Wellness of the Early Care and Education Workforce: Science & Practice

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Overview

1. Overview of ECE Workforce Wellness (Laura)
   a. Current health status of the ECE workforce
   b. Outcomes associated with ECE workforce wellness
   c. Interventions to improve ECE workforce wellness

2. Example intervention *Be Well Care Well* (Kerrie)
   a. Intervention background and rationale
   b. Intervention components

3. *Be Well Care Well* Evaluation design and results (Angela)

Next steps: ECE Workforce Wellness sub-group
ECE Workforce - Sociodemographics

ECE providers tend to earn low wages ($11.17/hour versus $18.50/hour for all occupations)

- More than half of all ECE providers are enrolled in at least one public support program, such as the Federal Earned Income Tax Credit, Medicaid or Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)
- Just 15% of the ECE workforce receives employer-sponsored health insurance

Nearly all ECE providers are female and they are disproportionately women of color.
What is early childhood educators’ work-related well-being?

“A dynamic state, involving the interaction of individual, relational, work–environmental, and sociocultural–political aspects and contexts. Educators’ well-being is the responsibility of the individual and the agents of these contexts, requiring ongoing direct and indirect supports, across psychological, physiological and ethical dimensions.”

CONCEPTUAL MODEL FOR QUALITY IN HOME-BASED CHILD CARE

Foundations for Sustainability of Care
- Creating and maintaining a safe environment
- Promoting providers’ self-health and wellness
- Identifying and engaging with community resources, including other caregivers
- Accessing supports for caregiving and teaching
- Managing business and finances
- Demonstrating reflection and openness to change

Lasting Relationships
- Developing nurturing relationships with children
- Facilitating children’s relationships with each other
- Building responsive relationships with families
- Maintaining healthy relationships with other adults/family members in home
- Fostering relationships in the community

Opportunities for Learning and Development
- Promoting children’s wellbeing
- Capitalizing on available materials, equipment, and other resources
- Supporting each child’s development through stimulating, responsive activities, including routines
- Building on children’s everyday, familiar, and culturally relevant experiences to promote learning
- Supporting children to learn with and from each other

Scoping Review

- Review of the published and unpublished literature
- Health status AND programs

Mental Health

Physical Health
Example: CCAoA Focus Groups (2016-17)

Eating habits:

- **Challenges**: food cost, eating schedule and constraints, convenience, stress
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"Most of the time I don’t eat but once a day when the kids are there because I’m trying to get them fed. Some days I may eat something, but for the majority of the time, as long as they’re there, I don’t eat." (FCC)
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"During the times that I’m working, I think that’s where I fall short. I’m with the kids, so my lunch consists of a bowl of cereal, cookies, cake, chocolate snacks. I’ll just grab something."
Example: Happy Teacher Project (Oklahoma)

- 66% Work-Related Ergonomic Pain
- 54% Below Average Cardiorespiratory Fitness
- 75% Obesity/Overweight
- 55% Headache
- 28% Neck Pain
- 23% Shoulder Pain
- 29% Knee Pain
- 52% Back Pain
- 23% Hand/Wrist Pain
- 33% Urinary Tract Infection
- 23% Work-related Injuries

Example: Family Child Care Providers

**Sample**: 166 FCC in NC (between 2011 and 2015); 74% African-American; 77% reported annual household income <$50,000

**Measurement**: self-administered questionnaires, measured height/weight

**Health status**:
- 89% overweight or obese
- 62% high stress
- Less than half meeting recommendations for PA (48%), sleep (43%) and fruits and vegetables (50%)

Solutions
In the midst of caring for, nurturing, and providing a stable environment for children, child care professional can struggle to find time to take care of their own needs.

Be Well Care Well promotes and supports the well-being of child care providers so they are better equipped for the challenges of their daily work.
Why does it matter?

Teachers who reported elevated levels of job stress and/or depressive symptoms were more likely to expel preschool children than those who reported no symptoms.


- Children cared for by more-depressed teachers were more likely to exhibit behavior problems.
- More depressed teachers were more likely to perceive children’s behaviors as problematic.
- Teachers reporting more depressive symptoms also had lower process quality ratings in their classrooms.

“Taking care of children requires taking care of their teachers”

Core elements of the BWCW model

**Well-Being Committee**
- Consist of owner/director & fellow teachers
- Share ideas, develop strategies to meet group well-being goals

**Well-Being Activities**
- Participants select goals
- Goals and activities aligned with the 8 Dimensions of Wellness

**Well-Being Coach**
- A helper for the journey
- Supports the center and well-being committee in meeting goals
- Connects the center with resources to achieve goals
Well-Being Activities Guide

Well-Being Coach: __________________________________________________________

Program Name: __________________________________________________________

Well-Being Committee Lead: ______________________________________________

Getting Started - These activities are required for participation

☐ 1. Establish or continue an active Well-being Committee — minimum 3 members (i.e. Owner, Administrator, Teachers)

☐ 2. Staff well-being priorities written into program materials

☐ 3. Develop specific goals and objectives related to well-being project

Team Building Activities
Supportive relationships are a key defense against the negative effects of stress.

