

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



JULY 1, 2011 – JUNE 30, 2012

# From our Director

The 2011-12 academic year continued to be busy and productive at the OU-Tulsa Early Childhood Education Institute (ECEI).



The ECEI implemented several program evaluation projects and research studies, delivered numerous professional presentations, disseminated information through refereed and invited publications, and co-hosted several early childhood professional

development sessions. We enjoyed accomplishments in each of our three core activities of research, evaluation, and community collaboration. Highlighted below are key events and activities:

## Research

In 2011, the ECEI was designated as an OU University Strategic Organization (USO) through a highly selective, peer-reviewed competition. This was a major step in positioning the ECEI and its Infants, Toddlers, Twos, and Threes (IT<sup>3</sup>) initiative to be at the forefront of research and academic programs in the U.S. with an applied interdisciplinary focus on infants, toddlers, twos and threes. In early May, the ECEI hosted the inaugural meeting of the IT<sup>3</sup> USO Advisory Board—composed of local, state, and national leaders interested in applied research to support optimal development and care of our youngest citizens and their families. During the two day meeting, the ECEI staff shared our history and future research plans. The Advisory Board complimented our work to date and, more importantly, endorsed our future research ideas. They believe we have fundable ideas and encouraged us to continue to build the ECEI and develop research proposals devoted to the understudied age groups of infants, toddlers, twos and threes. The Advisory Board affirmed that the ECEI is well-positioned to grow into a leading national center focused on the care and education of infants, toddlers, twos, and threes.

Attainment of this goal will be a long-term effort. During 2011-12, the staff of the ECEI has strengthened our foundation by pursuing numerous publication and presentation opportunities, disseminating findings from our research and evaluation projects, and continuing data collection on various short-term and extended evaluation contracts in collaboration with our community partners.

## Evaluation

The ECEI conducted multiple evaluation projects during 2011-12. The ECEI's projects are listed below with more details given in this report:

- ❑ Educare Implementation Study at Tulsa Educare I and II
- ❑ Educare Randomized Control Trial at Tulsa Educare I
- ❑ Educare I Kindergarten Follow-up Study
- ❑ Educare Home-Based Evaluation Study
- ❑ Self-Assessment of NAEYC Professional Development Standards for Early Childhood Educators
- ❑ Evaluation of the State of Oklahoma Infant/Toddler Pilot Program
- ❑ Assessing the School Readiness of CAPTC's Head Start Children
- ❑ Scholars for Excellence in Child Care Mentoring Pilot Project for Oklahoma Department of Human Services
- ❑ Early Childhood Education Statewide Needs Assessment and Technical Assistance Project
- ❑ Assessment of Supply/Demand and IHE's Capacity to Produce Early Childhood Educators in Oklahoma





For each of our evaluation research projects, the ECEI works closely with program partners to shape meaningful research questions, strategies, and plans. Additionally, ECEI regularly shares 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.

### Community Collaboration

The ECEI hosted the Fifth Annual Early Childhood Leadership Institute (ECLI) on September 16-17 at the OU-Tulsa Schusterman Learning Center. The conference focused on Active Teaching and Learning for Children from Birth to Grade 3. Co-sponsors included the OU-Tulsa Professional Development and Leadership Academy, Child Care Resource Center, Tulsa Tech, Tulsa Community College, OU Jeannine Rainbolt College of Education, OSU Department of Human Development and Family Science, and the OU Center for Early Childhood Professional Development. The conference was also offered to our research partnership sites, community-based child care programs that partner with us to serve as ECEI training sites, at a discount for their staff. Multiple guest lectures, conference presentations, and papers served as mechanisms to share research-based knowledge with the broader community, including parents and practitioners.

This annual report contains more information about these and other activities of the ECEI during 2011-12.

It also 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 community collaboration.”

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

Thanks for your interest in the work of the ECEI.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Diane M. Horm".

**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 Community Collaboration

# Our Mission

The Early Childhood Education Institute (ECEI) at OU-Tulsa strives to advance and support early childhood programming and policies by generating, disseminating, and applying meaningful research.

# Core Values

The Early Childhood Education Institute has identified the following core values as the foundation for our work:

## **Integrity**

We are committed to doing what is right. We are honest and sincere in our relationships in order to build trust and foster collaboration. We practice discipline, consistency, and persistence in our work to ensure the quality of our research.

## **Responsibility**

We are independent professionals who hold ourselves and each other accountable.

## **Excellence**

We go beyond what is expected, as individuals and as an organization.

## **Respect**

We treat others with fairness, dignity, and compassion. We value the diversity of our team and the strengths of each member. We center our research in respect for children, their families, and the early childhood profession. We approach each person with positive intent.

## **Learning**

We are advocates for the continuous pursuit of knowledge both as contributors to the scientific field and as lifelong learners.

## **Flexibility**

We adapt to the needs of our growing organization, its partners, and our employees.

# Growth and University Support

Over the ECEI's six-year history, our projects have expanded from being solely Tulsa-based to now serving a statewide audience.

