

Early Intervention and Early Learning in Special Education

*Perspectives about the Future of Education Research
at IES from NCSEER-funded early childhood researcher,
IES review panel member, post-doctoral and early
career mentor, and former practitioner*

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Guiding questions

- From your position in the field, what are critical issues on which new research is needed?
- How are these areas of study positioned to address equity issues?
- How can research methods, measurement, and review processes be designed to support research developments in the field?

SETTING THE STAGE FOR CRITICAL ISSUES

EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT AND LEARNING

Loosely-coupled “system”

**Neurons to
Neighborhoods (2000)**

CONCEPTUAL AND THEORETICAL ISSUES: EARLY LEARNING

CONCEPTUAL ISSUES

What is early learning
and what are early
learning contexts for
research?

NCER & NCSE
definitions of early
learning and early
learning contexts

THEORETICAL ISSUES

Eco-bio-developmental model

<https://www.aap.org/en-us/advocacy-and-policy/aap-health-initiatives/EBCD/Pages/Eco-Bio-Developmental.aspx>

Ecologies and experiences in
them become biology and
together they drive
development and learning

EVOLUTION OF RESEARCH IN EARLY INTERVENTION AND EARLY LEARNING IN SPECIAL EDUCATION

First-Generation Research (1960s to ~1986)

Is early intervention efficacious?

Second-Generation Research (~1986 to present)

Which **practices (interventions)** are efficacious for which children and families and under what conditions?

Third-Generation Research (~2007 to present)

What implementation methods and strategies are efficacious for supporting practitioners or families to use which evidence-based (recommended) practices with fidelity for which children and families and under what conditions?

Carta, J., & Snyder, P.A. (2019). Fifty years of research on children with disabilities and their families: From changing behaviors to transforming lives. In B. H. Wasik & S.L. Odom (Eds.), *Celebrating 50 years of child development research: Past, present, and future perspectives* (pp. 235-254). Baltimore: Brookes.



DEC Recommended Practices

Release Date
04/14/2014

The DEC Recommended Practices provide guidance to practitioners and families about the most effective ways to improve the learning outcomes and promote the development of young children, birth through age 5, who have or are at-risk for developmental delays or disabilities.
Developed by the DEC Recommended Practices Commission.

- “DEC Recommended Practices are based on the best-available empirical evidence as well as the wisdom and experience of the field” (p. 3).
 - Evidence-based practice as a verb versus solely as a noun
- “DEC Recommended Practices support children’s **access and participation in inclusive settings and natural environments and address cultural, linguistic, and ability diversity” (p. 3).**

Division for Early Childhood. (2014). Recommended practices in early intervention/early childhood special education 2014.

<https://divisionearlychildhood.egnyte.com/dl/7urLPWct5U/?>

IMPLEMENTATION SCIENCE AND IMPLEMENTATION RESEARCH: BEYOND REPLICATION TO ROUTINE PRACTICE

Implementation Science

...understanding processes and procedures that promote or impede the transfer, adoption, and use of evidence-based [recommended] practices in real-world contexts” (cf. Kelly & Perkins, 2014)

Kelly, B., & Perkins, D.F. (Eds.). (2014). *Handbook of implementation science for psychology in education*. Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press.

Implementation Research

...the scientific study of [implementation] **methods and strategies** to promote the systematic uptake of evidence-based [recommended] practices to become routine practices in inclusive EC contexts (cf. Eccles et al., 2009)

Eccles, M. P. et al. (2009). An implementation research agenda. *Implementation Science*, 4, 18-25. <https://doi.org/10.1186/1748-5908-4-18>

IES NCSEER AND NCER EARLY LEARNING AFFORDANCES (A) and ISSUES (I)

REVIEW PANEL AND PANEL PROCESSES

A = Capacity to build shared knowledge and connections across NCSEER & NCER investigators

I = Panel members' knowledge about substantive, methodological, and measurement issues across NCSEER and NCER

REVIEW CRITERIA, METHODS, AND MEASUREMENT

PRACTICES & MULTI-TIERED SYSTEMS OF SUPPORT

Universal
Secondary/Targeted
Tertiary/individualized
A = All children & additional supports when needed

I = Access \neq Participation
I = Many ?s to answer

NCER & NCSEER UNIFYING FRAMEWORK

EQUITY, DIVERSITY, & INCLUSION

A and **I** =
Systems
Workforce and practice contexts
Families
Children

“ALL” NEEDS TO MEAN ALL

CONTRIBUTIONS FOR FUTURE OF IES RESEARCH FROM SPECIAL EDUCATION & EARLY INTERVENTION AND EARLY LEARNING IN SPECIAL EDUCATION

SOCIAL VALIDITY

**SINGLE CASE EXPERIMENTAL
& ADAPTIVE INTERVENTION
DESIGNS**

**FAMILY-CENTERED, CAPACITY
BUILDING, TRUSTED
PARTNERSHIPS**

**AUTHENTIC ASSESSMENT
AND GENERAL OUTCOME
MEASURES**

**FOCUS ON
[RECOMMENDED]
PRACTICES AND FIDELITY
OF PRACTICE
IMPLEMENTATION**

“CONTEXTUAL FIT”

FUTURE OF EARLY LEARNING RESEARCH ACROSS NCSEER and NCER

**EARLY LEARNING:
BIRTH TO AGE 5
ALIGNMENT TO AGE 8**

**METHODS
COMPLEMENTARY AND
MIXED METHODS**

**COMMON CONSTRUCTS
AND MEASUREMENT**

**IMPLEMENTATION
SCIENCE AND RESEARCH**



EQUITY, DIVERSITY, INCLUSION:

Systems
Workforce
Families
Children

All really means all!