



Studies in the News for



Children and Families Commission

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Introduction to Studies in the News

Studies in the News: Children and Family Supplement is a service provided to the First 5 California Children and Families Commission by the California State Library. The service features weekly lists of current articles focusing on Children and Family policy. Prior lists can be viewed from the California State Library's Web site at <http://www.library.ca.gov/sitn/ccfc/>.

How to Obtain Materials Listed in SITN:

- When available on the Internet, the URL for the full-text of each item is provided.
- California State Employees may contact Information Services at (916-654-0261; cslinfo@library.ca.gov).
- All other interested individuals should contact their local library - the items may be available there, or may be borrowed by your local library on your behalf.

The following studies are currently on hand:

IMPROVED CHILD DEVELOPMENT

Effective Evaluation of Quality Rating and Improvement Systems for Early Care and Education and School-Age Care. By Gail Zellman, RAND Corporation and others. Research-to-Policy, Research-to-Practice Brief OPRE 2011-11a. (Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation, Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Washington, DC) June 2011. 25 p.

Full text at:

http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/opre/cc/childcare_technical/reports/quality_rating.pdf

[“It is important to evaluate Quality Rating and Improvement Systems (QRISs) so that policy makers and stakeholders can learn how well they are working and how they might be improved. Well-designed QRIS evaluations go beyond a ‘pass/fail’ judgment to identify implementation successes and problems and assess what needs to be done to improve the system. A recent evaluation of a small QRIS field test in two communities in Washington State exemplifies what good evaluations can do. The evaluation provided

useful findings for both policy makers and program developers by examining both ‘how’ the QRIS was working (an implementation study), and whether the improvement approach was affecting child care quality. The findings informed a larger field test in five locations around the state. The purpose of this document is to encourage high-quality QRIS evaluations by providing timely information on evaluation options to those who may be in positions to authorize, finance, design, and refine QRISs and other quality improvement efforts, including state child care administrators, legislators, and other potential funders such as foundation personnel, as well as child care and early education provider organizations. This Brief presents basic evaluation concepts, useful tools for determining the appropriate design and timing of an evaluation, and evaluation references and resources for those who wish to learn more. Readers should come away with enough background to understand the basic issues in designing evaluations of quality improvement efforts and a stronger sense of their importance.”]

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Best Practices for Conducting Program Observations as Part of Quality Rating and Improvement Systems. By Bridget Hamre, University of Virginia and Kelly Maxwell, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill. Research-to-Policy, Research-to-Practice Brief OPRE 2011-11b. (Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation, Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Washington, DC) June 2011. 18 p.

Full text at:

http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/opre/cc/childcare_technical/reports/program_observations.pdf

[“Program observation offers an important window into program quality and an opportunity to identify strengths and weaknesses of programs. Observations assess the degree to which programs are providing children with safe and stimulating environments and warm, sensitive, and stimulating interactions - the aspects of early childhood environments most closely aligned with positive developmental outcomes. Although implementing observations can be complex as well as time and resource intensive, data from observations are an important component of quality rating and improvement systems (QRIS) and are used to inform both the ratings for the public and the improvement plans for programs. In a 2010 Compendium of QRIS, 22 of 26 QRIS included program observations as part of the rating system. Recognizing the widespread use of program observations in QRIS, the purpose of this Brief is to highlight issues and recommendations for conducting program observations as part of a QRIS. Some of the issues in this Brief apply to all early care and education settings, including family child care homes; others apply only to center-based programs with multiple classrooms. The first section of the Brief includes considerations when selecting a quality measurement tool. The second section describes issues related to hiring and training individuals to conduct observations. The third section describes issues about planning, scheduling, and conducting observations; the fourth section covers scoring and reporting.”]

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Evaluation of Quality Rating and Improvement Systems for Early Childhood Programs and School-Age Care: Measuring Children’s Development. By James Elicker, Purdue University Kathy R. Thornburg, University of Missouri. **Research-to-Policy, Research-to-Practice Brief OPRE 2011-11c.** (Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation, Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Washington, DC) June 2011. 12 p.

