Background

- Early childhood, the period between birth and age five, is a time of significant physical, cognitive, social, emotional, and behavioral development that lays the foundation for lifelong learning, health, and behavior (Institute of Medicine, 2000).
- Almost 50% of children five and younger in the US spend time in early care and education (ECE) settings.
- ECE occurs in a variety of settings including child care centers, preschools, Head Start or Early Head Start centers, pre-kindergarten classrooms, and family child care homes.

Policy, Systems, and Environmental (PSE) Change Interventions

- 96% of CES provided in-person or synchronous online classes.
- 50% provided asynchronous online classes.
- 87% of CES provided professional development for ECE professionals.

Most popular methods of delivering ECE programming: in-person programs, classes, or meetings (90%); print media (83%); in-person communication (80%); Extension website (80%); video conferencing (77%).

Aims of the National Inventory of Cooperative Extension Programming

- Provide information about How Cooperative Extension Systems provide programming and disseminate information to ECE professionals;
- Catalogue the direct education and policy, systems, and environmental change interventions that CESs provide for ECE professionals and young children in ECE settings;
- Document the state and local ECE systems, agencies, and programs that Cooperative Extension professionals work with and the nature of these relationships; and
- Describe how Cooperative Extension professionals who serve the ECE workforce connect and network with one another.

Methods

- Data Collection: Compiled a list of all 111 Land Grant Institutions (LGIs; 1862, 1890, & 1994) and surveyed ECE professionals. Respondents from all regions & types of LGIs participated in the cognitive interviews and the 73 survey respondents.

Involvement with State or Local Agencies & Programs

- No involvement: 30% of CES do not provide ECE programming.
- Consulting: CES delivers programming, training, or services requested by the agency or program.
- Coordination: CES and agency or program engage in mutual projects, both contribute to conceptualization/design, and implement a grant-funded program.

Networking

- 89% of individuals responded to at least one professional association, 63% were members of NEAFCS (n=22).

Conclusions and Implications

Need for Additional Programming

- 30% of CES do not provide ECE programming.
- Likely need additional funding & personnel.

Multistate & National Initiatives

- This inventory identifies several areas of shared work across CESs.
- Organize through Extension Foundation and NEAFCS

Opportunities to Diversify ECE Programming Provided by CESs

- Current focus: health/wellness, nutrition, & physical activity.
- Leverage SNAP-Ed and EFNEP funding to develop and grow programming in other areas.
- Bring together CES professionals working in different areas.

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