

A Meeting Summary

**A Long-Awaited Conversation:
Dialogue to Bridge the High-Tech/
High-Touch Gap In Early Childhood
Workforce Preparation and
Professional Development**

**Chicago, Illinois
May 6–7, 2004**

**Prepared by Douglas Clark
Graduate School of Education and Psychology
Pepperdine University**



U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
Administration for Children and Families
Administration on Children, Youth and Families



NCCIC National Child Care Information Center

A service of the  Child Care Bureau

243 Church Street, NW, 2nd Floor, Vienna, Virginia 22180

Voice: 800-616-2242 • TTY: 800-516-2242 • Fax: 800-716-2242

E-mail: info@nccic.org • Web: <http://nccic.org>

Additional copies are available at NCCIC.

A Meeting Summary

**A Long-Awaited Conversation:
Dialogue to Bridge the High-Tech/
High-Touch Gap In Early Childhood
Workforce Preparation and
Professional Development**

**Leadership Connections Conference
Chicago, Illinois
May 6–7, 2004**

**Hosted by The Center for Early Childhood Leadership at
National-Louis University**

Prepared by Douglas Clark for:

**The Child Care Bureau
Administration on Children, Youth and Families,
Administration for Children and Families, U.S.
Department of Health and Human Services**

Acknowledgements

The Child Care Bureau would like to thank the Center for Early Childhood Leadership at National-Louis University for hosting the meeting, “A Long-Awaited Conversation: Dialogue to Bridge the High-Tech/High-Touch Gap in Early Childhood Workforce Preparation and Professional Development,” in conjunction with their 2004 Leadership Connections conference held in Chicago in May 2004. The participants in the meeting enjoyed a warm and intellectually stimulating environment that supported a culture of collaboration and learning. In particular, we would like to thank our partners from the National College of Education at National-Louis University: Elizabeth Hawthorne, Dean of the National College of Education; Paula Jorde Bloom, Director of the Center for Early Childhood Leadership; and Jill Bella and Eileen Eisenberg, conference coordinators.

The meeting was conceptualized and organized by a team comprised of Shannon Rudisill and Valerie Krajec at the Child Care Bureau, Susan Rohrbough of the National Child Care Information Center, and Douglas Clark, an online early childhood degree program director at National-Louis University and second year doctoral student in the educational technology program at Pepperdine University. Doug conceived the idea for this meeting and prepared this report. Logistical support was provided by Kimberly Prue of the Child Care Bureau’s Conference Management Center.

The Bureau would also like to thank the participants in the Chicago Meeting, who are listed in Appendix B. Each one made a significant contribution to the lively discussion. The group is indebted to Sarah Click, Vernon Mason, Meghan Ortiz, and Allison Walker, who graciously shared their personal experiences as early childhood practitioners utilizing various modes of technology to support their professional development. As of the release of this publication in October 2004, many of those who attended the Chicago Meeting have acted on the recommendations and ideas that emerged from the long-awaited conversation.

Table of Contents

Introduction		III
The Chicago Meeting		1
Definitions and Themes		3
Next Steps		19
A Final Word		21
Appendices		
APPENDIX A	Meeting Brief and Meeting Agenda	23
APPENDIX B	Participant List	27
APPENDIX C	<i>Distance Learning in Early Childhood Education</i> (2004), National Child Care Information Center	33
APPENDIX D	<i>States with Distance Learning Options</i> (2004), National Child Care Information Center	47
APPENDIX E	<i>Technology and Early Childhood Professional Development: A Policy Discussion</i> (2002), by Jessica McMaken, Education Commission of the States	57



Introduction

A Long-Awaited Conversation: Dialogue to Bridge the High-Tech/High-Touch Gap in Early Childhood Workforce Preparation and Professional Development was sponsored by the Child Care Bureau (CCB), Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. The Child Care Bureau supports low-income working families through child care financial assistance and promotes children's learning by improving the quality of early care and education and after-school programs. The Child Care Bureau administers the Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF), which in recent years, has provided \$4.8 billion annually to States and Tribes. Quality spending in FY 2003 was \$881 million, or 9 percent of total State and Federal CCDF expenditures.¹ Using a survey on FY 2000 expenditures, the U.S. General Accounting Office (now the U.S. General Accountability Office) reported that 82 percent of States spent CCDF quality funds on training and professional development for child care providers. Taken together, training and related caregiver compensation initiatives comprised 25 percent of spending.²

The Child Care Bureau has a longstanding interest in professional development for child care providers across all child care settings. States and Tribes make significant investments in professional development from the Child Care and Development Fund. CCB's research and technical assistance activities attempt to answer critical questions about early childhood training and help States identify and replicate promising practices. State CCDF administrators are seeking effective methods to improve quality, achieve improved child outcomes, and adequately support child care providers. The use of technology to reach and train early childhood staff has

¹This figure includes the minimum quality spending requirement and the earmarks for quality, infant and toddler care, and school-age and resource and referral services.

²Source: U.S. General Accounting Office. *States Have Undertaken a Variety of Quality Improvement Initiatives, but More Evaluations of Effectiveness Are Needed*, GAO-02-897. Washington, DC: General Accounting Office, 2002. <http://www.gao.gov/new.items/d02897.pdf> (accessed October 22, 2004).

INTRODUCTION

been one area of keen interest to State Child Care Administrators and agencies providing quality improvement activities.

Although needs vary by State depending on demographic and geographic circumstances, some needs cut across States: the need to provide current training to large numbers of early care and education practitioners, the need to improve the educational levels of the current and prospective early care and education workforce, the need to reach large numbers of isolated family child care providers, and the need to provide training and resources to those family, friends, and neighbors who are caring for approximately one-half of low income children across the country.

For States considering or implementing some form of technology-supported training or coursework, there are questions about legitimacy of the sponsor institution, quality assurance, and articulation of course credit. In addition, States weigh cost-effectiveness, potential outreach, and the number of participants. Many States are working to establish program and management infrastructure related to technology, instruction, and to record and track participant achievement. While technology allows near global access to training and coursework, such access forces State Administrators to address scholarship and reimbursement issues related to training that crosses State lines.

The Chicago Meeting

To build on earlier work by the Educational Commission of the States and KnowledgeWorks Foundation in July 2002 (a summary report is available in Appendix E) and from a Distance Training & Early Childhood Professional Development discussion held in January 2002 (agenda and meeting notes available at www.nhsa.org), a two-day invitational forum was organized to convene more than thirty individuals, representing an array of expertise and technology-based program models associated with training the early childhood workforce (Appendix B includes a participant list). In preparing for this meeting, the Child Care Bureau and its National Child Care Information Center (NCCIC) worked with Pepperdine University doctoral student Douglas Clark to address States' information and technical assistance needs related to technology-mediated distance learning for early childhood practitioners. The planning team consisted of Shannon Rudisill and Valerie Krajec of the Child Care Bureau, Susan Rohrbough from NCCIC, and Douglas Clark. As part of a technical assistance strategy to partner with regional and national venues, the forum was held in Chicago on May 6–7, 2004, concurrent with the Leadership Connections conference hosted by the Center for Early Childhood Leadership at National-Louis University. For brevity, the forum is referred to as the Chicago Meeting throughout this report.

The agenda for the Chicago Meeting emerged from multiple planning sessions and consultations with several members of the early childhood professional development community (Appendix A includes a meeting brief and the meeting agenda). Built around the theme “A Long-Awaited Conversation: Dialogue to Bridge the High-Tech/High-Touch Gap in Early Childhood Workforce Preparation and Professional Development,” four discussion topics were identified as areas of focus:

- Topic 1:** Promising practices and models using technology as a mediator for the training and professional development of early care and education practitioners
- Topic 2:** Perspectives of learners

THE CHICAGO MEETING

Topic 3: Lessons learned from pioneering experiences

Topic 4: Content, competencies, credentials, accountability, and results

Facilitated by Susan Rohrbough, the Chicago Meeting was designed as a dialogue with subgroups of participants serving as lead discussants throughout the two-day session. In addition, a panel of adult learners was interviewed to share experiences and recommendations regarding the uses of technology in education and training. To culminate the dialogue, each participant was asked to share his/her thoughts about areas of consensus that had emerged from the discussions regarding key themes and next steps. The meeting proceedings and subsequent outcomes are summarized in the pages that follow.

Definitions and Themes

Operational Definitions

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT. Because the community of early childhood practitioners and the many forms of their practice are so diverse, the planning team invited early childhood professionals representing a wide array of provider/learner, educator/trainer, institutional/organizational, and geographical constituencies. Accordingly, the working definition of professional development for meeting agenda purposes is very broad and includes activities of two- and four-year colleges and universities, child care resource and referral agencies, cooperative extension programs, and public television. It also includes activities that apply toward credentials such as the Child Development Associate (CDA) and early childhood certification. Professional development activities considered include self-study, workshops and training series, credit and non-credit coursework, and ultimately focused on training and coursework that would count toward a degree or could be translated into credit toward a degree or credential.

TECHNOLOGY. It is an ambitious undertaking to identify a common taxonomy to describe the many ways technology supports teaching, learning, and professional development among early childhood practitioners. The definition of technology for the meeting was very broad, but the basis for most discussion was distance delivery models and parts of the conversation focused mostly on online or Internet-based coursework. During the two-day dialogue, several terms were used to describe the new instructional technologies. These included: distance learning, online learning, Web-based learning, Internet learning, and e-learning.

TECHNOLOGY-MEDIATED LEARNING. Since many of the learning opportunities currently available to early childhood practitioners involve contact with the instructor and content via the Internet, the meeting discussions often related specifically to online coursework. However, in addition to Internet-based learning, several participants in the Chicago Meeting were engaged in a *continuum of technologies*, such as broadcast television, Web-casts, video conferencing, satellite downlinks, and training modules on videotape and CD-ROM.

They also used blended approaches that combined technology with face-to-face classroom experiences, mentoring, or technical assistance.

The planning team aimed to consider a broad array of approaches and promising practices currently used in early childhood training, and not to focus on or recommend a particular form of technology for use in professional development. To that end, the broad term *technology-mediated learning* is used in this report to indicate the applicability of the group's findings to virtually all delivery modes and instructional practices that involve digital media, broadcasts via satellite or the World Wide Web, electronic networking, or other related formats.

“This is not just information dissemination, but career development and learners acquiring knowledge they can use in their practices. Making the process interactive is vital. The network would be designed to serve diverse needs of a vast audience of multiple language-speakers in disparate locations, particularly rural ones. It must serve a diversity of learning styles.”

CAROL BRUNSON DAY,
COUNCIL FOR PROFESSIONAL
RECOGNITION

Five Cross-Cutting Themes

Outcomes from the Chicago Meeting are summarized as five cross-cutting themes.

THEME 1: WHAT WE ALREADY KNOW ABOUT LEARNING AND EFFECTIVE TEACHING ALSO APPLIES TO TRAINING MODELS THAT ARE DELIVERED VIA MEDIA AND TECHNOLOGY.

It's all about relationships. Learning takes place within a social context, so the effective use of instructional technology provides such a context for learning. Successful models are relationship-based, even if the instructor and the student never meet in person. An appreciable aspect of the instructional experience relies upon meaningful interaction among all participants. Even where there is less opportunity for person-to-person contact, a connection to fellow participants, to the instructor, the training entity, or to the educational institution leads to positive feelings about the learning experience and learning success.

DEFINITIONS AND THEMES

Technology-mediated learning forces a paradigm shift, by transferring control of the learning experiences away from instructors and toward learners. Meeting

participants gravitated to the phrase “guide on the side, not the sage on the stage” to describe the instruc-

tor’s role evident in the most promising technology-mediated learning endeavors.

There was solid consensus that this attribute is a benchmark for best practice, and agreement that it is a hallmark of quality

for all successful adult learning scenarios—though not implemented as frequently in face-to-face classroom experiences where the teacher tends to remain in the spotlight.

“Online learning was a better use of my time. For me, the biggest advantage was the flexibility of when to ‘attend’ class. A.m., p.m., midnight—it didn’t matter. In the time I would have spent driving to the nearest university and parking my car twice per week, I was normally able to get my course work done. The same is true for getting your resource materials online. When in the real world we are pushed for time, through online courses, we learn how to get information in minutes.”

**VERNON MASON JR.,
DIRECTOR, WEE SCHOOL
CHILD DEVELOPMENT
CENTER**

In technology-mediated coursework and training experiences provided for adult learners, the instructor is no longer the person with all of the information. Sharing among peers is commonplace, and is often the centerpiece of the curricular design. In addition, access to the wealth of information and Internet search tools, which can be made immediately available through technology-mediated instruction, gives students tremendous resources. By providing individuals more control over what they learn through increased access to information and information sources, the technology-mediated learning process is inherently democratic in nature.

“My cohort was able to decide on what time class will be held and we can answer the Bulletin Board questions at our own pace. This allows time for thought-provoking questions and answers. The Bulletin Board feature is a very effective support for my professional development as I can communicate all week long with my fellow cohort members as opposed to the time constraints in a face-to-face classroom.”

**SARAH CLICK, HEADSUP!
READING COORDINATOR AND
STUDENT AT CONCORDIA
UNIVERSITY IN MINNESOTA**

DEFINITIONS AND THEMES

For instructional technology to be effective, the tools and strategies used must do more than merely deliver content. Technology offers the opportunity to present information in a variety of ways and builds the capacity of the learner to work

“The Early Childhood Self-Study Course on Inclusion is designed for child care providers and other early childhood professionals who want to complete learning activities without leaving their home. Providers learn to assess and evaluate their philosophies and programs to meet the individual needs of children with disabilities. This is a correspondence course where providers can earn two units of college credit through the local community college.”

JOCELYN TUCKER,
CAREER ADVOCATE,
CONTRA COSTA
CHILD CARE
COUNCIL

toward higher levels of learning. To meet this potential, the technology tools and teaching practices must do more than just provide information (the equivalent of didactic lecture). To be effective, the technology must be used by instructors and participants alike to mediate multi-dimensional relationships among learners, teacher/facilitators, and the training content (see Figure 1).

