Measuring Up to Our Ideals
A New Vision for Equitable Quality Measurement

Lydia Carlis, Acelero and Shine Early Learning
Stephanie Curenton, BU Wheelock College
Bridget Hamre, Teachstone
Jennifer Brooks, Consultant (moderator)
Chrisanne Gayl, Trust for Learning
Debi Mathias, BUILD Initiative (host)

March 31, 2022
Welcome!

Debi Mathias
Director
ECE Quality Improvement National Learning Network
BUILD Initiative

Chrisanne Gayl
Chief Strategy & Policy Officer
Trust for Learning
As we go:

Please share your **questions** in the Q&A feature.

Please share your **comments** in the chat.
What are ideal learning environments for young children?
Evidence Brief – Ideal Learning Environments for Young Children

Children are born learning, exploring and growing. How they will develop depends on us. We know that during the first few years of life, more than 1 million neural connections are formed every second. Young children develop through rich, daily interactions with nurturing caregivers and educators, building brains and shaping physical, socioemotional and cognitive development for life. These early years represent a unique, flexible period of human development and a finite window for high-impact investment.

Because children are born learning, any environment can become an ideal learning environment.
Moderator and Panel

Jennifer Brooks
Senior Impact Advisor
Consultant to Trust for Learning

Lydia Carlis
Chief Program and People Officer
Acelero and Shine Early Learning

Stephanie Curenton
Professor
BU Wheelock College of Education & Human Development /
Director
Center for the Ecology of Early Childhood Development

Bridget Hamre
Co-Founder
and Chief Executive Officer
Teachstone
Measurement Guide

- Easy-to-understand publication that represents the consensus thinking from a workgroup of experts regarding quality measurement for programs serving young children.

- Provides expert insights to support holistic, equity-driven approaches to measuring program quality.

Quality Measures Expert Workgroup

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Jessica Barnes Major</th>
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<tr>
<td>Director for Community Partnerships &amp; Co-Investigator for the Tribal Early Childhood Research Center Michigan State University</td>
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<th>Stephanie M. Curenton</th>
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<td>Associate Professor at the School of Education &amp; Human Development Boston University / Wheelock College</td>
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<th>Brian Boyd</th>
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<td>Director of the Juniper Gardens Children's Project &amp; Associate Professor of Applied Behavioral Science University of Kansas</td>
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<th>Ellen Frede</th>
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<td>Senior Co-Director and Research Professor National Institute for Early Education Research Rutgers University</td>
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<th>Dina Castro</th>
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<td>Director, BU Institute for Early Childhood Well-Being Boston University / Wheelock College</td>
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<td>Research Professor of Public Policy &amp; Founding Director of the Equity Research Action Coalition UNC Chapel Hill, Frank Porter Graham Child Development Institute</td>
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<th>Marty Zaslow</th>
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<td>Independent Consultant and Visiting Distinguished Fellow Child Trends</td>
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Trust for Learning Staff & Consultants

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<th>Jennifer L. Brooks</th>
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<td>Senior Impact Advisor Consultant to Trust for Learning</td>
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<th>Claire Wernstedt-Lynch</th>
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<td>Consultant to Trust for Learning</td>
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<th>Ellen Roche</th>
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<tr>
<td>Executive Director Trust for Learning</td>
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Two Components

First section, *Fundamentals of Quality Measurement*, articulates a vision about the purposes and use of quality measures that is rooted in equity.

Second part identifies specific measurement instruments that align with elements of each of the principles of ideal learning.
A New Vision for Quality Measurement

What constitutes quality in ECE and how are we holistically measuring it?