Full text at:

http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/opre/cc/childcare_technical/reports/improv_systems.pdf

[“Quality Rating and Improvement Systems (QRIS) for early childhood programs and school-age care are being implemented in more than half of the states as a strategy to improve program quality for young children. QRIS provide parents with information to help them select high quality education and care for their children. QRIS give early childhood programs and school-age care providers incentives and resources to improve quality, working through several manageable steps or levels, plus public recognition for their achieved quality levels. An important long-term goal of QRIS is to improve child development and school readiness outcomes for children. This Brief examines key issues in measuring children’s development when evaluating QRIS.”]

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A Strong Start: Positioning Young Black Boys for Educational Success: A Statistical Profile. By Richard J. Coley, ETS Policy Information Center with the help of Children’s Defense Fund staff. **ETS Addressing Achievement Gaps Symposium, June 14, 2011, Washington, DC.** (Educational Testing Service, Princeton, New Jersey) 2011. 5 p.

Full text at:

http://www.ets.org/s/sponsored_events/pdf/16818_BlackMale_trifold3_WEB.pdf

[“Marian Wright Edelman, President of the Children’s Defense Fund (CDF), refers to the ‘toxic cocktail of poverty, illiteracy, racial disparities, violence, massive incarceration and family breakdown that is sentencing millions of children to dead end and hopeless lives and threatens to undermine the past half century of racial and social progress.’ These ingredients ultimately combine to produce striking gaps in educational success, life expectancy and other important outcomes. This brief statistical profile provides a snapshot of the rugged terrain many Black boys traverse during the course of their lives. Beginning at birth, the data describe the individual, family, school and community factors that impact a child’s development, and suggest important transition points where opportunities to develop human capital are gained or lost.”]

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“Experts Call for Early Focus on Black Boys' Nonacademic Skills.” By Mary Ann Zehr. IN: Education Week, vol. 30, no. 36 (published online June 15, 2011) 3 p.

Full text at:

<http://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2011/06/15/36ets.h30.html?tkn=YMYFrCihSxO863tHPO104CTjP3hKWxMdMzUN&cmp=clp-edweek>

[“Schools should increase their attention to social and emotional development in the early grades as one way to prevent black boys from falling behind their peers, researchers said... at a symposium on closing the achievement gap between African-American males and other student groups. Panelists at the meeting hosted... by the Princeton, N.J.-based Educational Testing Service and the Washington-based Children’s Defense Fund also said that a significant portion of the dollars spent on incarcerating black males in this country would be better spent on high-quality early-childhood education.”]

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Improving Public Financing for Early Learning Programs. By W. Steven Barnett and Jason T. Hustedt. **Preschool Policy Brief. No. 23.** (National Institute for Early Education Research, New Brunswick, New Jersey) April 2011. 28 p.

Full text at: <http://nieer.org/resources/policybriefs/24.pdf>



[“How we fund early care and education varies greatly from program to program, across states, and across levels of government. Most funding sources exist independent of one another, in different departmental jurisdictions and local, state, and federal governments each have their own funding approaches. This brief reviews sources and models of public financing of early care and education and makes recommendations for improving upon what currently exists so as to remove barriers to increasing program access and quality.” NIEER.]

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Summary of Preschool California Research: Programs Serving Young Five Year Olds in California. By Preschool California. (Preschool California, Oakland, California) 2011. 32 p.

[This is a “new resource for school districts and others looking toward the implementation of transitional kindergarten statewide. Preschool California has conducted a preliminary statewide scan of the programs across the state currently serving young 5 year olds as part of a two-year kindergarten program similar to transitional

kindergarten. The scan presents an overview of ten programs throughout California and includes details about curriculum and instruction, staffing and family engagement practices. The information was gathered through phone interviews and site visits with teachers, school and district administrators and has been compiled into a grid format. While these program snapshots are not necessarily a complete picture, we hope they will help inform the successful implementation of transitional kindergarten as districts across the state begin the process of designing their new programs.” Ernesto Saldaña, Preschool California.]

