work force and teachers of three and four year olds in center based programs estimates that there are 284, 277 teachers of three and four year olds in the United States and the average age of these teachers is 39 years. Ninety-nine percent of teachers of three and four year olds are female. By the estimates of this study the majority of three and four year old teachers are white followed by black or African American and Hispanic or Latino (Saluja, et al).

Study responses regarding education indicated 91 percent of teachers of three and four year olds have some education beyond high school. Of this number, 27% have some college and an additional 50% have at least a bachelor's degree. Teacher education varies by program type with teachers in public schools having more education than teachers in other program types. Eighty-seven percent of teachers who work in public schools have at least a bachelor's degree, with less than 50% of teachers in religious settings, for-profit settings, and Head Start programs having a bachelor's degree. (Saluja, et al., 2002).

Teachers also reported about early childhood education or child development training type with the list ranging from no specialized training to an advanced degree. Less than 1% of teachers report no training in early childhood. Many (62%) have at least attended workshops on early childhood topics. Thirty-one percent have taken some early childhood college-level courses without receiving an early childhood college degree, 19% have earned a CDA, 12% have an associate's degree, 31% have earned a bachelor's degree, and 13% have an early childhood advanced degree (Saluja, et al., 2002).

Amount of Education and Professional Development

Beliefs about developmentally appropriate practice (DAP). A center's program is

determined by teachers' knowledge of and ability to apply DAP. That is, the teacher understands the needs and interests of the child and is able to prepare an environment that enables the child to discover new information and form new concepts through play and exploration (Snider & Fu, 1990). Snider and Fu indicated that the factors having the greatest effect on early childhood teachers' knowledge of DAP are education/academic degree, number of content areas covered in child development /early childhood education courses taken, and the interaction of child development /early childhood education content and supervised practical experience.

Findings of a study conducted by Cassidy et al., (1995) indicate that completion of at least 12 to 20 credit hours of community college courses resulted in significantly more developmentally appropriate beliefs and practices for teachers compared to a group of teachers who did not attend college classes. This supports the position that improving teacher educational qualifications is related to improved knowledge of DAP. The findings of the Snider and Fu (1990) study showed that teachers with academic degrees in child development/early childhood education scored significantly higher on a DAP measure than those with other academic degrees/training. The results also seemed to indicate that formal training and supervised experience associated with the completion of degree in child development/early childhood education, provide the early childhood teacher with the knowledge and skills necessary to determine what constitutes DAP. Study results also indicated that formal education combined with supervised practical experience is more effective in helping teachers acquire knowledge regarding DAP. Supervised practical experience without formal child development training does not seem to have a significant effect on teachers' knowledge of DAP (Snider & Fu, 1990).

Classroom quality. Arguments for a model of professional development for the early childhood workforce are predicted on the purported relationship between teacher background and classroom quality. Although there are many components of a teachers' background which may relate to her classroom performance, including years of experience and inservice training, most advocates of a professional development system for early childhood teachers are focusing on improved educational requirements (Cassidy, et al., 1995).

The Cassidy et al., (1995) article examines the effect of community college coursework on the beliefs and classroom practices of teachers in child care centers. The results revealed that the classrooms of the program participants had made significant gains on the Early Childhood Environment Rating Scales (ECERS) or the Infant-Toddler Environment Rating Scales (ITERS) (Cassidy, Buell, Pugh-Hoese, & Russell, 1995).

Classroom Interactions. A review of research (Buell, Cassidy, 2001; Rhodes, Hennessy, 2000) indicates that strong evidence exists for a relationship between caregiver training in early childhood education and their behavior with preschool children. In Buell and Cassidy (2001) the review specifically notes that teachers with college degrees demonstrated more positive behaviors, such as sensitivity to children, and fewer negative behaviors, such as harshness and detachment. In addition teachers with at least a bachelor's degree in early childhood or child development, or both, provided more appropriate caregiving, including appropriate curricular activities and room arrangement; were more sensitive; and were less detached than teachers with vocational training or less.

