Early Childhood Workforce: Registries

Overview

In the early 1990s, a concept changed the way states and regions track achievements of professionals in the early childhood field. The first early childhood professional development registry was created in Wisconsin. It would become known simply as "The Registry." One of The Registry's early goals was to provide recognition for early childhood professionals who have historically been under-recognized as a profession. The Registry provided a way for practitioners to track their professional development achievements and to plan for future training through a posted training calendar.

Other states and regions quickly saw the benefits of professional development registries and began the process of creating them in either the private or public sector. To date, there are over 38 state or regional registries at various stages of development, and several others in early planning stages. Most of these registries belong to the National Workforce Registry Alliance (NWRA), a non-profit association of state and regional registries. Registry personnel across the country are often asked to explain exactly what a registry is and what it does. The definition for registries is provided by the National Workforce Registry Alliance, a voluntary association of state and regional registries below.

A registry is an information system for the early childhood and afterschool workforce that

- promotes professional growth and development;
- captures data about early childhood and afterschool practitioners in a variety of roles;
- is based on state career level systems that provide a framework for professional development;
- places individuals on a career level based upon verified educational information;
- recognizes and honors professional achievements of the early childhood and afterschool workforce; and
- informs policy makers and partners.

Professional Development Tracking and Verification

Access to registries varies by region. In areas where registries existed before the internet, data entry was conducted by registry staff and approval of events were made at the time of data entry, requiring a two-step process. Many of these paper registries have now transitioned to online systems, though many still accept paper applications in lieu of online submissions. Some systems are completely online, accepting only electronic or scanned-in documents. Fees for application or entry into the system vary greatly with the main determinant often being the funding base of the registry.

Tracking professional development provides practitioners with a snapshot of their achievements in the field, embedding an incentive to continue toward higher education goals, attend additional training sessions, or pursue other forms of professional development. Additionally, connection to states' or regions' career pathways or lattices can show professionals where they stand or provide them access and direction to achieving a higher level.

Additional Functionalities of Registries

Registries are each as unique as the states and regions they serve. Developed for area needs, these separate registries have emerged, for specific functions. They may have started as a professional development tracking system but evolved to offer modules or applications. As state and regional registries developed, several companies have formed, using standardized "off the shelf" systems instead of proprietary versions. Thus, new registries have rapidly grown over the past five years. They also save their users time and costs as they do not have to create their own system.

In reviewing state and regional registry profiles on the NWRA website, several functionalities emerge as standard features.

Career Pathways or Lattices

For systems sharing data with licensing or Quality Rating and Improvement Systems (QRIS), coding training sessions and identifying content in Child Development Associate Credential (CDA) or other core knowledge areas can support a direct feed into transcripts for state or area requirements or recognized credentials. An interface between data systems can include a Memorandum of Understanding so that regulatory entities can download or access data that, in the past, would have taken hours of personnel time to verify and record.

Many registries have connected to their state's or regional's career pathway through level calculation or as part of a credentialing process. Whether states or territories use specific levels or point systems, the process can be linked with document review and verification. Professionals who access their profiles can see at-a-glance where they are on their pathway and use that real-time data to plan where they want to go. This becomes a unique and powerful professional development planning tool.

Training and Trainer Approval

Registry embedded approval systems include a variety of training and trainer registries and approval systems (NWRA, 2012). Some self-declared training registries rely on trainer self-report and typically have no approval process. These self-report systems' goals include providing a statewide snapshot of the numbers of trainers, types of training offered, and locations of trainings. Self-report systems can act as a clearinghouse of trainers in the state. Self-reported trainer registries provide a streamlined process with minimal paperwork while providing trainers a marketing tool to advertise their sessions. There is no quality assurance with this system and while it serves as useful marketing tool for the trainers, it is a buyer beware trainer search. Clear messaging by the respective registries must let searchers know the buyer beware status, otherwise there may be an implicit misunderstanding by the public that if a trainer is registered, then someone has approved them. In its 2012 survey of registries, NWRA found that seven of the responding registries were self-reported (NWRA, 2012). Additionally, self-reported data can cause data integrity issues, as there are little control measures covering data entry.

Approved trainer registries and systems account for 25 of the state registries that responded to NWRA's survey. Overlap in the types of trainer registries reflect hybrid systems that include self-report and approval systems. Approval systems vary in the level that they are embedded within their states' early childhood and afterschool professional development systems. The systems may be voluntary ones in that trainers submit profiles or sessions to show that they have the stamp of approval or recognition. Systems may include all approved training within the greater professional development system or the quality rating system.

According to the NWRA survey, six registries provide approval for entire training entities and seven registries additionally offer registration services for posting approved training. The National Workforce Registry Alliance has recently implemented a national training entity recognition through a process that utilizes criteria chosen by state or regional level systems. State and regional registries can choose to become a partner in the recognition process and agree to approve training that is provided by these recognized entities.