Effective instructional approaches are learner-centered. Successful uses of technology account for differences among the participants: differing learning styles and

preferences, widely varied computer skills, and differing levels of access to technology and media. The promising practices identified during the Chicago Meeting were spe-

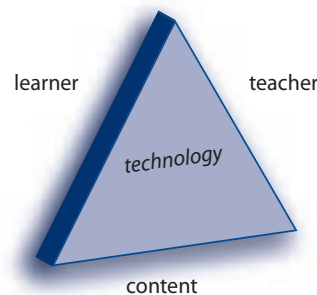


Figure 1: Effective instructional technology mediates relationships among learners, teachers, and training content.

cifically designed for working adults, building on theories about the social construction of knowledge and employing problem-based methodologies such as case study analysis or reflection on authentic experiences. These practices often included some form of journaling and direct application of training content to the work environment.

“HeadsUp! Reading is an example of using live satellite TV for professional development. This 30-hour college level course is available in English and Spanish. For the past four years it gave practitioners direct access to primary researchers and experts in language and early literacy through engaging instructional segments and opportunities for live call-ins. It uses video to bring concepts and teaching strategies to life, taking practitioners into homes and classrooms in various contexts. A trained on-site facilitator mediates the learning experience and a Web site allows for review, expanded application activities, and additional questions.”

CATHIE HARVEY,
RISE LEARNING
SOLUTIONS AND

DEBBIE WINDHAM,
NATIONAL HEAD
START ASSOCIATION

THEME 2: NOW IS THE TIME TO GET INTENTIONAL ABOUT CAPACITY BUILDING.

Substantial evidence exists and continues to mount to validate the use of technology as a mediator of effective distance learning experiences. Now, the focus can shift from questioning the viability of technology as an appropriate educational delivery channel, toward a purposeful emphasis on building institutional capacity to plan, prepare for, and deliver technology-mediated instruction. Participants agreed that intentionality is vital and implementation with faithfulness to the original design is critical to success.

Institutional expectations should be clear and realistic. Building capacity must be deliberate in nature, comprehensive in scope, and emanate from a systems perspective. All stakeholders at the institutional level must discuss their expectations for making their educational offerings available over the Internet or via some other technology. Stakeholders need to understand each other’s expectations and check whether the assumptions and goals are realistic. Mutually understood expectations ought to be explicit at the outset of the strategizing process. For instance, is it expected that learning outcomes will improve compared with face-to-face delivery? Is it expected to be more convenient for students or teachers? Is it expected to be less expensive? Is it expected that more people will be trained? Stakeholders need to work together throughout planning and execution. Otherwise, the juxtaposition of

different stakeholders embracing different planning assumptions places undue tension on the design and ultimate effectiveness of the training endeavor.

Participants in the dialogue pointed out the importance of careful adherence to original plan designs. For example, if the design required certain conditions such as mentoring, on-site facilitation, or a particular kind of technical support that were not implemented due to emergent resource constraints, the overall effectiveness of the model might be compromised. Many discussants spoke from personal experience that in cases such as these, a common tendency is to blame the overall delivery approach despite the reality that the envisioned model was never truly tested as intended. Compromises to plans before their faithful implementation greatly diminish critical opportunities for systematic review and comprehensive assessment of program designs and delivery strategies. Sufficient funding to underwrite the full development of technology-mediated training and coursework is an essential ingredient for increasing institutions' capacity to serve the field of early childhood education.

Technical support is a factor in the ultimate success or failure of a venture. Several people indicated that both instructors and students need time, as much as one or two weeks before being thrust into the rigors of technology-mediated study, to obtain technical support for getting started. Learners expressed the need for a “survival guide” at the outset of their learning experience. Many participants reported that technical support provisions focus narrowly on matters such as how to access or navigate a course Web site, and generally do not address other crucial concerns such as how to use the technologies or grasp the nuances of full participation as an instructor or student in the course.

Chicago Meeting participants also pointed to the importance of reliable and effective technical support for instructors and students. It was suggested that the most accommodating technical support person is not necessarily a person with the best technical knowledge, but rather one who understands the client's (instructor's or student's) perspective and possesses interpersonal skills needed to convey technical assistance in common, non-technical terms.

A continuum of technology-mediated options is crucial for addressing a wide range of professional development needs demanded by the early childhood workforce. As considered during the Chicago Meeting, capacity building is broad and underscores the importance of a continuum of technology-mediated options. Both the content and the audience of learners should influence the choice of technology and delivery method. For example, broadcast television is effective for reaching large populations with simple, straightforward messages.

“One challenging aspect of online learning is technological problems. If your computer shuts down, or online service shuts down, you are not able to complete assignments. In my experience, there have been wonderful people in the college’s tech support department—and my professors have all been very understanding!”

MEGHAN ORTIZ
ASSISTANT DIRECTOR,
MCLEAN COUNTY
YWCA CHILD CARE

The use of television was also cited as a confidence booster among learners who afterward participated in online training or academic courses.

This progression demonstrates how one instructional approach along the continuum of technologies complements another.

Recruitment and development of instructors. Instructors need preparation in how to become comfortable with the technology for the design and delivery of their courses. They need to master the technology itself and also understand the differences in course dynamics as opposed to face-to-face course delivery. For instance, several meeting participants who were online instructors pointed out that they had to learn to be careful in designing and scheduling student assignments to avoid an avalanche of electronically submitted written materials to which they could not effectively respond. The workload and expectation for interaction is so high in Web-based courses that many faculty refuse to attempt teaching online.

Similarly, younger instructors on tenure track, who may be less intimidated by the technology, may shy away from teaching with technology because of time pressures associated with obligatory scholarship, publication, and service to their institutions.

In many cases, especially for adjunct faculty, instructor salaries are generally low, so the proposition of greater requisite personal investment for no more remuneration has kept the talent pool small. On a hopeful note, some participants suggested that the pool of potential instructors might be expanded to include those who live far from campuses in rural areas or parents with young children who wish to work from home.

Recruitment and development of students. Recruiters and admissions personnel should be equipped to assist prospective students in determining their readiness for technology-mediated learning. One instructor in the group said that with some potential students “you only get one shot.” If their educational history was challenging, another failed academic experience may turn them off for years.

Institutions and instructors should consider closely each student’s skill level and need for support at the beginning and throughout the span of the student’s technology-mediated learning experience. This comprehensive approach would begin with readiness screening and provide orientation prior to the student’s first course. The orientation process should serve as a “survival guide” that covers the use of the required technologies, such as e-mail, “netiquette,” and how to conduct an Internet search. It should also provide a means of determining learning style preferences and assess the learner’s likelihood of success with the particular instructional media or platform. Discussants also pointed out the importance of devising exit strategies for students who initially choose technology-mediated learning and then find that they are better suited for face-to-face classes.

Toward an early childhood professional development infrastructure. Throughout the two days of dialogue, discussants cited several items associated with the concept of professional development systems for early childhood practitioners as essential for consideration in future capacity building activities. Among the items linked to the professional development system concept were: a) an assurance mechanism to validate the quality of the technology-mediated initiative; b) course content standards that are linked to defined competencies within the professional development

system; and c) a career lattice and career counseling for students engaged in technology-mediated professional development.

The group also acknowledged the importance of credibility for courses, training, and degrees delivered via technology. Participants suggested that established entities such as accredited institutions of higher learning, child care resource and referral agencies, and respected professional organizations are readily trusted within the early childhood field and by the public at large. Thus, the training and courses offered by or associated with these entities are also trusted. This point underscored the importance of identifying an objective means of evaluating technology-mediated professional development experiences to ensure their adherence to a high standard of quality.

“I have found two major challenges to online learning as opposed to a regular classroom setting. The first is simply educating my colleagues about the legitimacy and effectiveness of online learning. The second challenge is that of self-discipline. I have to condition myself to keep on task with the reading (and there is a lot of it), answer the Bulletin Board questions thoroughly, and complete all the assignments. But in the end—it will all be worth it!”

**SARAH CLICK, HEADSUP!
READING PROGRAM
COORDINATOR AND
STUDENT AT CONCORDIA
UNIVERSITY IN
MINNESOTA**

THEME 3: COLLABORATION IS KEY.

Many efforts related to the design and implementation of technology-mediated instruction have taken place and continue to occur across disciplines throughout the United States and around the globe. In most instances, these activities are happening in isolation, which has led to duplication of effort and expense. Participants agreed that future efforts to conduct research, refine methodologies, enhance practices, and improve learner outcomes could be better leveraged through collaboration that would capitalize on the collective expertise of educational technologists, early childhood education faculty, training providers, and the learners themselves.

On the point of collaboration, meeting participants agreed to continue to communicate, think, and learn together; and to exchange ideas, helpful tools, and successful strategies with one another. They acknowledged the benefits of developing course content that could be accessed via a central Web portal and exchanged across organizations within the early childhood community. For example, a common commitment to make use of the *Shareable Content Object Reference Model (SCORM)*¹ could help to standardize the delivery of training and education and support deeper levels of sharing and cross-fertilization.

THEME 4: BEHIND THE HYPE, THE HOPE, AND THE HEARSAY: THE PRACTICAL REALITIES OF TECHNOLOGY-MEDIATED DISTANCE LEARNING.

Participants identified areas of practical reality that contradict widely held beliefs about technology-mediated learning.

***The Hype:* Technology-mediated distance learning is a “can’t-miss” way to deliver high-volume/low-cost coursework and training.**

Practical reality. While there are distinctions among the various approaches to course facilitation, instructors reported that they spend more time per class teaching a technology-mediated course than they would need for a traditional face-to-face course. In many cases, enrollment levels in technology-mediated courses are relatively low so the instructor:student ratio can be kept lower for accommodating increased amounts of participant interaction via discussion groups, journal entries, e-mail exchanges, and written assignments.

In relatively few cases where the programs are highly systemized and the study content need not be modified to maintain its relevance to a large population of learners, technology-mediated training and coursework has been shown to be a cost-efficient

¹*SCORM* is a series of e-learning standards that specify ways to catalog, launch, and track course content.

alternative. However, these successes typically involve scenarios where the scale of the professional development involves multiple sites, multiple instructors, and a heavy front-end investment to develop the infrastructure and mass-produce training materials (for example, thousands of videotapes). In contrast, commitments at this level typically extend beyond the capacity of a single online course, training program, or educational institution.

***The Hope:* All modes of technology-mediated distance learning are appropriate for all learners and all course content.**

Practical reality. Technology-mediated distance learning is a viable alternative for preparing and training early childhood practitioners but it is not and will not be for everyone; nor is it viable for all training content relevant to early care and learning. Many participants cited the high degree of self-discipline required to consistently participate in distance learning, as well as the huge time commitment required to actively participate in technology-mediated coursework. Technology-mediated learning seems best-suited for people with a high degree of personal and professional motivation.

Not all learners will be comfortable enough with the technology to experience immediate success. Because of the prevailing need to communicate in writing, learners' English fluency, literacy, and writing skills also influence the success students can experience through distance learning. On the other hand, some technology-mediated experiences, such as online courses, entail activities that foster improved writing and reflection skills.

Participants also agreed that not all content is appropriate for conversion to 100 percent distance delivery. They cited activities like classroom observations or mentor consultations as crucial to certain training experiences. In cases like these, the group saw no apparent way for substituting a virtual or simulated activity that could retain the same level of effectiveness as a counterpart experience in a face-to-face arrangement.

While there was consensus among the discussants that technology-mediated learning is not a one-size-fits-all solution, there was also strong support that it could have at least a nominal role, such as in a format where online and face-to-face experiences were both utilized, in virtually any training situation. Participants suggested that various approaches should be attempted for different learner populations based on their stages of professional and personal readiness for technology-mediated learning. As an example, distributing video tapes to training participants has been proven effective as a suitable alternative in cases where students' computers lack the capacity to access live video streaming or high-resolution graphics.

The Hearsay: Technology-mediated distance learning lacks the capacity to facilitate meaningful interaction and nurture a sense of community among participants.

Practical reality. Effective technology-mediated learning models can support and even deepen relationships among peer learners and course facilitators. One participant cited the power of online course delivery as a formidable means for cultivating a "sense of community" among learners. To further this claim, many discussants reported anecdotally that online coursework had actually increased the participation of some students: instructors and students alike indicated that technology-mediated delivery increased the participation of some who were reluctant to speak in a classroom environment or who might prefer time to reflect before contributing to the class discussion. Many believed that a technology-mediated format was less biased compared to classroom settings because students were less likely to receive "credit" for particular personality traits, appearance, or other similar factors.

The positive effect of technology on building a sense of community among groups of learners is not limited to online course experiences. For example, one discussant spoke about the importance of mentoring encounters among family child care home providers scattered thinly across the rural areas of her State. Though separated geographically, the use of Listservs and e-mail allow these providers to take part in

the telementoring of newcomers to their community as well as to each other. These providers also exchanged lesson plans and digital photos of their learning environments electronically.

THEME 5: IMPORTANT QUESTIONS REMAIN.

The dialogue remained lively and enthusiastic throughout the Chicago Meeting and several key issues were addressed pertaining to the role of technology as a mediator for improving quality among the early care and education workforce. Nevertheless, at the culmination of the dialogue many unanswered questions lingered. Three broad-sweeping questions were identified for further attention.

Question: How can innovations in instructional technology be used to accommodate the widely disparate nature of the early care and education workforce? As one participant stated, “We need to take a closer look at who the potential learner is.” What innovative ways are appropriate for the various groups? Can the technologies be adapted to effectively reach out not only to licensed early childhood staff, but also family, friend, or neighbor providers?

There are many technologies, from televisions to computers, which can be used for early childhood professional development and quality improvement. Since some of the concerns about learners’ technology skills may diminish as students and instructors mature into a more tech-savvy generation, future plans should accommodate this potential change in user needs.

Question: How can we assess the effectiveness of technology-mediated distance learning for the professional development of early care and education practitioners? With the proliferation of technology-based training resources, quality assurance is a concern for State or local professional development systems and for organizations that grant credentials. Matters of quality are also of concern for institutions. In some settings, instructors generally characterized as “not riveting”

DEFINITIONS AND THEMES

in the classroom may prove to be very effective in the delivery of technology-mediated distance learning formats. Conversely, an organization’s best “classroom” instructors may not be able to adapt for equally effective course delivery via the technology.

