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EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION: ORIGINS, THEORIES
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EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION: ORIGINS,
THEORIES AND POLICY REALITIES

By

Rachel Fulcher Dawson

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ABSTRACT

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION: ORIGINS, THEORIES AND POLICY REALITIES

By

Rachel Fulcher Dawson

This dissertation explores Early Childhood Education (ECE) Policy from both a theoretical and empirical perspective drawing on sociology and political science. I first explain the size, scope and status of this policy issue. This sets the stage for the subsequent analysis and demonstrates the trends and the conflicting data in this policy area. Then I turn to three theories of policymaking in order to propose how ECE policy might better be understood, evaluated and enacted. Using these theories - multiple streams, issue framing and diffusion – I present three different analysis of ECE policy. First I focus on problem definitions by viewing the history of ECE policy in the U.S. through Kingdon’s policy streams lens. I break ECE policy into 3 general time periods- pre-Head Start era, Head Start era, and post-Head Start era. I find clear evidence of considerable differences in the theoretical and operational problem definitions of ECE during each era. Next I present results of a case study of framing in two different states over a 25 year period. I find evidence that the framing of ECE has wavered between that of education frames and welfare frames, though two frames that distinguish ECE from these others are the “scientific findings” or “evidence” frame and the “economic investment” frame. Finally, I present the results of a 50-state analysis of state adoption of ECE policy. I find that percentage poverty, working women and a liberal government ideology increase the log odds of a state adopting preschool policy in a given year. Most

significant is that the ratio of education to welfare spending (a proxy variable to these two domains' relative strength in a given state year) is significant in increasing these log odds. I also find that early adopting states are most likely to “reinvent” or innovate in this policy area and reinvention is most likely in the areas of teacher policy and funding. Finally, I find that states ***not adopting*** ECE policy have significantly higher Head Start enrollment supporting (though not significantly) the notion that federal policy created a pressure valve effect in these states that found federal policy sufficient to meet their ECE policy needs.

To Mom, Dad, Matthew, Joanna, Josh, Martha, Scott, Grace, Ellie and Caroline –
the best, most loving, most consistent and most patient teachers in my life.

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I have many people to thank for their help with this dissertation and with the completion of my PhD.

I wrote this dissertation during the “early years” of three very important people in my life, my daughters, Grace, Ellie and Caroline (who was born during the dissertation year)! In theory this gave me a personal perspective on what it is that magically takes place during transformation of a newborn into a toddler into a preschooler into a kindergartener. For my kids, I see how each went through different phases and developmental changes at their own unique pace – while still basically being raised in the same environment. For me and my husband, I see how it has been magical and miraculous to witness the beauty and brilliance of each of them – while coping with the physical, mental and emotional challenges of parenting three young children. The “personal perspective” then is simple: no matter what policy I have evaluated or compared or analyzed, nothing has yet to capture for me what I have personally experienced. It is as a researcher, then that I have tried to understand how the public role has developed in the life of young children - how it is that as a society, it is absolutely in the best interest of everyone that all children have the best possible early experience. The challenge is in finding out how that public role meets the personal, private choices of families, parents and children.

My own early experience was molded by my parents, Nancy and Tony Fulcher. Through a combination of love, strength, sacrifice and faith, they saw to it that me and my four siblings had access to the very best education has to offer: development of each

individual learner, challenges in and out of the classroom, outstanding teaching, high expectations met with support and resources. There is no way to properly acknowledge what my parents - my first teachers - have meant for me. *Everything* would not be overshooting - not by a mile.

My siblings, Matthew, Joanna, Josh and Martha were and are my constant companions, rivals and friends. Having them in my life is a constant reminder that my experience and interpretation therein are not so unique, and that in statistical terms, an “N of 1” is informative, but rarely captures the full effect of anything!

My husband Scott has been my constant supporter and champion for the past 10 years and especially during this dissertation process. His love, humor and friendship have been life-support for me when I doubted myself, my path and my stamina. I think he did best by encouraging me without ego of his own in a process – a dissertation- that I think requires just enough ego of its author to actually complete it and more than enough humility to realize it’s not a masterpiece!

