EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION INSTITUTE
The University of Oklahoma-Tulsa
ANNUAL REPORT

JULY 1, 2010 – JUNE 30, 2011
Our Director

The 2010-11 Year was an exciting one at OU-Tulsa’s Early Childhood Education Institute (ECEI).

We enjoyed numerous accomplishments in each of our three core activities of research, evaluation, and outreach. I highlight here key events and activities.

A primary function of the ECEI is to conduct applied program evaluation research with the goal of improving outcomes, programs, and policies for young children. During 2010-11, the ECEI conducted several evaluation research studies in collaboration with local, state, and national partners. These projects are described in this annual report. For each of these projects, the ECEI worked closely with program partners to shape meaningful research questions, strategies, and plans.

Additionally, ECEI staff regularly share detailed results with ample discussion of use of results to inform practice. Beyond sharing results with program partners, the ECEI disseminates results and lessons learned to the broader early childhood community. During the 2010-11 year, ECEI staff presented research findings from our evaluation projects at local, regional, and national-level professional meetings.

Regarding outreach, during 2010-11, the ECEI created and co-sponsored the Fourth Annual Early Childhood Leadership Institute (ECLI), held October 8-9, 2010, at the Tulsa Zoo. We collaborated with several co-sponsors, including the OU-Tulsa Professional Development and Leadership Academy, Child Care Resource Center, Tulsa Zoo, Tulsa Tech, Tulsa Community College, OU Jeannine Rainbolt College of Education, and OU Center for Early Childhood Professional Development to develop and offer this two-day conference. The yearly Early Childhood Leadership Institute is one example of the ECEI’s dedication to distilling and disseminating research-based practices to early childhood professionals, parents, program leaders, and the general public.

This annual report contains more information about these and other activities of the ECEI during 2010-11. It introduces you to the ECEI staff whose expertise and diligent work make it possible for the ECEI to fulfill our vision of “advancing quality in early childhood through research, evaluation, and outreach.”

Although the ECEI’s first five years (2006-2011) have been characterized by rapid growth and success, we are looking forward to the next five. On June 29, 2011 we were notified that the ECEI was named a University Strategic Organization (USO) at the University of Oklahoma for our proposal entitled IT³: Research on the Early Care and Education of Infants, Toddlers, Twos, and Threes. This designation indicates that OU sees our work as a future growth area for the university and provides financial support to further build and strengthen ECEI’s research capacity.

The expertise and diligent work of the ECEI staff make it possible for us to fulfill our vision.

We look forward to sharing ECEI’s continued development and growth in future Annual Reports. I invite you to read this report and view our website. Please feel free to contact me with questions, suggestions, or opportunities for collaboration.

Thanks for your interest in the work of the ECEI.

Diane Horm, Ph.D.
Director
George Kaiser Family Foundation Endowed Chair
Early Childhood Education

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Our Vision
Advancing Quality in Early Childhood through Research, Evaluation and Outreach

Our Mission
The two broad missions of the ECEI are:

**RESEARCH AND EVALUATION:** A primary function of the ECEI is to conduct applied research relevant to improving outcomes, programs, and policies for young children. The ECEI designs and conducts both process and implementation evaluations as well as outcome research on a broad range of topics related to young children. Research foci of the ECEI include assessing programs designed for young children and their families, exploring program impacts on young children, and examining systems and policy initiatives related to young children and the people who care for them. In addition, the ECEI investigates the characteristics of the early care and education workforce – an under-researched topic in the existing literature.

**OUTREACH:** For theory and research to impact the field, research findings and implications must be distilled and made accessible to parents, practitioners and policymakers. A major activity of the ECEI is the dissemination of research-based practices to programs, parents, professionals, and the general public. In collaboration with community partners, the ECEI provides research-based professional development opportunities. The ECEI is committed to preparing leaders who advance early childhood programming and policy initiatives at the classroom, program, state and national levels.
Four lines of research are emphasized at the ECEI:

**Policy-Oriented Early Childhood Research**

The ECEI works in collaboration with local, state, and national partners to assess community needs, inform policy makers, and develop systems to improve the lives of young children and their families.