In addition to securing three Smart Start Oklahoma (SSO) projects in the last two years via competitive proposal processes, the ECEI leadership staff are also active on statewide committees and task forces such as Oklahoma Partnership for School Readiness workgroups that address state early childhood policy initiatives.

The ECEI received various forms of support through OU during 2011-12. For example, Dr. Horm received funding to attend a national-level conference in the spring of 2011. With the addition of 18 new staff members, the university matched this growth with structural support and provisioned the ECEI with 10 new offices, two new meetings spaces, and two storage areas. These new offices and renovation costs were covered by the OU JR College of Education, OU-Tulsa central administration, and OU's Vice President for Research.

The most significant OU support came in June 2011 when the ECEI's Infant, Toddlers, Twos, and Threes (IT<sup>3</sup>) proposal was one of six selected as a University Strategic Organization (USO) with \$150,000 base

support per year expected over the next five years to build the research infrastructure of the ECEI.

In the summer of 2011, the Oklahoma Regents for Higher Education approved a Ph.D. program specializing in Early Childhood Education (ECE) to be offered at the OU-Tulsa Campus. The Ph.D. program and the ECEI are becoming mutually supportive. The ECEI serves as an applied laboratory for teaching the next generation of ECE researchers, scholars, and college faculty. The presence of doctoral students increases the ECEI's capacity to contribute significant work with local, state, and national implications.



## Research and Evaluation

Three lines of research are emphasized at the ECEI:

### **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.

### **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.

### **Early Childhood Workforce Development**

The ECEI conducts outcome and process evaluations of current practices as well as new initiatives that relate to the training and education of the early childhood workforce.

# Evaluation of Early Childhood Models and Programs

## Educare Implementation Study

Educare, a research-based program that prepares young children for school, is an enhanced Head Start program serving children living in poverty and at risk for school failure.

Educare has a strong parent involvement component, highly-qualified staff, and full-day, year-round services for children birth through five years of age.

The ECEI is the local evaluation partner for Tulsa Educare, Inc. and its programs. 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.

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 parenting beliefs, practices, and needs.

### Highlights for 2011-12:

- Increased use of data to drive program improvements and submitted publications outlining these processes.
- Provided additional training and consultation to assist with implementation of high quality, developmentally appropriate practices at the local level.
- Focused on relationship-building to strengthen the stakeholder role in understanding and using data for continuous program improvement.

### Principal Investigators: Project Director:

Diane Horm, Ph.D.  
Deborah Norris, Ph.D.

Shannon Guss

### Site Coordinator:

Jennifer Petty

### Funding:

9/1/2011 – 8/31/2012: \$413,000  
George Kaiser Family Foundation

## 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 “gold standard” or best approach for drawing meaningful conclusions about a program's effectiveness.

### Highlights for 2011-12:

- Participants included children less than 19 months of age, their families, and their early care and education providers in both Educare and other early care environments.
- Children's language, social-emotional, and executive functioning abilities were assessed and comparisons will be made between children enrolled in Educare and their peers enrolled in other early care environments. Other variables examined include parenting practices, social support, and child health, 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.
- The ECEI collaborated with FPG Child Development Institute at UNC-CH and four other Educare sites in competing for a federal grant from the Institute of Education Sciences to examine the progress of these children through age five.



### Principal Investigators:

Diane Horm, Ph.D.  
Deborah Norris, Ph.D.

### Study Coordinator:

Lauren Worley

### Funding:

3/1/2011 – 2/28/2013:	\$163,875
University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill	
4/1/2011 – 12/31/2013 (cohort 2):	\$50,000
George Kaiser Family Foundation	



## Educare Kindergarten Follow-Up Study

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.

### Highlights for 2011-12:

- ❑ Child assessments were completed with former Educare preschoolers who attended kindergarten at a Tulsa Public School during the 2010-11 and 2011-12 school years. Data were also collected from teachers to assess the social-emotional development of the children. Parents described their involvement in school and the types of parent/child activities provided in the home. The ECEI staff assessed each child using school readiness and vocabulary assessments.
- ❑ The participation rate of teachers, families and children enrolled in 11 elementary schools was nearly 100 percent.
- ❑ Dr. Lisa Monroe and Dr. Diane Horm reported results from this study in a presentation at the National Head Start Research Conference in Washington, D.C.

### Principal Investigators:

Lisa Monroe, Ph.D.  
Diane Horm, Ph.D.

### Study Coordinator:

Sarah Freed

### Funding:

4/1/2011 – 12/31/2013: \$50,000  
George Kaiser Family Foundation

## Educare Home-Based Evaluation Study

The Educare Home-Based Evaluation Study documented the implementation of an Early Head Start home visiting parent education program funded through Educare. As funding for the youngest children is sparse across the nation, studies of the implementation and effectiveness of home-based services provide an important perspective on early care and education.

### Highlights for 2011-12:

- ❑ This was the first implementation of a home-based program by Tulsa Educare and the intent of the study was to provide formative data for program improvement.
- ❑ Data were collected about frequency of visits, topics discussed, resources and support provided to parents, activities and attendance at social gatherings planned for the children and their families, as well as language and social emotional development in the fall and spring to assess growth of children enrolled.
- ❑ Parents reported high levels of satisfaction with the home visits and socialization activities. Several were able to articulate specific, positive behavior changes they made when interacting with their children due to the parent education provided.