In a study by Rhodes and Hennessy (2000) the effects of a 120 hour preschool

training course on caregivers' behavior and children's development in early-year settings was examined. Caregivers were assessed on a measure of caregiver sensitivity in the child care centers in which they were employed. Children from each center were assessed for social and cognitive competence. Caregivers who received training made significant gains in positive relationships and decreased in levels of detachment. The children in their care made significant gains in complex social and cognitive play from pre- to post-training. The comparison groups adults and children showed no significant improvements from pre- to post-test times. The results showed that the completion of a 120-hour training program resulted in higher levels of caregiver sensitivity and higher levels of play among children cared for by caregivers that received training. An important feature of the findings is the fact that the effects of training were significant despite the fact that the participants had an average of more than six years of experience working with children (Rhodes & Hennessy, 2000).

Content of Education and Professional Development

The Snider and Fu (1990) study examined the effects of training and practical group care experience on early childhood teachers' knowledge of DAP and inappropriate classroom practices. It found that participants who covered ten or more content areas in their child development/early childhood education courses scored significantly higher than those who had no child development content in their training. The results also indicated that among the factors having the most effects on early childhood teachers' knowledge of DAP was the number of content areas covered in child development and early childhood education courses taken. (Snider & Fu, 1990). According to NAEYC guidelines, teacher training programs should provide; theoretical knowledge and

practical skills in child growth and development; early childhood professional courses; curriculum planning and evaluation; methods of child guidance and group management; knowledge about developmentally diverse children, parent-teacher relations, and public policy issues; as well as supervised practical experience in working with young children (Snider & Fu, 1990).

The child development/early childhood education content areas used in the Snider and Fu study were child growth and development, psychological foundations, sociological foundations, planning and implementing content, creating evaluating, and selecting materials, creating learning environments, planning for disabilities/special abilities, curriculum models, observing and recording behaviors, understanding developmentally diverse children, child health, and classroom observation. The data showed that the greatest discrepancies between those in the high score and the low score groups, lie in the number of people who had been exposed to following five content areas: (a) planning, implementing, and evaluating developmentally appropriate content; (b) creating, evaluating, and selecting materials (c) creating learning environments; (d) curriculum models; and (e) observing and recording behaviors (Snider & Fu, 1990).

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study was to examine the association between different types of early childhood professional development/initiatives and child care quality in preschool classrooms. The analysis for the study came from data collected as part of a larger study. The Center Validation Study (Norris, Dunn, & Eckert, 2003) was funded by the Oklahoma Department of Human Services Division of Child Care and conducted by Dr. Deborah Norris and Dr. Loraine Dunn.

Sample

A total of 336 child care centers across the state of Oklahoma were visited between October 2001 and May 2002. The sample included 98 One-Star, 85 One-Star Plus, 97 Two-Star, and 56 Three-Star/Accredited centers. Fifty (89%) of the Three-Star/Accredited centers were accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) while the remaining centers had National Early Childhood Program Accreditation (NECPA). NECPA was created in 1993 by the National Child Care Association.

A preschool classroom was randomly selected for observation in each center. The average teacher in these classrooms who participated in the study was a married female, age 30-39, employed in the profession for an average of 8.66 years. She has been

employed at her current program for 4.14 years

Procedures

A team of up to three researchers made an initial visit to the center to conduct classroom quality observations and a director interview. Teacher and director demographic questionnaires were left at the center at the completion of the first visit. Observers were not informed of the Star rating of the facility, however many centers prominently displayed signs indicating their Star ratings.

Data collectors were trained on study procedures and instruments prior to data collection and all achieved at least 90% inter-observer reliability on the observation instruments prior to data collection. Monthly reliability visits were conducted with each data collector.

Instruments

A 19-item teacher demographic questionnaire (Appendix) from the Center Validation Study was utilized for this study. It requested information about education, training, credentials or certifications, professional organizations, and early childhood initiatives. Only questions from the instrument used to create variables for this study will be explained here. The variables for this study included formal early childhood education, workshops, systematic workshops, credentials, and accessing of the infrastructure (see Tables 3, 4, and 5).

Teachers were asked to indicate their highest level of completed specialized education in early childhood (ECE) or child development (CD). They could select from none, less than 12 college hours in ECE or CD, 12 or more college hours in ECE or CD

without degree completed, two-year College Certificate of Mastery, two-year degree in ECE or CD, four-year degree in ECE or CD, some graduate coursework in ECE or CD, or graduate degree in ECE or CD. Possible scores could range from zero to five.