Full text at: <http://www.tkcalifornia.org/dev/wp-content/uploads/2011/06/Survey-of-Programs-Serving-Young-5-Year-Olds-Spring-2011-FINAL.pdf>

Transitional Kindergarten Library (website): <http://www.tkcalifornia.org/>

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IMPROVED FAMILY FUNCTIONING

Poverty Fact Sheet: Implications for Infants and Toddlers. By Allison Krutsinger and Nora Tarr, Zero to Three. (Zero to Three, Washington, DC) May 2011. 4 p.

Full text at: <http://www.zerotothree.org/public-policy/pdf/poverty-fact-sheet-5-10-11-final.pdf>

[“One of the most consistent associations in the science of early childhood development is between economic hardship and compromised child development. We know that poverty can compromise every aspect of a child's development, leading to short- and long-term effects on health, achievement in school, and success in life. But what do we actually mean when we talk about poverty? And what exactly are the effects of poverty on infants and toddlers? ‘Poverty Fact Sheet: Implications for Infants and Toddlers’... provides an overview of poverty as it pertains to the healthy development of infants and toddlers.” The Baby Monitor (June 20, 2011.)]

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National Survey of Programs and Services for Homeless Families: California. By the Institute for Children, Poverty, and Homelessness. (The Institute, New York, New York) Summer 2011. 2 p.

[“California had an estimated 8,810 homeless families on a single night in 2010, with providers serving nearly three times their bed capacity over the course of the year. This brief summarizes the Housing Program for homeless families in Los Angeles County, San Francisco's innovative Project Homeless Connect, efforts by the Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority, and the identification of hidden homeless persons in Alameda and Los Angeles counties.” ICPH.]

Full text at: http://www.icphusa.org/PDF/reports/ICPH_California_Brief.pdf

Other state briefs: <http://www.icphusa.org/index.asp?CID=4&PID=137>

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Protecting Children in Tough Economic Times: What Can the United States Learn from Britain? By Jane Waldfogel, Columbia University and London School of Economics. (First Focus, Washington, DC and Foundation for Child Development, New York, New York) June 2011. 11 p.

Full text at:

http://www.firstfocus.net/sites/default/files/ProtectingChildrenEconomicTimes_0.pdf



[“Following a successful, decade-long campaign to reduce child poverty by half, author Jane Waldfogel, Ph.D. of Columbia University and London School of Economics, documents the concrete steps taken by the United Kingdom to maintain its commitment to reduce child poverty in the midst of deficit reduction, even following a change in government. The U.K. preserved its commitment to fighting child poverty right up through the recession - through a set of income support policies that preserved and increased supports for low-income children, as well as critical investments in children in the areas of education, early learning, and development. The paper also outlines the parallels the United States can consider as it faces similar challenges with budget negotiations and deficit reduction.” First Focus (June 16, 2011.)]

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Catalog of Research: Programs for Low-Income Fathers. By Sarah Avellar and others, Mathematica Policy Research. OPRE Report 2011-20. (Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluation, Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Washington, DC) June 2011. 501 p.

Full text at:

http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/opre/strengthen/proven_promising/reports/catalog.pdf

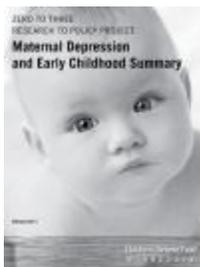
[“Research consistently shows a link between supportive fathering and positive child outcomes... but some fathers encounter barriers to positive involvement with their children. Research indicates that low-income fathers in particular are less likely to live with and have contact with their children (Nelson 2004) and may have greater difficulty providing for their children financially. In recognition of fathers’ interest and the importance of fathers in their children’s lives, efforts to support and promote positive