Examples:
- Educator-child and peer relationships
- Learning practices and content
- Equity in opportunities and experiences
- Use of dual language approaches

Measures might be used to:
- Assess quality of children’s learning environment
- Inform educator professional development
- Study disparities in children’s experiences

Examples:
- Professional development systems supporting effective teacher practices
- Distribution of funding/resources across communities
- Quality of technical assistance
- Program requirements

Measures might be used to:
- Report to public agencies/legislatures
- Identify areas for system improvements
- Analyze systems-level program data

Examples:
- Characteristics of early childhood workforce
- Availability of quality training for educators
- Transportation opportunities
- Levels of trauma among families

Measures might be used to:
- Study program quality at a local level
- Identify specific needs and assets of population
- Analyze equity of access, opportunities, and supports

Children’s Learning Experiences

Policy and Systems

Organizational Characteristics

Community Context
A New Vision for Quality Measurement: Leading with Equity

• Central to the report is the belief that an early childhood program cannot be considered high-quality without equity of access, experience, and opportunity, resulting in equitable outcomes for all children and families.

• Equity must be incorporated into what is measured, how it is measured, and how the data are used.
Fundamentals

- Measures should be used in the context of an overall measurement strategy.
- Should reflect what children need to thrive emotionally, socially, physically, and academically.
- Measurement tools are designed for different purposes, and it is important to use the right tool for the right purpose.
- If intended to inform program improvement, measurement tools need to produce information that is usable.

- Quality measurement should fully incorporate equity considerations.
- To fully capture quality, measurement must include factors from all levels of the early childhood system.
What Does this Mean for Policymakers and Educators?

- What is our vision for quality and how does quality measurement help us to achieve this vision?
- Have we proactively centered equity in or approach?
- How does quality measurement address the diversity of children and families in our state, community, or program?
- Is the training and data collection process adequately funded?
- Do providers understand how the measures relate to other quality elements of the system?
- Are systems adequately resourced to enable program improvement?
What Does this Mean for Policymakers and Educators?

- What is our vision for quality?
- How does quality measurement help us to achieve this vision?
- Have we proactively centered equity in our approach?
- Do staff understand exactly how measurement data will be used?
- What resources need to be put in place to ensure the data collected is actionable?
- Are these measures burdensome to administer and/or take away from staff’s work with children?
Measurement of each of the principles of ideal learning, addressing the questions:

• What indicators would show the principle being implemented in practice?

• What is the current state of the measurement field in capturing these indicators?

• What are some examples of how existing measures address elements of this principle?
Principle 3: Play is an Essential Element of Young Children’s Learning

What would indicate that this principle is being used in practice?

Play is essential to children's physical, intellectual, and social development. Overly didactic instruction is both developmentally inappropriate and ineffective for young children. Instead, play is a primary mode of learning — about themselves, the world, and relationships — for young children.

Ideal learning environments recognize, support, and encourage children’s playful learning by providing resources and opportunities for children to engage in deep, interactive, and creative play. Teachers facilitate the use of different forms of play, encouraging children to cooperate and communicate as they engage in shared tasks and providing scaffolding as children learn how to resolve conflict. Teachers allow children the time and space to engage in play, capitalizing on opportunities to support concept development, language development, and social skills without interrupting children's activities.

Indicators of this principle in practice might include:

- Learning experiences incorporate play.
- Evidence that children are encouraged to develop and articulate their plans for activities before beginning to play in support of executive function skills.
- Access to outdoor spaces where children have room to incorporate large motor activities, like running and jumping, into their play.
- The availability of diverse toys and resources that children can engage with during and incorporate into their play.
- Educators engage in play with children and facilitate and support play among groups of children.
- Lack of adult interruption of children's play time.
- Promotion of peer communication during play and support for conflict resolution when needed.
- Educators who understand different types of children's play that support growth and learning.
- Playful learning activities and materials are culturally inclusive and support children's play equitably.

Current State of Measurement

Some early childhood measures include items related to play as a part of a more general set of questions about the organization's schedule and routines. For instance, some measures assess whether there are time and resources for outdoor play. There is at least one measure of the degree of maturity in children's play, but this is a measure of children's development aimed at identifying children that may need extra support to develop their play styles more fully (particularly in terms of cooperating with other children).

