



ADVENTURES & INTERVENTION IN EARLY EDUCATION SPACES

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When I began managing this journal as a brand-new graduate assistant, I had no experience in academia. Now, sometime later, the impact of this journal on my personal and professional life is profound. As a previous early educator, I began my doctorate to impact early educators across the state and have built a research platform to ensure children and families have access to high quality childcare, family home care, or preschools. Furthermore, ensuring that educators have access to resources to support their practice. In my dissertation, I was able to demonstrate an effective interrater reliability process for the teacher evaluation efforts of early childhood educators across the state of North Carolina. This evaluation process provided support for around 700 educators by ensuring their evaluators were providing fair and reliable Birth-to-Kindergarten license regulations. Professionally, our journal produces incredibly rigorous research from across the United States that is only possible because of the hundreds of readers, reviewers, authors, practitioners, and experts in the field who consistently contribute. Personally, I've been able to correspond with all of you and support the research, which has given me a passion for early childhood research and childcare policy.

The theme for the first issue of 2023 came to the forefront of my mind while learning to navigate a new city, after moving away from my hometown for the second time. In this move, I reflected that each of us have faced unique challenges since the year 2020 began. Now imagine that challenge through the lens of our youngest humans. For infants born from 2020-2022, they have been protected, sheltered, and loved through the Pandemic and are now at the pinnacle of new adventures in their early education experiences. Our older children, had traditional educational experiences and then had those fractured, causing rifts in typical development and education trajectories. There are fears and excitement abounding as each of these groups of children enter new spaces and new centers, ready to expand their minds. Each of the articles in this issue show us ways to navigate these adventures of early education through a deep personal reflection by childcare directors and through two interventions to support children with behavior needs.

The issue opens with a qualitative work titled, *The State of Childcare: Exploring Childcare Center Directors' Perceptions on the Past, Present, and Future* from Dr. Tracey Hoffman at Miami University in Oxford, Ohio. The research aims to understand the current perceptions of the childcare landscape based on a sample of childcare directors in southwest Ohio. These directors bring up concerns such as lack of professionalism towards childcare workers, staff shortages, and dwindling funds. The licensing structure for the state was also brought up as a concern. The research leaves the reader encouraged that while childcare has experienced much change in the past ten years, there is hope for the future. The corresponding Research to Practice summary, also by Dr. Hoffman, investigates the implications for childcare practice.



The next research article is a quantitative work titled, *Effects of an Online Emotion Socialization Intervention for Parents of At-Risk Preschoolers Enrolled in Head Start During a Global Pandemic*, by Briana J. Williams and Dr. John S. Carlson of Michigan State University in East Lansing, MI. This research centers around the family structure, encouraging parents to be involved in an emotional coaching activity. In particular, it addresses the shared responsibility between families and educational environment. In the small sample of families ($n=8$), a total of four different measures were used to understand parent engagement, parent and student outcomes, and appropriateness of intervention. The researchers found that the intervention was appropriate and that online emotional coaching tools should be more widely implemented and researched.

The final research article speaks to the important practice of inclusion in our early childhood spaces. This work highlights examples of successful use of applied behavioral analysis (ABA) through the use of a behavior consultant. The researchers, Dr. Megan Kunze of University of Oregon and Dr. Bernice de la Cruz of Texas A&M University- San Antonio, conducted a longitudinal study that aimed to describe the process of working with a behavior consultant and highlight positive benefits for children in inclusive spaces. The research indicates that through appropriate training, teachers can support more diverse children, and support families better. The research to practice summary provides several tables of examples in practice of top recommendations made during behavior consultations.

In conclusion, experts in the field of early childhood must remember the wonderful adventures that we get to embark on each day in our roles. Whether we are physically in a classroom, supporting students every day, or in a research or professor role, we each have a unique space to take up in early childhood. It is important to reflect on those challenging times in our field, but propel ourselves forward, and be optimistic about the future ahead of us. Our youngest learners deserve to be seen, heard, and valued. Let's guide them on an adventure to support their success through the rest of their educational careers.