In the absence of complete knowledge about the training source or the quality of the content and delivery, how should systems decide whether and how much credit or recognition to

award for technology-mediated learning activities?

Related questions include how to evaluate technology-mediated training for inclusion in a State training approval system

or how to include “test out” options that gauge and validate learner competencies which are the result of technology-mediated learning.

“The Better Kid Care Program successfully reaches all types of child care providers (home-based caregivers, family, relative/neighbor caregivers, center staff, CDA candidates, certified teachers, program directors), especially those in rural populations. This is effectively accomplished through: satellite workshops, distance education lessons (Web-based and mail-based), as well as direct training by Cooperative Extension educators throughout the State.”

PATTY WELLS,
ASSISTANT DIRECTOR,
DISTANCE EDUCATION,
PENN STATE BETTER
KID CARE PROGRAM

Question: *How do we address the question of credibility?* Despite the heavy investment of time and intellectual resources required to succeed in a technology-mediated course or training experience, both students and participating faculty expressed concerns about the credibility of technology-mediated distance learning with their employers or with peers in academia. How can quality assurances and training approval systems be used to validate the credibility of technology-mediated learning? Participants mentioned current research efforts as well as the possibility of conducting new research to identify learner outcomes and the effectiveness of the various technologies with specific populations. These efforts support the effectiveness of such training and document student success.

Question: How do we resolve policy and funding issues related to courses that “cross” State lines? Students, faculty, and policy-makers in attendance raised concerns about reciprocity for courses and training that cross State lines, especially with regard to scholarships and incentives for taking coursework. While technology fosters virtual classrooms with no borders, State Child Care Administrators typically face restrictions on the use of State and Federal pass-through dollars. The use of technology to resolve issues of access must be accompanied by mechanisms to provide financial incentives and scholarships to assist individuals in paying for coursework and training.

Next Steps

Participants concurred that much work is needed to address the key issues that were raised throughout their discussions. Further, they agreed that a coordinated and collaborative approach to addressing these issues would likely result in timelier and more effective outcomes. To that end, the discussants agreed to remain in contact and continue sharing with one another after the meeting had adjourned. To initiate this follow-through, a Listserv dedicated to early childhood distance learning was established (DLEC@ecqnet.org), hosted by the Ohio State University Quality Network in conjunction with the National Head Start Association.

Some participants indicated their willingness to share their expertise in the varied aspects of capacity building. These people's interests spanned the gamut from quality assessment systems to faculty development to student support mechanisms. Others offered to work on identifying new ways to increase access to technology-mediated training opportunities for early childhood staff from informal provider settings; to seek information from other business sectors about lessons learned from their training experiences to explore the potential for more strategic alliances among professional development organizations; and to investigate the prospects for E-rate assistance (discounted access to telecommunications services for libraries and schools) in all early childhood locations.

The group also saw the need for more research and information about the use of technology in early childhood education. In particular, discussants identified the need to better understand how the use of technology could be tailored to the unique learning needs of distinct provider populations comprising the early childhood workforce. They agreed that much of the focus of future research should address topics related to assessment of technology-mediated programs, instructor competence and the readiness, and expectations of the training participants. To inform strategic capacity building processes across the field, the early childhood professional development community is anxiously awaiting breakthrough information that can arise from these kinds of studies.

In addition to the exchange of ideas that occurred during the Chicago Meeting, the Child Care Bureau is committed to using the results of the meeting and this report to support the work of States in addressing the training needs of early care and education practitioners across the country. NCCIC has revised and updated two technology-related documents (Appendix C, *Distance Learning in Early Education*; and Appendix D, *States with Distance Learning Options*.) Highlights of the Chicago Meeting were shared informally at the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) Professional Development Institute in Baltimore in June 2004, and a roundtable discussion was convened at the annual State Child Care Administrators Meeting (SAM) in Washington, DC in July 2004. Looking ahead, a working session to develop a fundable strategic plan has been set for the NAEYC Annual Conference in Anaheim, CA in November 2004.

A Final Word

The shift from traditional face-to-face delivery of educational content to technology-mediated formats is the new reality of learning experiences available to early childhood practitioners. To be certain, this change of paradigm presents formidable challenges to teachers, learners, educational institutions, and professional development systems. In many ways, however, this shift also presents a fresh start that can be leveraged as an opportunity for shaping best training practices, improving learning outcomes, and most importantly providing for better experiences in child care and early learning settings that previously have been too difficult to reach by traditional means. The May 2004 meeting, “A Long-Awaited Conversation: Dialogue to Bridge the High-Tech/High-Touch Gap in Early Childhood Workforce Preparation and Professional Development,” was another step toward re-examining the way early childhood practitioner training can be delivered.

Meeting Brief

The opening session was convened by Shannon Rudisill, Director of Technical Assistance for the Child Care Bureau (CCB). After welcoming the participants and providing some introductory remarks, Shannon introduced Douglas Clark, a doctoral student in educational technology at Pepperdine University and convener of the Chicago Meeting. Doug greeted the participants and introduced Dr. Elizabeth Hawthorne, Dean of the National College of Education at National-Louis University (NLU). After formally welcoming the group to Chicago and National-Louis University, Liz provided a brief presentation about the NLU's historical ties to early childhood teacher preparation. Afterward, the meeting was turned over to Susan Rohrbough, Technical Assistance Specialist with the National Child Care Information Center (NCCIC). For the remainder of the two-day session, Susan served as the meeting facilitator.

Four topics were identified for meeting agenda:

- Topic 1:** Promising practices and models using technology as a mediator for the training and professional development of early care and education practitioners
- Topic 2:** Perspectives of learners
- Topic 3:** Lessons learned from pioneering experiences
- Topic 4:** Content, competencies, credentials, accountability, and results

The two-day summit was designed as a dialogue, with subgroups of participants serving as lead discussants throughout the meeting. After each of these four main sections, other meeting participants were designated to facilitate a brief full-group reflection to summarize the dialogue and identify key concepts and major themes that had emerged from the discussions.

PROMISING PRACTICES. The dialogue around Topic 1 was initiated by a group comprised by Lead Discussants Charlotte Brantley from PBS Ready to Learn; Jocelyn Tucker from the National Association for Family Child Care; Petra Luck from Liverpool Hope University College; and Patty Wells from the Better Kid Care initiative at Penn State University. The summarizing discussion for this session was facilitated by Shannon Rudisill of the Child Care Bureau.

LEARNER PERSPECTIVES. The dialogue around Topic 2 was initiated by a panel of four student-practitioners. The group was comprised by Allison Walker, Head Start Educational Coordinator from the Ounce of Prevention (Chicago) who had recently completed a Master's degree program that was a blend of online and on-campus coursework; Vernon Mason,

Meeting Brief, cont.

a preschool owner from North Carolina and current participant in an online cohort Master's degree program in early childhood administration; Meghan Ortiz, Assistant Director of a YWCA child care program; and Sarah Click, Illinois Network of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies. The summarizing discussion for this session was facilitated by Valerie Krajec of the Child Care Bureau.

LESSONS LEARNED. The dialogue around Topic 3 was initiated by a group comprised by Lead Discussants Cathie Harvey of RISE Learning Solutions; Susan Dion of Concordia University–St. Paul (MN); Chuck Lynd from The Early Childhood Quality Network at Ohio State University; and Jane Humphries from Center for Early Childhood Professional Development at University of Oklahoma. The summarizing discussion for this session was facilitated by Linda Saterfield from the Illinois Department of Human Services, Child Care Bureau.

CONTENT, COMPETENCIES, AND CREDENTIALS. The dialogue around Topic 4 was initiated by a group comprised by Lead Discussants Chip Donohue from the Early Childhood Professional Development Program at University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee; Maril Olson from the National Association for the Education of Young Children; Mary Beth Van Why from The Council for Professional Recognition; and Debra Torrence from Project CONTACT at the Frank Porter Graham Child Development Institute. The summarizing discussion for this session was facilitated by Kay Henderson from the Illinois State Board of Education, Early Childhood Division.

NEXT STEPS. To culminate the two days of dialogue, each participant was asked to share his/her thoughts about areas of consensus that had emerged from the discussions regarding key themes and next steps. The final thoughts of the participants were used to close the meeting, to identify next steps and individual commitments, and to compile the findings of the two-day dialogue.

Meeting Agenda



INVITATIONAL FORUM

*A Long-Awaited Conversation:
Dialogue to Bridge the High-Tech/High-Touch Gap
in Early Childhood Workforce Preparation and Professional Development*

CHICAGO MARRIOTT O'HARE
MAY 6 & 7, 2004

DAY I – THURSDAY, MAY 6, 2004

CHICAGO BALLROOM A/B

11:30 AM OPENING CONFERENCE LUNCHEON

1:30 PM HOTEL CHECK-IN & NETWORKING BREAK

2:15 PM FORUM WELCOME & INTRODUCTIONS

OVERVIEW of MEETING

➤ BACKGROUND and PURPOSE

➤ EXPECTED OUTCOMES

- Convene leaders/pioneers that are using technology in preservice preparation and/or in-service training;
- Create/Strengthen a community of learners focused on the use of technology in Early Childhood Workforce Preparation and Professional Development;
- Gain a more in-depth knowledge of the various technological approaches to early childhood training—both pre-service and in-service, of the techniques and processes used, and of the implications for training/education delivery systems;
- Identify resources and approaches that may impact State and national policy related to Early Childhood Professional Development.

➤ ROLE of INVITEES

- To discuss, share and examine pioneering approaches to training early care and education practitioners.
- To discuss challenging questions, shared learning and innovative training approaches.
- To identify strategies and lessons learned and share ideas.

**2:40 PM FRAMING OUR DIALOGUE: WHAT DO I BRING
to THIS DISCUSSION FORUM?**

3:30 PM PROMISING PRACTICES & MODELS

4:30 PM REFLECTIONS & CONSIDERATIONS

5:15 PM SUMMARIZING DAY I

**5:30 –
7:00 PM NETWORKING RECEPTION – LEADERSHIP
CONNECTIONS CONFERENCE**

Meeting Agenda, cont.

DAY II – FRIDAY, MAY 7, 2004

CHICAGO BALLROOM E

- 7:30 AM** CONTINENTAL BREAKFAST
- 8:30 AM** FORUM RECONVENES
- 8:45 AM** PANEL FROM the FIELD: LEARNERS SHARE THEIR PERSPECTIVES & KEY LEARNINGS
- 9:45 AM** REFLECTIONS & CONSIDERATIONS
- 10:15 AM** BREAK
- 10:30 AM** DELIVERY METHODS, PRACTICES & LESSONS LEARNED
- 11:30 AM** REFLECTIONS & CONSIDERATIONS
- ILLINOIS REGISTRY DEMONSTRATION – SHOWCASE UPDATE
- 12:30 PM** LUNCH
- 1:30 PM** CONTENT, COMPETENCIES, CREDENTIALS, ACCOUNTABILITY & RESULTS
- 2:30 PM** REFLECTIONS & CONSIDERATIONS
- 3:00 PM** BREAK
- 3:15 PM** WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?
- 4:45 PM** WRAP-UP & NEXT STEPS
- 5:30 PM** FORUM CONCLUDES

OPTIONAL DINNER: Forum participants are invited to have dinner with National-Louis University Graduate Students in Early Childhood Administration.

Administration for Children and Families

A Long-Awaited Conversation: Dialogue to Bridge the High-Tech/High-Touch Gap in Early Childhood Workforce Preparation and Professional Development

May 6–7, 2004
Chicago, Illinois

Participant List

Patricia Anderson

Assistant Professor
National-Louis University
200 South Naperville Road, Room 112
Wheaton, Illinois 60187
Telephone: 630-983-9901
Fax: 630-579-9910
E-mail: panderson@nl.edu

Paula Jorde Bloom

Director
The Center for Early Childhood Leadership
National-Louis University
6310 Capitol Drive
Wheeling, Illinois 60090
Telephone: 800-443-5522, ext. 7701
E-mail: pbloom@nl.edu

Charlotte Brantley

Senior Director
PBS Ready to Learn
1320 Braddock Place
Alexandria, Virginia 22314
Telephone: 703-739-5445
Fax: 703-739-7506
E-mail: cbrantley@pbs.org

Michael Butler

Project Officer
Administration for Children and Families
Office of Family and Child Development,
Head Start
U.S. Department of Health and Human
Services
233 North Michigan Avenue, Suite 400
Chicago, Illinois 60601
Telephone: 312-886-5359
Fax: 312-886-5373
E-mail: mibutler@acf.hhs.gov

Douglas Clark

Assistant Professor
Early Childhood Education
National College of Education
National-Louis University
1000 Capitol Drive
Wheeling, Illinois 60090
Telephone: 847-947-5062
Fax: 847-465-5910
E-mail: dclark@nl.edu

Susan Dion

Grants Faculty
PDI Director
Concordia University
275 Syndicate Avenue N
St. Paul, Minnesota 55105
Telephone: 651-603-6155
E-mail: dion@csp.edu

Chip Donohue

Program Director
Early Childhood Professional Development
Program
University of Wisconsin–Milwaukee
161 West Wisconsin Avenue, Suite 600
Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53203
Telephone: 414-227-3334
Fax: 414-227-3330
E-mail: cdonohue@uwm.edu

Catherine Helgoe Fett

Senior Project Manager/Developer
LEGO Educational Division
Research and Development
21 Dearborn Street
East Longmeadow, Massachusetts 01028
Telephone: 860-763-6936
Fax: 860-763-7741
E-mail: cathy.fett@america.lego.com

Irmgard Gruber

Chair
Early Childhood Education
Kendall College
2408 Orrington Avenue
Evanston, Illinois 60201
Telephone: 847-448-2342
Fax: 847-448-2403
E-mail: igruber@kendall.edu

Twila Hardaway

Educational Technology Doctoral Student
Pepperdine University
HC 75, P.O. Box 1337-7
Fort Davis, Texas 79734
Telephone: 432-426-3648
E-mail: twilahardaway@overland.net

Cathie Harvey

Vice President
Programs
RISE Learning Solutions
10490 Taconic Terrace
Cincinnati, Ohio 45215-1154
Telephone: 610-896-9060
Fax: 610-896-3126
E-mail: harvey@risetraining.org