I wanted to use this space to acknowledge each and every teacher I have had in my life. It is overwhelming and informative to actually sit down and think about this list of people. I remember the name of every teacher for every grade from preK to 12 (34 people). Oddly enough, I had a much harder time remembering all the great professors I had as an undergrad at Marquette (though I can estimate this number to be around 37) and then as a grad student at Maryland (19). Here at MSU, I’ve had the great fortune of being taught and working with Drs. Sedlak, Plank, Fairweather, Arsen, Sykes, Youngs, Fairweather and Weiland in the College of Education and Drs. Jacoby, Schneider, Creel-Davis, Hammond and Kautz in the Department of Political Science. I truly believe and

know this dissertation to be a cumulative product of these 103 people – their patience, inspiration, encouragement and belief in me as a student gave me a lifelong love of learning and a desire to always, always search for knowledge and truth in a helpful way.

I come to the field of education policy from both a teacher's and a political perspective. Though I taught almost a decade ago, I still recall often the amazing experience of working, learning and teaching at Notre Dame Middle School in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. I am humbled by teachers who work their entire careers in the classroom – dedicated to children and to learning in a way that I know I cannot be directly. I must thank the Rev. Timothy O'Brien, Ph.D. for grounding my political perspectives and belief in the American governmental system. And the only two politicians I have ever worked for – Rep. Timothy Roemer (IN) and Sen. Herb Kohl (WI) – make me proud of America and of what it means to be political: no scandals, no nonsense, hard work, strong ethics and morals, freedom-loving.

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Introduction

By much estimation, Early Childhood Education (ECE) is a hot policy topic. Politicians, educationalists, economists and celebrities champion its importance for children and for society. Most families send young children to some ECE program before they begin kindergarten. All levels of government are involved in ECE provision, regulation and administration. Non-governmental organizations and advocacy groups champion the importance and need for it. Research is conclusive that quality programs lead to dramatic benefits for children and society and that early childhood is absolutely the most dynamic and critical growth period of an individual's life. And all of these factors of ECE policy are growing: more people as champions, more government programs, and more research evidence. In this way, it seems that there is both *momentum* and *consensus* around this policy issue with growth in programs and agreement on funding and importance. Yet despite such seeming momentum and consensus, ECE policy in the United States remains enigmatic with erratic policy growth across the nation, conflicting views about the role of government in young children's development, inconsistent applications of scale-up from known successful programs and instable funding and funding sources.

A quick snapshot shows momentum at most every level. First of all, most kids - 60 percent - under age five are in some sort of non-parental care and this is higher for children ages three (65%) and four (79%) who are predominantly in formal care arrangements such as childcare centers, preschools and nursery schools (Mulligan, et al, 2005). The federal government has consistently funded Head Start regardless of partisan control of the executive or legislative bodies, with increases at or above inflation since its

inception (Vinovskis, 2005; Head Start Bureau, 2006). All but twelve states have adopted state-funded preschool programs, with over \$2.8 billion state-dollars currently spent on more than 800,000 kids (Barnett, et al, 2006). This represents an increase in funding of over 7.5 percent (adjusted for inflation) and over 100,000 kids in just the last five years alone (2000-2005) (Barnett, et al, 2006). In addition, K-12 schools and districts have a growing interest in ECE policy as 822,000 kids are now in preschools housed in public schools and around 19,900 (35%) of all public elementary schools now have prekindergarten programs on-site (NCES, 2003). Recent non-legislative efforts provide additional levity to an ECE-push with the “adequacy” lawsuits in four states including prekindergarten provision as part of the constitutional financial obligation of a state (ACCESS, 2006). Recent efforts at statewide compliance with the No Child Left Behind Act have led many states to align preschool standards with elementary ones- forty-one states have now done this (Education Week, 2007).

