Knowledge, Access, and Utilization of Evidence-Based Practices (EBP) by Early Childhood Professionals

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Purpose of Study
With the enactment of No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB, 2001) and IDEA (2004), the use of evidence-based practices has been promoted and widely discussed in practice and research. However, the concept of evidence-based practice has been understood differently, and a gap between research and practice exists (Dunst, 2009). To support practitioners in using an evidence-based decision making approach, we examined through an online survey how practitioners would like to access information. Exploring practitioners’ perspectives on EBP will provide future directions for professional development.

Question 4: What type(s) of resources or experiences guide you in determining if a practice/strategy is evidence-based?

Group Profile Summary

**Administrators (n = 63)**
- Administrators learn about new practices from agencies (required/recommended) more frequently than other groups
- Administrators report liking research briefs compared to other groups

**Faculty/Trainers (n = 23)**
- Most familiar (80%) with evidence base for current practices compared to other groups
- Articles, conferences, and websites are the most desired formats to receive information for evidence
- Searching the literature is the most frequent activity to access research

**Related Service Providers (n = 21)**
- Most related service providers are familiar (50%) or somewhat familiar (38%) with research evidence for their practices
- 57% of related service providers rely on evidence before changing a practice
- Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube were the least desired formats for evidence for related service providers

**Teachers (n = 125)**
- Most teachers are familiar (48%) or somewhat familiar (43%) with research evidence for their practices
- 60% of teachers rely on evidence before changing a practice
- Teachers strongly prefer conferences over other formats to receive information about evidence and access knowledge through trainings

**All (n = 223)**
- Learn about a new practice and make decisions based on colleagues and mentors recommendations over other sources and methods
- Teachers, faculty/trainers, and administrators prefer conferences to obtain information about evidence
- 17% of participants like Facebook, Twitter, or YouTube formats to receive information
- All participants are likely to utilize multiple activities to access evidence for practice

*analysis is based on preliminary data from the online survey*