Elizabeth Hawthorne

Dean
National College of Education
National-Louis University
122 South Michigan Avenue
Chicago, Illinois 60603
Telephone: 312-261-3380
E-mail: ehawthorne@nl.edu

Kay Henderson

Division Administrator
Early Childhood Education
Illinois State Board of Education
100 North First Street, E225
Springfield, Illinois 62777-0001
Telephone: 217-524-4835
Fax: 217-785-7849
E-mail: hhenders@isbe.net

Jane Humphries

Program Administrator II
Center for Early Childhood Professional
Development
The University of Oklahoma
1801 North Moore Avenue
Moore, Oklahoma 73160
Telephone: 405-799-6383
Fax: 405-799-7634
E-mail: jhumphries@ou.edu

APPENDIX B

Holly Knicker

Quality Program Manager
 Illinois Department of Human Services,
 Child Care and Development
 401 South Clinton Street, 3rd Floor
 Chicago, Illinois 60607
 Telephone: 312-793-3610
 Fax: 312-793-4881
 E-mail: dhsd6015@dhs.state.il.us

Valerie Krajec

Child Care Program Specialist
 Child Care Bureau
 Administration for Children and Families
 Administration on Children, Youth and
 Families
 U.S. Department of Health and Human
 Services
 Switzer Building, Room 2315
 330 C Street SW
 Washington, DC 20447
 Telephone: 202-401-5067
 Fax: 202-690-5600
 E-mail: vkrajec@acf.hhs.gov

Marjorie Lee

Professor and Department Chair
 Early Childhood Education
 National College of Education
 National-Louis University
 122 South Michigan Avenue
 Chicago, Illinois 60603
 Telephone: 312-261-3523
 E-mail: mwlee@nl.edu

Petra Luck

Liverpool Hope University College
 Hope Park
 Liverpool, United Kingdom L16 9JD
 Telephone: ++4 41512913744
 E-mail: luckp@hope.ac.uk

Chuck Lynd

Associate Director
 Information Technology Services
 Ohio State University Quality Network
 700 Ackerman Road, Suite 440
 Columbus, Ohio 43202-1559
 Telephone: 614-447-0844, ext. 122
 Fax: 614-447-9043
 E-mail: lynd.7@osu.edu

Susan Markko

Early Head Start Program Specialist
 Administration for Children and Families
 U.S. Department of Health and Human
 Services
 233 North Michigan Avenue, Suite 400
 Chicago, Illinois 60601
 Telephone: 312-353-9695
 Fax: 312-886-5373
 E-mail: susan.markko@acf.hhs.gov

Jan Maruna

Executive Director
 Illinois Network of Child Care Resource
 and Referral Agencies
 207 West Jefferson Street, Suite 503
 Bloomington, Illinois 61701
 Phone: 309-829-5327
 E-mail: jmaruna@ilchildcare.org

Nina Sazer O'Donnell

Vice President
 Families and Work Institute
 3405 Hillsborough Road, Suite B-24, #24
 Durham, North Carolina 27705
 Telephone: 919-477-7137
 Fax: 919-477-4257
 E-mail:
 nsazerodonnell@familiesandwork.org

Maril Olson

Project Coordinator
National Association for the Education of
Young Children
1509 16th Street NW
Washington, DC 20036
Telephone: 202-232-8777, ext. 12122
Fax: 202-234-6415
E-mail: molson@naeyc.org

Susan Rohrbough

State Technical Assistance Specialist
National Child Care Information Center
17596 Walnut Trail
Chagrin Falls, Ohio 44023
Telephone: 440-708-2852
Fax: 440-708-2852
E-mail: srohrbou@nccic.org

Shannon Rudisill

Director
Technical Assistance
Child Care Bureau
Administration for Children and Families
Administration on Children, Youth and
Families
U.S. Department of Health and Human
Services
Switzer Building, Room 2046
330 C Street SW
Washington, DC 20447
Telephone: 202-205-8051
Fax: 202-690-5600
E-mail: srudisill@acf.hhs.gov

Donna M. Ruiz

Academic Director
Early Childhood Learning Community
University of Cincinnati
4123 French Hall West, P.O. Box 210047
Cincinnati, Ohio 45221-0047
Telephone: 513-556-2620 or 888-325-2669
Fax: 513-556-3007

Linda Saterfield

State Child Care Administrator
Illinois Department of Human Services
400 West Laurence, 3rd Floor
Springfield, Illinois 62762
Telephone: 217-785-2559
Fax: 217-524-6030
E-mail: dhsd6501@dhs.state.il.us

Debra Torrence

Educational Planning and Program
Consultant
Frank Porter Graham Child
Development Institute
CB 8040
Chapel Hill, North Carolina 27599-8040
Telephone: 919-962-5777
Fax: 919-962-7463
E-mail: torrence@mail.fpg.unc.edu

Jocelyn Tucker

Accreditation Council Co-Chair
National Association for Family Child Care
1652 South Fairfax Avenue
Los Angeles, California 90019
Telephone: 323-964-0975
Fax: 323-937-4420
E-mail: jtucker4@hotmail.com

Mary Beth Van Why

Early Childhood Specialist II
Council for Professional Recognition
2460 16th Street NW
Washington, DC 20009-3575
Telephone: 202-265-9090, ext. 300
Fax: 202-265-9161
E-mail: maryv@cdacouncil.org

Tim Walker

Technology Coordinator
Center for Early Childhood Leadership
National-Louis University
6310 Capitol Drive
Wheeling, Illinois 60090
Telephone: 847-947-5054
Fax: 847-465-5910
E-mail: timwalker@nl.edu

Kathy Ward-Cameron

Subscriber Relations Manager
HeadsUp! Network
National Head Start Association
191 Stuarton Drive
Wheaton, IL 60187
Telephone: 630-699-2685
E-mail: kwcameron@aol.com

Patty Wells

Assistant Director of Distance Education
Penn State Better Kid Care
253 Easterly Parkway
State College, Pennsylvania 16801
Telephone: 814-865-9837
Fax: 814-865-7893
E-mail: plw8@psu.edu

Debra Windham

Director
HeadsUp! Network
National Head Start Association
917 Rothowood Road
Lynchburg, Virginia 24503
Telephone: 434-386-9477
Fax: 434-386-9477
E-mail: dwindham@nhsa.org

Mary Wynne

Director
Professional Development
Minnesota Child Care Resource and Referral
Network
380 Lafayette Road, Suite 103
St. Paul, Minnesota 55107
Telephone: 651-290-9704, ext. 104
Fax: 651-290-9785
E-mail: maryw@mnchildcare.org



National Child Care Information Center

A service of the Child Care Bureau

243 Church Street NW, 2nd Floor
Vienna, Virginia 22180

Phone: (800) 616-2242 Fax: (800) 716-2242 TTY: (800) 516-2242

World Wide Web: <http://nccic.org>



DISTANCE LEARNING in EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

Comprehensive professional development systems for early care and education personnel are accessible and based on a clearly articulated framework; include a continuum of training and ongoing supports; define pathways that are tied to licensure, leading to qualifications and credentials; and address the needs of individual, adult learners. Enhancing a spirit of life-long learning is one goal of any professional development system; similar to this goal, a professional development system itself is never a finished product and should continually evolve and be refined to best meet the needs of the population it serves.

Within professional development systems there are several interconnected components. These components fall under five broad elements: 1) Funding; 2) Core Knowledge; 3) Qualifications and Credentials; 4) Quality Assurances; and 5) Access and Outreach. A one-page document that outlines and defines this simplified framework is available on the Web at <http://nccic.org/pubs/goodstart/pdsystem.html> or in PDF format at <http://nccic.org/pubs/goodstart/pdsystem.pdf>.

Distance learning is a component of the Access and Outreach element of a professional development system. States are expanding training delivery systems for child care providers in order to make additional training and education more accessible. States also are accepting a greater variety of training—including distance-learning courses (such as correspondence courses, video conferencing, Web-based correspondence, etc.)—as a way for providers to satisfy licensing and/or additional education requirements.

The following are examples of different methods and approaches to distance learning in early childhood education, such as correspondence courses, Internet/Web-based courses, interactive medial courses, satellite training courses, television/video courses, and programs that use a combination of methods. Also included is a sample of distance-learning resources.

COORESPONDENCE COURSES

- **California College for Health Sciences (CCHS)**
5295 South Commerce Drive
Salt Lake City, UT 84107
800-791-7353 or 619-477-4800
World Wide Web: <http://www.cchs.edu>

CCHS is a nationally accredited, degree-granting institution that offers an Associate of Science degree in Early Childhood Education entirely via correspondence. CCHS has courses in child

development, program planning, and administration. It has organized the degree programs to mesh with national certification programs for early childhood professionals, such as the Child Development Associate (CDA) credential from the Council for Early Childhood Professional Recognition, and the Child Care Professional (CCP) credential from the National Child Care Association. These credentials can be credited toward completion of the Associate of Science degree. The program is accredited by the Commission of Career Schools and Colleges of Technology and the Commission of the Distance Education and Training Council.

■ **CARE Courses**

P.O. Box 10526
McLean, VA 22102-8526
703-448-1800
800-685-7610

World Wide Web: <http://www.carecourses.com>

CARE Courses, a correspondence school for child care providers, offers training to help child care providers obtain their Child Development Associate (CDA) or Child Care Professional (CCP) credentials. Many States also allow child care providers to use the courses for their annual clock hour requirements. Information on each State's requirements is available on the Web at <http://www.carecourses.com/states.htm>.

■ **North American Montessori Center**

13469 27th Avenue
Surrey, British Columbia V4P1Z1
Canada
877-531-6665

World Wide Web: <http://www.montessoritraining.net>

North American Montessori Center has been in operation since 1996, providing professional distance-education programs to educators throughout North America and around the globe. The North American Montessori Center is registered with the Private Post-Secondary Education Commission, the National Association of Career Colleges, and the International Montessori Council. It offers distance-learning courses for early childhood educators desiring to obtain their Montessori Teaching Diploma. Students can enroll in the correspondence course at any time. The program is divided into three separate segments. Each segment must be completed within a two-month period, for a total of approximately seven consecutive months. Students enrolled in the correspondence course receive the identical manuals and instructional materials as those provided to local students at the Vancouver Training Centers. The program is offered with specializations in infant/toddler, preschool/kindergarten, and elementary education.

■ **Professional Career Development Institute (PCDI)**

430 Technology Parkway
Norcross, GA 30092
800-362-7070

World Wide Web: <http://www.pcdi.com>

PCDI offers the Professional Child Day Care Program, an 18-lesson home study course, and the Teacher Assistant Program. These courses are accredited by the Accrediting Commission of the Distance Education and Training Council, a nationally recognized accrediting agency for distance-learning schools sponsored by the U.S. Department of Education. Additional information is available on the Web at <http://www.pcdi-homestudy.com/courses/az>.

INTERNET/WEB-BASED COURSES

■ Child Care Resources

127 East Main Suite 314
Missoula, MT 59802
406-728-6446 or 800-728-6446

World Wide Web: <http://www.childcaretraining.org/>

In 2001, Child Care Resources began developing online training units. Child Care Resources' online courses have been approved in 22 States—**Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Florida, Georgia, Idaho, Illinois, Michigan, Minnesota, Montana, Nevada, New York, North Dakota, Ohio, Oklahoma, Oregon, South Dakota, Texas, Utah, Washington, and Wyoming**—and are currently in the approval process for several other States. The online courses can be applied toward annual training to meet licensing requirements in other States that do not require pre-approval of training. Additional information is available on the Web at <http://www.childcaretraining.org/approved.php?PHPSESSID=23a833abad946573fe7444cffb9a243a>.

■ Concordia University

College of Graduate and Continuing Studies
275 North Syndicate Street
St. Paul, MN 55104-5434
800-211-3370

World Wide Web: <http://www.csp.edu>

Concordia University offers both an online Master of Arts in education, with an early childhood or school-age/youth development emphasis, and Baccalaureate degrees in child/school-age/youth development. After a five-day residency on the campus of Concordia University, students can complete the degree from their home.

Concordia University also has a wide variety of credit and non-credit based courses on early childhood, school-age and youth topics, as well as topics in other human service areas available through the continuing education department. The University also offers an online AA degree program.

■ Eager-to-Learn

380 Lafayette Road, #103
St. Paul, MN 55107
651-290-9704

World Wide Web: <http://www.mnchildcare.org/index.html/>

Eager-to-Learn, a program of the Minnesota Child Care Resource & Referral Network, is designed to provide high-quality, affordable educational opportunities using electronic or e-learning technologies and experienced, knowledgeable instructors. The program also features information and education about e-learning, links to other e-learning sites, and a virtual meeting site for professional early childhood and school-age groups. The goal of this collaborative program is to provide a viable alternative for delivering rich learning experiences in a setting that reduces geographic, economic, and other barriers of traditional professional development. Courses can be completed for in-service hours and Continuing Education Units (CEU) (a credit option is available for some courses).

■ **Frank Porter Graham (FPG) Child Development Institute**

The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

Campus Box 8180

Chapel Hill, NC 27599-8180

919-966-4814

World Wide Web: <http://www.fpg.unc.edu/>

FPG is expanding early childhood distance learning. Project CONTACT (College Opportunity Networks & Technology Access for Child Care Teachers) is a research and training project designed to develop a model system of delivery and support for early childhood college courses offered on the Internet. This distance-learning effort will afford child care teachers with an opportunity to earn college credits from work, home, a college campus, or a community base. CONTACT also seeks to build the capacity of the community college system to offer early childhood education to their students at a distance. Additional information, along with distance-learning tools and distance-learning projects, is available on the Web at <http://www.fpg.unc.edu/~contact/index.cfm>.

Project CONTACT is partnered with the North Carolina Community College System (NCCCS). Their Early Childhood Studies Web site is available at <http://www.ncccs.cc.nc.us/Perkins/EarlyChildhoodStudies/earlyChildhoodStudies.htm>. In addition, information on distance learning through NCCCS is available on the Web at http://www.ncccs.cc.nc.us/Distance_Learning/index.html. This site offers links to the individual community colleges and the courses they offer.