### Principal Investigator:

Lisa Monroe, Ph.D.

### Funding:

8/1/11-6/30/12: \$4,000  
ECEI



# Policy-Oriented Early Childhood Research

## Early Childhood Education Statewide Needs Assessment

Smart Start is Oklahoma's statewide early childhood initiative whose mission is to lead Oklahoma in coordinating an early childhood system focused on strengthening families and school readiness.

Smart Start Oklahoma contracted with the ECEI in August 2011 to conduct an early childhood education statewide needs assessment. Data were collected from more than 500 participants, including parents of young children (118), child care center directors (239), family child care providers (61), county health department staff (14), Oklahoma Community Action Agency administrative staff (126), and Oklahoma Parents as Teachers staff (21). Participants were from counties with no local Smart Start representation or those identified as having high or very high scores on the Oklahoma Department of Human Services School Readiness Risk Index report.

### Highlights for 2011-12:

- The study focused on hard-to-reach, high-risk families. An intentional focus and strategic sampling led to the successful engagement of hard-to-reach populations across the state.
- Recommendations at the state level primarily addressed barriers families faced in accessing quality child care, including affordability, lack of care during non-traditional or part-time hours, and access to child care subsidies.
- Recommendations at the local level were to increase access to transportation to and from child care facilities, provide small business start-up support for child care centers in high need areas, facilitate recruitment of Spanish-speaking professionals into child care, and engage the business community in partnerships with child care centers to sustain the stability and development of the workforce.

### Principal Investigator:

Lisa Monroe, Ph.D.

### Funding:

8/16/11-12/31/11: \$40,000  
Oklahoma Partnership for School Readiness

## Early Childhood Workforce Development

### Assessment of Supply/Demand and IHE's Capacity to Produce Early Childhood Educators in Oklahoma

The Smart Start Capacity Assessment is focused on the extent to which the institutions of higher education (IHE) in the state of Oklahoma are able to meet the current and future demand for degreed early childhood educators.

In close collaboration with various state and federal agencies, the ECEI uses multiple sources of data to address these issues. Because of changes to Head Start regulations and continued expansion of universal pre-kindergarten in the state, rapid growth in the numbers of degreed early childhood educators is expected.

Using enrollment data from public school early childhood programs and Head Start programs, the ECEI projected the numbers of teachers needed to meet the rising demand. These projections are being compared to anticipated numbers of early childhood education graduates in the coming years to assess whether adequate numbers of degreed early education professionals will be available to meet this demand.

### Highlights for 2011-12:

- Collaborated with multiple agencies (e.g., State Regents, State Department of Education, Head Start) to access and utilize existing data.
- Because of these collaborative efforts, a more complete story emerged than was previously seen by investigating only data within a single agency.
- Plans are in place to present relevant findings to multiple audiences to inform policy issues within both the early education and higher education settings.

### Principal Investigators:

Diane Horm, Ph.D.

Sherri Castle, M.S.

### Funding:

4/11/12-8/31/12: \$50,000  
Oklahoma Partnership for School Readiness





## SECC Mentoring Pilot Project for Oklahoma Department of Human Services

The Scholars for Excellence in Child Care (SECC) program provides scholarships for early child care teachers and professionals in Oklahoma to take community college courses in child development. The goal is to improve the quality of child care in the state while continuing to provide access to quality child care in local communities.

The ECEI participated in the evaluation of a mentoring component of this project called the Scholars Mentoring in Motion project.

### Highlights for 2011-12:



□ This pilot project provided mentoring services for 100 teachers and early childhood professionals in 16 cities across the state who received scholarships to enroll in early childhood courses at three participating community colleges: Connors State College, Murray State College, and Northern Oklahoma College. The

project was created to assist these scholarship recipients with the application of course material in classrooms at their child care facilities.

- During this final year of the project, results were shared with community colleges, the Department of Human Services, and Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education partners.
- Insights gained from analysis will inform programmatic decisions regarding continuation and implementation of the project in the future.

### Principal Investigator:

Deborah J. Norris, Ph.D.

### Study Coordinator:

Lauren Worley

### Funding:

7/1/11 – 6/30/12: \$80,589  
Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education

## Self-Assessment of NAEYC Professional Development Standards for Early Childhood Educators

The National Association of the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) has articulated six standards for early childhood professionals across the career ladder. The ECEI developed a measure of early childhood educators' understanding of best practices to align with NAEYC Professional Development.

### Highlights for 2011-12:

- ECEI researchers collaborated with 227 early childhood teachers employed in 21 different early care and education centers in the Tulsa area to test the Early Childhood Educator Standards-Based Self-Assessment (ECESBSA).
- The instrument is designed as a self-assessment of key practices related to effective early childhood teaching that can be used to inform the professional development and preparation of both pre- and in-service early childhood educators.
- Preliminary analyses suggest the ECESBSA is a reliable assessment tool. Plans are in place to collaborate with additional early care and education providers to establish the validity of the ECESBSA. With established reliability and validity, the ECESBSA will be available to all teachers in the field of early childhood education to self-assess and guide their continuing professional development.

