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**EARLY CHILDHOOD
COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE**

SOUTHEAST Comprehensive Center
at American Institutes for Research

July 2018

SECC Early Childhood Community of Practice E-Newsletter

Greetings! Thank you for taking the time to participate in the community of practice (CoP). We encourage you to continue visiting the [CoP website](#). Here are some of the latest updates!

State Highlights

Congratulations to Alabama! The Alabama Department of Early Childhood Education and Council for Leaders in Alabama Schools just completed its National Association of Elementary School Principals Pre-K–3 Leadership Academy, the first collaborative initiative of its kind in the country. In June, the department celebrated its inaugural cohort of school leaders who participated in this year-long pilot program. The academy is designed to build the capacity of principals and program directors to lead pre-K–3 communities. It is aligned to NAESP's foundational competency publication, *Leading Pre-K–3 Learning Communities: Competencies for Effective Principal Practice*. [Click here to read more about this innovative free program.](#)

Professional Development Resource Spotlight

Don't miss [Training-of-Trainers: Classroom Based Assessment for Preschoolers](#), an August 24, 2018, workshop in Washington, D.C., offered by the National Association for the Education of Young Children. This one-day event will provide trainers, administrators, and professional developers with skills and materials needed to train staff on assessment. The workshop focuses on classroom assessment strategies based in observation, documentation, and collecting evidence. Space is limited; register by August 17.

Resource Spotlight

Excessive stress early in life is related to learning problems. Pediatricians and child development experts are concerned about the long-term effects of the recent zero tolerance policy, which resulted in the separation of immigrant children from their families. Such separation can cause toxic stress that impedes the brain's development, which could lead to issues with mental and physical health and learning. [The Science of Early Childhood Development](#), a brief report and an overview video from the Center on the Developing Child at Harvard University, are available in both English and Spanish. The resources describe the connection between stress in early life and learning problems, the need for early intervention, and policy implications. These basic concepts, established over decades of research, illustrate why birth–five child development is a foundation for a prosperous and sustainable society.

Research Spotlight

The recent controversy over the Hart and Risley 30-million-word gap study has prompted a defense of research that validates the need to provide low-income families with supports for early language learning. The Brookings Institution featured the article [Talking with Children Matters: Defending the 30 Million Word Gap](#), which states that we should not undercut the significance of what we know about the role of language in child development. The authors cite a recent University of Washington-led study, which found that a child's language competency in kindergarten predicts later language, mathematics, reading, and social abilities up to fifth grade and is indeed the best early indicator of success. The article appears at Education Plus Development, a blog on the intersection of global education, learning, and development by scholars from the Center for Universal Education.

In addition, a University of Washington-led study published in *Early Childhood Research Quarterly* looked at a variety of school readiness skills to determine which are solid predictors of later success. Language, the ability to learn words and make sentences, was the solid predictor. Researchers found that of the skills evaluated, only language skills, upon entering school, predicted performance within that subject area and most other subjects from first through fifth grade. The authors posit that it is critical to add language to the skills that are taught to prepare children for school because readiness and success depend upon it. To learn more, access the article [Want to Help Your Child Succeed in School? Add Language to the Math, Reading Mix.](#)

For other early childhood news and information, please visit the CoP website. We appreciate your continued collaboration.

The ECCoP Team

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