■ **Kendall College**

900 North North Branch Street

Chicago, IL 60622

312-752-2445 or 877-588-8860

World Wide Web: www.kendall.edu

Kendall College offers an online Bachelor's of Arts program in Early Childhood Education. Kendall is a nationally accredited, degree-granting institution which allows students to complete their Bachelor's degree and Illinois Type 04 Certification in Early Childhood Education. Currently, 300 and 400 level courses are offered online. Those coming into the program tend to have an Associate's degree or a Bachelor's degree in another field. As part of this program, an endorsement in Early Childhood Special Education is offered. Additional information about the

early childhood education degree programs is available on the Web at http://www.kendall.edu/index.cfm/fuseaction/academics.school_detail/object_id/161693F7-1A3A-494D-BCB4-76BDD34F695C/EarlyChildhoodEducationEarlyChildhoodEducation.cfm.

■ **National-Louis University**

The Center for Early Childhood Leadership
6310 Capitol Drive
Wheeling, IL 60090
800-443-5522, ext. 5056

World Wide Web: <http://cecl.nl.edu/#questions>

National-Louis University's online cohort graduate degree program in Early Childhood Administration (ECA) is both "high-tech and high-touch." The 24-month sequence begins with a six-day residency in June. At this Convening Residency, participants meet other members of their cohort group and develop technology skills. A six-day Connecting Residency occurs the following spring and again at the end of the cohort sequence. All other coursework is taken online and is entirely Web-based. The Masters in Education (MEd) option is designed for students who have a Baccalaureate degree. The Certificate of Advanced Studies (CAS) is designed for students who already have a Master's degree in education. The ECA online cohort does not lead to teacher certification.

■ **Northampton Community College Distance Learning**

3835 Green Pond Road
Bethlehem, PA 18020
610-861-5300

World Wide Web: <http://www.northampton.edu/>

Northampton Community College makes its entire early childhood education Associate's of Applied Science degree program available online. In addition to a full Associate's degree, it offers online specialized diplomas in family child care and school-age child care. Additional information is available on the Web at <http://www.northampton.edu/distancelearn/index.htm>.

■ **Pacific Oaks College and Children's School**

Office of Admissions
5 Westmoreland Place
Pasadena, CA 91103
800-684-0900 or 626-397-1300

World Wide Web: <http://www.pacificoaks.edu>

Pacific Oaks College offers upper division classes online. Students can earn a Master's and a Baccalaureate degree in human development, a post-graduate certificate in early childhood education, a teaching credential in early childhood special education, and optional specializations in child care, early childhood education, or in infants and toddlers. All online degree students are required to take at least two on-site classes.

- **Western Washington University**
Extended Education and Summer Programs
MS 5293 WWU
516 High Street
Bellingham, WA 98225
360-650-3308
World Wide Web: <http://www.wce.wwu.edu/depts/hs>

Western Washington University offers courses that concentrate on the care of children birth to age 5. Classes were developed in collaboration with Head Start and Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program (ECEAP) representatives. Students receive a certificate when all 12 credits have been successfully completed. Additional information is available on the Web at <http://www.acadweb.wwu.edu/eesp/distance/default.asp>.

- **Working with Young Children**
Office of Continuing Education
University of Wisconsin-Stout
Vocational Rehabilitation Building, Room 140
Menomonie, WI 54751-0790
1-800-457-8688
World Wide Web: <http://www.uwstout.edu/solutions/cc/eceweb/home.htm>

The Working with Young Children On-line Early Childhood Education program is designed to enhance the training and knowledge base for early childhood educators and administrators. The child care professional can earn continuing education units (CEUs) by demonstrating competency of the materials covered for either initial or renewal certification. While this program is based in Wisconsin, early childhood professionals from across the United States can participate.

One continuing education unit is equivalent to ten training hours. Competency is demonstrated by completing a written test for each part of the training with 85 percent accuracy. A CEU Certificate of Completion will be sent to students who successfully complete their program. The program consists of five parts. An individual may register for one or more parts, depending on their educational needs. Each part contains from one to 11 chapters. A written test is required at the end of each chapter with a combined total of 85 percent accuracy to successfully complete the part.

INTERACTIVE MEDIA COURSES

- **State University of New York (SUNY)**
Early Childhood Education and Training Program
SUNY Training Strategies Group
State University Plaza
Albany, NY 12246-0001
518-443-5940
World Wide Web: <http://www.tsg.suny.edu/vcmain.htm>

SUNY Early Childhood Education and Training Program offers video conference training on various topics at several sites in New York. The program consists of a live broadcast, discussions with panelists, activities, resource materials, and training.

■ **University of Wisconsin-Extension**

702 Langdon Street
Madison, WI 53706-1487
608-262-3465

World Wide Web: <http://www.uwex.edu/disted/catalog/>

The University provides distance-education programs via video teleconference in remote locations throughout the State. Certificate and degree programs are available. A wide variety of courses are offered, including psychology of childhood and adolescence.

■ **Early Childhood News Professional Development Program**

800-933-2829

World Wide Web: http://www.earlychildhood.com/community/news/news_index.asp

The University of Wisconsin-Stout has developed the Professional Development Program which can be used independently by family child care providers or child care center staff. Early childhood specialists write articles based on Child Development Associate (CDA) competency areas and Child Care Professional (CCP) ability areas which are published in bi-monthly issues of *Early Childhood News* magazine. Registered participants in the Professional Development Program can read these designated articles, take a quiz printed in alternate issues of the magazine, and receive credit in the form of Continuing Education Units (CEUs).

SATELLITE TRAINING COURSES

■ **HeadsUp! Reading**

National Head Start Association (NHSA)

1651 Prince Street
Alexandria, VA 22314
800-438-4888

World Wide Web: <http://www.heads-up.org>

HeadsUp! Reading is a distance-learning college course delivered via satellite television that is supported and expanded by information available on the Web. Training is delivered directly into child care programs and is taught by a diverse faculty of experts in early childhood and literacy. The course offers a variety of professional development credits, including Continuing Education Units (CEUs) and credit at more than 140 colleges nationwide.

This collaborative project, led by the National Head Start Association and its partners, the Council for Professional Recognition and RISE Learning Solutions, delivers professional development to early educators, parents, and child care providers at approximately 700 sites in 47 States nationwide. Additional information is available on the Web at

<http://www.huronline.org>.

■ **Winning Teams®**

800-436-2067

World Wide Web: <http://www.winningteams.org/>

Winning Teams® is a 27-hour, interactive course presented in three segments: “Nurturing the Young Learner,” “Guiding Behavior,” and “Learning to Read and Write.” Winning Teams® is delivered via live, satellite television broadcasts and in-person workshops, with a Web site for additional support. The content focuses on children birth to 5 and is designed for early childhood staff, family child care providers, and parents. Additional options such as webcasting, simultaneous translation, and captioning are available.

Winning Teams® includes video examples from diverse homes and classrooms. It is produced by RISE Learning Solutions and is based on current research. It directly aligns with most States’ early learning guidelines. Winning Teams® has been independently evaluated and qualifies participants for continuing education units (CEUs), including initial CDA credential hours. It can be used as the basis of a college course or independent study.

TELEVISION/VIDEO COURSES

■ **Annenberg/Corporation of Public Broadcasting Project (CPB)**

1301 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW #302

Washington, DC 20004

202-783-0500

800-532-7637 (video sales and customer service)

World Wide Web: <http://www.learner.org>

The Annenberg/CPB Project is a video series and Public Broadcasting Station broadcast on developmental education and care from birth to age 5 called *The Whole Child: A Caregiver’s Guide to the First Five Years* (1997) (available in both Spanish and English). A textbook, student guide, faculty guide, and parent guide are available to accompany the series. It is a complete curriculum adaptable for the Child Development Associate credential and teacher certification, and can be licensed as a college telecourse for distant learners. For further information about how this series can be licensed and accessed as a college telecourse, visit the Adult Learning Service on the Web at <http://www.pbs.org/als/>.

■ **National Child Care Association (NCCA)**

Institute for Professional Development

1016 Rosser Street

Conyers, GA 30012

800-543-7161

World Wide Web: <http://www.nccanet.org>

NCCA offers the Professional Development Video Series designed to meet the professional development needs of the broad diversity of individuals working in early childhood care and educational settings. The video series provides in-depth coverage of each of the professional ability areas required for the Child Care Professional (CCP) Credential.

COMBINATION OF METHODS**■ The Better Kid Care Program**

Penn State Better Kid Care
253 Easterly Parkway
State College, PA 16801
814-863-0339

World Wide Web: <http://betterkidcare.psu.edu/page06.html>

The Better Kid Care Program focuses on improving the availability, accessibility, and quality of child care in Pennsylvania. This is accomplished in several ways, including satellite workshops, training workshops, and video learn-at-home units for family and group home training. The Better Kid Care Program is offered nationwide through the outreach system of Cooperative Extension of the National Network for Child Care.

■ Loyalist College

Early Childhood Education Distance Education Program
Walbridge-Loyalist Road, P.O. Box 4200
Bellevue, Ontario K8N 5B9
Canada
613-969-1913, extension 2383
888-LOYALIST

World Wide Web: <http://www.loyalistic.on.ca/>

Loyalist College offers an Early Childhood Education Diploma that takes two years to complete. Each course is designed to offer a wide variety of choice as to when and how students learn. Activities, self-tests, and projects are used for students to monitor their own progress and to receive feedback and guidance from their instructor. Electronic conference areas provide the opportunity to discuss material with other students taking the same course. Additional information is available on the Web at <http://www.loyalistic.on.ca/learn/programs/ECEP.html>.

■ RISE Learning Solutions, Inc. (RISE)

10490 Taconic Terrace
Cincinnati, OH 45215
800-971-7473

World Wide Web: <http://www.risetraining.org>

RISE is a national, nonprofit organization dedicated to providing quality, cost-efficient professional development services to geographically dispersed audiences. RISE uses high-production-value video; live, interactive television; CD-ROM's; the Internet; and trained, on-site facilitators to provide professional development for teachers, administrators, and parents. The RISE training programs have provided professional development to Head Start programs, public preschool teachers throughout Ohio, and to early childhood professionals in California.

- **University of Cincinnati (UC)**
Early Childhood Learning Community (ECLC)
P.O. Box 210047
Cincinnati, Ohio 45221
888-325-2669
World Wide Web: <http://www.teachered.uc.edu/eclc/>

The Early Childhood Learning Community (ECLC) is designed to prepare students to work in preschools, child care centers, and other specialized settings serving young children. Courses concentrate on child development, developmentally appropriate practices for young children, and child guidance strategies. The curriculum also includes course work in English, math, the humanities, and social sciences with the opportunity to plan and implement developmentally appropriate environments for young children. In general, students watch the lecture series which have been taped previously. Video and CD/DVD sets are available for lease and students with high speed Internet access can view the lectures series free on their computer. Much of the interaction between students, and between students and the instructor, is accomplished over the Internet.

ADDITIONAL DISTANCE-EDUCATION RESOURCES

- **Distance Education Clearinghouse**
Instructional Communications Systems
University of Wisconsin-Extension
The Pyle Center
702 Langdon Street
Madison, WI 53711
World Wide Web: <http://www.uwex.edu/disted/home.html>

The Distance Education Clearinghouse provides electronic access to a wide range of information about distance education. The Clearinghouse is a shared project with the University of Wisconsin-Extension's partners in distance education. Information on technologies, program and course offerings, instructional design, and many other aspects of distance education is available.

- **Distance Education and Training Council (DETC)**
1601 18th Street NW
Washington, DC 20009
202-234-5100
World Wide Web: <http://www.detc.org>

DETC is a nonprofit educational association that serves as a clearinghouse of information about the distance study/correspondence field. The organization also sponsors a nationally recognized accrediting agency called the Accrediting Commission of the Distance Education and Training Council. DETC has a directory of accredited institutions available online. In addition, there is information available on institutions with degrees programs and college credit recommendations.

- **World Wide Learn**
Box 172, Suite 100
1039-17th Avenue, SW
Calgary, Alberta
Canada T2T 0B2
403-802-6116
World Wide Web: <http://www.worldwidelearn.com/>

World Wide Learn is a directory of online courses, accredited online degrees, continuing education, online training, and online education. “Online Early Childhood Education Degree Programs” provides resources about degree programs offered by accredited colleges, universities and education institutions. In addition, “Early Childhood Education and Child Development Programs” provides resources on online and distance-learning certificate and diploma programs offered by accredited colleges, universities, and education institutions. This resource is available on the Web at <http://www.worldwidelearn.com/career-training/early-childhood-development.htm>.

PUBLICATIONS

- *Guide to Effective Practices for Online Professional Development* (July 2003), endorsed by the Minnesota Early Childhood & School-Age Trainers Association, is a collection of current thinking and practice from several nationally and locally recognized institutions, organizations, and individuals representing both academic and non-academic learning environments. The Guide was created to promote a common understanding of the elements that constitute quality within an Internet-based educational environment by applying elements from traditional instruction to define quality in an online learning environment. The purpose of the Guide is to assist the wide variety of institutions/organizations, instructors, and students that make up professional development efforts in the field of early childhood and school-age care. Institutions and instructors can use the Guide to help plan future online professional development opportunities and assess current ones. Likewise, students, promoters, program administrators, and regulators will find this Guide useful in assessing the quality of online programs. This resource is available on the Web at <http://etl.mnchildcare.org/effective.pdf>.

- “Promising Directions for Early Childhood Professional Development” (March 2003), in *Child Care Information Exchange*, compiled by Chip Donohue, discusses what to look for in an online course before enrolling, including: content and instructional design of the course, the learning experience one would have as a student, and the student support/customer service offered. This article includes a directory of online degree, certificate, and credential programs for early childhood professionals. For more information contact Chip Donohue at cdonohue@uwn.edu. Additional information is available on the Web at https://secure.ccie.com/catalog/product_info.php?products_id=5015089.