For this study, workshops are considered as early childhood educational seminars or courses (see Table 3). Teachers were asked to indicate where they received training in CD, ECE, or child care. They could select from in-service workshops at center, workshops/seminars at professional meetings, workshops/seminars in the community, satellite training, workshops at a resource referral agency, and video training. Possible scores could range from zero to six. The teachers received a score of one for each one attended and a zero for those not attended. A total score was created by adding up the total number of responses.

Systematic workshops are those early childhood workshops that are part of a system and have a specific purpose and organizing frame (see Table 3). Teachers were asked to indicate where they received training in CD, ECE, or child care. They could select from CDA training, Child Care Careers courses, NAC, DAT, and ELCCT. Possible scores could range from zero to five. The teachers received a score of one for each one attended and a zero for those not attended. A total score was created by adding up the total number of responses.

Teachers were asked what credentials or certifications they held (see Table 4). They could select from CDA, Certified Child Care Professional Credential (CCP), two-year college Certificate of Mastery, NAC, Early Childhood Education (pre-K to 3rd grade), and Elementary Education. Possible scores could range from zero to six. The teachers received a score of one for each one completed and a zero for those not

completed. A total score was created by adding up the total number of responses.

Infrastructure provides support services to the early childhood workforce (see Table 5). On the questionnaire, teachers were asked what early childhood initiatives they had participated in. They could select from TEACH, CECPD scholarships, REWARD, College Scholar Coordinator Services, and DHS vouchers to attend conferences. Possible scores could range from zero to five. The teachers received a score of one for each one they had participated in and a zero for those they had not participated in. A total score was created by adding up the total number of responses.

Classroom observations data collected in the study through the use of the Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale (ECERS) was used in the current study that focused on preschool age classrooms.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS

The purpose of this study was to examine the association between different types of early childhood professional development/initiatives and quality child care in preschool classrooms.

Characteristics of Professional Development

Specialized education could range from zero (none) to five (graduate degree). The actual sample scores ranged from zero to five also. The sample average was 1.46 (sd=1.37) which was between less than 12 college hours in ECE or CD and 12 or more college hours in ECE or CD without a degree completed. The frequency of responses have been presented in Table 6. One-third of the sample did not have any specialized education in ECE or CD while one half of the sample had some college hours in ECE or CD. The category of 12 hours or more with no degree completed was the category that most represented the sample participants.

The scores on workshops could range from zero to six. The actual sample scores ranged from zero to five. The sample average was 2.49 (sd=1.46) with 36 participants or 12.3% having none. The frequency of responses have been presented in Table 7. Sixty-five or 22.3 percent of participants had attended workshops at resource referral agencies. Forty-one percent of the participants had never attended in-service workshops at the

center. The most frequently utilized type of workshops among the sample participants was workshops and seminars at professional meetings.

The scores on systematic workshops could range from zero to five. The actual sample scores ranged from zero to five also. The sample average was 1.23 (sd=1.01) which means they were participating on average in no more than one of these options when five were available. The frequency of responses have been presented in Table 8. Seventeen participants had participated in ELCCT. Eighty-two participants or 28.2 % had not participated in any systematic workshops. CDA training was the most commonly attended category among sample participants.

Credential scoring could range from zero to six. The actual sample scores ranged from zero to four. The sample average was .63 (sd=.68). The frequency of responses has been presented in Table 9. Fourteen or 4.89 percent of participants had a Certified Child Care Professional credential. One hundred-thirty seven participants or 46.6 % did not have any type of credential. The most common type of credential among sample participants was CDA.

Infrastructure scores could range from zero to five. The actual sample scores ranged from zero to five also. The sample average was 1.21 (sd=1.14). The frequency of responses has been presented in Table 10. Thirty three percent of the participants have not utilized any of the infrastructure available to support their work in early childhood. Thirty percent of the participants have been involved with the TEACH project and DHS vouchers to attend conferences was the most utilized type of infrastructure among the sample participants.

Classroom Quality

The average ECERS score for these 336 classrooms was 5.75 (sd=.81) with a range from 2.61 to 6.90. A score of five or higher has been identified as good quality care in previous studies.