father involvement have increased in recent decades. Such programs often focus on helping fathers increase involvement with and provide emotional and material support for their children, teaching parenting and co-parenting skills, and helping fathers attain economic self-sufficiency. Many programs also work with and through other systems that may involve fathers, including child support enforcement, education or training, and criminal justice. The Healthy Marriage and Responsible Fatherhood (HMRF) grant program authorized by the Claims Resolution Act of 2010, authorizes the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) to provide \$75 million in grant funds for demonstrations that promote responsible fatherhood through three types of activities: healthy marriage, responsible parenting, and economic stability. A similar amount is designated for grants for healthy marriage and relationship skills education. To provide information for practitioners and program providers who may apply for funding - such as the HMRF grant program or demonstration funding from the ACF Office of Child Support Enforcement - or those who are otherwise developing programs, the Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation (OPRE) within ACF contracted with Mathematica Policy Research to conduct a systematic review of impact, implementation and descriptive studies that have examined responsible fatherhood and related family strengthening programs.... This document provides summaries of studies that describe and analyze programs that target and serve low-income fathers. Studies of additional family-strengthening programs are expected to be identified and documented in future catalog releases.”]

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IMPROVED HEALTH

Maternal Depression and Early Childhood: Full Report. Zero to Three Research to Policy Project. (Children’s Defense Fund Minnesota, Saint Paul, Minnesota) April 2011. 57 p.



[“Neuroscience tells us that the brain development of babies and toddlers is greatly affected by their environments. Even in the first few hours after birth, babies are processing their experiences, reaching out to their caregivers and building the foundation on which all of their development will occur. If the adults in their lives respond in a nurturing way, take care of their daily needs and ensure they are safe, they are on the path to productive and fulfilling adulthoods. Not all babies experience a positive response from the world into which they are born, however. Many infants and toddlers experience toxic levels of stress in their brains and bodies - sometimes beginning before they are born - making it difficult or even impossible for them to grow to their full potential. Research is documenting that there are many adverse experiences in early childhood that can have lifelong negative consequences. This paper focuses on one of the most harmful - maternal depression.... If addressed early and holistically, maternal depression and its negative effects can be mitigated and even prevented.”]

Summary: 8 p. http://www.cdf-mn.org/sites/default/files/CDF_Maternal_Depression_Summary_Revised.pdf

Full text at: http://www.cdf-mn.org/sites/default/files/CDF_Maternal_Depression_Full_Revised.pdf

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Social-Emotional Effects of Early Childhood Education Programs in Tulsa. By William T. Gormley, Jr., Georgetown University and others. CROCUS Working Paper No. 15 (Center for Research on Children in the United States, Georgetown University, Washington, DC) [2011.] 45 p.

Full text at: <http://www.crocus.georgetown.edu/reports/CROCUSworkingpaper15.pdf>

[“This paper assesses the effects of Tulsa, Oklahoma’s early childhood education programs on social-emotional outcomes, using teacher ratings of children’s disobedience, aggression, attention-seeking, apathy, and timidity from the Adjustment Scales for Preschool Intervention (ASPI) and a separate measure of attentiveness as the dependent variables and fixed effects regression modeling with propensity score matching as the estimating technique. The sample consists of 2,832 kindergarten students in October 2006, 1,318 of whom had participated in the Tulsa Public Schools (TPS) pre-K program and 363 of whom had participated in the CAP of Tulsa County Head Start program the previous year. Participation in the TPS pre-K program was associated with lower ratings on timidity and higher ratings on attentiveness. Participation in the Head Start program was associated with a marginally significant reduction in timidity. We found similar, but not identical results, when we restricted the sample to free-lunch-eligible children. We conclude that high-quality, school-based preschool programs can enhance social-emotional development, perhaps especially in domains of behavior that affect the child’s attentiveness and engagement in learning.”]

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Federal Programs that Protect Young Children’s Health. By Elizabeth L. March, Children’s HealthWatch and others. Children’s HealthWatch Policy Action Brief. (Children’s HealthWatch, Boston Medical Center, Boston, Massachusetts) June 2011. 2 p.

