



Potential Early Childhood Research Questions

The New York State Early Childhood Advisory Council recognizes the importance of research, particularly applied research. What follows is a compendium of questions that members of the ECAC acknowledge as important to further advance the study of early childhood and the development of the field. While all of the questions are grounded in equity and justice, we have organized them into overarching categories. We trust that graduate students and researchers will find these questions provocative and worthy of further attention.

COVID-19

- How have children's expressive language skills been impacted by the increased use of virtual learning?
- What are effective ways to decrease vaccine hesitancy across NYS early childhood communities?
- What best practices were developed during the pandemic that had a positive impact and should be continued?
- What effect did mask wearing classroom staff have on social development and language development for children 0-3 years?
- How can we mediate the effects of the pending mental health crisis in young children that has been exacerbated by the pandemic?
- How are young children who are medically fragile affected by tele-based services? What are best practices to balance COVID and respiratory infection risk and benefits of in-person therapies?

Early Intervention & Special Education

- Conduct an analysis of waitlists for EI services across the 10 regions of the state by category of need (diagnosis/recommended services). Identify barriers.
- What percentage of students identified in EI or CPSE eventually receive ENL services?
- What are perceptions and implicit biases among providers serving new American children with disabilities and their families?
- Are there racial and ethnic disparities in receipt of EI and CPSE services at the county level?
- Has the availability of school district sponsored or BOCES (public 4410) programs decreased for preschoolers with special needs over the past 2, 5, 10 years?
- What is the effect of children receiving Early Intervention services for mild disability on their primary grade retention?
- What is the impact of challenging experiences that occur during the transition from EI to CPSE on short-term school outcomes? Long-term school outcomes? Developmental trajectories?



- Do children under age 5 with social emotional concerns perform better with school or home-based interventions?

Early Learning

- Is there any research that addresses dosage regarding 10/12 month programs and part day/full day programs serving children birth to age five?
- How are children impacted when attending community schools with integrated health components?
- What transition practices had positive impacts on families transitioning to their new setting?
- Qualify and quantify the value of play in early learning.
- What is the correlation between leader qualifications and quality?
- Research the benefits of an Early Head Start-Child Care Partnership model.

Family Engagement

- Which models of parenting support and education used in center based programs best supports children's outcomes?
- How do most parents find out about early care and learning options in their community?
- What are the most effective items in the NYS Baby Bundles? What do new families find most helpful and how are the materials being used?
- What strategies are used by programs to address challenges when a family needs communication support?
- What do families with young children want most in helping promote their child's development?
- Study the decisions and choices that families make regarding child care/early childhood services: what are the factors that impact a family's choice or decision regarding child care?
- Compare the family's experience with tele-therapies vs in-person therapies to determine preference, effectiveness, etc.

Policy

- What are optimal ways to measure who uses the child care subsidy system and who does not to better understand opportunity and possibility to make the system more equitable?
- Why is WIC participation decreasing across NYS over the last few years while SNAP applications are up?
- Analyze OCFS child care licensing enforcement of regulations to determine if there are trends or patterns of inequitable application (zip code analysis).



- Now that child care deserts across New York are identified, launch a research project to generate granular data explaining the dynamics of each desert.
- Conduct an analysis of other states' methods for tracking child outcomes. What measures are used? How are these outcomes shared?
- What is the role of an early childhood system to support multi language households?
- Analyze other state data systems: What information from other states has resulted in systems change? What information that other states started collecting turned out to be not so important?
- What is the impact of school based UPK programs on child care providers' business model?
- What value have Kindergarten Entry Assessments (Kindergarten Skills Inventories) had in improving early childhood systems across the country - what is the latest understanding of the return on these investments?
- What are some best practice models to expand access to post-partum depression services?

Race Equity

- How is race, ethnicity and socioeconomic status (suspecting all interrelate) impacting access to early childhood resources and services? (And how do we fix this). Consider this research using a QUALITYstarsNY frame.
- What are the disparities found as family's access WIC services including but not limited to race, limited English proficiency, geography etc.
- How does limited English proficiency in a family with young children affect access and engagement with NYS early childhood services?
- How is mixed immigrant family status currently affecting access to early childhood benefits?

Whole Health

- How can we best understand what compels a family to follow up on initial screenings, like the early hearing screening?
- Conduct a descriptive study of new families' experiences managing the health care system
- Conduct an asset map activity to determine where/how children under 5 receive mental health services in each region of the state?
- Create a literature review of best practices for resources for families with children with special health care needs.
- What percentage of resettled refugee and asylee families are connected with trauma-informed, multi-lingual mental health services?



- How are interpreters being adequately used for tele-therapies and tele-services among families with limited English proficiency?
- What is the impact of prenatal stressors (i.e. financial hardships, housing instability, food insecurity) on early childhood health and developmental outcomes?
- How many children with special healthcare needs are missing therapies because of conflicts around service payment between payers and school districts?

Workforce Development

- What are the barriers to experienced early childhood educators obtaining NYS B-2 teacher certification?
- What are the characteristics of highly effective teachers (degrees, experience, professional development etc)?
- In addition to increased compensation, what factors lead to staff of early childhood education programs to remain in the field?
- Analyze early childhood educator capability to differentiate programs/curriculum for young children based on their observation and assessment.
- Calculate the cost of high quality care per region/regional cost of living to determine a more equitable subsidy rate by region in preparation for new federal provisions.
- Determine the impact of (which) anti-bias trainings on preschool teachers' classroom practices.
- How does SED monitor/guide teacher education programs to ensure that pre-service teachers are prepared to support children/families experiencing homelessness?