### Principle Investigators:

Diane Horm, Ph.D.

Carla Goble, Ph.D.

Funded by ECEI and OU (graduate assistants' time)

Date: On-going

# Community Collaboration

## Early Childhood Leadership Institute

The two-day Early Childhood Leadership Institute (ECLI) conference, entitled “Active Teaching and Learning for Children from Birth to Grade 3,” was held September 15-16. Keynote speaker was Doug Clements, Ph.D., renowned expert on mathematics and young children. Breakout sessions covered topics such as math, intentional teaching, brain research, and science activities for young children.

More than 100 participants – including leaders from state government, public schools, private early childhood programs, and university scholars – convened to focus on the topics of early math and active teaching and learning for young children. Several of the ECEI staff and OU-Tulsa ECE faculty delivered presentations. Special discounts were given to many of the ECEI’s research partnership sites.

The ECLI was preceded by the Seed Sower free public lecture at OU-Tulsa on September 14th on the topics of early math and active teaching and learning for young children. It was the best attended OU-Tulsa Seed Sower in the series’ history. This opportunity was available to early childhood professionals, parents, program leaders, and the general public.



## Research Partnership Program

Child care centers that have agreed to be community partner sites provide essential opportunities for the ECEI staff to practice child assessments and classroom quality observations. These training and reliability sessions ensure that the ECEI can maintain high standards of protocols when administering child assessments and classroom quality measures.

In turn, the community partners receive professional development opportunities such as workshops and discounts to the ECLI, as well as materials specific to using research tools to improve services to young children.

During the past year, the ECEI continued our partnership program with local child care centers. In 2011-12, 12 local providers signed partnership agreements with the ECEI and participated as training sites. This initiative not only helps support the ECEI’s work, but also provides high quality professional development that might otherwise be a financial burden to centers. Workshops offered during 2011-12 included Fostering Language Development and Encouraging Creative Thinking, Working with Families, Block Play in ECE Classrooms, and ECE Child Assessments.

### Our current partners include:

- ❑ Angel Academy Early Learning Center I
- ❑ Angel Academy II
- ❑ Country Club Gardens Head Start/Early Head Start
- ❑ Crosstown Early Learning Center
- ❑ Holland Hall Preschool Program
- ❑ The Preschool at Jenks Church
- ❑ NACT Head Start
- ❑ Play & Learn Preschool Inc.
- ❑ Sapulpa Early Head Start/Head Start
- ❑ Sapulpa Stegall Head Start
- ❑ Small World Learning Center
- ❑ Taylor’s Tool Box, LLC
- ❑ Tulsa Community College Child Development Center

# Contracted Data Collection



## Assessing the School Readiness of CAPTC's Head Start Children

The school readiness of Head Start children enrolled in CAPTC's early childhood centers was assessed through the use of a standardized, norm-referenced assessment designed for use with this age group.

By understanding the developmental level of children, programs tailor interactions and learning opportunities to individual children's needs.

- Approximately 1,600 preschool children, enrolled at one of the 12 Head Start funded programs throughout Tulsa, were assessed in both fall and spring with a commonly used school readiness tool.
- During the seven week data collection timeline, 3- and 4-year-old children were assessed on five basic skills: colors, letters, numbers and counting, size and comparisons, and shapes.
- Results were shared with teachers and parents to show child progress on those five skills considered important for school readiness.

### Project Coordinator:

Stephanie Farris

### Funding:

8/15/11 to 6/30/12: \$58,788  
Community Action Project of Tulsa County (CAPTC)

## Oklahoma Early Childhood Technical Assistance Project

Smart Start Oklahoma contracted with the ECEI to assist its community partners in conducting an assessment of local early care and access needs. Dr. Monroe created survey templates for parents, child care providers, center directors, family child care providers and community agency staff that will be used across the state.

Survey templates and training materials provided will enable communities to assess local needs. The standardized use of these templates will allow leaders to make regional comparisons.

Dr. Monroe provided training to local Smart Start community staff in sampling, recruitment, survey distribution and data collection.

More than 2,000 surveys were completed by parents to inform early childhood policymakers at the local level.

### Principal Investigator:

Lisa Monroe, Ph.D.

### Funding:

1/15/12 – 6/30/12: \$24,900  
Oklahoma Partnership for School Readiness Foundation



# Publications

The ECEI staff were active in disseminating research-based information through publications in peer-reviewed journal articles and book chapters.