**Evaluation of Early Childhood Models and Programs**

The ECEI utilizes multiple methods of data collection to provide formative information to programs that serve young children and their families. Data about program models are used to inform policy and practice at the local, state, and national levels.

**Evaluation of Programming for Children Under 4**

The ECEI conducts formative and summative evaluations of current and innovative practices involving the care and education of infants, toddlers, twos and threes.

**Early Childhood Workforce Development**

The ECEI conducts outcome and process evaluations of current practices and new initiatives that relate to the training and education of the early childhood workforce.
**Evaluation of Early Childhood Models and Programs**

**Educare Implementation Study**

Since 2007, researchers employed at the ECEI and other institutions across the nation have administered a common set of measures, using common training and protocols and a shared timeline, to collect data about the Educare early childhood program.

Educare is a research-based program that prepares young children for school. It is an enhanced Head Start program that focuses on children living in poverty who are at risk for school failure. Educare has a strong parent involvement component.

The ECEI is the local evaluation partner for Tulsa Educare, Incorporated, and their programs. The national evaluation study allows us to combine data across sites to evaluate Educare as a program model, and it permits us to use our site-specific data to monitor child progress and inform local program improvement efforts. This study employs a mixed-methods design to collect data regarding: classroom quality; child development and learning; family support services; teacher practices, attitudes and beliefs; and parent child rearing beliefs, practices, and needs.

**Principal Investigators**
Diane Horm, Ph.D.
Deborah Norris, Ph.D.

**Project Director**
Lisa Monroe, Ph.D.

**Site Coordinators**
Barbara White
Shannon Guss

**Funding**
George Kaiser Family Foundation

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**Educare Randomized Control Trial**

The ECEI is partnering with the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill and researchers from other sites across the country to conduct the Educare Randomized Control Trial.

This study seeks to evaluate the effectiveness of the Educare program using an experimental design. The experimental design is considered the best approach for drawing meaningful conclusions about a program’s effectiveness.

Participants include children less than 19 months of age, their families, and their early care and education providers. This study assesses these children from birth through age 3 and examines the cognitive, language, social-emotional, and executive functioning abilities of children attending Educare in comparison to their peers experiencing other early environments. We are also examining the parenting practices and well-being of parents, along with the quality of care that children experience.

The ECEI procured independent funding to recruit and follow a second cohort of children and their families in the fall of 2011.

**Principal Investigators**
Diane Horm, Ph.D.
Deborah Norris, Ph.D.

**Project Director**
Chana Goodno

**Funding**
1/15/2010 – 12/31/2010: $60,000
Ounce of Prevention
George Kaiser Family Foundation
**Educare Kindergarten Follow-Up**

The purpose of the Educare Kindergarten Follow-Up Study is to examine the differences at the end of the kindergarten year between English and Spanish speaking children who attended Educare Kendall-Whittier.

We are conducting child assessments on former Educare preschoolers who attend Kindergarten at a Tulsa Public School during the 2010-2011 and 2011-2012 school years. We are also collecting data from teachers to assess the social-emotional development of the children as well as from parents to describe parental involvement in school and parent/child activities in the home. The information will be analyzed and used to inform Educare program improvement, including the transition process between Educare and public schools.

**Principal Investigators**
Lisa Monroe, Ph.D.
Diane Horn, Ph.D.

**Study Coordinator**
Sarah Freed

**Funding**
4/1/2011 – 3/31/2013: $50,000
George Kaiser Family Foundation

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**Evaluation of Programming for Children Under 4**

**State of Oklahoma Early Childhood Pilot Program**

In 2006 the Oklahoma State Legislature directed the State Board of Education to establish a pilot infant and toddler program (State Pilot Program) funded through private contribution and state funds to serve at-risk children and their families in at least one rural and one urban area of the state.

The Early Childhood Education Institute designed and conducted a multi-phase evaluation of the State Pilot Program (SPP) that began in 2007.

In 2010-2011, the project entered into year five, where researchers conducted a synthesis of phases (years) 1 through 4, focusing on practice and policy implications.