Full text at: http://www.childrenshealthwatch.org/upload/resource/fedprogs_brief_jun11.pdf

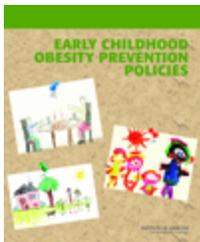
[“Infants and toddlers, whose bodies and brains are in their most rapid period of growth, are uniquely vulnerable to even short-term deprivation.... Research has shown that children who suffer from poor nutrition, unstable housing and inadequate home heating

have a greater likelihood of poor health, a higher risk of developmental delays and, in some cases, an increased risk of hospitalization. These are costly problems in human and economic terms - problems our nation can ill afford as we seek to address the growing deficit and to position ourselves to compete in an increasingly global economy. Fortunately, our country has a number of highly effective programs that help protect brain and body growth in very young children. These programs, including the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP – formerly food stamps), WIC, the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP), and subsidized housing, have all been shown to be effective in reducing the risks of poor child health and development. Reductions to these programs or structural modifications, such as block granting, which could ultimately reduce the number of families able to access them in times of need, will undermine the health of our nation’s youngest children.”]

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Early Childhood Obesity Prevention Policies. Committee on Obesity Prevention Policies for Young Children, Institute of Medicine of the National Academies. Edited by Leann L. Birch and others. Prepublication copy: uncorrected proofs. (National Academies Press, Washington, DC) 2011. 132 p.

Full text at: <http://www.iom.edu/Reports/2011/Early-Childhood-Obesity-Prevention-Policies.aspx> (NOTE: Read online or download with free registration.)



[“Limiting television and other media use, encouraging infants and young children in preschool and child care to spend more time in physically active play, and requiring child care providers to promote healthy sleeping practices are some of the actions needed to curb high rates of obesity among America’s youngest children, says a... report from the Institute of Medicine. The report recommends steps that should be taken by child care centers, preschools, pediatricians’ offices, federal nutrition programs, and other facilities and programs that shape children’s activities and behaviors. Although the recommendations are directed to policymakers and health care and child care providers, these professionals can counsel and support parents in promoting healthy habits in the home as well, said the committee that wrote the report.” National Academies, News Release (June 23, 2011.)]

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IMPROVED SYSTEMS OF CARE

Learning As We Go: A First Snapshot of Early Head Start Programs, Staff, Families, and Children. By Cheri A. Vogel and others, Mathematica Policy Research. OPRE Report No. 2011-7. (Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluation, Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health

and Human Services, Washington, DC) February 2011. Volume I: First Report: 254 p. Volume II: First Report: Technical Appendices: 110 p.

Full text at: http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/opre/ehs/descriptive_study/index.html

[“The Early Head Start Family and Child Experiences Survey, or Baby FACES, is the latest contribution to an ongoing research effort that began with the inception of the Early Head Start program.... Baby FACES is a longitudinal descriptive study of Early Head Start that captures family- and child-level information in addition to program-level characteristics. From a nationally representative sample of 89 programs, we enrolled 976 parents of children who were in two age cohorts in spring 2009: 194 newborns, which includes pregnant women and children up to 8 weeks old, and 782 1-year-olds, which includes children aged 10 to 15 months. We gathered detailed information from program directors on program operations, services, management, and characteristics of staff and enrolled families. In addition, we gathered targeted information on participant families from parent interviews; Staff-Child Reports (SCRs) prepared by study children’s teachers or home visitors; individual interviews with those staff members; and observations of study children’s classrooms and home visits.... Research questions for Baby FACES address four aims: (1) describing Early Head Start and program services and staff, (2) describing the population served by the program, (3) relating program services to child and family outcomes, and (4) assessing the properties of measures used in the study. Because this is the first year of a multiyear effort, some questions will only be answered in later years when additional data have been obtained.”]

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“The Impact of Child Care Subsidy Use on Child Care Quality.” By Rebecca M. Ryan, Georgetown University and others. IN: Early Childhood Research Quarterly, vol. 26, no. 3 (September 2011) pp. 320-331.

[“Over the past two decades, the federal government has substantially expanded funding for subsidized child care. Much of this funding flows through the Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF), which supports state-administered subsidy programs for low-income families.... The program, whose explicit goal is to facilitate employment among current and former welfare recipients as well as low-income parents more broadly, is now the federal government’s largest child care program, serving nearly 2 million children per month.... Of particular interest is whether parents use subsidies to purchase higher-quality care than they would otherwise, for quality of child care is positively associated with children’s cognitive and socioemotional development... particularly among low-income children.... If subsidies do elevate recipients’ quality of care, then CCDF funding could be considered not just an effective work support but also a support for children’s early development. The present study addresses this issue, asking whether families who receive a federal subsidy choose higher-quality care than comparable families who do not.” NOTE: The Impact of Child Care Subsidy... is available for loan.]