Associations Between Professional Development and Classroom Quality

Correlations between types of professional development have been presented in Table 11. All were correlated with each other and represent different facets of professional development.

Three types of professional development were significantly correlated with the total ECERS score-specialized education ($r=.27, p<.01$), credential ($r=.17, p<.01$), and workshops ($r=.17, p<.01$). The other two professional development variables were not significantly correlated with ECERS scores-systematic workshops ($r=.08$) and infrastructure ($r=.11$).

A hierarchical regression equation was performed to examine the predictive activity of professional development variables on classroom quality (Table 12). Step one was specialized education in early childhood, step two included the workshops, systematic workshops, and accessing infrastructure to support professional development, and step three was credentials. The regression equation for the overall model was significant ($F(5,260)=5.668, p<.00$) with eight percent of the ECERS variance explained by this model. Specialized education was significant showing that for every one step increase in this education there was .24 of a point increase in the ECERS score.

An ANOVA procedure was done to determine more information about the

regression (see Table 13). Four education groups were created that include none, less than 12 hours, more than 12 hours but no degree, and an Associate's degree or higher. There were group differences in ECERS scores depending on level of specialized education ($F(3,265)=6.354, p<.000$). Those with at least 12 hours or more in ECE but no degree have significantly higher ECERS scores than those without any. Those with an Associate's degree or higher have significantly higher ECERS scores than those without any college in ECE.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

The purpose of this study was to examine the association between different types of early childhood professional development and child care quality in preschool classrooms. To conclude, a discussion of this study will follow including implications and recommendations for future research.

Discussion

It is important to remember that the data used in this study was collected in the years 2001 and 2002. In regard to specialized education in this study, 10.4 percent of participants had obtained a bachelor's degree. In contrast, 50 percent of the teachers who participated in the Saluja, et al study in the review of literature had obtained Bachelor's degrees (Saluja, et al., 2002). In this study, 22.7 percent had attended some college with 27 percent having attended some college in Saluja, et al (Saluja, et al.). In the credential category, 32.7 percent of teachers who participated in this study held a CDA credential while in the Saluja, et al study 19 percent had a CDA (Saluja, et al.). Regarding early childhood workshops, 75 percent of this study's participants had attended these compared to the Saluja, et al study in which 62 percent had attended workshops (Saluja, et al.).

The results from this study suggest that specialized education makes a difference in terms of child care quality. This is similar to the findings in Buell and Cassidy (2001)

which noted that teachers with college degrees demonstrated more positive behaviors, such as sensitivity to children, and fewer negative behaviors, such as harshness and detachment. The Cassidy, et al study also notes that improved teacher education qualifications are related to improved knowledge of DAP and higher quality classrooms (Cassidy, et al., 1995). It is also interesting to note when discussing specialized education's affect on quality that based on the LeMoine and Azer (2005) report, only a few states require this type of professional development for teachers and master teachers as part of their center child care licensing program.

A concern of this study is that the findings suggest that the number of teachers who participated in CDA training was much larger than the number of teachers who had completed a CDA credential. This of course would suggest that some teachers although willing to commit to training are not willing to commit to completing a full credential. It also leads to thinking about teachers and child care staff who may only be participating in the training to meet a mandatory training requirement. In these situations, staff may not be considering the appropriateness of the training. Another concern of this study is the high percentage of participants who had never attended in-service training at a center. This by some is considered to be the most basic part of a center's ongoing staff training program. The director's role in this must be considered as they are primarily responsible for providing in-service training and assuring that staff attend. An additional concern of this study is the small number of teachers who participated in some of the professional development formats and also the number of participants who had not participated in the infrastructure available to support their early childhood work. The very low number of teachers in this study who had received College Scholar Coordinator services is another

concern.

It should be noted that the ELCCT training was a very new training program when the data used in this study was collected. It is felt that current data would provide a different outcome in regard to this.