## Peer-reviewed journal articles:

- McBride, B., Groves, M., Barbour, N., Horm, D., Stremmel, A., Lash, M., Bersani, C., Ratekin, C., Moran, J., Elicker, J., & Toussaint, S. (2012). Child development laboratory schools as generators of knowledge in early childhood education: New models and approaches. *Early Education & Development, 23*(2), 153-164. doi: 10.1080/10409289.2012.651068
- Monroe, L., & Horm, D. M. (2012). Using a logic model to evaluate undergraduate instruction in a laboratory preschool. *Early Education & Development, 23*(2), 227-241. doi: 10.1080/10409289.2012.619135
- Sisson, S. B., Campbell, J. E., May, K. B., Brittain, D. R., Monroe, L. A., Guss, S. H., & Ladner, J. L. (2012). Assessment of food, nutrition, and physical activity practices in Oklahoma child-care centers. *Journal of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics, 112*(8), 1230-1240. doi: 10.1016/j.jand.2012.05.009

## Book chapters:

- Horm, D. M., Goble, C. B., & Branscomb, K. R. (2011). Infant toddler curriculum: Review, reflection, and revolution. In N. File, J. J. Mueller, & D. B. Wisneski (Eds.), *Curriculum in Early Childhood Education: Re-examined, Rediscovered, Renewed* (pp. 105-110). New York, NY: Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group.

- Hyson, M., Horm, D., & Winton, P. (2012). Higher education for early childhood educators and outcomes for young children: Pathways toward greater effectiveness. In R. C. Pianta (Ed.), *Handbook of Early Childhood Education* (pp. 553-583). New York, NY: Guilford Press.

## In press:

- Guss, S. S., Norris, D. J., Horm, D. M., Monroe, L. A., & Wolfe, V. (in press). Lessons learned about data utilization from classroom observations. *Early Education and Development*.
- Horm, D. M. (in process). *Building a foundation for school readiness with infants and toddlers*. Washington, DC: U. S. Department of Health and Human Services.
- Norris, D. J., & Horm, D. M. (in press). Introduction to the special issue on use of data to inform early childhood practice and policy. *Early Education and Development*.

## Other acknowledgements:

- The ECEI's Dr. Lisa Monroe was featured in the following practitioner journal: National Association for the Education of Young Children. (2011). *Teaching Young Children/Preschool, 5*(1). Washington, DC: NAEYC. Retrieved from <http://www.naeyc.org/tyc>.
- Drs. Norris and Horm served as co-editors for a special issue of *Early Education and Development*, to be published in January 2013.

# Presentations

JULY 1, 2011 – JUNE 30, 2012

The ECEI staff delivered presentations at local, state, regional, national and international levels.

## Local:

- Horm, D., & Wolfe, V. *Educare: A catalyst for change*. OU-Tulsa Education Leadership classes. Tulsa, OK, June, August, & October 2011.
- Horm, D. *Brain development in early childhood*. Early Childhood Educators Training sponsored by Child Care Resource Center, Tulsa, OK, June 2011.
- Horm, D. *Educare outcomes*. Presentation at site visit with educators from Austin TX, Tulsa, OK.
- Guss, S. *Educare models and the implications of evaluation research thus far*. Invited presentation for Brock International 2012 Award recipient, Tulsa, OK, March 2012.

## State:

- Horm, D., & Erling, M. *Research on age of entry to kindergarten*, Presentation at Common Education Committee, Oklahoma House of Representatives, Oklahoma City, OK, October 2011.
- Horm, D., & Hanken, A.V. *Using research to inform best practices in early childhood education: Tulsa Educare*. Invited Presentation at Practice & Policy Lecture Series sponsored by the Oklahoma Department of Human Services Office of Planning, Research, and Statistics and the University of Oklahoma Center for Public Management, Oklahoma City, OK, October 2011.
- Norris, D., & Ehlers, V. *Outdoor play for young children*, Invited keynote speakers and workshop presenters at Oklahoma's State Family Child Care Conference, Oklahoma City, OK, October 2011.
- Goodno, C., & Guss, S. *ABC's and... what else??? Perspectives from early childhood research in Oklahoma*. Presentation at Early Childhood Leadership Institute, Tulsa, OK, September 2011.

## Regional

- Farris, S., & Freed, S. *Safe & sanitary: Sensible solutions for the infant-toddler classroom*. Southern Early Childhood Association Conference (SECA), San Antonio, TX, February 1, 2012.

## National

- Horm, D. *The role of higher education in building an early childhood professional development system*. Invited "featured session" at the Arizona First Things First's Early Childhood Summit, Phoenix, AZ, August 2011.
- Rust, E., Horm, D., Murphy, D., & Nepstad, C. *The future of early childhood education*. Presented as an invited keynote panel discussion. National Association of Early Childhood Teacher Educators (NAECTE) Annual Meeting, Orlando, FL, Nov. 2, 2011.
- Horm, D., Hyson, M., & Winton, P. *Higher education for improving teaching practices and child outcomes: Taking paths to greater effectiveness*. Presented at NAEYC's 21st National Institute for Early Childhood Professional Development, Indianapolis, IN, June 10, 2012.
- Guss, S. *Caregiver interactions and behavior ratings of preschoolers*. Society for Research in Human Development (SRHD), New Orleans, LA. March 24, 2012
- Crofut, D., Horm, D., Stubblefield, J., & Goble, C. *Professional self-assessment for early childhood educators*. Research poster presented at NAEYC's 21st National Institute for Early Childhood Professional Development, Indianapolis, IN, June 11, 2012.
- Monroe, L., Horm, D., & Freed, S. *Parent activities and parent involvement in school: An examination of differences between preschool and kindergarten and between English and Spanish-speaking families*. Research poster presented at Head Start's 11th National Research Conference, Washington, DC, June 18, 2012.