Twenty registries responding to the survey approve training content. Training approval can include alignment of the content to state, regional, or national guidelines or standards, core knowledge and competencies, leveling of content, and audiences for the content. Trainers or training authors may be asked to identify learner objectives, delivery method, and research underpinnings of the training content. They may be asked to submit a training plan, an outline, or all of the training materials.

When trainers alone are approved, it may be based on trainer qualification including education, experience, or credentials/certifications. Some systems provide mandatory training for trainers and once trainers complete the training, their sessions are automatically approved.

Data from training/trainer approval systems can also be designed to connect to other facets of the state or regional professional development system. For example, training approvals and training sessions can be coded and tracked in professional profiles in ways that align to standards, guidelines, and/or competencies. Then professionals' attainment of

training in each of these areas can be easily identified. Online training and trainer approval systems also benefit trainers. When these systems are online, trainers can manage their own trainings and even view evaluation results related to their trainings.

Trainers might also post their codified sessions on the training calendar with an online registration system—which a growing number of registries have started implementing. Online registration, with verification of training hours can expedite credit for professionals' profiles and reduce the time and cost of approving and uploading paper verifications. Similarly, online processes for trainers – including access to the latest version of a mandatory or core training--can be ensured, increasing trainer and training fidelity with courses that are offered with regularity and are intended to be delivered with consistency as part of a state's professional development system. Registry staff can embed and maintain approval systems. They may also house the systems and approvals in the registry with approvals completed by outside agencies, depending on the needs of the state or region.

Center or Program Profile

In addition to professional profiles, registries generally house a center or program profile. Fields may include program type (center, family child care, preschool, Head Start, Public Pre-K, etc.), quality ratings or accreditation, location and contact information, amount and ages of children served, hours for child care or preschool, groups or classrooms, numbers of children enrolled and open slots, staff names and registry identification numbers with relation to education and training, staff employment start and end dates. Additionally, registries may collect data that are useful for Licensing or for QRIS.

Administrators or directors typically have access to the center or program profile. From the program profile, leaders can add start and termination dates for staff, view educational and training records, update openings for child care or preschool, or adjust hours as needed. Additionally, leaders may use program profiles to track the provision of technical assistance, post-employment opportunities, or register staff for training.

Additional Functionalities of Registries:

- Coaching or Technical Assistance Tracking
- Scholarship administration
- Training calendar
- Online registration and attendance tracking or payment
- Job Board
- Learning Management System (LMS) access
- Credential approval or assignment

Early Childhood Workforce Data Collection: Practices and Possibilities

Registries are an integral part of the infrastructure for state professional development systems, serving as a hub for data collection, reporting, and analyses. Registries typically collect data on individual professionals (including practitioners, trainers, and technical assistance providers), early childhood or school-age programs, and professional development events.

While the scope of the data collection varies from state to state, most registries collect demographics, full education history, professional certification and licensure, employment, and professional development. Registries often produce tracking reports for program directors and state-level reports about workforce trends for policymakers. Registries can also provide information and documentation, such as the Quality Performance Report, to support larger federal reporting requirements (AEM, 2015).

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Registry Data

Registries can provide a data-rich view of the professionals and programs in a location, state, or region. These same data, prior to a registry's implementation, would have required extensive surveying efforts that may only yield data representative of the field, rather than the rich data available from a robust, deeply saturated registry. These state-level data would be extremely useful to states in their collection for the Early Childhood Data System Collection (ECID) that collects, integrates, maintains, stores, and reports information gained from early childhood programs across different agencies. The usefulness of the data however, would be contingent on the saturation levels of the participating registries. For example, if participation in registries is mandatory, saturation rates will be higher and the data more robust.

Though much of the ECID data is based on programming for individual children and their families, some data about programs and staff could be enriched by registry-level data. Additional possibilities for data that registries track include the following:

- Connection to state, region, or territory licensing agencies to help licensors or regulators verify programs and workforce data.

- Connection to state, region, or territory Quality Rating and Improvement Systems (QRIS) to help licensors or regulators verify programs and track workforce development.

- Professional demographics that can provide an overall view of the workforce for evaluation and planning purposes.

- Market Rate Survey data that could be strengthened using program inclusion and workforce data.

- Professional development uptake rates, organized by content or competency areas, levels, roles, locations, or other demographic areas for strategic planning purposes.

- Trainer and training evaluation data including areas and levels of training, core knowledge, and competencies as well as demographics, levels, and expertise of trainers providing the professional development.

- Retention rates identified when entered by professionals or administrators, or tracked over time.

As tracking of professional development and credentials in state or regional registries become more common, several factors have arisen that serve to strengthen the registry work. They include the following:

- Registry software has introduced data entry consistency, with static fields and business rules. As the software developers work with different state systems, the software capabilities and functionalities become more responsive to changes in the greater field.

- Many state or regional registries have gone through the Partnership Eligibility Review (PER) process ensuring quality standards are being upheld in data entry, verification, policies, and registry management. PER review allows registries that meet the standards to align the National Data Set*, to partner with accrediting bodies (e.g., NAEYC), and to provide transcripts for CDA consideration through agreements with the Council for Professional Recognition.