Some measures include a more detailed analysis of how teachers engage with children and scaffold their learning through play, but these items are less common than measures that simply look at how play factors into routines. Moreover, few measures exist that assess how teachers encourage and promote learning through play in environments other than classrooms, or in mixed-age or infant and toddler programs. Finally, existing measures do not adequately reflect how children's culture, language, or learning differences are addressed in how organizations support or scaffold play.

Illustrative Examples of Existing Measures That Reflect This Principle

The *Classroom Coach*™ has items that examine the availability of resources to facilitate play both indoors and outdoors, including appropriate outdoor play equipment. It also measures the degree to which those resources are organized and made accessible to children to ensure exploration and to build seamless connections between areas of the classroom. Other items related to play include ways to address conflicts that encourage children to solve relationship problems during their play. Finally, the measure has items that capture the availability of time allowed for children to make their own choices and follow their own intentions with minimal adult interference.

The *Sustained Shared Thinking and Emotional Well-Being*™ (SSTEW) Scale assesses the teacher's role both in supporting independent play and also engaging in play with children when asked. This tool also considers how educators monitor children's play activities and notice whether concepts presented throughout the day or week are appearing in children's play activities. Items related to social development also consider whether children are encouraged to reach out to adults if peer-to-peer play or sharing begins to break down. Items related to communication assess how well teachers scaffold children to help them extend cooperative play and learning and enhance peer communication.
Measuring Quality Using the Ideal Learning Framework

29 measurement instruments that align with one or more element/s of principles.

- Tools presented are illustrative, not exhaustive, and are not an endorsement by Trust for Learning.
- Includes more commonly used classroom assessments (e.g., CLASS, ECERS) and tools that may be less familiar (e.g., ELLCO-DLL, Assessing Classroom Sociocultural Equity Scale (ACSES)).
- Despite importance of measuring all levels of the system, most tools emphasize classroom or immediate learning environments.
- Far fewer tools look at the organization as a whole, and even fewer look at broader systems.
# Appendix

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measure</th>
<th>Creator/Publisher</th>
<th>Primary use</th>
<th>For which ages/grades of children</th>
<th>For which learning environments</th>
<th>Which levels of quality?</th>
<th>Collection Method</th>
<th>What it measures</th>
<th>More info/ Ideal Learning Principles</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ACES: Assessing Classroom Sociocultural Equity Scale</td>
<td>Dr. Stephanie Correnty</td>
<td>Research</td>
<td>Preschool to 3rd grade</td>
<td>Classroom/Center-based care</td>
<td>Children's Learning Experiences</td>
<td>Observation</td>
<td>Equitable sociocultural interactions with racially minoritized learners (RMLs). 2 subcales: 1) Challenging inequity, which focuses on equitable learning opportunities, challenging status quo knowledge, and equitable discipline; and 2) Bridging Sociocultural Connections, which focuses on peer collaboration across RMLs and connections to home life</td>
<td>Validity for the Assessing Classroom Sociocultural Equity Scale (ACES) in Early Childhood Classrooms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arnett CIS: Arnett Caregiver Interaction Scale</td>
<td>Dr. Jeffrey Arnett.</td>
<td>Research</td>
<td>0 to 5 years</td>
<td>Any out-of-home settings</td>
<td>Children's Learning Experiences</td>
<td>Observation</td>
<td>Caregiver's emotional tone, discipline style, and responsiveness of teachers and caregivers. 4 subscales: 1) Sensitivity; 2) Warmth; 3) Detachment, and 4) Permissiveness.</td>
<td>Caregiver Interaction Scale Tool</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BEQ: Brief Early Childhood Quality Inventory</td>
<td>ECD Measure</td>
<td>Monitoring, formative assessment, and research</td>
<td>0 to 5 years</td>
<td>Any out-of-home settings</td>
<td>Children's Learning Experiences and Organizational Characteristics</td>
<td>Observation Self-assessment</td>
<td>Play-based learning and interactions between teachers and children. 4 subscales: 1) Play-based learning; 2) Learning through conversations; 3) Promoting strong relationships; and 4) Safe and stimulating environments.</td>
<td><a href="https://www.ecdmeasure.org/best/">https://www.ecdmeasure.org/best/</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>C-COS: The Child-Caregiver Observation System</td>
<td>Bollard, K., &amp; Sprachman, S.</td>
<td>Research</td>
<td>1 to 5 years</td>
<td>Any out-of-home settings</td>
<td>Children's Learning Experiences</td>
<td>Observation Captured Address engaged</td>
<td>Quality of On-Demand Greeting, content, emotion</td>
<td>Principle 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CASIBA: Classroom Assessment of Supports for Emergent Bilingual Acquisition</td>
<td>Friedson, M., Figuera-Sanz, E., Fendt, E., Bollard, K.</td>
<td>Research</td>
<td>Preschool</td>
<td>Classroom/Center-based care</td>
<td>Children's Learning Experiences</td>
<td>Observation Satisfaction</td>
<td>Quality of Dual Language content, emotion</td>
<td>Principle 2</td>
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<tr>
<td>CHILD: Climate for Healthy Interactions for Learning and Development</td>
<td>Dr. Chris R. Reyes</td>
<td>Research and evaluation, professional development</td>
<td>3 to 5 years</td>
<td>Developer notes it was created for use in center-based care but has been used in home-based settings</td>
<td>Children's Learning Experiences</td>
<td>Observation Competence and empathy</td>
<td>Principle 1</td>
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### Information included in the Appendix