An implementation evaluation was also conducted in year 5. The implementation study utilized on-line surveys from various stakeholders in an effort to get a clearer picture of how each site was implementing the program and their experiences with the State Pilot Program in their work with children and families.

**Principal Investigator**
Deborah Norris, Ph.D.

**Principal Investigator, Implementation Study**
Lisa Monroe, Ph.D.

**Funding**
10/10/2010 – 9/30/2011: $181,551
Community Action Project of Tulsa County
Statewide Early Childhood Data System Workgroup

The use of data has been identified as a key factor in improving the quality of early childhood education.

The Oklahoma Partnership for School Readiness is leading an initiative to develop a “unified data collection system for public early childhood education and development programs throughout the state.” The ECEI is part of this team and contributes its expertise in identifying key questions that will be most beneficial to improve the care and education of young children.

Early Childhood Workforce Development

Tulsa Community College and OU-Tulsa Student Research Project

The objective of this research is to gain a better understanding of early childhood students' knowledge, skills and attitudes at different levels of educational attainment.

The levels of educational attainment include the Child Development Associate Certificate (CDA), associate’s degree, bachelor’s degree, and teacher licensure. This research is longitudinal in nature and employs mixed-methods for gathering data. Measures are administered to each student upon entry into an identified plan of study at Tulsa Community College (TCC) or OU-Tulsa.

As students complete and/or transition to the next higher level of education, the study assessments are re-administered to gain a measure of knowledge, skill, and attitudes attained at each level of education.

Principal Investigators
Carla Goble, Ph.D., George Kaiser Family Foundation
Professor, Tulsa Community College
Diane Horm, Ph.D.

Graduate assistant provided by OU Jeannine Rainbolt College of Education

SECC Mentoring Project Random Assignment Study

The Scholars for Excellence in Child Care (SECC) program recruits employees of child care facilities to take courses in early childhood at local community colleges in order to improve the quality of child care in the state.

A mentoring pilot project was created to assist Scholars (child care teachers) with the application of course material in their classrooms at their child care facilities. In 2009 the ECEI began a comprehensive evaluation of the Mentoring in Motion intervention, assigning Scholars randomly to receive the enhanced mentoring services or typical SECC services. The study employs a mixed-methods design and collects data from all participants. An implementation study began in 2010 to provide data from various stakeholders to better understand the mentoring process. Insights gained from analysis will inform programmatic decisions regarding continuation and implementation of this project on a larger scale.

Principal Investigator: Deborah Norris, Ph.D.
Project Coordinator: Beth Sullins
Principal Investigator, Implementation Study: Lisa Monroe, Ph.D.

Funding
07/01/2010-06/30/2011: $199,999
Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education
Research Partnership Program

The ECEI launched a partnership program in 2011 with 12 local child care programs. In exchange for allowing ECEI staff to practice assessments in their child care setting, the ECEI delivers professional development and support. This initiative helps support the work of the ECEI and provides high quality professional development to centers.

Early Childhood Leadership Institute

The 2010 focus for the annual ECLI was on “outdoor classroom experiences.” The ECEI invited Rusty Keeler, renowned gardener and landscaper, to work with early childhood educators to create wonderful and creative outdoor environments for children to discover and play. In addition to creating outdoor spaces, those in attendance were able to view creative spaces from around the world and discuss how to creatively encourage children to explore their natural environment. Breakout sessions included other topics such as, “Five Senses” Video Journaling, “Taking the Children Outside for Science” and “Creating Natural Playscapes.” In addition to presenting to the participants attending the 2-day ECLI, Rusty also delivered a community presentation, a “Seed Sower Lecture,” during his visit to Tulsa on the topic of natural playscapes, and was Rich Fisher’s guest on a segment of KWGS’s Studio Tulsa.

Jeannine Rainbolt College of Education Research Day

The ECEI participated with the faculty of the Jeannine Rainbolt College of Education for “Research Matters,” a poster display of research and creative projects. It was an opportunity for the ECEI to share our current research projects with faculty of the college and with some invited guests, including the Vice President for Research, Kelvin Droegemeir and the Dean of the Graduate College, Lee Williams.