- *Technology and Early Childhood Professional Development: A Policy Discussion* (2002) by the KnowledgeWorks Foundation, provides a summary of the presentations and discussions held at a meeting hosted by the Education Commission of the States and the KnowledgeWorks

Foundation on July 8–9, 2002. The report concludes with 10 recommendations that promote the use of technology to better prepare early childhood professionals. The chapters of this report include: 1) “Using Technology in Early Childhood Professional Development”; 2) “Does Distance Learning Get Results for Early Childhood Educators”; 3) “Access for All in Distance Learning”; 4) “Articulation and Accreditation”; 5) “Implementation and Funding”; 6) “Recommendations”; and 7) “Resources.” This resource is available on the Web at http://www.kwfdn.org/Resources/tech_report_jul02/index.html.

■ *Distance Learning Resource Guide: Education and Technology Issues* (revised April 2002), by Nanette Lofaro, Leslie Anderson Morales, and Linda Nainis, with the Head Start Information and Publication Center, contains a range of resources, including selected journal articles and conference proceedings; book and journal titles; distance learning organizations and associations; and Internet sites which direct the user to additional resources on distance learning. Particular focus is on emerging educational and technology issues in distance learning: state-of-the-art technology, programs for adult learners, and educational challenges to teachers and students in this type of learning environment. This resource is available on the Web at http://www.headstartinfo.org/infocenter/guides/dl_intro.htm.

■ “Early Childhood Education: Distance Learning for Teachers Adds a New Dimension” (Fall 2001), in *Carnegie Reporter*, by the Carnegie Corporation of New York, describes HeadsUp! Reading and its impact in the field of early childhood education. This resource is available on the Web at <http://www.carnegie.org/reporter/03/chidhooded/>.

■ *Effectiveness of Internet Training for Child Caregivers: Mastering Early Childhood Course Content and Learner Satisfaction: A Comparison of Regular Classroom Instruction with Three Variations of Internet Delivery Via the Penn State World Campus* (December 2000), by James Johnson, Richard Fiene, Joyce Iutcovich, and Jane Keat, compares one course taught by the same instructor in four delivery formats: (1) in a regular classroom, (2) in a computer lab via the Internet with opportunities for interaction with peers and the instructor, (3) on the Internet as part of a local distance-education group with limited opportunities for face-to-face interaction with peers and the instructor, and (4) on the Internet as part of a Statewide distance-education group where there were no opportunities for face-to-face interaction. Evaluation of learning outcomes indicated significant gains in knowledge for the classroom group, whereas the learning in the three Internet-based instruction groups did not show the same gains. This resource is available on the Web at <http://ecti.hbg.psu.edu/docs/publication/ccitarticle2.doc>.

■ *National Directory of Early Childhood Teacher Preparation Institutions, Fourth Edition* (2000), by the Council for Professional Recognition and the National Center for Early Development and Learning (NCEDL), provides lists of each university/college with a relevant distance-learning program. The directory is available on the Council for Professional Recognition Web site at <http://www.cdacouncil.org>. For additional information, contact the Council for Professional Recognition at 800-424-4310 or 202-265-9090.

- *Think Global, Document Local: Using Data and Information Technologies to Move the Early Childhood Agenda* (2000), by the Carnegie Corporation of New York and The Finance Project, describes the use of data and information technologies by children’s initiatives in specific localities and States across the nation. It describes the challenges involved in data collections and initiatives which have used data and information technologies to mobilize public support for improving early care and education; illustrates the use of data and information technologies to improve the planning and delivery of services; and discusses issues that the early childhood field will face as it moves into the future. A copy of this document is available on the Web at <http://www.financeproject.org/resource.htm> or contact The Finance Project at 202-628-4200.

- “Collaborative Course Development in Early Childhood Special Education through Distance Learning” (1999), in *Early Childhood Research & Practice*, describes the current status of distance-education methods for personnel preparation programs in early childhood special education (ECSE). This resource is available on the Web at <http://ecrp.uiuc.edu/v1n1/>.

- *NCES Fast Facts: Distance Learning*, by the National Center for Education Statistics, U.S. Department of Education, provides data on distance education at postsecondary institutions and information about distance-learning initiatives at the elementary and secondary level. This resource is on the Web at <http://nces.ed.gov/fastfacts/display.asp?id=80>.

- “Building a Working Policy for Distance Education” (Fall 1997), a journal in the *New Directions for Community Colleges* series, published by the Educational Resources Information Center Clearinghouse for Community Colleges (ERIC/JC), includes articles that show how community colleges across the country are taking the lead in shaping distance-education policy at the State, Federal, and institutional level. The articles in this journal are described on the Web at <http://www.josseybass.com/WileyCDA/WileyTitle/productCd-0787998427.html>. The complete publication is available through Jossey-Bass Publishers, Inc. at 877-762-2974.

The National Child Care Information Center does not endorse any organization, publication, or resource.



National Child Care Information Center

A service of the Child Care Bureau

243 Church Street NW, 2nd Floor
Vienna, Virginia 22180

Phone: (800) 616-2242 Fax: (800) 716-2242 TTY: (800) 516-2242

World Wide Web: <http://nccic.org>

STATES with DISTANCE LEARNING OPTIONS

Comprehensive professional development systems for early care and education personnel are accessible and based on a clearly articulated framework; include a continuum of training and ongoing supports; define pathways that are tied to licensure, leading to qualifications and credentials; and address the needs of individual, adult learners. Enhancing a spirit of life-long learning is one goal of any professional development system; similar to this goal, a professional development system itself is never a finished product and should continually evolve and be refined to best meet the needs of the population it serves.

Within professional development systems there are several interconnected components. These components fall under five broad elements: 1) Funding; 2) Core Knowledge; 3) Qualifications and Credentials; 4) Quality Assurances; and 5) Access and Outreach. A one-page document that outlines and defines this simplified framework is available on the Web at <http://nccic.org/pubs/goodstart/pdsystem.html> or in PDF format at <http://nccic.org/pubs/goodstart/pdsystem.pdf>.

Distance learning is a component of the Access and Outreach element of a professional development system. States are expanding training delivery systems for child care providers in order to make additional training and education more accessible. States also are accepting a greater variety of training—including distance-education courses (such as correspondence courses, video conferencing, Web-based correspondence, etc.)—as a way for providers to satisfy licensing and/or additional education requirements. The following State examples provide information on early childhood professional development systems available on the Web that have a distance-learning component.

STATES

Alaska

- **Child Care Connection Resource and Referral Agency**

World Wide Web: <http://www.childcareconnection.org>

Alaska Child Care Connection's Resource Development Program helps child care providers with appropriate training to provide better early care and education experiences for children and families. Training opportunities include early childhood and school-age workshops, mini-courses, and seminars on a variety of topics including health and safety, child development basics, Child Development Associate (CDA) credential training, family child care, training of trainers, technical assistance, and child care administration. Recognizing that providers in rural areas have fewer training opportunities, Child Care Connection does have several distance delivery training options and is in the process of developing additional training modules. Additional information

on professional development and training is available on the Web at http://www.childcareconnection.org/ps/ps_ccc_trainings.htm.

■ **University of Alaska**

World Wide Web: <http://ece-distance.alaska.edu/index.html>

The University of Alaska offers a distance-delivered Associate's of Applied Science degree in early childhood education. The program reaches students all over the State in over 25 tiny villages, many small towns and several cities via audio-conference, e-mail, faxing, and computer conferencing. The Web site includes information about course schedules and instructors.

California

■ **Child Development Training Institute**

World Wide Web: <http://www.childdevelopment.org/schoverview.htm>

The Web site of the Child Development Training Institute maintains a schedule of Non-traditional Classes and Trainings in early childhood education, including online classes. A search engine is available for prospective students to search for online courses in their local area that are offered for credit or professional development hours.

Colorado

■ **Colorado Community Colleges Online**

World Wide Web: <http://www.cconline.org/>

The Early Childhood Professions Program is designed to prepare people to work with young children in a variety of settings. The Group Leader and Director Certifications are designed to meet the educational requirements established by the Colorado Department of Human Services. People who wish to work in licensed early childhood care and education programs may complete the certification sequence of courses for Group Leaders or Directors and may also go on to earn a two-year degree at many of the State's community colleges. All courses needed for Group Leader or Director certificates are available online and are accepted at most of the State's community colleges. Additional information is available on the Web at http://www.cconline.org/courses/homepage_ece.htm.

Indiana

■ The Indiana Family and Social Services Administration and its partners continue to seek opportunities to deliver high-quality instruction and certification to child care providers throughout Indiana. An Online Child Development Associate (CDA) credential is available to meet the needs of providers in areas of the State with little or no access to traditional education. Students can take these classes when it is convenient and when they have access to a computer. Additional information is available on the Web at <http://www.in.gov/fssa/childcarelearning/>.

Kentucky

■ **Kentucky's STEPS Training and Outreach Project**

World Wide Web: <http://www.ihdi.uky.edu/stepsweb>

STEPS (Sequenced Transition to Education in the Public Schools) provides training and consultative services in the following areas:

- Developing community wide transition systems;
- Team building;
- Effective meeting strategies;
- Interagency and collaborative issues;
- Assessing and facilitating social and behavioral skills for transition;
- Leadership;
- Effective training skills; and
- Conflict resolution.

Assessing Social, Behavioral and Functional Skills for Preschool Populations is a current Web-based training that is being offered on their Web site. Additional information is available on the Web at <http://www.ihdi.uky.edu/stepsweb/hels/>.

Minnesota

■ Eager-to-Learn

380 Lafayette Road, #103
St. Paul, MN 55107
651-290-9704

World Wide Web: <http://www.mnchildcare.org/index.html/>

Eager-to-Learn, a program of the Minnesota Child Care Resource & Referral Network, is designed to provide high-quality, affordable educational opportunities using electronic or e-learning technologies and experienced, knowledgeable instructors. The program also features information and education about e-learning, links to other e-learning sites, and a virtual meeting site for professional early childhood and school-age groups. The goal of this collaborative program is to provide a viable alternative for delivering rich learning experiences in a setting that reduces geographic, economic, and other barriers of traditional professional development. Courses can be completed for in-service hours and Continuing Education Units (CEU) (a credit option is available for some courses).

Nebraska

■ Nebraska's Early Childhood Training Center (ECTC)

World Wide Web: <http://www.esu3.org/ectc/>

ECTC provides support and training to staff working with young Nebraska children and their families, and serves as a resource to parents and families about parenting. The section of the ECTC Web Site, Training and Consultation, provides information on training topics; consultation services; an information "Child Line"; registry; Nebraska training partners; regional training coalitions; and Statewide staff development. ECTC supports a broad array of training initiatives through direct participation and media services.

The University of Nebraska Cooperative Extension is a Nebraska Training Partner; they offer an independent study course for early childhood professionals via the internet. Information on Nebraska's Training Partners is available on the Web at <http://www.esu3.org/ectc/train/Regional.html>. Information on the University of Nebraska Cooperative Extension program is available on the Web at <http://nerec.unl.edu/childcare.htm>.

New York

■ New York State Early Childhood Education Online

World Wide Web: <http://www.nyseceonline.suny.edu/default.htm>

Several colleges in the State University of New York (SUNY) system offer early childhood education courses online. All courses are credit-bearing and taught by the college faculty. This Web site includes a listing of all courses by campus, course descriptions, and a sample online course. Also, on the Web site is *A Guide to Distance Learning: For Early Childhood Students in the SUNY System* available at <http://www.nyseceonline.suny.edu/gdl01.html>.

North Carolina

■ North Carolina Institute for Early Childhood Professional Development

World Wide Web: <http://www.ncchildcare.org>

This Web site provides support and information for those who are interested in professional development opportunities. The section Education Opportunities lists various college credit course work and credit paths available, including certification or degree via distance learning.

■ Frank Porter Graham (FPG) Child Development Institute

The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

Campus Box 8180

Chapel Hill, NC 27599-8180

919-962-5777

World Wide Web: <http://www.fpg.unc.edu/>

FPG is expanding early childhood distance learning. Project CONTACT (College Opportunity Networks & Technology Access for Child Care Teachers) is a research and training project designed to develop a model system of delivery and support for early childhood college courses offered on the Internet. This distance learning effort will afford child care teachers with an opportunity to earn college credits from work, home, a college campus, or a community base. CONTACT also seeks to build the capacity of the community college system to offer early childhood education to their students at a distance. Additional information, along with distance-learning tools and distance learning projects, is available on the Web at <http://www.fpg.unc.edu/~contact/index.cfm>.

Project CONTACT is partnered with the North Carolina Community College System (NCCCS). Their Early Childhood Studies Web site is available at <http://www.ncccs.cc.nc.us/Perkins/EarlyChildhoodStudies/earlyChildhoodStudies.htm>. In addition, information on distance learning through NCCCS is available on the Web at http://www.ncccs.cc.nc.us/Distance_Learning/index.html. This site offers links to the individual community colleges and the courses they offer.

Oklahoma

■ Entry Level Child Care Training (ELCCT) Online

World Wide Web: <http://www.cecpd.org/Child%20Care%20Careers/elcctonline.htm>

ELCCT Online, part of the Center for Early Childhood Professional Development (CECPD), College of Continuing Education, University of Oklahoma, meets the child care center licensing

requirement for the entry-level training for the first 90 days of employment. Additional information on CECPD is available on the Web at <http://www.cecpd.org/>.

Wisconsin

■ Wisconsin Training Network

World Wide Web: <http://www.t-net.org/>

The Training Network and Event Calendar provides information on conferences and local training events; registries on professional administrators credentials and professional infant toddler credentials; State and county required entry level courses; and credit courses. Each section provides a database searchable by training topic, location of training, and in some cases dates of training. Some courses are listed as being available online. To find specific online courses, type “online” in the search engine and the Network will display all online courses available through the network.

This resource, available from The Registry, Wisconsin’s Recognition System for the Childhood Care and Education Profession, acknowledges and highlights the training, experience and professionalism that is vital to quality child care. The Registry awards a certificate verifying that individuals have met all State of Wisconsin Department of Health and Family Services entry level and continuing education requirements. Training above and beyond those requirements along with experience and professional contributions are represented by the levels and stars of The Registry’s career ladder. Additional information on The Registry, a collaboration of Wisconsin Early Childhood Association, Wisconsin Family Child Care Association, Wisconsin Child Care Administrators Association, Wisconsin School-Age Alliance, and Wisconsin Head Start Association, is available on the Web at <http://www.the-registry.org/registry.htm>.

