

Understanding Advice Seeking and Knowledge Dissemination Among Early Childhood Professionals

Research Aims

1. Describe how early childhood education (ECE) professionals *seek advice* and *are sought for advice* based on professional role (e.g., lead teacher, assistant teacher, administrator) and advice content area (e.g., behavior management, instruction, family engagement)
 2. Explore potential drivers of why ECE professionals seek advice from certain colleague but not others (e.g., familiarity, perceived expertise)
 3. Investigate associations between advice seeking and teachers' professional experiences, collegial perceptions, and burnout over one school year
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Research Methods and Sample

- **Quantitative data:** Surveys completed in fall 2016 and the spring 2017 by 374 ECE professionals, including lead teachers, assistant teachers, administrators, social/family workers, office workers, and other support staff (e.g., security, kitchen). Sample drawn from 43 ECE programs that are generally representative of NYC preschool programs.
 - **Qualitative data:** Semi-structured interviews completed in the 2017-2018 school year with 46 ECE professionals, including lead teachers, assistant teachers, administrators, an instructional coach, a parent coordinator, and a secretary.
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Main Findings

- Most ECE staff have internal advice resources that can offer ongoing, daily support to implement best practices.
- Sources of advice are aligned with professional role; administrators are the primary source of advice for ECE professionals, and lead teachers are sought for advice more than twice as much as assistant teachers.
- Sources of advice are somewhat related to advice content; family/social workers are sought extensively for family engagement advice but less so in other content areas.
- ECE staff report seeking advice for professional reasons (e.g., perceived expertise and job title of colleague) and interpersonal reasons (e.g., familiarity with colleague).
- ECE teachers' advice seeking predicts aspects of their professional experiences, collegial perceptions, and burnout, suggesting that advice networks play a meaningful role in teacher turnover, professional development, and efforts to promote child outcomes.
- As a whole, these results have implications for working to maximize the effective exchange of information between staff working in ECE programs.

Measures Used in Quantitative Analyses

Teaching Efficacy (Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk, 2001) - 12 items, 7-point scale, $\alpha = 0.94$

- How much can you do to get children to follow classroom rules?
- How much can you do to help your students value learning?
- How much can you use a variety of assessment strategies?

Job Satisfaction (Wells, 2015) - 16 items, 7-point scale, $\alpha = 0.91$

- My workload is manageable
- I receive administrative support
- I am happy at work

Collective Efficacy (Tschannen-Moran & Barr, 2004) - 12 items, 9-point scale, $\alpha = .96$

- How much can teachers in your school do to produce meaningful student learning?
- To what extent can teachers in your school help control disruptive behavior?

Commitment (Bryk & Schneider, 2004) - 4 items, 4-point scale, $\alpha = 0.83$

- I wouldn't want to work in any other school
- I feel loyal to this school

Personal Accomplishment (Maslach et al., 1997) - 8 items, 7-point scale, $\alpha = 0.88$

- I feel I am positively influencing other people's lives through being an early childhood professional

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