## International

- Sisson, S.B., Campbell, J., May, K., Brittain, D.R., Ladner, J., Monroe, L., Guss, S. *Assessment of Physical Activity Practices and Policies in Oklahoma Child Care Centers*. International Society of Behavioral Nutrition and Physical Activity Annual Meeting, Austin, TX, May 2012.
- Sisson, S.B., Campbell, J., May, K., Brittain, D.R., Monroe, L., Guss, S., Ladner, J. *Assessment of Food and Nutrition Practices in Oklahoma Child Care Centers*. International Society of Behavioral Nutrition and Physical Activity Annual Meeting, Austin, TX, May 2012.

# University Strategic Organization

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 of Oklahoma.

The ECEI competed for and was granted the status of USO for the IT<sup>3</sup> initiative – Research on the Care and Education of Infants, Toddlers, Twos, and Threes – in June of 2011.

Dr. Horm used a portion of the USO funds to travel to Washington, D.C. in the fall of 2011 to meet with representatives from federal offices and granting agencies. As a result of these contacts, Dr. Horm became one of 25 researchers invited to participate in the newly formed Network of Infant/Toddler Researchers (NITR) convened by the Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluation (OPRE) of the Administration for Children and Families (ACF). Upon attending the first NITR meeting in December of 2011, Dr. Horm and two colleagues from that meeting submitted a proposal for a concept paper. One of the distinguished colleagues represents Georgetown University, while the other is from Child Trends, a well-known research organization focused on child and family policy-oriented research. The award of the IT<sup>3</sup> USO in June 2011 gave the ECEI's work increased visibility and resulted in the NITR invitation as well as new collaborations. This collaboration will result in a commissioned paper co-authored with new colleagues and disseminated by a federal agency. The ECEI is starting to be recognized as a national-level resource.

On May 10 and 11, 2011, the ECEI hosted the inaugural meeting of the IT<sup>3</sup> USO Advisory Board—composed of local, state, and national leaders interested in applied research to support optimal development and care of our youngest citizens and their families. During the two-day May meeting, the ECEI staff shared its history and future research plans. The Advisory Board complimented our work to date

and, importantly, endorsed our future research ideas.

Specifically, the IT<sup>3</sup> Advisory Board noted the following strengths:

- ❑ Competent, dedicated staff
- ❑ Strong existing relationships with community and OU partners
- ❑ Unique settings and opportunities to pursue IT<sup>3</sup> work in Tulsa and the State of Oklahoma
- ❑ Relationships and links between the IT<sup>3</sup> initiative and ECE academic programs (Bachelor's and Ph.D.) producing mutual benefits for research training and productivity
- ❑ Broad topic area identified with many research gaps as the focus
- ❑ Solid and innovative initial plans

The Advisory Board affirmed that the ECEI is well-positioned to grow into a leading national center focused on the care and education of infants, toddlers, twos, and threes. Based on the IT<sup>3</sup> Advisory Board's recommendations, the ECEI and the emerging IT<sup>3</sup> Center both launched strategic planning activities during the fall of 2012 to outline plans and activities for the next four to five years.



## IT<sup>3</sup> Advisory Board

### Chair: Aletha C. Huston, Ph.D.

Aletha C. Huston is the Priscilla Pond Flawn Regents Professor of Child Development Emerita at the University of Texas at Austin. She specializes in understanding the effects of poverty on children and the impact of child care and income support policies on children's development. She was the Principal Investigator studying the effects of a poverty intervention program (the New Hope Project) on children and families and was an investigator in the NICHD Study of Early Child Care and Youth Development.

### Margaret Erling

Margaret Erling is president of Erling and Associates, a full-service legislative and consulting firm in the Oklahoma State Legislature. She strives to build relationships through various projects and clients for the betterment of others, focusing on education for young children.

### Lu Ann Faulkner-Schneider

Lu Ann Faulkner-Schneider is currently the Coordinator for Professional Development and Quality Initiatives at the Oklahoma Department of Human Services. For the last 23 years, Ms. Faulkner-Schneider has worked for Oklahoma Child Care Services with a variety of initiatives including the OK Early Learning Guidelines and Core Competencies for Early Childhood Practitioners. As Professional Development Coordinator, Ms. Faulkner-Schneider is involved in contracting, training and group work to move child care programs towards improvement.

### Patricia L. Hardre, Ph.D.

Pat Hardre is the Associate Dean for Research & Graduate Programs, OU Jeannine Rainbolt College of Education. Her research areas include: motivation for learning, rural education, faculty work and evaluation, computer-based assessments, HIV-AIDS education, education and human services program evaluation, and design of formal and informal learning environments.

### Susan Kimmel, Ph.D.

Susan Kimmel is the Director of the Center for Early Childhood Professional Development (CECPD) at OU. Dr. Kimmel has implemented large projects and led change efforts across the state to promote school readiness and early literacy and works extensively in culturally diverse urban and rural communities. In addition, Dr. Kimmel is a former early childhood classroom teacher, lead literacy coach in Heidelberg, Germany, and the principal investigator and director of multiple Early Reading First grants.