Along with this momentum of activity and seeming growth in the ECE policy area is a seeming consensus-everyone supports ECE generally speaking. Coalitions have formed around such specific endeavors as Universal Prekindergarten (the PreK-Now Group), Smart Start collaborations in the states, promoting NAEYC standards and accreditation, large statewide initiatives and referenda (Florida and California most recently). People from both political parties are supportive of ECE policy as are many otherwise-polarized ideologues (for example, AEI, CATO, Manhattan Institute, Children’s Defense Fund, Institute for Policy Studies, Brookings are think tanks across the ideological spectrum and have all publicly recognized the importance of early childhood). In addition, prominent economists –most notably the Nobel Laureate, James

Heckman – and well-known celebrities –most recently Rob “Meathead” Reiner, actor and producer – have been able to draw national attention and bring in new audiences to the ECE policy debates. Public opinion data demonstrate that an overwhelming majority of people want increases in funding for preschool and other ECE initiatives-a recent NIEER poll notes that 87 percent support state funding for preschool (NIEER, 2002). Evidence from two different strands of research - neuroscience and random-assignment studies of ECE programs – now converges along a common dimension: the experience and environment of young children in early childhood has a direct impact on their immediate learning and well-being as well as a significant long-term impact that affects each child and society.

An examination of the seeming momentum and consensus in ECE policy is particularly timely in light of current changes happening at the federal and state level of government in K-12 education reform policy. In response to NCLB, states have ratcheted up (or in some cases created from scratch) statewide standards and systems of accountability in order to more closely align what is taught by teachers with what is tested and what is learned. As the “feeder” system of graded schools, ECE programs and schools are a natural locus of attention for K-12 reforms.

And yet, the momentum and consensus belie the challenges facing ECE policy and policymakers. Countertrends demonstrate that while there is more attention and more funding than ever for ECE programs, the main ingredient from research in what makes programs affective –quality- is often not prioritized in policymaking. By many measures (teacher training, program quality) has plateaued and in some areas has gone *down* over time – one need look no further than a program like the Child Care

Development Fund (CCDF) which funnels more than \$5 billion per year to support child care provision for low-income and poor families, but has minimal requirements for providers, for program or for outcomes. Likewise, the seeming consensus masks the fact that while many generally support ECE policy and laud the importance of early learning, there are vastly different views of everything specific to ECE policy from state's roles, parental rights, age requirements, targeting vs. universal, and the like. In other words, the consensus in ECE of a diverse group of supporters could be much like the "empty vessel" charter policies in the states where a diverse set of supporters led to political compromise resulting in widely different laws and implementation realities (Wells, et al, 1999). A prime example of such support is seen in the wide variety of policies at the federal level – some twenty childcare and early learning programs- and the range of government involvement at the state level (thirty-eight states have forty-eight preschool programs, not to mention child care and other ECE programs). It quickly becomes clear that support does not mean consensus policy or programs.

The amalgam of policies across the states alone makes it clear that momentum and consensus are incomplete ways of understanding ECE policy today. It is not so simple to say that because most kids are already in ECE programs, because most states fund programs and because the federal government has been involved for so long, there is clear forward movement in this issue area. Rather, a more thorough understanding of how the existing policies have developed so differently is needed to shed light on what factors come into play in developing ECE policy. There is an inherently unclear picture of ECE policy in the U.S. as it encompasses welfare policy (aimed at poor families and children), education policy (aimed at all children with learning outcomes) and family

policy (less governmental in nature, but aimed at families and their support systems generally). This vagueness and variation is precisely what I aim to explore and hopefully explain in a helpful way. I suggest that ECE policy is a reflection of a mixture of competing political goals *and* a history of changing definitions and frames of understanding.

Research Program, Methods and Findings

My research program centers on one line of questioning: What explains variation in ECE policy? I answer this by first laying out the current data and historical trends for ECE in the United States. Through a set of complementary theoretical lenses I then explore what elements of the policymaking process have led to the existing status of ECE policy. I use a mixture of methods: historical analysis of problem definition, qualitative analysis of frames used in policymaking in two states, and quantitative analyses of 50-state data.

