

Research Notes

Published by the McCormick Tribune Center for Early Childhood Leadership, National-Louis University

WINTER 2009

Examining Family Child Care Quality from a Business Perspective

Research has demonstrated that center-based early childhood programs that have sound administrative practices are more apt to promote high-quality learning environments and positive development outcomes for children.¹ There is a growing consensus that sound business practices are equally important in family child care settings.

While there are several instruments that measure the quality of provider-child interactions and the quality of the learning environment in family child care, there has not been a valid and reliable measure of business and professional practices of family child care. With this in mind, the *Business Administration Scale for Family Child Care* (BAS) was developed to measure and improve this important dimension of family child care quality.² This Research Note summarizes the findings of a 2008 reliability and validity study of the BAS using a national sample of family child care providers.

Overview of BAS Items

The BAS includes 37 indicator strands organized in 10 items that measure the quality of the business and professional practices of family child care programs. Each item is rated on a 7-point scale from inadequate to excellent. Providers that employ assistant or substitute caregivers are scored on all 10 items; those without additional employees are scored on only the first 9 items. Item scores are averaged to achieve an overall BAS score.

Sample

A sample of 83 family child care providers was drawn from Florida, Tennessee, California, and Illinois. Thirty percent of providers were located in California, 31% in Florida, 30% in Tennessee, and 8% in Illinois. Programs were located across urban, suburban, and rural regions of their states and ranged in size by the number of children served. Table 1 provides a summary of program characteristics.

Findings

Content validity. A panel of seven national family child care experts evaluated each indicator and item on the BAS to ensure that key business and professional practices of family child care were included and that indicators appropriately represented increasing levels of quality on a continuum.

Descriptive statistics. The average BAS score for all items was calculated at 3.78 with a range of scores from 1.70 to 6.60. The distribution of item scores revealed that 25% of items were scored at a 1 level and 30% of items were scored at a 6 or 7 level. This suggests that the BAS has an acceptable distribution of item scores across the quality continuum. Most providers in this study did not receive a copy of the BAS prior to administration. It is anticipated that as the BAS becomes more broadly used, items scored at the 1 level will decrease.

Internal consistency. The degree of coherence of items included in the BAS was examined. Coefficient alpha for the total 10-item scale (n = 65) was calculated at .77, and for the 9-item scale (n = 83) at .73 indicating that the BAS has acceptable internal consistency among items and that the items reliably measure the construct.

BAS Items

- Qualifications and Professional Development
- Income and Benefits
- Work Environment
- Fiscal Management
- Recordkeeping
- Risk Management
- Provider-Parent Communication
- Community Resources
- Marketing and Public Relations
- Provider as Employer

Table 1. Sample Characteristics

Number of Children Served by Age (N=606)*					
Birth – 2.11 years		3 – 4.11 years		5 – 12 years	
N	%	N	%	N	%
204	33.7	256	42.2	146	24.1
Number of Programs Serving Age Groups (N=64)*					
Birth – 2.11 years		3 – 4.11 years		5 – 12 years	
N	%	N	%	N	%
62	96.9	60	93.8	39	60.9
Program Size					
Small (1 – 5 children)		Medium (6 – 10 children)		Large (11 – 16 children)	
N	%	N	%	N	%
10	12	37	44.6	36	43.4

*19 providers did not provide specific information on the ages of children served.

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Distinctiveness of items. The 10 items were correlated to determine the extent to which they measure distinct, though somewhat related aspects of family child care business practices. Item inter-correlations ranged from .01 to .44 with a median value of .23; confirming that for the most part, the BAS measures distinct characteristics of organizational quality.

Inter-rater reliability. The degree to which the 21 assessors' item scores matched the BAS anchor's scores was determined using a videotape protocol. Overall inter-rater reliability was calculated at 94%; individual assessor's inter-rater reliability scores ranged from 90% to 100% agreement. Individual item-level agreement ranged from 67% to 100% with a median item agreement of 100%.

Differentiating programs. A one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted to determine if the BAS could differentiate programs of varying quality based on their FCCERS-R score.³ The results of the ANOVA provide confirmatory evidence that programs with higher FCCERS-R scores had significantly higher BAS scores (M= 3.87, S.D.= .94) than those with lower FCCERS-R scores (M= 3.08, S.D.= .89).

To assure that the BAS does not unfairly discriminate between large and small programs and that it is applicable across geographic regions, two analyses of variance were conducted. Both examinations found that programs of varying sizes and programs in different geographic regions did not have significantly different overall BAS scores.

Concurrent validity. Concurrent validity was determined by a correlational analysis with another measure of organizational effectiveness—the Parents and Provider subscale of the FCCERS-R. The moderate correlation of $r = .49$ between the two instruments suggests that the BAS measures related, but not redundant, characteristics of organizational quality.

Discussion and Recommendations

The results of this validity and reliability study confirm that the *Business Administration Scale for Family Child Care* meets several psychometric criteria. The instrument demonstrates good internal consistency. It measures distinct but related business and professional practices of family child care. The instrument differentiates between low- and high-quality programs and is applicable for use in different geographic regions and in programs of varying sizes. Finally, the BAS has good inter-rater reliability and was found to be related to, but not redundant, with other measures of organizational effectiveness.

This research provides evidence of the important link between the quality of business and professional practices in family child care and the quality of care provided to young children. As well, this research demonstrates that the BAS is both a valid and reliable measure of this important dimension of family child care quality. Continued research is needed to understand how the BAS can be used as a tool to support family child care program improvement efforts.

References

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