

Research Questions and Variables*

The overarching research question for this study is as follows:

- To what extent are the child welfare, IDEA early intervention and ECE systems collaborating with each other to promote the school readiness needs of very young children (ages 0 to 5) in the child welfare system?

Conceptual Framework	Research Questions	Methods		
		Legal/Policy Analysis	Interviews	Surveys
Overarching Policies/Systems Management	ECE, IDEA and Child Welfare			
	What are the laws, regulations, policies and protocols relevant to collaboration between IDEA, ECE and child welfare systems?	X	X	
	What are the issues facing states in implementing the new requirement under CAPTA that states refer all children under three who are the subject of substantiated reports of child abuse and neglect to the early intervention system under Part C of IDEA?	X	X	
	How does the state agency view the ASFA requirement to address the educational well being indicator in child welfare as it applies to young children age 0 to 5?	X	X	
	What array of services do they consider relevant to the educational needs of very young children? Does that service array include ECE settings?	X	X	
	Does policy dictate that all children entering the child welfare system be provided with a developmental assessment or is this only done if a judgment is made that the child is showing signs of a developmental delay?	X	X	
	Does public policy and funding support providing access to these IDEA and ECE programs for young children in the child welfare system?	X	X	
	To what degree do public policies and agency missions support effective collaboration between the ECE, IDEA and child welfare systems?	X	X	
	Data Questions			
	What data is typically kept in the case file of child welfare caseworkers concerning the educational needs of very young children?		X	X
	Does state administrative data enable states to keep track of the degree to which attention is being paid to the educational needs of very young children in the child welfare system? What data are lacking?		X	
	Training of Child Welfare Key Players			
	What training is provided, if any, to child welfare key players about the brain research and the links between early learning environments and school readiness?		X	X
	What training is provided, if any, regarding the interpretation of the educational well being indicator under ASFA as it applies to children age 0 to 5?		X	X
	What training is provided, if any, about the early signs of developmental delay? About the importance of early intervention for children at risk?		X	X
	To what degree does the training provided to these groups promote effective collaboration with players in the ECE and Early Intervention/Preschool Special Education systems?		X	X
	What training is given to these groups to allow them to be effective advocates for very young children in the early intervention/preschool special education system?		X	X

* From our 2004 proposal to the Administration for Children and Families, Child Care Bureau, titled *Children At Risk in the Child Welfare System: Collaborations to Promote School Readiness*.

Conceptual Framework	Research Questions	Methods		
		Legal/Policy Analysis	Interviews	Surveys
Systems Entry/Assessment/ Planning	Level of Awareness			
	To what degree do the key players in the child welfare system view the requirement under ASFA for addressing the educational needs of children as applying to children ages 0 to 5?		X	X
	What is the level of awareness among these key players about the role of quality ECE programs/IDEA in the school readiness of children in the child welfare system?		X	X
	What is the level of awareness of these key players about the early signs of developmental delay? About the importance of early intervention for children at risk?		X	X
	Screening and Initial Assessment			
	What is the process followed when families of children age 0 to 5 enter the child welfare system?	X	X	
	To what extent, if any, are the education needs of children 0 to 5 considered in the initial assessment of the family and child(ren)?		X	X
	What is the screening process used to assess the developmental/educational needs of children? What questions are asked to assess educational needs?	X	X	X
	Service Plan Development and Implementation			
	Is IDEA and/or ECE considered as a part of the service plan for that child?		X	X
	To what extent are children in the child welfare system being referred to/enrolled in IDEA and/or ECE programs and for ECE, what types of settings are they enrolled in?		X	X
	What triggers consideration of an ECE setting? The needs of the child or the needs of the foster parent/biological parent to work?		X	X
	Is there clarity about who handles enrolling children in these programs: the foster parent or the case worker?	X	X	X
Reassessment & Evaluation	Monitoring and Reassessment			
	To what degree are the educational needs of children 0 to 5 revisited throughout the monitoring and reassessment process and how is this done?		X	X
	Once the service plan is implemented who makes the judgment about whether educational needs are being addressed adequately? Who are the key informants the case worker relies on to monitor the progress of the child?		X	X
	For children eligible for and receiving services under IDEA, is there clarity among the key players in the child welfare system about who plays what role in developing and monitoring an Individual Family Service Plan (IFSP)/Individual Education Plan (IEP) for a child found eligible under Part C or Part B of IDEA?	X	X	X
Care Management or Care Coordination	Collaboration Among the Key Players			
	To what degree do the players in the ECE, IDEA and child welfare systems collaborate at the state level? At the local level?		X	X
	What are the barriers to effective collaboration?	X	X	X
	To what extent is information shared between the players involved in addressing the educational needs of very young children regarding the family background/needs and progress of the child? What confidentiality constraints affect the sharing of this information?	X	X	X