CAPTC Bracken Training

ECEI Research Associates presented an overview and presentation concerning the administration of the Bracken School Readiness Assessment at Community Action Project of Tulsa County.

Studio Tulsa Radio

Drs. Diane Horn and Deborah Norris were interviewed October 5, 2010 on Studio Tulsa, the KWGS public radio talk show, about the importance of outdoor play and learning for young children.

Contracted Data Collection

Learning Games

The ECEI partnered with Dr. Joseph Sparling of the University of North Carolina and Teaching Strategies, as well as the Community Action Project of Tulsa County to conduct a baseline measure of children enrolled in Head Start. It incorporated curriculum intervention strategies shown to be effective in the widely known Abecedarian study.

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<tr>
<th>Project Coordinator:</th>
<th>Chana Goodno</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Funding</td>
<td>1/1/2010-9/30/2010: $23,110</td>
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<td>The Spencer Foundation/UNC-CH</td>
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Publications


Presentations

Local


State


Regional


National


Horm, D., & Goble, C. (2011). Using standards to bring faculty together to shape common goals. [Invited panel]. Presented at the National Association for the Education of Young Children Institute for Early Childhood Professional Development. Providence, RI.


Norris, D., Sullivan, B., & Monroe, L. (2010). "Flying the plane while building it": The ins and outs of planning and implementing pilot projects in this age of evidence-based practice. [Poster]. Presented at the National Association for the Education of Young Children Institute for Early Childhood Professional Development. Providence, RI.

International


University Strategic Organizations (USO) are organized scholarship units involving multiple disciplines, as well as mature linkages with industry and government, that represent core strategic activities of the University.

USOs are expected to promote the incubation of creative ideas and innovative/disruptive technologies within a mature, structured framework and mission directly aligned with University and/or State strategic research directions.

Owing to their strategic importance, USOs receive a portion of their funding as ongoing base support from the Office of the Vice President for Research, though in all cases the majority of funding will come from external sources. Any non-academic unit or informally organized activity is eligible to apply for USO classification. However, those having the greater likelihood of selection are longstanding entities that reflect core strategic directions of the University.

In June 2011, it was announced that the Early Childhood Education Institute would be one of the 6 university organizations honored with the designation of USO status. With the addition of this support from the University of Oklahoma, the ECEI's research on the Early Care and Education of Infants, Toddlers, Twos, and Threes will expand throughout our existing 4 lines of research over the coming years. As a USO, the ECEI will be able to accomplish its goal of becoming the nation's foremost center for translational research on these understudied age groups of young children.

Diane Horm, Ph.D.
Endowed Professor and Founding Director

Dr. Horm is the George Kaiser Family Foundation Endowed Chair of Early Childhood Education and Founding Director of the Early Childhood Education Institute (ECEI) at the University of Oklahoma at Tulsa.

Through the ECEI, Horm is leading several applied research initiatives including program evaluation research in collaboration with Tulsa's Educare programs and other community partners.

Prior to her 2006 appointment at the University of Oklahoma she held faculty and administrative positions at the University of Rhode Island including Associate Dean of the College of Human Sciences, Professor of Human Development and Family Studies, and Director of the URI Child Development Centers.

Horm was a visiting scholar at the U.S. Department of Education's National Institute on Early Childhood Development and Education and is a graduate fellow of Zero to Three's Leaders for the 21st Century Fellowship Program.

Deborah Norris, Ph.D.
Associate Director of Research

Dr. Norris is currently leading the evaluation projects for the state's Scholars for Excellence in Child Care professional development initiative and the Oklahoma State Pilot Program, a public private partnership supporting quality early care and education for children under 4 years of age. Prior to joining the ECEI in the fall of 2007 she was an Associate Professor of Early Childhood at Oklahoma State University in Stillwater. In her 35 years in the field of early childhood Dr. Norris has been a classroom teacher, center director, teacher educator, and researcher.