### Tammy L. Mann, Ph.D.

Tammy Mann is currently the President & CEO of The Campagna Center in Washington, DC. For over 20 years, Dr. Mann has worked in the nonprofit sector in agencies devoted to improving outcomes for minorities and low-income and children and families. At the outset of her career, she worked on the frontlines as a psychologist, providing home visiting services to low-income pregnant women and families with children under three. Throughout much of her career, she has worked at the senior management level in organizations to shape strategic direction and to develop and expand programs.

### Helen Raikes, Ph.D.

Helen Raikes is the Willa Cather Professor at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. She is also a Professor in the Department of Child, Youth and Family Studies and an associate of the Center on Children, Families and the Law at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. She was the principal investigator for the five-state Midwest Child Care Research Consortium to study child care quality, workforce characteristics and Quality Rating System intervention. She was one of several state-level principal investigators in a five-state Quality Intervention in Early Care and Education study.

### Linda R. Sheeran, Ed.D.

Linda Sheeran began her career as a classroom teacher in a variety of settings in multiple states. Since 2003, she has served as an instructor, Administrative Director of the Child Development Laboratory, Coordinator of Field Placements for Early Childhood Education, Early Childhood Education Program Coordinator, and the Executive Director of the Center for Early Childhood Teaching and Learning at Oklahoma State University. She was instrumental in designing training for teachers to use Fire Safety for Young Children: An Early Childhood Curriculum, part of a grant from the Federal Emergency Management Act.

### Dorinda Silver Williams, LCSW-C, ACSW

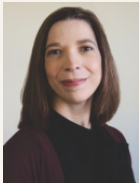
Dorinda Williams is the Director of Military Family Projects at ZERO TO THREE and has worked extensively with the military population throughout her career. Through her work at ZERO TO THREE since 2004, Ms. Williams has developed print materials, produced audio-conferences, created web-based content, provided consultation, and developed trainings, all focusing on the unique needs of military families and their young children in the context of military-specific stressors and trauma. Ms. Williams developed Research and Resilience, an initiative designed to promote research that specifically focuses on the needs and interests of military families with very young children.

## Meet the ECEI Staff

### ECEI Leadership Team



**Dr. Diane Horm** is the Founding Director of ECEI. In addition to her role as director, she is also the George Kaiser Family Foundation Endowed Chair of Early Childhood Education. She is the Principal Investigator for the Educare Implementation and Educare RCT studies and is a Co-Principal Investigator for the Smart Start Capacity Assessment.



**Sherri Castle, M.S.**, joined the Institute staff in January 2012 as a Senior Policy and Research Associate. Currently, she serves as Co-Principal Investigator for the Smart Start Capacity Assessment. Her responsibilities for this project include collaborating on project design, data collection, analysis, and dissemination of findings.



**Dr. Deborah Norris** has worked at ECEI since October 2007. As Associate Director of Research, her responsibilities include providing leadership for the research endeavors of the institute while serving as Principal Investigator for the Scholars for Excellence in Child Care Mentoring Study. Previously, she served as the Principal Investigator of the State Pilot Program-Community Sample Comparison Study.



**Dr. Lisa Monroe** has been working at ECEI since August 2009. She is currently working as a Senior Research and Policy Associate on Educare Kindergarten Follow-Up, Smart Start Oklahoma Needs Assessments, Educare Home Based Evaluation and the Educare Master Teacher project. She is the Principal Investigator on these projects and her responsibilities include study design, data analysis and reporting and project oversight. She will begin work as an early childhood education faculty member on the Norman campus in the fall of 2012 but will continue working with the ECEI on various projects as a faculty scholar.



**Beth Sullins** joined the Institute staff in September 2008. As Assistant Director of Administration, she oversees personnel, staffing, budgeting, and HR duties for the Institute. She also coordinates the Early Childhood Leadership Institute, a yearly conference on early childhood research and practice. Previously she served as Project Coordinator for the Scholars for Excellence in Child Care project.

## ECEI Staff

**Paula Berry** is a part-time Research Associate working across several projects at the ECEI, including the Educare Randomized Control Trial and the School Readiness Project. She also assists with training new staff on child assessments and classroom observations.

**Krista Blanche** joined the ECEI in April 2012. She worked as a data collector on the School Readiness Project.

**Flavia Carbone-Castro** joined the ECEI in April 2012, and is a Part-Time Research Associate, conducting child assessments for the Educare Randomized Control Trial and the School Readiness Project.

**Diane Dudley** has been working at ECEI since Sept 2011. She is currently working as a Research Associate on the School Readiness Project conducting child assessments and doing similar work for other projects as needed. She also presents Continuing Education Trainings with the staff of our Partnership Schools.

**Stephanie Farris** has been working at the ECEI since 2008. She is the Training Coordinator, and her responsibilities include training ECEI staff on all child assessments and classroom observations in current use. She also maintains the Research Partnership Program. Previously, she served as a Research Associate on the Educare Implementation, Scholars, and SPP projects.