Wyoming

■ The Wyoming Early Childhood Training Opportunities Web site is sponsored by Child Care Finder, a program of Children and Nutrition Services. This site provides training opportunities via region, and has links to approved distance delivery courses through Casper College and the University of Wyoming. This resource is available on the Web at http://www.childrens-nutrition.com/index_files/page0005.htm.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCE

■ The following information is excerpted from the *Child Care and Development Fund Report of State Plans FY 2004-2005* (2004), Child Care Bureau, Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services:

- Thirteen States (AR, CO, IN, KS, MA, MI, MO, NE, NY, NC, OK, PA, SC) indicated that they had supported the development and/or delivery of training initiatives that used distance learning techniques.

Indiana cooperated with higher education and private sector funders to develop On-Line Child Care Learning, a Web-based opportunity for a complete college credit CDA

credential (www.childcarelearning.IN.gov). The initiative includes additional literacy and business components as well as mentor assistance. (page 179)

- The following are excerpted from State Child Care and Development Fund Plans for the period 10/01/03 through 09/30/05. NCCIC reviewed Plans that were submitted July 1, 2003, and became effective October 1, 2003. Links to most State CCDF Plans are available on NCCIC's Web site at <http://nccic.org/pubs/stateplan/app-urls.html>. State Plans not included at this site can be obtained by contacting the individual State CCDF Lead Agency. This contact information is available in the Contact Directories section of NCCIC's Web Site at <http://nccic.org/statedata/dirs/devfund.html>.

Section 5.2 – State Plans for Professional Development

Describe the provider training, technical assistance, and professional development opportunities that are available to child care providers. Are these opportunities available Statewide to all types of providers? If not, please describe.

California

The trainings on the Prekindergarten Learning and Development Guidelines were initially presented through a series of facilitated distance learning sessions at 210 downlink sites in the state.

Illinois

HeadsUp! Reading: This training uses distance learning to bring teachers and parents the latest research on how children learn to read and write. The course delivers 30 hours of college-level training to early childhood professionals at their own doorsteps—child care centers, child care resource and referral agencies, Head Start sites, Pre-K classrooms and community colleges.

Indiana

Child Care Learning - On-line Learning - The Family and Social Services Administration and its partners came together to offer an opportunity to early care and education providers to receive the education components of the Child Development Associate (CDA) credential for college credit. The students can take the classes when it is convenient and when they have access to a computer. Child Care Learning provides an opportunity for early childhood professionals to serve as Mentors to students enrolled in on-line coursework.

Iowa

[Iowa Child Care and Early Education Network] trainings for community professionals that support providers –As a follow-up to The Midwest Child Care Research Consortium (Child Care in the Heartland) Iowa State University and the Lead Agency have partnered in offering a series of trainings around quality in early care and education. The focus of the trainings, targeted to community partners who support or regulate child care providers, has been to enhance the technical assistance skills in quality areas—as identified in the ECERS and reported in the research as needing improvement. This

training is being provided through Iowa's interactive telecommunications network system which has both video and audio communication.

Maine

Maine has a Child Care and Early Education Career Development System (Maine Roads to Quality) in place. A 180-hour core-knowledge training program has been developed. This training is offered statewide to all types of providers through the Child Care Resource Development Centers. In the fall of 2003 one of the training programs will be made available on the web to meet the needs of rural family child care providers.

Massachusetts

A Caring Curriculum for Infants and Toddlers is a distance learning course developed by the Office of Child Care Services (OCCS) to assist child care programs in understanding infant/toddler development and appropriate infant/toddler curricula.

Building Relationships in the School Age Environment is a distance learning course developed by OCCS that is separated into five individual distance learning modules. The modules include information relevant to school-age programming such as middle childhood development, promoting and maintaining relationships between children, their caregivers and peers, and core competency requirements in a school-age program.

Inclusion in Child Care is a distance learning course developed by OCCS that helps providers identify and understand children's specific disability issues and gives providers a guide for individualizing a child care program to meet a particular child's needs.

Montana

Montana's twelve Child Care Resource and Referral agencies provide early childhood practitioners with a variety of approved trainings and technical assistance. Practitioners are also given the opportunity to attend approved trainings offered by other agencies in their communities along with distance learning opportunities that have been developed by Child Care Resource and Referral agencies, the Child Care Resource and Referral Network, Child Care Plus+, and ECC [early child care] college coursework available on the internet.

New York

Video Conference Training

Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS) sponsors teleconferences, twice monthly, which bring recognized child care experts to child care providers at 96 sites across New York State. Providers may receive credit for their participation in the teleconferences towards their required 30 hours of training. An average of 4,000 providers participate in each session.

Washington

The Washington State Child Care Resource & Referral Network has several training, professional development and educational opportunities for child care providers. In addition to implementing the T.E.A.C.H. program, the Network offers the following:

- Building Blocks - Local child care resource and referral agencies (CCR&R's) partner with local family child care associations to offer this 20-hour, STARS-approved high-quality, relevant and practical training and mentoring to new or prospective family child care providers.
- DASA - The State Division of Drug and Alcohol Abuse has contracted with the CCR&R Network to design, create and disseminate a training curriculum to assist caregivers both in working with children of substance abusing parents, and in communicating effectively with the parents about the impact their addiction is having on their children.
- Learning Options - is the premier Internet campus for early childhood professionals and parents to expand and enhance professional development and educational opportunities.

ORGANIZATIONS

■ Child Care Resources

127 East Main, Suite 314
 Missoula, MT 59802
 406-728-6446 or 800-728-6446
 World Wide Web: <http://www.childcaretraining.org/>

In 2001, Child Care Resources began developing online training units. Child Care Resources' online courses have been approved in 22 States—**Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Florida, Georgia, Idaho, Illinois, Michigan, Minnesota, Montana, Nevada, New York, North Dakota, Ohio, Oklahoma, Oregon, South Dakota, Texas, Utah, Washington, and Wyoming**—and are currently in the approval process for several other States. The online courses can be applied toward annual training to meet licensing requirements in other States that do not require pre-approval of training. Additional information is available on the Web at <http://www.childcaretraining.org/approved.php?PHPSESSID=23a833abad946573fe7444cffb9a243a>.

■ HeadsUp! Reading

National Head Start Association (NHSA)
 1651 Prince Street
 Alexandria, VA 22314
 800-438-4888
 World Wide Web: <http://www.heads-up.org>

HeadsUp! Reading is a distance-learning college course delivered via satellite television that is supported and expanded by information available on the Web. Training is delivered directly into child care programs and is taught by a diverse faculty of experts in early childhood and literacy. The course offers a variety of professional development credits, including Continuing Education Units (CEUs) and credit at more than 140 colleges nationwide.

This collaborative project, led by the National Head Start Association and its partners, the Council for Professional Recognition and RISE Learning Solutions, delivers professional development to early educators, parents, and child care providers at approximately 700 sites in 47 States nationwide. Additional information is available on the Web at <http://www.huronline.org>.

■ **RISE Learning Solutions, Inc. (RISE)**

10490 Taconic Terrace

Cincinnati, OH 45215

800-971-7473

World Wide Web: <http://www.risetraining.org>

RISE is a national, nonprofit organization dedicated to providing quality, cost-efficient professional development services to geographically dispersed audiences. RISE uses high-production-value video; live, interactive television; CD-ROM's; the Internet; and trained, on-site facilitators to provide professional development for teachers, administrators, and parents. The RISE training programs have provided professional development to Head Start programs, public preschool teachers throughout Ohio, and to early childhood professionals in California.

The National Child Care Information Center does not endorse any organization, publication, or resource.

**Technology and
Early Childhood Professional Development:
A Policy Discussion**

**Hosted by: Education Commission of the States and KnowledgeWorks Foundation
July 8-9, 2002 Los Angeles, California**



Education Commission of the States 700 Broadway, Suite 1200 Denver, Colorado 80203-3460
303.299.3600
www.ecs.org

Acknowledgments

“Technology and Early Childhood Professional Development: A Policy Discussion” was cosponsored by the Education Commission of the States (ECS) and the KnowledgeWorks Foundation and supported by a grant from the KnowledgeWorks Foundation.

The primary author of this document was Jessica McMaken, ECS researcher for early childhood. Other ECS staff who contributed to the review and production of the report include Kristie Kauerz, program director for early childhood; Dale DeCesare, writer/editor; Genevieve Hale, researcher for the Community College Policy Center; and Josie Canales, proofreader.

Technology and Early Childhood Professional Development: A Policy Discussion

In July 2002, a group of policymakers and practitioners gathered to discuss “Technology and Early Childhood Professional Development.” In particular, the discussion focused on the potential for using various technologies to deliver effective training from a distance to early childhood educators. The intent of the one-and-a-half day meeting was to:

1. Define the main issues involved with using distance learning technology to provide professional development to early childhood educators
2. Identify and share current efforts to use distance learning technology to improve professional development for early childhood educators
3. Discover gaps in knowledge and practice regarding these issues
4. Propose an agenda to close the gaps, to complement existing efforts, and to expand and enhance the use of technology to better prepare early childhood professionals.

This report provides a summary of the presentations and discussions held at the meeting, and concludes with 10 recommendations that promote the use of technology to better prepare early childhood professionals. The recommendations were developed by meeting participants and do not necessarily reflect the view of the Education Commission of the States or KnowledgeWorks Foundation.

Using Technology in Early Childhood Professional Development

Keynote – Sue Bredekamp, director of research, Council for Professional Recognition

Discussion of distance learning technology and early childhood professional development demands careful consideration of the link between well-trained teachers and developmental outcomes for young children. Distance learning is one of many models of professional development and should not be separated from or held to different standards than traditional methods of professional development. All professional development programs should produce high-quality teachers and positive outcomes for children.

The importance of early childhood professional development

Research reveals the need for major investments in teacher preparation and professional development for early childhood educators. In *Eager to Learn: Educating our Preschoolers*, the National Research Council reports that “the professional development of teachers has been shown to be related to quality of early childhood programs, and program quality predicts developmental outcomes for children.”¹ Both overall education and training specific to child¹ development are related to positive outcomes for children, although “existing national studies point to caregiver training as the more important factor.”²

Challenges in early childhood professional development

Challenges facing early childhood professional development include:

- The [crucial components](#) of a high-quality professional development curriculum are many and varied. *Eager to Learn* outlines an appropriate curriculum, which includes child development,

¹ Bowman, Barbara T.; Donovan, M. Suzanne and Burns, M. Susan (Eds.) 2001. *Eager to Learn. Educating Our Preschoolers*. Washington, DC: National Research Council, National Academy Press, 263.

² Hayes, C.D., Palmer, J.L. and Zaslow, M.J. (Eds.) 1990. *Who Cares for America’s Children?* Washington, DC: National Research Council, National Academy Press.

assessment, subject-matter content, working with children from diverse backgrounds and more. Early childhood educators also need training in math, literacy, special education, social/emotional issues and the arts.

- Higher education must find a way to keep early learning faculty up-to-date so that the most current information is provided to students.
- The early childhood professional development community must find a way to share the knowledge of a few experts with large numbers of early childhood educators, including those in remote areas.

Why distance learning?

Distance learning technology can answer many early childhood professional development challenges:

- Done properly, distance learning creates an active, “hands-on” learning environment that encourages student interaction and provides the opportunity for application of and reflection on what has been taught.
- Effective distance learning builds on students’ current knowledge and is delivered by experts in the field.
- Distance learning also allows wider access to early learning experts from around the globe.
- Effective use of distance technologies can increase the availability of high-quality professional development experiences, which can in turn increase the number of early childhood educators with the training necessary to promote positive outcomes for young children.

Does Distance Learning Get Results for Early Childhood Educators?

Presenters

Chip Donohue, University of Wisconsin – Milwaukee; Julie Hirschler, Education Development Corporation, Literacy Environment Enrichment Program (LEEP); Betty Jones, Pacific Oaks College; Shawna Pinckney, National Head Start Association, HeadsUp! Network

Moderator

Calista Harden, KnowledgeWorks Foundation

The effectiveness of distance learning depends in part on the appropriateness of the delivery system. Distance learning modes can range from traditional paper and pencil correspondence to highly interactive combinations of two-way satellite broadcast complemented by Web-based instruction. Course content, student characteristics and faculty skill determine the most effective technologies for a distance learning course.

The panelists discussed four early childhood educator professional development programs using different technologies for delivery. They reflected on the benefits and challenges presented by each medium. Where available, the panelists shared evaluation research on program effectiveness.

Public Television

Courses offered through public television combine instructional videos with traditional correspondence, allowing students to complete assignments and receive instructor feedback.

Benefits of this approach include:

- Public television is widely available and low-tech.
- Students have easy access to course materials, especially if they are able to record initial broadcasts.
- Course completion can be self-paced.
- The visual nature of the medium increases information retention for visual learners.
- Students can observe high-quality care in a variety of settings.
- Although videos can be expensive to produce, they may be used repeatedly, with many audiences, over a number of years.

Videos created for training early childhood educators must record real classrooms and authentic activities in an unobtrusive manner. Recorded classrooms should reflect a variety of settings so that professionals from all types of early care and education settings are able to identify with what they see.

Limitations of teaching through television include:

- Absence of classroom interaction
- Absence of an onsite facilitator/instructor
- Delayed feedback from submitting assignments via mail
- Instructors' inability to observe students interacting with children in a classroom.

Internet

With Internet-based distance learning, course content is accessed primarily through the World Wide Web. The course may use e-mail, live chat and online message boards for communication among teachers and students.

Benefits of Internet-based distance learning include:

- Many of the same benefits as television-based programs because instructors can make videos available on the Internet
- Videos can be provided on a VCR tape or on a CD rom for those individuals with slow connections, which makes downloading videos difficult
- Ability to view children's work online
- Ability to access content any time
- Opportunity to interact with instructors and peers via e-mail, message boards and live chats.

Because Internet-based courses depend on reading and writing, this medium may be most effective with leadership-level professionals who have extensive experience to share. However, it can also offer less-skilled writers an opportunity to practice this skill in informal written "conversation" with peers. When written reflection is emphasized, anecdotal evidence indicates that the resulting thoughtful correspondence may actually lead to deeper learning than face-to-face group discussion.