I begin by presenting the current statistics relevant to this policy area as well as trend data to situate it historically. What is evident from this data is that ECE has certainly grown in usage, public spending and types of programs. While Head Start and the Child Care Development Fund dominate federal policy in terms of dollars and numbers of children served, they are vastly different programs with different goals, regulatory controls and funding streams. In addition to these two large programs, there are more than a dozen other federal programs that serve young children, many of which serve the same populations as Head Start and the CCDF. Critical to an understanding of ECE policy today is the development of a broad set of state programs and policies most recently compiled and rated by the National Institute of Early Education Research

(Barnett, et al, 2006). What is most remarkable in the current status of ECE is that it is consistently funded at the federal level, it is increasingly funded by states, but that it remains, in the aggregate, a largely *private* endeavor – families still bear on average around 60 percent of the costs for ECE (Barnett and Masse, 2002). What is also remarkable is that while there is great deal of consistent and uncontroversial evidence from both the hard sciences (neuroscience) and the social sciences (education) of the importance of early learning and early experiences, the programs and policies put in place do not always require or fund the necessary ingredients of quality programs and quality staff (Schweinhart and Fulcher-Dawson, 2006). A closer look reveals some evidence in recent years of a leveling-off or plateauing of ECE demonstrating that access to care is no longer a *major* issue. However, this plateauing masks the fact that there are still constant trade-offs made in this policy area whereby more children are often brought into the fold of public programs at the expense of quality concerns such as teacher training and class size.

In order to understand the issue of ECE, it is necessary to consider a broader perspective of how *any* policy changes and grows over time and across issue areas. As such, I explore three theories that attend to the relevant considerations of ECE policy. While these are not comprehensive theories of policymaking nor do I explore the entire range of such theories, these theories are particularly chosen because they address such things as time, social movements, and political “tipping points”, multiple issue streams and innovation in the states. Such theories help inform any understanding of ECE policy and outcomes by highlighting how issues evolve and change over time and in different institutions. Furthermore, these theories help shed light on the apparent mismatch

identified previously between the seeming consensus and momentum surrounding ECE policy and the widely variable and tenuous nature of such policy. These theories help clarify how issues are defined, to what effect and what factors make enactment of policy most likely.

Diffusion and innovation theory focuses on the process through which governments adopt new programs (Berry and Berry, 1999). The theory suggests that there are variables that must be considered when examining why a government enacts a given policy-in particular, state policy enactment depends on variables internal to the state as well as variables external to it (such as other states' adoptions, federal policy, national economic trends). Kingdon's theory of agenda setting and multiple streams suggests that there are three streams: problems, policies and politics through which issues flow and at certain points in time (usually accompanied by a policy entrepreneur) all three are combined leading to attention on the agenda and action by policymakers (Kingdon, 1985). The idea is that policy growth and change is often incremental and predictable, but that major changes can and often do happen demonstrating that policy change depends both on the agenda and the issue definition. This ties into a third theory - issue framing - developed primarily in sociology, particularly, the theories of social movements. This theory compliments the others as it suggests that the crux of social movements is in how an issue is framed, such that the frame focuses the public and the debate on certain things and thus renders other facts and arguments moot (Schön and Rein, 1992). Taken together, these three theories posit how an issue gets on the political agenda, how it then gets enacted and how the definition and framing of the issue moves society in a given direction on this issue.

Using Kingdon's theories of problem definition and policy streams, I examined the history of ECE policy in the United States. I did this by separating this history into three "eras" of ECE policy: the pre-Head Start era (roughly beginning in the 1820s with infant schools and ending in the 1940s with Lanham Act child care centers); the Head Start Era (from early 1950s through the late 1970s); and the Modern or Post-Head Start era (from the early 1980s to present). I found that in the pre-Head Start era, there was limited attention to early learning and that problem definitions wavered between the developmental needs of children generally and the handicap of poverty in early childhood. The "problem" for the two early twentieth century policies was simply economic- out of work teachers in the Great Depression and later working mothers during WWII who needed custodial care for their young children. The Head Start era saw a rapid expansion of ECE policy most notably with the landmark Head Start legislation and program in 1965. Yet the problems this policy set out to solve were crippling as it was part of a larger agenda to end poverty and racial inequality. The problems of poverty and racial inequality were large and deep rooted and as the idea of an early childhood program to mitigate racial and economic inequalities for young children arose, so too did the political expediencies of making it a massive program at the expense of major design flaws. As such the problem quickly also became the Head Start policy itself as there was enormous pressure for this popular program to carry the weight of the less popular War on Poverty programs on its preschool shoulders. Finally, the Modern Era of ECE policy has seen an explosion in almost every policy direction as the problem definitions multiplied and policy solutions were made at many levels of government and more notably in private homes and families.