Lisa Monroe, Ph.D.
Senior Research and Policy Associate

Dr. Monroe focuses her research on the implementation of early childhood programs and policies. This year she was the Project Director for the Educare Implementation Study and she also conducted process studies of the State Pilot Program and the
Scholars for Excellence in Child Care Mentoring Project. Dr. Monroe represents the ECEI at state policy meetings and participates in various workgroups charged with improving the care and education of Oklahoma's youngest children. Before joining the ECEI in 2009, Dr. Monroe served as the Director of the University of Oklahoma Laboratory Preschool in Norman and as an instructor in the Early Childhood Education undergraduate program.

Assistant Director of Administration

Beth Sullins was the Project Coordinator for the Scholars for Excellence in Child Care Mentoring in Motion Pilot Project evaluation and has been with the ECEI since 2008. As Project Coordinator she managed data collection, analysis and reporting. Along with Dr. Deborah Norris, she presented at NAEYC’s Professional Development Institute in 2011. Her other duties include community outreach and coordinating work on the annual “Early Childhood Leadership Institute” each fall. She was appointed Assistant Director of Administration in May 2011.

Staff Support Specialist

Sherry Phillips joined the institute in 2009. She provides administrative support by handling travel arrangements, coordinating office projects, and maintaining filing systems.

Technology and Database Specialist

Chana Goodno has been with the ECEI since 2009. She works with the study and site coordinators to design databases specific to project needs. She also provides technology support for the ECEI, maintains the website and participates in the design and production of Institute publications. Chana was also the Project Coordinator for the Educare Randomized Control Trial, recruiting and interviewing families in English and Spanish.

Training Coordinator

Stephanie Farris has been a Research Associate with the ECEI since 2008. She conducts child and classroom assessments and works across projects to support our various research initiatives. In March of 2011, Stephanie assumed the role of Training Coordinator, and is responsible for managing the professional development and training on assessment instruments for our staff, and also providing training for our community partners. She manages our Research Partnership Program and works on ECEI publications as part of our Dissemination Team.

Educare Site Coordinators

Shannon Guss is the Site Coordinator at the Tulsa Hawthorne Educare and the Data Analyst for the Educare Implementation Study. She has been with the ECEI since 2008. Her responsibilities include coordinating all assessment data at Hawthorne, disseminating data findings to teaching leadership, analyzing data, and creating power point presentations based on data analyses from both Educare sites. Shannon is also an active participant on the Infrastructure team, assisting in the creation of policies and procedures for the growing ECEI.

Barbara White is the Site Coordinator at the Tulsa Kendall-Whittier Educare. She has been with the ECEI since 2007. Her responsibilities include coordinating the collection of all the assessment data, conducting child assessments in English and Spanish and classroom assessments, and disseminating data findings to teaching leadership at the center.

Research Associates

Sarah Freed, a Research Associate II, has been with the ECEI since 2008. She works across several evaluation projects conducting child and classroom assessments. She is the Study Coordinator for the Educare Kindergarten Follow-Up Study and is a member of the ECEI Infrastructure team. Sarah presented at the Early Childhood Association of Oklahoma conference in 2010.

Imelda Galvez joined the ECEI in 2011. Her primary responsibility is conducting child assessments in English and Spanish at Educare Kendall-Whittier and scoring and entering data. She also assists with the Educare Randomized Control Trial and the State Pilot Program evaluation studies.

Malia Jackson has been with the ECEI since 2009. She works across several of our evaluation projects and her primary responsibilities include conducting child and classroom assessments, scoring and entering data, and designing publication materials for the ECEI. Malia has presented at state and regional conferences.

Jennifer Petty joined the ECEI in 2010. She has worked across several projects conducting child and classroom assessments, compiling data reports, and organizing literature reviews. She also coordinated a four-county needs assessment project. Jennifer has presented at state and regional conferences.

Lauren Worley is a Research Associate II who joined the ECEI in 2011. She is the new Study Coordinator for the Scholars in Excellence in Child Care evaluation project, and is the new study coordinator for the Educare Randomized Control Trial. In addition, she conducts child assessments in English and Spanish for the Educare Kindergarten Follow-Up Study.