Implications

A very important recommendation for the Oklahoma DHS Division of Child Care is to continue research on the subjects of professional development and child care quality in order to continually improve and make needed changes to the system. Barriers to participation in professional development should also be addressed. It is recommended that the Center for Early Childhood Professional Development address the barriers also as well as new ways to promote participation. This could be done through a statewide teacher survey. It is my opinion that a possible barrier could be the complex nature of the system and the many different agencies involved. Teachers and child care providers can become confused when their scholarship comes from one agency, their credential is processed by a different agency, and yet another agency approves their REWARD supplement, etc.. It should be considered that a type of “one stop” agency that represents all services could be of benefit to the early childhood profession. The CECPD should review their advertising and promotion methods and consider how to successfully get out information about their programs and services to people statewide. The CECPD should also look at their recruitment efforts of registry trainers and whether or not there are adequate amount of trainers statewide. Oklahoma as well as other states should review and assess their current state licensing requirements for professional development to determine any future changes needed. The states should also evaluate if they have

adequate infrastructure in place to support professional development for its' early childhood teachers and why some of these support systems are not being frequently utilized. As previously stated, the College Scholar Coordinator program was not well utilized by the teachers participating in this study. This issue should be reviewed to determine any changes that may be needed in order to better promote this program and to recruit a larger number of students. The College Scholar Coordinator program is not currently available to staff who work in centers that are at a one star level. This could have been a contributing factor to the low participation by the teachers in this study. Both the CECPD and the Division of Child Care should consider the critical role the director plays in the training of staff. Regarding the issue of in-service training, there may be directors who need training on how to plan and present this type of training to their staff.

Future Research

It is recommended that current data be collected to determine if there would be a difference in the sample today. There have been changes in licensing requirements and training initiatives that could affect outcomes. Research done to evaluate the different types of professional development is recommended. This same type of study could also be done for infant and toddler age children as well as school-age. It would also be interesting to perform research to compare professional development and quality between metropolitan and rural areas. Family child care homes rather than centers could be examined in future studies. Another type of measure other than ECERS could be used to measure classroom quality in future research.

Summary

As previously stated, the importance of training and professional development for early childhood staff is widely known and accepted by those in the early childhood profession. Professional development is related to classroom quality and interactions, and teacher beliefs about practice.

This study was center based but it is important to remember the critical role played by family child care homes. We must also continually evaluate their professional development system and how it is related to their work with children.

Through many years of work experience in child care licensing I have seen much improvement in the professional development opportunities available to those who work in early childhood. Even though there are more opportunities for training than ever before, it is my opinion that there are still needs in some areas, especially in rural Oklahoma. These needs must be addressed by practitioners and policymakers alike. Our politicians and policymakers must be kept well educated in order to make good decisions about regulation and funding. We must keep public attention focused on early childhood and the professional development of its' workforce in order to make improvements to the system. We must encourage parents and the public to support and advocate for the early childhood profession. The systems in place to support the early childhood profession should continue and be continually evaluated for needed improvements. We all have our own role to play in today's early childhood and professional development system and we must work together and strive to make it the best system it can be. Children and families will only benefit from this.

Table 1

Professional Development Requirements for Teachers (by State)

Requirements	Number of States
Preservice Requirements	
None	38
CDA or CCP	6
Vocational Child Care Course	3
Regional Occupation Program Certificate	1
Clock hours in EC	1
Non credit course in ECE	1
Ongoing Requirements	
None	3
Clock hours (range from 3-30 per year)	44
% of employment (hours worked)	2
Unspecified number of hours	1

Table 2

Professional Development Requirements for Master Teachers (by State)

Requirements	Number of States
Preservice Requirements	
None	2
CDA	8
Bachelor's degree	3
Associate's degree with ECE credits	1
ECE competency certificate	1
State or national credential	1
Ongoing Requirements	
None	1
Clock hours (range from 6-22.5)	14
% of employment (hours worked)	1

Table 3

Criteria for Workshops and Systematic Workshops

Workshops

In-service workshops at center

Workshops/seminars at professional meetings

Workshops/seminars in the community

Satellite training

Workshops at resource referral agency

Video training

Systematic Workshops

CDA training

Child Care Careers courses

National Administrator Training-NAC

Directors Advanced Training-DAT

Entry Level Child Care Training-ELCCT

Table 4

Criteria for Credential

Child Development Associate credential-CDA

Certified Child Care Professional credential-CCP

Two-year college Certificate of Mastery

National Administrator credential-NAC

Early childhood education (pre-K to 3rd grade)