**Kris Foyil** has been with the ECEI since April 2012, and is a Part-Time Research Associate, conducting child assessments for the School Readiness Project.

**Sarah Freed**, who joined the ECEI staff in fall 2008, is Study Coordinator for the Educare Kindergarten Follow-Up study. She also works as a Research Associate on the Educare Implementation Project and collects assessment data for classrooms and children.

**Imelda Galvez** has been with ECEI since March 2011. She is the Kendall Whittier Site Coordinator on the Educare Implementation Project and assists with the Educare Randomized Control Trial Study. Responsibilities include overseeing data collection at the site, conducting and facilitating child assessments, facilitating feedback following data collection, and working closely with Educare staff to maintain family involvement in the study. She also assists in participant retention and parent interviews in the Randomized Control Trial Study.

**Mary Gilford** has been working at ECEI since August 2011. She is currently working as a Part Time Research Associate on the School Readiness Project. Her role on this project is to conduct child assessments.

**Chana Goodno** has been working at ECEI since August 2009. She worked as the Technology and Database Coordinator for the ECEI during the 2011-12 academic year. Her responsibilities included creating and updating project databases, assisting staff with various technology needs, and conducting technology training for the institute. Previously, she served as the Project Coordinator for the Educare RCT project, the CAPTC Learning Games project and the SPP evaluation project, specifically with the community comparison sample.

**Shannon Guss** has been with the ECEI since September 2008. As Project Director for the Educare Implementation Study, she oversees data collection at the Educare sites. Her responsibilities include data analysis and reporting, as well as maintaining a collaborative relationship with Educare staff. Previously, she collected child assessment and classroom observation data as a Research Associate on the Scholars for Excellence in Education evaluation, the State Pilot Project evaluation, and the Educare Implementation Project and served as the Site Coordinator for Educare Hawthorne.

**Lilia Hernandez de Paul**, with ECEI since September 2011, is currently working as a Research Associate on the Educare Randomized Control Trial Study, the School Readiness Project, and the Kindergarten Follow-Up Study. Her responsibilities on these projects include conducting different child assessments in English and Spanish, recruiting families, and entering data.

**Shawn Krehbiel** joined the ECEI staff in 2011 as a part-time Research Associate. She has collected classroom and child data on various projects for the Institute, coordinated data collection for the School Readiness Project, and assists with training new employees to do classroom observation and child assessments.

**Emma Lang** is a part-time Research Associate. She currently works on the Scholars Project and collects child assessments for the School Readiness Project and the Educare Implementation Study. She also assists with data management on the Educare Implementation Study.

**Ronda Marfechuk** has been with the ECEI since April 2012 and is a Part-Time Research Associate, conducting child assessments for the School Readiness Project.

**Susan Mensching** is a part-time Research Associate. She has worked for the ECEI since July 2011. She has worked on the School Readiness Project collecting child assessment data and assisted in a review of NAEYC standards as they relate to learning guidelines.

**Roma Patel** joined the ECEI in July 2011 as a part-time Research Associate, conducting child assessments for the School Readiness Project and telephone interviews for the Smart Start of Oklahoma Needs Assessment.

**Jennifer Petty** has been working at ECEI since January 2010. She is currently working as the Hawthorne Site Coordinator on the Educare Implementation Project. Her responsibilities on this project include overseeing the project, conducting and facilitating classroom observations, conducting and facilitating child assessments, and working closely with Educare Staff to get family consents and family interviews completed. Previously, she has served as a Research Associate on the Educare Implementation Project, State Pilot Program, Smart Start Needs Assessment and Scholars.

**Sherry Phillips** has been working at ECEI since October 2009. As the ECEI Staff Assistant, she provides administrative support by handling travel arrangements, processing travel, copying, faxing, scanning, ordering office supplies, and coordinating office projects.

**Melissa Ruiz** has been working at ECEI August 2011. She is currently working as a part time research associate on Educare Implementation, and her responsibilities on this project include conducting child assessments, and entering and checking data. Previously, she served as a blind assessor on the RCT project and conducted assessments for the School Readiness Project.

**Tracy Shepherd** joined the ECEI in April 2012 as a part-time Research Associate, conducting child assessments for the School Readiness Project and the Educare Implementation Evaluation.

**Tracy Todd** joined the ECEI in 2011 as a part-time Research Associate. She collected child assessment and classroom observation data for the Educare Implementation study. Tracy is currently with Clayton Early Learning of Denver, Colorado.

**Lauren Worley** has been working at ECEI since March 2011. She is currently working as a Bilingual Study Coordinator on the Educare Randomized Control Trial Project. Her responsibilities on this project include overseeing project protocol and serving as the coordinator of data collection. Previously, she has served as a Study Coordinator of the Scholars Project participating in data collection coordination and analyses. She has also participated in data collection in the Educare Kindergarten Follow-Up Project.

**Tara Wyatt** has been working at ECEI since September 2011. She is currently working as a Research Associate on the School Readiness Project, conducting child assessments and entering data. Additionally, she is reviewing literature relating to child care from birth to 3 years from the NICHD Study of Early Child Care and Youth Development.



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