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STUDIES TO COME

[The following studies, reports, and documents have not yet arrived. California State Employees may place requests, and copies will be provided when the material arrives. All other interested individuals should contact their local library - the items may be available there, or may be borrowed by your local library on your behalf.]

IMPROVED CHILD DEVELOPMENT

“Pre-School Quality and Educational Outcomes at Age 11: Low Quality Has Little Benefit.” By Kathy Sylva, University of Oxford, UK and others. IN: *Journal of Early Childhood Research*, vol. 9, no. 2 (June 2011) pp. 109-124.

[“This article reports the effects of pre-school quality on children’s cognitive and behavioural outcomes at age 11 using a large-scale longitudinal study of 3000+ children in England (EPPE/EPPSE). The ECERS-R and a curricular extension to it (ECERS-E) were used to assess the quality of provision in 141 pre-school settings attended by the children. The quality measures were derived from observations throughout the day of interactions and resources related to Literacy, Numeracy and Science learning, as well as observational/ interview data related to how each centre catered to diverse needs of children. Multi-level modelling was used to investigate the effects of pre-school quality on children’s academic and social-behavioural outcomes at age 11. Pre-school quality significantly predicted most outcomes, after taking account of key child and family factors. More importantly, children who attended low quality pre-schools had cognitive and behavioural scores that were not significantly different from those of children with no pre-school experience.” NOTE: Pre-school Quality and Educational Outcomes... will be available for loan.]

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IMPROVED HEALTH

“Determinants of Children's Use of and Time Spent in Fast-food and Full-service Restaurants.” By Alex McIntosh, Texas A&M University and others. IN: *Journal of Nutrition Education and Behavior*, vol. 43, no. 3 (May 2011) pp. 142-149.

[“New USDA-funded research indicates that fathers are more likely than mothers to have an impact on childhood obesity. Sociologists found, almost accidentally, that a father's use of restaurants and his perceptions of family meals strongly impacts kids’ eating habits. Lenient fathers allow their children more trips to fast-food restaurants (linked to obesity in children) while dads who value dinner time as a special family time are less likely to spend that time in a fast-food restaurant.” California WIC Association Flash (June 21, 2011.) NOTE: Determinants of Children’s Use of and Time Spent in Fast-food... will be available for loan.]

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CONFERENCES AND OPPORTUNITIES

3rd Annual RTI Early Childhood Summit. By the Center on RTI in Early Childhood. September 26-27, 2011. The Hyatt Regency Tamaya Resort, Santa Ana Pueblo, New Mexico.



[“Join your colleagues from around the country for a fascinating, intense, two-day exploration of response to intervention. Find out what research is being done, learn more about models that work, and participate in lively discussions about implementing tiered interventions for young children. The 3rd Annual RTI Early Childhood Summit is designed for practitioners, program administrators, policymakers, parents, researchers - and you, of course!”]

For more information: <http://www.cvent.com/events/rti-early-childhood-summit/event-summary-7d8bc1d9a5e948c8a0808705a879a3e8.aspx>

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Webinar: Connecting the Research Community and State Early Childhood Advisory Councils. July 14, 2011. 10:00 a.m. - 11:15 a.m. PDT. Sponsored by Child Care and Early Education Research Connections and the National Governor’s Association Center for Best Practices.

For more information:

https://www2.gotomeeting.com/register/679896202?utm_source=News-%26-Resources+ListServ&utm_campaign=ea87e75ccb-STATE_ECAC_Webinar_Invite6_20_2011&utm_medium=email

[“Research Connections in conjunction with the National Governor's Association Center for Best Practices is organizing a webinar... on the topic of State Early Childhood Advisory Councils and the Research Community. The purpose of this webinar is to provide examples of state early childhood advisory councils that have established connections with their state research communities and are applying research in their decision making.”]

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If you have a report, conference or funding opportunity that you would like us to consider for this publication, please send it to our attention.

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