- Creator/publisher
- The primary use (e.g., research, coaching)
- Which ages/grades it is relevant for
- Which learning environments it can be used in
- What level of the system it addresses
- What it measures
- Which ideal learning principles it touches on
- Where to find more information about the tool
Highlighted Resources

Evidence Brief – Ideal Learning Environments for Young Children
https://trustforlearning.org/evidence-brief/

Measurement Guide: Evaluating Quality in ECE

Building Equitable Early Childhood Systems
https://buildinitiative.org/approach/equitable-early-childhood-systems/

www.buildinitiative.org
Welcome to the NCIT XChange Community!

The NCIT XChange was created to provide a dedicated Online Community for prenatal-to-three leaders, advocates, coalitions, consultants, partners, practitioners, providers, and parents...anyone who is a champion for infants and toddlers. Our mission is to build a stronger and more effective prenatal-to-three network through the sharing of knowledge and insights to improve the lives of infants and toddlers and their families.

The XChange community not only provides access to timely and targeted resources, members of the XChange can ask questions of experts and peers, engage in discussions, share insights, and post materials they have found most helpful in their work. Additionally, there are regular announcements of events of interest to the community, job announcements and alerts about new research, legislation, and publications.
Join the NCIT XChange

On the NCIT XChange, you can:

- Join discussions with peers
- Learn from the experience and expertise of others
- Find timely resources and events
- Share info with the network
- Use the NCIT Hub Help Desk to get expert help
- And more!

Thank you!

Debi Mathias
Director
ECE Quality Improvement National Learning Network
BUILD Initiative
dmathias@buildinitiative.org
www.buildinitiative.org
Resources Shared in Chat during Webinar

• IMPACT Measures Tool
  https://ecmeasures.instituteforchildsuccess.org

• “Measuring the Quality of Early Learning Environments: Appendix”
  https://drive.google.com/file/d/1qC-3Ca_V1z0sjmrQMopmiTeL6_09f4hT/view

• “The Assessing Classroom Sociocultural Equity Scale (ACSES)”

• HOPE (Healthy Outcomes from Positive Experiences)
  https://positiveexperience.org/
Resources Shared in Chat during Webinar

- “Beyond Quality in Early Childhood Education and Care”

- RECE (Reconceptualizing Early Childhood Education)
  https://receinternational.org

- “QRIS Knock It Down Video Series”
  https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aB3LjSeVpSw

- “Measuring the Quality of Teacher–Child Interactions at Scale: Comparing Research-Based and State Observation Approaches”