

Professional development needs of directors leading in a mixed service delivery preschool system ^[1]

Early Childhood Research & Practice, Vol. 13 no. 1

Author: Ryan, Sharon; Whitebook, Marcy ; Kipnis, Fran & Sakai, Laura

Source: Early Childhood Research & Practice

Format: Article

Publication Date: 1 Mar 2011

AVAILABILITY

Full text of the article ^[2]

Abstract:

This paper reports on an interview study with directors of Head Start and child care programs who are collaborating with local education authorities to provide publicly funded preschool in New Jersey, USA. A standardized interview protocol was utilized with 98 directors chosen to represent a range of center types from across the three main regions of the state. Interviews were conducted over the phone. The study examined the kinds of preparation that these directors received for their work as program leaders, the areas that these directors identified as strengths and weaknesses, and the kinds of professional development that they perceived as necessary to perform their jobs well. Results indicate that given the wide range of qualifications and work experiences among directors in this mixed service delivery system, targeted professional development focusing on both administration and early childhood content is needed. These findings suggest that policy makers and administrators of preschool programs should conduct needs assessments of their preschool directors and school leaders to ensure that professional development opportunities address different levels of experience and expertise appropriate for leaders working in these systems. Because of the complexity of leading programs with mixed sources of funding and policy mandates, it is also suggested that competencies be articulated for preschool leaders and that institutions of higher education develop early childhood leadership preparation programs.

Region: United States ^[3]

Tags: staff ^[4]

pre-school ^[5]

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