In a separate study, I looked at how ECE has been framed as an issue by policymakers. I looked at State of the State Addresses for the past twenty-five years for two states – Michigan and Oklahoma to examine the frames used by these governors. I compared ECE frames with those of welfare policy and education policy as these are the two larger areas of domestic policy between or within which ECE is situated. What I find is that frames used mirror those of both welfare and education, but ECE also enjoys the “evidence” or “research” frame whereby ECE is framed in terms of the evidence of the long-term findings of Perry and Chicago preschools. In addition, the economic frame was used more recently by governors in both states to present ECE as an “investment” with sure returns for the state.

A final study involved using event history analysis (EHA) where I examined the adoption of state ECE policies over a twenty year period. I tested for both the typical internal and external variables of diffusion as well as for a policy stream variable that I call “policy domain-strength” which posits that the relative strength of education to welfare as an issue in a state increases the adoption of ECE policy. I find evidence that the percentage poverty is correlated with ECE policy adoption as are the number of working women in the state and the liberal ideology of state citizens. Interestingly, the policy domain strength variable proved highly significant and increased the likelihood of adoption by the highest log-odds. I present an analysis of the “reinvention” of ECE policy by states in order to capture adoptions that happened subsequent to initial adoption finding that early adopters of ECE were more likely to “reinvent” policy most likely to adapt to changed policy expectations. Furthermore, reinvention policies were most likely to involve teacher policy and funding. Finally, I looked at the usage of federal policies in

non-adopting states and find that most are located in the mountain plains and that they have significantly higher rates of usage of Head Start and Special Education than their peers that did adopt policy. While these findings show promise for understanding under what conditions states adopt ECE policy, there are many factors that are not accounted for in my models and which I hope to accommodate in a future expansion of this project.

Conclusions

The aim of this dissertation was to delve into the issues surrounding the early childhood education. What is remarkable about this policy area is that despite an enviable amount of support and momentum, there are major gaps in quality, inefficiencies in policy overlaps and confounding definitions of the goals of the policy. What is evident from the findings presented herein is that the evolution of the policy has depending greatly on the different problem definitions used by policymakers at different times. Furthermore, framing of this policy has wavered between frames used for welfare and education policy. Two frames, however, seem to set ECE apart, the evidence frame and the investment frame. Finally, there is evidence that at the state level partisan politics has little to do with enacting policy, and that a state's poverty level and level of working women correlates with enactment. Reinvention in this policy area occurs primarily in early-adopting states and is most likely to involve teachers and/or funding. Non-adopting states utilize federal preschool programs in greater number than their adopting peers.

ECE policy has certainly grown and changed over time. This body of evidence raises a set of concerns in this policy area. First of all, quality concerns have been present from the get go and there still seems to be a considerable trade-off made between

funding and quality. Despite evidence from the solid body of research that quality is important to achieve documented outcomes; the same evidence that is professed in the framing of ECE is often ignored in the funding and implementation. An additional concern is that while the original aims of Head Start were to address the massive problems of poverty and racial inequality, these problems have not gone away and ECE policy has not proved to be a simple panacea policy to solve them. The massive federal programs of Head Start and CCDF continue to dominate *public* investment in ECE, and while recent efforts to improve quality in Head Start show promise; CCDF continues to operate largely as a custodial program for the very kids that research shows benefit most from high quality developmental preschool programming. An additional concern is with teacher qualifications and training. Because the funding and quality trade-off has become common, paying highly qualified teachers becomes tricky and as such teacher quality remains a major concern in this area. At a time when public schools have focused dramatically on “highly qualified teachers”, it is tragic that the same attention and concern is not lavished on the early childhood profession.