- Discussions between registry systems through a listserv managed by the National Workforce Registry Alliance, through sessions at national conferences, and through peer-to-peer discussions.

Registries continue to expand and grow at a rapid rate to keep up with the growing demands of the field. Registries are responsive to individuals as well as the greater field. At the individual level, an early care and education professional can track her or his professional development, see her or his own professional growth over time, and set future goals. At the field level, registries provide a snapshot view of the early care and education workforce.

*The National Data Set is part of the Alliance Early Childhood and School-Age National Workforce Dataset Project. This project is a bi-annual, multi-state data transfer of verified registry data. Contributing registries have established operational standards and collect and report workforce data elements in a uniform and standardized manner. The number of contributing registries varies with each cycle as registries work to pursue or maintain approval status. Beginning in 2015, a longitudinal identifier was added by participating registries with agreement to continue use of that identifier in future datasets to provide capacity for longitudinal analyses. The Alliance partners with researchers to complete an in-depth analysis and identify key workforce trends and inform policy makers about the status of the early childhood and school-age workforce. Additionally, analyses yield information about where registries need additional support in order to meet best practice and increase their future data contributions.

State Examples

The final section of this brief provides examples of existing state registries and their functionality.

Kentucky

Kentucky utilizes a trainer-only approval system. Trainer approval in Kentucky is managed through application and training process by the University of Kentucky (UK). Prospective trainers submit an application that lists education and experience. Trainers then attend a multiple day workshop, Fundamentals of Effective Training (FET), held periodically in different locations across the state. FET has many opportunities for attendees to engage in hands-on experiences and network with other trainers. Attendees are then expected to complete online follow-up training, including a session about the state's core knowledge and competencies. Once requirements are met, trainers become certified and their training is approved.

https://www.kentuckypartnership.org/Services/trainer-credential

Ohio

In Ohio, the registry is a centralized information system for early childhood and afterschool professionals. Ohio's Professional Registry houses the state approval system for four state agencies. It also allows state agency representatives to approve trainers and training content. Eventually the state agencies created a universal approval system and the approval was turned over to the agency managing the registry. The registry also hosts a online tool that allows professionals to search and register for statewide training. Users can search and register for statewide training through the registry. Trainings taken through the registry are automatically linked to a professional's profile.

https://registry.occrra.org/

Resources

National Workforce Registry Alliance (NWRA)
The National Workforce Registry Alliance (NWRA) is a private, non-profit, voluntary organization of state and regional early childhood and afterschool workforce registry systems. A map of state and regional registries, and their status, is updated frequently on their website. Several briefs and papers are available as well. Links to registries and member profiles can be found on the website. NWRA hosts an annual conference and organizes the Partnership Eligibility Review (PER).

http://www.registryalliance.org/

Workforce Data and Implementation Guide
National Center on Child Care Professional Development Systems and Workforce Initiatives, a service of the Office of Child Care and Office of Head Start, Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2012.

https://childcareta.acf.hhs.gov/resource/workforce-data-planning-and-implementation-guide

The State of Registries Survey

The website describes this survey below.

> The "State of Registries 2012" survey was initiated by the National Registry Alliance (the "Alliance") to provide information on the current state of registries throughout the United States and its Territories. The Alliance is a private, nonprofit, voluntary organization of State early childhood and school-age workforce registry and professional development leaders. The Alliance promotes high-quality, coordinated, documented, and accessible State career development systems to encourage a well-trained and educated, supported, and adequately compensated workforce.

TNRA. (2012). *The State of Registries Survey*. Washington DC: The National Registry Alliance.

www.registryalliance.org/documents/alliance.../24-2012-state-of-registries-survey

2012 The State of the Nation's Training and Trainer Registries and Approval Systems

The document describes the content below.

> The "2012 State of the Nation's Trainer and Training Registries and Approval Systems" survey was initiated by the National Registry Alliance's (the "Alliance") Trainer and Training Approval (TTA) Task Force to provide information on the current state of trainer and training registries throughout the United States. This document is intended to support efforts to create and manage training and trainer registries and/or approval systems that meet the needs of states and regions. It breaks apart the functionality of each of the models, providing information about goals, advantages, limitations, and common business practices. No one model is preferable to the others; rather, states take advantage of multiple models to meet their professional development needs.

TNRA. (2013). *2012 The State of the Nation's Training and Trainer Registries and Approval Systems*. Washington, DC: The National Registry Alliance.

https://www.researchconnections.org/childcare/resources/25729

Early Childhood Workforce Data: Collection Practices and Possibilities

The document describes the content below.

> This resource was prepared in cooperation with the Statewide Longitudinal Data Systems (SLDS) Grant Program to provide Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge (RTT-ELC) States with the information they need about reliable data about their workforce. This information will help States make critical administrative, policy, and funding decisions about improving programs and services to children and families and to meet State and Federal reporting requirements.

Early Childhood Workforce Data: Collection Practices and Possibilities. AEM Corporation, (2015).

https://elc.grads360.org/services/PDCService.svc/GetPDCDocumentFile?fileId=15240

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