Limitations of Internet-based learning include:

- Many early childhood educators do not have access to an Internet connection in their home or at work.
- Even when Internet access is available, old technology and slow connections can make it difficult to easily view pictures and videos.

When offering online coursework it is important to consider the technology available to the students taking the course. Additionally, faculty support and training must be provided, as teaching an online course is new and challenging to many instructors.

Interactive Television

Interactive television (ITV) allows participants in different locations to interact in real time with two-way audio and video. Providing an onsite facilitator and Internet-based course material can create a highly interactive learning environment. ITV is most effective when broadcast to three or four sites with about 15 students and an onsite facilitator present.

Benefits of ITV include:

- ITV combines all the benefits of video and Internet-based instruction.
- The two-way audio/video allows for discussion among experts and peers throughout instruction.
- The presence of an onsite facilitator ensures students are interested and engaged.

Potential limitations of ITV are:

- Students need to be present with a learning community at a classroom site with the ITV technology when the course is broadcast.

- There can be technology challenges – it is essential that the connection is clear and constant; otherwise, students and instructors can become frustrated.

The Literacy Enrichment Education Program (LEEP) uses the ITV/Internet/onsite facilitator model to train early childhood professionals to promote literacy in young children. An evaluation of LEEP was led by David Dickinson, a senior researcher with the Center for Children and Families at the Early Childhood Development Center. The evaluation found that children in classrooms of Head Start teachers and supervisors who took LEEP experienced an increase of 3.28 points in their expected vocabulary gains as measured by the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test (PPVT).

Satellite Broadcast

Similar to ITV, satellite broadcast is one-way, real time, audio and video. Where ITV provides interaction between an expert and students at a relatively small number of sites, satellite broadcast allows hundreds of students from around the country to interact with a single professional at one time. There is generally time provided to ask questions of the expert, through an onsite facilitator, via telephone or fax. Discussion typically takes place within and not among sites.

HeadsUp! Reading uses the satellite broadcast/Internet/onsite facilitator model to reach early childhood professionals across the country. A small scale evaluation of HeadsUp! Reading, funded by the Heinz Foundation and conducted by Assistant Secretary of Elementary and Secondary Education Susan Neuman during her tenure as director of the Center for the Improvement of Early Reading (CIERA), provides some beginning evidence that teachers learned new information and – according to their own assessments – enhanced their classroom practice as a result of participation in the course. Children’s literacy knowledge improved after three weeks and improved significantly after four weeks.

Access for All in Distance Learning

Presenters

Andy Carvin, Benton Foundation; Larry Fox, Learning Options; Tracy Yee, Puget Sound Educational Service District

Moderator

Sue Bredekamp, Council for Professional Recognition

While distance learning allows individuals in disparate parts of the country (and even the world) to effectively share and access information, it is important to acknowledge that not everyone has access to these technologies. In this session, panelists discussed access as the greatest benefit and the biggest challenge of distance learning.

The Digital Divide

Traditionally, the “digital divide” is defined as the gap between individuals with computers and those without. But the digital divide is about more than computer ownership. Andy Carvin of the Benton Foundation points out that even if everyone had a computer, the digital divide would still exist.

The Benton Foundation’s Digital Divide Network addresses the digital divide from three perspectives.

1. Do people have access to technology at home, school, work and/or in their community? Is the technology accessible to people with disabilities?
2. Do users have the literacy and technology skills necessary to make effective use of the technology?
3. Are users able to create and share content through technology? For example, do they have the skills and technology to create a Web site?

Increasing access to training opportunities is the primary goal behind the proposed Washington Early Literacy Outreach Project. Tracey Yee, director of Head Start Expansion and Online Development Center spoke of the project's goal to provide access to content through a variety of media so that individuals would have choice in how to access training. The choices range from low to high tech. In a small survey of child care staff conducted by the center, the most popular method of accessing the material was through a VCR at home.

Larry Fox of Learning Options stated that while a digital divide certainly exists, the gap between the "haves" and "have nots" is closing. Fox said that, according to the U.S. Commerce Department, more and more people are on the Internet. Those in the lowest income bracket (less than \$15,000/year) are gaining access at the most rapid rate. Fox argued that offering Internet-based distance learning opportunities to early childhood professionals is one way to bridge the digital divide by providing technological opportunities to a low-income population – namely, early childhood educators.

Fox also reported that large child care chains have seen Internet-based training as a cost-effective strategy to provide uniform, high-quality training to educators at all of their centers. He also stated that there has been an increase in the number of family-child care providers interested in these learning opportunities.

Articulation and Accreditation

Presenters

Lisa Holstrom, University of Cincinnati; Karen Kietzman, Higher Learning commission of North Central Accreditation; Alison Lutton, ACCESS–American Associate Degree Early Childhood Educators; Kim Shreve, University of Cincinnati

Moderator

Dale Beckmann, Consultant

Distance learning increases the number of early childhood professionals who have access to professional training. Distance learning opportunities that are offered through, or in partnership with, community colleges for college credit also increase access to higher education for early childhood professionals.

Panelists discussed the role of accreditation in articulation and the importance of articulation agreements for increasing access to higher education for early childhood professionals.

Accreditation is a status granted to an educational institution or program that has been found to meet or exceed certain quality standards. Institutions are accredited by regional accrediting bodies. Programs within institutions may be accredited by professional councils such as the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education. Credits from accredited programs are more easily transferred from one school to another.

Articulation refers to statewide or institutional policies and/or agreements to accept the transfer of credits between institutions. The articulation process is intended to ensure problem-free transfer from one institution to another. Associate degrees from accredited programs, for instance, are more easily articulated into bachelor degree programs.

Many early childhood professionals are reluctant to seek higher education. They generally are nontraditional college students and may need flexibility and support in order to succeed in higher learning. Distance learning can open the door for many of these students to higher education opportunities available through community colleges.

Community colleges and associate degrees are important entry points into higher education for

early childhood professionals. Community colleges are accustomed to serving nontraditional college students, and the early childhood workforce is similar to the community college student population in education experience. Community colleges are well-equipped to meet the needs of these students and to support them through the attainment of an associate degree, which can articulate to a bachelor degree.

A major barrier to articulation of early childhood education associate degrees is the range of quality in associate degree programs. There are currently no accreditation standards for early childhood education associate degrees. ACCESS and the National Association for the Education of Young Children are developing such standards. It is hoped that, by properly accrediting early childhood associate degree and distance learning programs, early childhood professionals will have better access to other higher education opportunities.

Implementation and Funding

Presenters

Sheri Azer, National Association for the Education of Young Children; Carol Fichter, Nebraska Early Childhood Training Center; Jessica McMaken, Education Commission of the States; Debra Torrence, Frank Porter Graham Child Development Institute

Moderator

Kristie Kauerz, Education Commission of the States

What is currently being done to implement distance training for early childhood professionals, and how is it being paid for? In this session, panelists discussed state efforts to use distance technology to train early childhood educators.

Sheri Azer presented an overview of professional development challenges and policy trends in the states. She shared information from Wheelock College's 2001 Early Childhood/School-Age Career Development survey, which found that 47 states currently have some form of a career development system for early childhood educators. More information on the survey can be found on the Wheelock College Web site (see "Resources").

Nebraska uses distance learning as part of its career development system. Carol Fichter spoke of the work of the Nebraska Early Childhood Training Center. Through the center, Nebraska offers several distance learning professional development opportunities. HeadsUp! Reading courses are supported through the state's satellite broadcast system. First Connections, a Web-based course on caring for infants and toddlers, was developed and is distributed by the center. Students taking these courses can receive college credit at local community colleges. These efforts are funded through a combination of state general funds, federal early childhood special education money, the federal child care and development fund, federal Even Start Family Literacy money, federal Head Start funds, federal Title I money and conference fees.

In North Carolina, CONTACT (College Opportunity Networks and Technology Access for Childcare Teachers) is a pilot early childhood distance education research and training project conducted by the Frank Porter Graham Institute at the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill. CONTACT worked with state and local partners to develop a model early childhood Internet course and to provide faculty training on how to teach early childhood teachers at a distance. More information can be obtained by sending an e-mail to Debra Torrence at Frank Porter Graham Institute (see "Resources").

State policy can support or hinder efforts to provide distance learning programs. Jessica McMaken of the Education Commission of the States shared current state policy contexts regarding distance learning. Policy-supported distance learning efforts include online networks of distance learning classes available through community colleges and universities and state-funded satellite technology systems. States can also support high-quality programs by legislating distance education quality standards. For more information on state policies regarding distance

learning, see the *ECS StateNote* on “Technology and Early Childhood Professional Development” (see “Resources”).

Recommendations

Used properly, distance learning can be a powerful means of increasing the availability of high-quality professional development experiences for early childhood educators. This in turn can increase the number of young children with access to early childhood educators capable of providing the kind of high-quality care and education necessary to give them the best possible start in life.

At the Technology and Early Childhood Professional Development symposium hosted by the Education Commission of the States and KnowledgeWorks Foundation, participants made the following recommendations regarding the use of distance technology to train early childhood professionals. These participant recommendations do not necessarily reflect the views of the Education Commission of the States or KnowledgeWorks Foundation.

Recommendation #1:

Identify a person and/or organization to track distance learning opportunities in early childhood professional development throughout the country. This entity should create a network representing all stakeholders to share knowledge and promising practices.

Recommendation #2:

Work to identify stakeholders. Those identified at the symposium include:

- Early childhood practitioners
- Administration and faculty at two- and four-year institutions of higher education
- Current early childhood distance learning providers
- Philanthropic community
- Policymakers
- Federal and state department of education officials
- Technology and telecommunications community
- Business community
- Higher education accreditation bodies
- Resource and referral agencies
- Parents
- Teacher’s unions
- Advocacy groups
- State early childhood professional development systems.

Recommendation #3:

Conduct additional research to show how distance learning can increase the availability of high-quality training opportunities for early childhood professionals. Identify appropriate content and technologies for distance delivery.

Recommendation #4:

Use research to promote distance learning as an option to increase professional development opportunities for early childhood professionals.

Recommendation #5:

Enact policies at the state and federal level that promote the quality of, access to and infrastructure support for distance learning opportunities. Implement policies that will sustain program efforts through changes in political climate.

Recommendation #6:

Identify an appropriate organization to provide technical assistance to states to develop models of statewide distance learning opportunities for early childhood professionals.

Recommendation #7:

Create policies and systems to ensure faculty are appropriately trained and supported to teach effectively via distance learning technology.

Recommendation #8:

Continue efforts to build transfer and articulation agreements between and among early childhood education associate degree programs and bachelor degree programs.

Recommendation #9

Continue efforts to develop accreditation standards for early childhood education associate degree programs.

Recommendation #10:

Identify and begin to address intellectual property rights issues that come from sharing content on the Internet.

Resources

(listed by meeting session)

Keynote Speakers

Sue Bredekamp, Council for Professional Recognition
Sueb@cdacouncil.org

Michael Levine
Bush Center in Child Development and Social Policy
mhlcc@aol.com

Does Distance Learning Get Results for Early Childhood Educators?

Speakers:

Chip Donohue, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee
cdonohue@uwm.edu

Julie Hirschler, Education Development Corporation
jhirschler@edc.org

Betty Jones, Pacific Oaks College
bjones@pacificoaks.edu

Shawna Pinckney, National Head Start Association
spinckney@nhsa.org

Resources:

HeadsUp! Reading

Contact Shawna Pinckney
www.huronline.org

LEEP Literacy Environment Enrichment Program

Contact Julie Hirschler
http://www.fpg.unc.edu/highlight_detail.cfm?id=88

Access for All in Distance Learning

Speakers:

Sue Bredekamp, Council for Professional Recognition
Sueb@cdacouncil.org

Andy Carvin, Benton Foundation
acarvin@benton.org

Larry Fox, Learning Options
lfox@learningoptions.org

Tracey Yee, Puget Sound Educational Service District
tyee@psed.wednet.edu

Resources:**Digital Divide Listserv**

Contact Andy Carvin

Bringing a Nation Online: A Benton Foundation Policy Brief

<http://www.digitaldividenetwork.org/content/stories/index.cfm?key=248>

Learning Options

Contact Larry Fox

www.learningoptions.org

KidsCount Snapshot: Disconnected Kids

<http://www.aecf.org/kidscount/snapshot.pdf>

Articulation and Accreditation**Speakers:**

Dale Beckmann

d.w.beckmann@worldnet.att.com

Lisa Holstrom, University of Cincinnati Early Childhood Learning Community

Lisa.holstrom@uc.edu

Karen Kietzman, Higher Learning Commission of North Central Accreditation

kkietzman@hlcommission.org

Alison Lutton

ACCESS

Northampton Community College

alutton@northampton.edu

Kim Shreve, University of Cincinnati

kimbo43135@yahoo.com

Resources:**ACCESS, American Associate Degree Early Childhood Educators**

Contact Alison Lutton

www.accesssece.org

Council for Higher Education Accreditation

www.chea.org

Implementation and Funding**Speakers:**

Sheri Azer

National Association for the Education of Young Children

sazer@naeyc.org

Carol Fichter

Nebraska Early Childhood Training Center

cfichter@esu3.org

Kristie Kauerz
Education Commission of the States
kkauerz@ecs.org

Jessica McMaken
Education Commission of the States
jmcmaken@ecs.org

Debra Torrence
Frank Porter Graham Child Development Institute
torrence@mail.fpg.unc.edu

Resources:

Nebraska Early Childhood Training Center
<http://www.esu3.org/ectc/ECTChomepage.html>

Project CONTACT (College Opportunity Networks and Technology Access for Childcare Teachers)
Contact Debra Torrence

North Carolina Community College System Web site
http://www.ncccs.cc.nc.us/Perkins/professional_development_opportunities.htm

ECS StateNote “Technology and Early Childhood Professional Development”
<http://www.ecs.org/clearinghouse/39/15/3915.pdf>

Wheelock College Institute for Leadership and Career Initiatives
State-Level Early Childhood/School-Age Career Development Work in 2001
<http://institute.wheelock.edu/instresearch/insturvmmap.html>