Elementary education

Table 5

Criteria for Infrastructure

TEACH project

CECPD scholarships

REWARD wage supplement program

College scholar coordinator services

DHS vouchers to attend conferences

Table 6

Specialized Education Participation (n=269)

Specialized Education Levels	n	%
None	88	32.7%
12 hours or more with no degree completed	69	25.7%
Less than 12 hours	61	22.7%
Bachelor's degree	28	10.4%
Associate's degree	18	6.7%
Graduate degree	5	1.9%

Table 7

Workshop Participation (n=292)

Workshop Formats	n	%
Total Workshop Formats Selected		
0	36	12.3%
1	46	15.8%
2	50	17.1%
3	83	28.4%
4	57	19.5%
5	20	6.8%
Workshop Formats Utilized		
Workshops at professional meetings	219	75.0%
In-service workshops at center	171	58.6%
Workshops in the community	171	58.6%
Satellite training	97	33.2%
Video training	71	24.1%
Workshops at resource referral agency	65	22.3%

Table 8

Systematic Workshop Participation (n=291)

Systematic Workshop Formats	n	%
Total Systematic Workshop Formats Selected		
0	82	28.2%
1	89	30.6%
2	92	31.6%
3	24	8.2%
4	3	1.0%
5	1	.3%
Systematic Workshop Formats Utilized		
CDA training	178	61.0%
Child Care Career courses	132	45.2%
Directors Advanced Training-DAT	22	7.5%
Entry Level Child Care Training-ELCCT	17	5.8%
National Administrators Training-NAC	14	4.8%

Table 9

Credential Participation (n=294)

Credential Types	n	%
Total Credential Types Selected		
0	137	46.6%
1	135	45.9%
2	19	6.5%
3	2	.7%
4	1	.3%
Credential Types Utilized		
CDA	96	32.7%
Elementary Education	29	9.9%
Early Childhood Education	23	7.8%
Certified Child Care Professional-CCP	14	4.8%
Two-year college Certificate of Mastery	13	4.4%
National Administrator's Credential-NAC	8	2.7%

Table 10

Infrastructure Participation (n=294)

Infrastructure Formats	n	%
Total Infrastructure Formats Selected		
0	97	33.0%
1	88	29.9%
2	69	23.5%
3	28	9.5%
4	11	3.7%
5	1	.3%
Infrastructure Formats Utilized		
DHS vouchers to attend training	120	40.8%
TEACH	106	36.1%
REWARD	95	32.3%
CECPD scholarships	35	11.9%
College scholar coordinator services	3	1.0%

Table 11

Intercorrelations for Professional Development Variables

Measure	1	2	3	4	5
1. Specialized Education	1.00	.13*	-.07	.41**	.13*
2. Workshops	-	1.00	.34**	.23**	.39**
3. Systematic Workshops	-	-	1.00	.15**	.36**
4. Credentials	-	-	-	1.00	.22*
5. Infrastructure	-	-	-	-	1.00

*p<.05 **p<.01

Table 12

Regression Analysis for Professional Development Variables Predicting Classroom Quality

Variable	<u>B</u>	<u>SEB</u>	<u>β</u>
Step One			
Specialized Education	.140	.038	.240
Step Two			
Total Workshops	.057	.032	.118
Total Systematic Workshops	.045	.039	.076
Total Infrastructure	.008	.047	.011
Total Credentials	.032	.079	.027

Note: Adjusted $R^2 = .081$ (N=266, $p < .05$)

Table 13

Specialized Education and Classroom Quality

Level of Specialized Education	n	Classroom Quality	
		Mean	SD
None	88	5.52	.94
Less than 12 hours	61	5.75	.74
More than 12 hours but no degree	69	5.90	.64
Associate's degree or higher	51	6.08	.68

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APPENDIX

Teacher Demographic Questionnaire

TEACHER DEMOGRAPHIC QUESTIONNAIRE

C# _____

All information you provide is confidential
 Research reports will be discussed as a group, not by individual.

T# _____

PLEASE PROVIDE THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION ABOUT YOURSELF

1. How many years have you been employed as a teacher in this child care program? _____
2. How many years have you been employed in the early childhood profession? _____
3. What is the highest level of education you have completed?