☐ 1. Recognition for staff achievements (i.e. personal health goals, academic achievements, births, home purchases, etc.)

☐ 2. Create and encourage staff to participate in staff walking or running group

☐ 3. Participate as an employee team (minimum of 3 person team) in a community walk/run or other sporting event

☐ 4. Implement a weight management program or other health challenge into the program for teachers/staff/families (ex. FitBit challenge, hydration challenge, Weight Watchers, Biggest Loser-type competition, etc.)
Administrative Goals
Staff who feel supported and valued by their employer, have increased job satisfaction and reduced turn-over!

1. Conduct employee well-being needs or interest survey yearly with staff
2. Develop written policy that address recommended food choices in break areas, staff parties, and/or vending machines
3. Develop and communicate, and implement a written policy that provides 5-10 minutes for employees to participate in well-being activities during works days in addition to break times
4. Program offers discounted child care rates for staff
5. Develop a written policy that allows nursing mothers (staff) to nurse or pump during work hours
6. Program directors maintain a list, and make use of, resources to support teachers who are challenged by children’s behaviors or special needs
7. Provide space for staff to store/prepare food during work hours
8. Offer Employee Assistance Program to all staff
9. Allocate funds annually for well-being initiative
10. Support exercise breaks during the work day for activities such as stretching or walking around the property

Relaxation and Reflection
Finding time to relax and reflect on your feelings and thoughts can help you strengthen your relationships, internal beliefs, initiative and self-control.

1. Integrate stress relief activities into programs during meetings/gatherings (i.e. mediation, deep breathing, yoga)
2. Coordinate discounts for relaxation experiences such as chair massages or salon/spa treatments
3. Create a quiet, meditative space where staff can go relax during break times (space must be separate from workroom area and must not have copy machines, etc. - space can be inside or outside)
4. Bring in guest speakers on staff professional development days that can present on topics related to relaxation and reflection (i.e. stress management, mindfulness, etc.)
5. Offer life skills training (in-person or virtually)
Building Your Bounce

• “When we feel better, we do better!”

• Increased stress levels negatively affect our health

• Protective Factors: relationships, internal beliefs, initiative, self-control
Statewide Partners for Well-Being
Statewide Partners for Well-Being

- Benefit Bank Counselors
- Tax Clinics
- Financial Health
- Self-Care webinar
- Communication Training
- Mental Health Awareness

- Cooking Matters
- Shopping Matters
Local Happenings

Local gym partnership: discounted membership rates, free nutrition and workout classes

Text challenges: planks, hugs, rejuvenating breathing, walking, etc.

Outdoor space for teacher relaxation

Chair massages offered by local spa

Coupon Class

Food Bank: Nutrition classes and cooking demos

Mobile Farmer's Market

Studio 43*19 Art Playground - Art journaling
WELL-BEING SUPPORTS MENU

□ PHYSICAL ACTIVITY PACKAGE

UPRIGHT EXERCISE BIKE
You can exercise at work! Don’t be shy!

RESISTANCE BANDS, EXERCISE BALLS, JUMP ROPE, AND FREE WEIGHTS
This is simple equipment that your staff can use in so many ways

EXERCISE MATS
You’ll be comfortable while you exercise!

EXERCISE BOOK
This book will help your staff make use of all the exercise equipment

□ NUTRITION PACKAGE

BLENDER
Think of the delicious healthy smoothies you could make right there at work!

HEALTH SNACKS/TASTING GIFT CARD
$100 gift card to use for healthy snacks for staff or a healthy snack/meal tasting

MEAL PREPARATION SUPPLIES
With the right preparation tools, it makes it easier to prepare healthful meals and snacks at work

NUTRITION INFORMATION BOOK
This nutrition book will be a reliable reference for staff
WELL-BEING SUPPORTS MENU

☐ RELAXATION PACKAGE

CHAIR MASSAGE INSERT
This insert fits an office chair and transforms it into a massage chair!

NECK MASSAGER
Take a seat and enjoy a quick neck massage to help reduce stress

DIFFUSER + AROMATHERAPY
Diffusing lavender or chamomile oil is aromatherapy for stress

LAVENDER NECK WRAP
This soothing wrap is a quick and easy way to reduce stress

RELAXATION BOOK
This book shares information about relaxation and breathing techniques

☐ SERVICES PACKAGE

SERVICES UP TO $250
Your staff may be interested in:
- Registration fees for a community walk/run
- Exercise classes at work
- Presentations on cooking or shopping
- Workshops for other wellbeing options
STAFF SHOUT OUT!!!

How it works:
1. Think of a staff member who has been doing a fabulous job lately or someone who has helped you out.
2. Grab a sticky note and write down a compliment.
3. Post it on our “wonderful shout out” board.
4. Smile about making somebody’s day!
WHAT ARE -2- REASONS YOU ARE HAPPY TO BE HERE TODAY??
What they’re saying...

