LEARNING ABOUT INFANT AND TODDLER EARLY EDUCATION SERVICES (LITES): IDENTIFYING WHAT WORKS AND ADVANCING MODEL DEVELOPMENT

2014 CALL FOR STUDIES

SUBMISSION DEADLINE: MARCH 11, 2014

Mathematica Policy Research® seeks studies for a review that will assess the evidence base of out-of-home early care and education (ECE) models for infants and toddlers (from birth to age 3). The review is being conducted by Mathematica for the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation (ASPE), in partnership with the Office of Planning, Research & Evaluation (OPRE) within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. It will be used to help inform policy, new initiatives, and program directions at the federal level. Submissions are due by March 11, 2014.

Background

A growing body of research indicates that high quality early learning experiences can promote young children’s development and help to reduce achievement gaps. However, little is known about what works for children from birth to age 3 in terms of early learning services designed to support children’s cognitive, language, and social-emotional/behavioral development. Increasingly, federal policymakers are using research evidence to inform decision making and funding evidence-based program models as part of efforts to make smarter investments in education, health care, and social services (Burwell et al., 2013; Haskins & Baron, 2011). To help identify effective and replicable program models of out-of-home ECE services for infants and toddlers, ASPE, in partnership with OPRE, is conducting a systematic review of the evidence base.

Purpose

The purpose of this review is to identify replicable program models that have demonstrated evidence of effectiveness for supporting infant and toddler early learning in the domains of cognition, language, and/or social-emotional/behavioral development in out-of-home ECE settings. These settings may include ECE centers and family child care homes. The review will include program models that provide (1) direct early learning services to infants and toddlers in out-of-home ECE settings and/or (2) indirect early learning services through professional development for adult out-of-home caregivers designed to support infant and toddler early learning.¹

¹Caregivers may include teachers/caregivers in infant and toddler ECE classrooms and

¹ Program models that provide infrequent or supplemental home visits may be considered for inclusion in the review, but the primary service setting must be out-of-home care. Program models that provide supplemental services in areas such as nutrition, health and developmental screening, supports for parents, and referrals to other community resources may be considered for inclusion in the review, but the primary focus of services must be supporting infant and toddler early learning delivered outside the child’s home. Indirect services—such as parenting,
family child care providers. To be considered replicable, program models must at a minimum
provide a defined set of infant and toddler early learning service components or professional
development services to help caregivers support infant and toddler early learning.

For the purpose of this review, infants and toddlers are children from birth to age 36
months.\(^2\) Services must be targeted broadly to infants and toddlers and/or their adult out-of-home
caregivers. Program models targeted narrowly to infants and toddlers with diagnosed disabilities
or specific medical conditions will not be included in the review.\(^3\) However, services targeted to
broad groups of at-risk infants and toddlers (for example, children from low-income families or
low-birth-weight children) will be eligible for inclusion.

**Eligibility**

This call for studies aims to identify unpublished manuscripts (past or recent), conference
papers, new publications (currently in press), or manuscripts with new analyses of already
published work that are not included in existing research databases. Apart from the call for
studies, the Mathematica team will conduct keyword searches of electronic databases and other
search activities. The review will include all relevant studies from these searches, supplemented
with additional studies identified through this call.

Studies submitted in response to this call should:

- Focus on program models that provide direct early learning services to infants and/or
toddlers in out-of-home care or indirect early learning services through professional
development for out-of-home caregivers. (Professional development services must
involve intervening directly with caregivers and take place in the caregiving setting or
a similar setting.)
- Include study samples in which at least half of the children were initially enrolled in
services at age 30 months or younger.
- Have been prepared or published in 1980 or later.
- Provide the name and a detailed description of the program or model being evaluated,
as well as the study design, analysis methods, and findings. Slide presentations and

\(\text{(continued)}\)

family self-sufficiency, or referral services—will not be included because they do not target children’s early learning
in out-of-home care settings.

\(^2\) Programs that enroll families before the child’s birth may be included in the review, as long as the primary
focus of services is supporting children’s early learning in out-of-home ECE settings.

\(^3\) The Administration currently has substantial investments in special education and supporting the
development of children with disabilities. The focus of this review is to identify effective program models for
supporting early learning for a broad range of infants and toddlers. However, if subgroup impacts are reported for
children with diagnosed disabilities or specific medical conditions in a study of an intervention that targets infants
and toddlers broadly, subgroup impacts will be reported in the review.
abstracts alone should not be submitted as they will not provide sufficient detail for the review.

- Target at least one child outcome in at least one of the following domains: cognitive development, social-emotional/behavioral development, and/or language development.

- Be accessible to the public through a website, as a published article or book chapter, or upon request from the study author. (Mathematica will not publically distribute studies; however, to ensure transparency of the review, the manuscript should be available upon request and should not be confidential.)

Submission Instructions

Submissions should include the following:

- An electronic version of the study in MS Word, PDF, or RTF format
- A cover email noting:
  - Contact information for the lead or corresponding author
  - The name of the out-of-home ECE program for infants and toddlers being evaluated
  - The study design—randomized controlled trial, matched comparison group design, regression discontinuity design, single case design, nonexperimental design (such as pre-post or correlational), or implementation study

Submissions should be emailed to LITES@mathematica-mpr.com

The deadline for submissions is March 11, 2014.

Submitters will receive acknowledgment of receipt of their submission but no indication of the possible inclusion of their study in the review.
References