CHECK ONLY ONE

Education	My Highest Level
Less than High School	
High School	
Vocational School	
Some College	
Associate's Degree	
Some Graduate coursework	
Master's Degree	
Post-Master's work	

4. What is the highest level of specialized education in early childhood (ECE) or child development (CD) you have completed?

CHECK ONLY ONE

ECE/CD Preparation	My Highest Level
None	
Less than 12 college hours in ECE or CD	
12 or more college hours in ECE or CD without degree completed	
2-year College Certificate of Mastery	
2-year degree in ECE or CD	
4-year degree in ECE or CD	
Some graduate coursework in ECE or CD	
Graduate degree in ECE or CD	

5. Where have you received formal training (not including on-the-job-training) in child development, early childhood education, or child care?

CIRCLE ALL THAT APPLY

1. In-service workshops at this center
2. Workshops/seminars at professional meetings
3. Workshops/seminars in the community
4. Satellite training
5. CDA training
6. Workshops at a Resource Referral agency
7. Child Care Careers courses
8. National Administrator Training-NAC
9. Directors Advanced Training-DAT
10. Courses in high school
11. Courses at vocational technical school
12. 2-year college courses
13. 4-year college courses
14. Graduate level courses
15. Other (PLEASE SPECIFY) _____

6. How many hours of formal training in child development, early child hood education, or child care have you completed?

See #5 above for a definition of “formal training.”

RECORD NUMBER FOR EACH; RECORD “0” IF NONE COMPLETED

Clock hours completed in the last 12 months _____

Clock hours completed in the last 5 years _____

College credits completed in the last 12 months _____

College credits completed in the last 5 years _____

7. What credentials or certifications do you hold?

CIRCLE ALL THAT YOU HOLD

1. Child Development Associate Credential-CDA
2. Certified Child Care Professional Credential-CCP
3. Two-year College Certificate of Mastery
4. National Administrator's Credential-NAC
5. Early Childhood Education (pre-K to 3rd grade)
6. Elementary Education

8. Are you a member of any professional organization such as NAEYC, SECA, ECAO, OCCA, FOEE, etc?

Yes _____ No _____

9. Have you participated in any of the following early childhood initiatives?

(CIRCLE ALL THAT APPLY)

1. TEACH Project
2. Scholarships from the Center for Early Childhood Professional Development (CECPD) (NOTE: CIRCLE ONLY IF YOUR SCHOLARSHIP WAS FROM CECPD- THESE SCHOLARSHIPS HAVE RECENTLY BEEN TRANSFERRED OVER TO THE TEACH PROJECT)
3. REWARD Wage Supplement Program
4. College Scholar Coordinator Services
5. DHS vouchers to attend conferences
6. DHS SATURN (satellite) training
7. Child Care Careers Courses
8. Entry Level Child Care Training (ELCCT)
9. Video Lending Library at Center for Early Childhood Professional Development (CECPD)
10. National Administrators Credential-NAC
11. Directors Advanced Training-DAT (from OCCA)
12. Training or technical assistance from CECPD's Registry
13. Model Observation Site Program (coordinated by CECPD)
14. Other: (please specify) _____

10. What age groups of children do you teach? _____

11. Are there any children in your classroom with an Individual Education Plan(IEP) or an Individual Family Service Plan (IFSP) ?

Yes _____ No _____

IF NO, GO ON TO QUESTION 12 BELOW

IF YES, PLEASE ANSWER THE FOLLOWING

Do you attend IFSP or IEP meetings?

Yes _____ No _____

Do the children receive special education services at your center?

Yes _____ No _____

Do special education professionals help you in your work with children?

Yes _____ No _____

12. Have you had any training in the following curricula?

CIRCLE ALL THAT APPLY

1. Montessori
2. High/Scope
3. Reggio
4. Diane Trister-Dodge's Creative Curriculum

13. What is the schedule for a typical day in your classroom?

WRITE YOUR SCHEDULE HERE

14. How often you do the following with parents in your classroom?

CIRCLE ONE NUMBER FOR EACH LINE OF THE TABLE BELOW USING THE FOLLOWING SCALE

Almost Never	Once a Year	Every 6 Months	3 – 11 Times a Year	Monthly	2 -3 Times a Month	Daily / Weekly
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Send home newsletters	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Send home notes about child or classroom	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Make phone calls to parents	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Hold parent conferences	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Hold special days in my program (ex: Mom's day, picnics, breakfasts)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Visit the homes of the children in my class/program	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Hold parent meetings with guest speakers or special events	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Contact parents about children's problems	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Inform parents when children do well	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Ask parents to assist with field trips or parties	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Encourage parents to work with children in the classroom (read, play games, cooking, art, etc.)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Ask parents to make things for the program or class	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Provide educational materials or information for parents	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Suggest activities for parents to do at home with their children	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Talk to parents at drop-off and pick-up times	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Share information between home and child care with a written system	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