“At first I thought this was for the children but then when I found it was for us I was so excited! It has reminded me that I need to, and should, take care of myself. It’s helping me not only in my work but also in my personal life.” – Participating Director

“I carved in time from 2-5 everyday where I have an assistant with the children, and I can focus on self-care and other tasks. I have gone for my mammogram and selected a Primary Care doctor, which is something I hadn't done in over 10 years!” - Participating Family Child Care Provider
Program Evaluation

- Pre- and post-intervention assessments (n=807)
- Parent-child interaction observations (n=62)

- Measured a range of pre- to post- outcomes
  - Social networks, internalized beliefs, professional skills
  - Physical activity and health
  - Emotional health
  - Exposure to traumatic events
  - Job stress and job satisfaction
  - Parent-child interactions
## Program Engagement

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th># of Completed Actions</th>
<th>Hours Logged</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>7.33 (5.9)</td>
<td>26.44 (20.8)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Culture of Well-Being</td>
<td>1.63 (1.6)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Physical Activity and Nutrition</td>
<td>2.39 (2.2)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Relaxation &amp; Reflection</td>
<td>1.85 (2.0)</td>
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<td>Team Building Activities</td>
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</table>
Teachers who reported more positive relationships reported having higher job satisfaction \((r = .28, p < .001)\)

### Devereux Adult Resilience Scale: Descriptives

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scale</th>
<th>PRE</th>
<th>POST</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>p</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DARS Relationships</td>
<td>8.50 (1.64)</td>
<td>8.83 (1.40)</td>
<td>3.46</td>
<td>.001</td>
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<td>DARS Internal beliefs</td>
<td>11.13 (1.12)</td>
<td>11.42 (0.90)</td>
<td>3.51</td>
<td>.001</td>
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<tr>
<td>DARS Initiative</td>
<td>13.24 (2.13)</td>
<td>13.82 (2.04)</td>
<td>3.18</td>
<td>.002</td>
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<tr>
<td>DARS Self Control</td>
<td>6.21 (1.43)</td>
<td>6.68 (1.28)</td>
<td>2.86</td>
<td>.002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Score</td>
<td>39.09 (4.62)</td>
<td>40.75 (4.32)</td>
<td>4.78</td>
<td>&lt;.001</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Physical activity and health

- Physical activity improved from pre to post

- Teachers who engaged in more hours of the BWCW program reported more significant increase in physical activity (B=.041, p<.05)

- More physical activity was significantly related to:
  - Higher motivation ($r = .19$, $p < .001$)
  - Less stress ($r = .13$, $p < .05$)
  - Higher job satisfaction ($r = .17$, $p < .01$)
  - Higher job value ($r = .12$, $p < .05$)
Emotional health

- Motivation improved from pre to post
- Stress decreased from pre to post
- Higher stress was significantly related to less job satisfaction ($r = .14, p < .05$)
Exposure to traumatic events

More than 50% of teachers had experienced at least 1 ACE in their lifetime and over 20% had experienced 4 or more ACEs.

The more ACEs teachers had experienced, the more worker stress ($r = .20, p < .001$) and less job satisfaction ($r = .12, p < .05$) and job values ($r = .20, p < .001$) they reported.

### SC Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) Questionnaire: Descriptives

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<th>Subscale</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std Dev</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SC ACES Total Score (max 8)</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>2.04</td>
<td>1.97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Substance Abuse</td>
<td>268</td>
<td>24.5% (80)</td>
<td>43.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mental Illness</td>
<td>268</td>
<td>21.8% (71)</td>
<td>41.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Incarceration</td>
<td>267</td>
<td>10.8% (35)</td>
<td>31.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Divorce/Separation</td>
<td>266</td>
<td>43.3% (140)</td>
<td>49.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Domestic Violence</td>
<td>266</td>
<td>21.4% (69)</td>
<td>41.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical Abuse</td>
<td>266</td>
<td>23.1% (75)</td>
<td>42.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotional Abuse</td>
<td>268</td>
<td>43.1% (140)</td>
<td>49.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexual Abuse</td>
<td>273</td>
<td>19.4% (64)</td>
<td>39.6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Job stress and satisfaction

Change in Job Satisfaction and Worker Stress Scores before and after program participation.

Average Job Satisfaction score increased by 5.2%.
Average Worker Stress score decreased by 21.2%.
Job stress and satisfaction

- Higher worker stress is related to less job satisfaction \( (r = .28, p < .001) \)

- Job satisfaction is significantly related to job values \( (r = .19, p < .01) \)
Teacher-child interactions

Pre to Post Change in CHILD Score

Average scores on the CHILD observation measure before and after program participation. Scores range from -2 to 2. Average score increased by 39%.
Teacher-child interactions

- The more hours that teachers engaged in the BWCW program, the more significant improvement that was observed in parent-child interactions ($B = .007, p < .001$)

- Teacher-child interactions was significantly related to motivation ($r = .31, p < .05$) and ACEs incarceration ($r = .28, p < .05$)
Take Home Points

- Integrating the BWCW program into centers improved multiple constructs from pre to post

- Hours of engagement were related to increased positive outcomes
Thank you!!!

Questions for us?

Questions for you:

- How has the health of the ECE workforce impacted your research?
- What are some of the opportunities and challenges of implementing wellness programs for the workforce?