



Early Childhood Policy In Institutions of Higher Education

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and the Buffett Early Childhood Fund*

Created originally as a prototypical module by the Early Childhood Policy in Institutions of Higher Education (ECPIHE) initiative, this document has been modified for use by (*insert university name*) for use in its (*insert program name*). This document supports ECPIHE's foundational intent to create and support a cadre of scholars who address early childhood policy. Moreover, it acknowledges ECPIHE's purposeful creation of comprehensive and adaptive materials that are designed to be modified to reflect the instructional goals and needs of diverse contexts and users. For more information about ECPIHE and/or to learn about additional coursework related to the initiative, please visit <http://policyforchildren.org/ecpihe/>

This module is Module 9 of 12 90-minute modules that have been developed as part of the Early Childhood Policy in Institutions of Higher Education (ECPIHE) effort funded by the Heising-Simons Foundation and Buffett Early Childhood Fund. The work herein represents the collective effort of the project's Content Work Group, which includes Linda Espinosa, Sharon Lynn Kagan, Kristie Kauertz, Helen Raikes, Aisha Ray, Adele Robinson, Catherine Scott-Little, Linda Smith, and Albert Wat. Eva Landsberg and Samantha Melvin contributed to the work, as well. Each module contains distinct content so that it may be used individually or in combination with other modules. Taken together, the 12 modules could form a course.

Title	<i>Module 9 – Research and Evaluation in Early Childhood Policy</i>
Learning Outcomes	<i>By the end of the session, students will:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Identify major research studies and datasets that have influenced (and continue to influence) the field of early childhood policy;• Understand how research is used across the policy cycle (design → enactment/adoption → implementation → evaluation)• Articulate the different ways “success” is conceptualized in early childhood;• Recognize challenges (of measurement and data) in research and evaluation about early childhood programs and services;• Discern between different research approaches to studying early childhood policy.• Understand considerations for making research more relevant to policy.
Content	<i>PART I – Introduction of the Role of Research & Evaluation in Early Childhood Policy (~20 minutes)</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What is policy-relevant research?

- How and why effects exist, rather than a simple question of do effects exist.
- Who is formulating the research questions?...and what is their positionality (values, theoretical grounding, stake in the results)?
- Who will use the information?
- Match between the research design/type of data and the questions being asked/conclusions drawn for policy
- Burdens of proof for different policy questions
- Criteria for evaluating results are provided and appropriate for the research design, e.g., effect sizes reported
- How research has contributed to the shaping of early childhood policy.
 - Looking back: brief examples of research that has been used to inform policy (Perry Preschool; Abecedarian study; neuroscience research; Cost, Quality, and Outcomes; 30 Million Word Gap and other achievement gaps)
 - Current research enthusiasm: brief examples of emerging/extant research that is influencing early childhood policy (toxic stress; relationships/interactions; social-emotional development)
 - Active/accessible datasets that are most relevant to the study of early childhood policy

PART III – Research on Outcomes: “Measures of Success” and the Importance of RQs (~15 minutes)

- Clearly, child outcomes are the ultimate goal.
- Implementation/Improvement Science moving the field to think more about interim outcomes.
- Other variables/“measures of success” used in different policy deliberations:
 - Efficiency – were resources used in a way that benefits exceed costs?
 - Equity – did those who suffer most get the most?
 - Liberty – are key stakeholders constrained in their actions and beliefs?

PART III – Research Uses Across the Policy Cycle (~20 minutes)

- Influence on problem definition
 - Population data – (e.g., use of census data as indicator of need for a policy)
- Influence on designing/formulating policy
 - Non-experimental design – e.g., What factors/variables are associated with a policy/program?
 - Quasi-experimental design – e.g., Is there an indication that a policy/program might work?
- Influence on evaluating policy
 - Quantitative research/evaluation approaches
 - Experimental design – e.g., Does a policy/program work?
 - Qualitative data collection
 - Understanding context and variation of impact on

	<p>individuals – e.g., What do people experience based on a policy/program?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Mixed methods <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Example of this type of study and question(s) this design can address (e.g., What are the possible impacts of a policy/program and what do people experience based on a policy/program?) ○ Administrative data <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Example of this type of data and questions that can be addressed with administrative data (e.g., How many people were affected by a policy?) <p><i>PART IV – Challenges Inherent to Research in Early Childhood Policy (~10 minutes)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ It’s a long distance between many programs and realization of improved child outcomes – but the field lacks robust understanding and measures of interim outcomes. ○ Difference between correlational and causal research and the need for caution in drawing conclusions from research ○ The way data are collected impacts the research that can be conducted and, therefore, conclusions that can be drawn (e.g., siloed administrative data) ○ Measuring child outcomes are tricky, expensive, and often interpreted out of context ○ Systems evaluation is complex... <p><i>PART V – Strategies for Using Research/Data to Inform Policymaking (~10 minutes)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Basic guidelines for communicating data effectively • Example(s) of effective strategies to communicate research/data to inform policy development/implementation (e.g., synthesis reports like the National Academy of Science panels, National Center on the Developing Child)
Delivery Method	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 70 minutes: PowerPoint accompanied by lecture and discussion questions • 15 minutes: Application activity in small groups • 5 minutes: Summary
Application Activity/ies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Option I: Develop a case study that describes a hypothetical research study. Form small groups and have students in each group identify the research design, describe the extent to which it exemplifies indicators of high-quality research, and describe how the results might be used in the policymaking process. Compare and contrast the responses across groups, noting salient differences and similarities in what they noticed about the study. • Option II: Provide examples of policy briefs that describe a research study

	<p>and recommendations for policy. Assign each brief to a small group of students, and have students critique the recommendations provided based on the research design and indicators of quality research that have been discussed.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Option III: Provide summaries of several examples of quality research and seminal studies that reflect RCT, Quasi Experimental Design, Qualitative, Mixed methods, Administrative Data, and Population Data studies. Give each group one study and have them identify the quality features for the type of study. Groups fill in a chart with their replies.
<p>Suggested Readings</p>	<p>Almeida, C., & Báscolo, E. (2006). Use of research results in policy decision-making, formulation, and implementation: A review of the literature. <i>Cad. Saúde Pública</i>, 22. Retrieved from http://www.scielo.br/scielo.php?script=sci_arttext&pid=S0102-311X2006001300002</p> <p>Center on the Developing Child. (2007). <i>A science-based framework for early childhood policy: Using evidence to improve outcomes in learning, behavior, and health for vulnerable children</i>. Retrieved from http://developingchild.harvard.edu/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/Policy_Framework.pdf</p> <p>Shonkoff, J. P., & Phillips, D. A. (2000). <i>From neurons to neighborhoods: The science of early childhood development</i>. Washington, DC: National Academy Press. Retrieved from https://www.nap.edu/read/9824/chapter/1#ii</p> <p>Phillips, D. A., Lipsey, M. W., Dodge, K. A., Haskins, R., Bassok, D., Burchinal, M. R., ... Weiland, C. (2017). <i>Puzzling it out: The current state of scientific knowledge on pre-kindergarten effects (A consensus statement)</i>. Washington, DC: Brookings. Retrieved from https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/consensus-statement_final.pdf</p>