15. My age is:

Circle One

1. Under 20
2. 20 – 29
3. 30 – 39
4. 40 – 49
5. 50 – 59
6. Over 60

16. My Gender is:

CHECK ONE

Female _____

Male _____

17. My marital status is:

CHECK ONE

Single/Never Married _____

Married/Single with Partner _____

Separated/Divorced/Widowed _____

18. My racial/ethnic status is:

CHECK ONE

American Indian _____

Asian _____

Black or African-American _____

Hispanic or Latina/o _____

Native Hawaiian or _____

Pacific Islander _____

White _____

Biracial/Multiracial _____

Other (SPECIFY) _____

19. What is your gross yearly salary as a child care teacher? (CHECK ONE)

Less than \$5,000 _____(1)

\$5,000-\$10,999 _____(2)

\$11,000-\$15,999 _____(3)

\$16,000-\$20,999 _____(4)

\$21,000-\$25,999 _____(5)

\$26,000-\$30,999 _____(6)

\$31,000-\$35,999 _____(7)

\$36,000-\$40,999 _____(8)

\$41,000-\$45,999 _____(9)

\$46,000-\$50,999 _____(10)

\$51,000-\$55,999 _____(11)

\$56,000 or over _____(12)

20. How many hours per week are you paid to work? _____

21. How many weeks per year are you paid to work-including paid vacation time? _____

VITA

Pamela S. LaFerney

Candidate for the Degree of

Master of Science

Thesis: EARLY CHILDHOOD PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND
CLASSROOM QUALITY IN PRESCHOOL CLASSROOMS

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Education: Graduated from Locust Grove High School, Locust Grove, Oklahoma in May 1977; attended Northeastern Oklahoma A & M, Miami, Oklahoma, Bachelor of Social Work from Northeastern State University, Tahlequah, Oklahoma in May 1983. Completed the requirements for the Master of Science degree with a major in Human Development and Family Science at Oklahoma State University in May 2006.

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Professional Memberships: National Association for Regulatory Administration, Southwest Oklahoma Early Childhood Association

Name: Pamela S. LaFerney

Date of Degree: May, 2006

Institution: Oklahoma State University

Location: Stillwater, Oklahoma

Title of Study: EARLY CHILDHOOD PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND
CLASSROOM QUALITY IN PRESCHOOL CLASSROOMS

Pages in Study: 50

Candidate for the Degree of Master of Science

Major Field: Human Development and Family Science

Scope and Method of Study: The purpose of this study was to examine the association between different types of early childhood professional development and child care quality in preschool classrooms. Participants in the study were preschool teachers in 336 child care centers across the state of Oklahoma. A preschool classroom was randomly selected for observations in each center. A team of up to three researchers made an initial visit to each center to conduct classroom quality observations and a director interview. Teacher and director demographic questionnaires were left at the center at the completion of the first visit. Classroom observations data collected in the study through the use of the Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale (ECERS) was used. The variables for this study included formal early childhood education, workshops, systematic workshops, credentials, and accessing of the infrastructure. Correlations procedures were used to test relationships between the variables. A multiple stepwise regression was used to examine study variables that influence child care quality.

Findings and Conclusions: The types of professional development examined in this study were all found to be correlated with each other. Specialized education, credentials, and workshops were found to be significantly correlated with the total ECERS score. Systematic workshops and infrastructure were not significantly correlated with ECERS. The regression equation for the overall model was significant. Specialized education was significant showing that for every one step increase in this education there was .24 of a point increase in the ECERS score. The results suggested that specialized education makes a difference in terms of child care quality.

ADVISER'S APPROVAL: Dr. Deborah Norris