The good news appears to be that states, the laboratories for policy innovation, have been more successful at provisions of quality and at making program provision universal. In addition, while public elementary schools certainly have a decent share of the ECE programming, the majority of preschools are still privately operated. This could mean that unlike kindergarten’s absorption into the system its makers were trying to avoid, preschool will remain by and large a separate institution. Because states are also the locus for implementing welfare and other social services programs, the possibilities for coordination and comprehension of services is greater here.

More general concerns arise in the area of family policy and child development. The notion of the family as central to ending poverty and to raising up blacks as a group were central to 1960s notions of appropriate policy solutions. The ability of such an amalgam of policies serving families in an efficient and sustaining way is unclear. Piecemeal approaches to family policy are likely inadequate, and while ECE is not the sole policy operating in that realm, it is certainly a major one. This gets to another fundamental strain in this policy area: between home and family. With the prevalence of non-parental care for young children, it is evident that it is no longer an Ozzie and Harriet society. Yet some children do stay home a considerable amount of their young lives and all children are at least home some of their young lives. As such, the developmental concerns of policy must encompass the home and family in order for success to be an option. The evidence that is cited so often that has taken on mythical proportions (Fuller, 2007), includes provisions for both parental involvement and home visitation. That program element is perhaps the least understood and the most likely to be eliminated in program implementation. The modest results seen in large-scale implementation of public ECE policy should be carefully reconsidered. The history and development of ECE policy, if nothing else, should caution policymakers to consider *all* elements of quality when developing and reinventing policy.

Chapter One: Current and Historical Status of ECE

This section aims to present the status of young kids, of Early Childhood and of government involvement in ECE currently and over time. This is primarily a summary chapter based on national and state data that demonstrate the current standing and the growth over time in this policy area. It also presents evidence of general consensus in this area among political, ideological and public groups. Finally, I present less prominent countertrends and dissent that are important to acknowledge in forming a complete picture of this policy domain.

Current Status

There are currently more than 24 million children under age six in the United States. This represents around 6.5 percent of the total U.S. population (U.S. Census Bureau, 2008). These 24 million children come from diverse backgrounds in terms of race, ethnicity, income and family status. Around 55 percent are white, 14 percent are black, 23 percent are Hispanic, 4 percent are Asian, and 1 percent are Native American (U.S. Census Bureau, 2007). Children come from families of varying financial means, with 20 percent are at or below the federal poverty limit (FPL), currently \$35,200 for a family of three (NCCP, 2008), 23 percent are low-income (families earn between 100 and 200 percent of the FPL) and the remaining 57 percent from families above low income. This means that more than 43 percent of young children come from families with low incomes or families in poverty. Statistics for these young families tend to compound each other as other risk factors associated with childhood are more prevalent in children from low-income and poor families. For example, these children are more likely to have parents with less than a high school education; more likely to live with a single parent

and are more likely to move frequently due to displacement, eviction and guardianship changes (NCCP, 2008).

A majority- 60 percent- of young children are in some type of non-parental care on a weekly basis (NCES, 2005). The National Household Education Survey (NHES) through the National Center for Educational Statistics (NCES) contains the most recent set of national aggregate data on child care and preschool participation. Table 1.1 summarizes to types of care below. Non parental care is more likely in older children as is center-based care (NCES, 2005).

Table 1.1: Care Arrangements for Children under 6

Age	Non-parental care	Relative care	Non-Relative care	Center-based care
All under 6	60%	22%	16%	33%
Less than 1	40%	21%	14%	8%
1	53%	22%	20%	16%
2	59	23	18	25
3	65	22	14	43
4	79	21	13	65
5	82	20	13	73

Source: NCES 2005, NHES survey

Participation varies with other factors such as race, mother's education, mother's working status and income. Black children are most likely to be in non parental care (75%) than white children (60%) or Hispanic children (48%) (NCES, 2005).

Participation varies by income as well with fairly steady rates between poor (55%) and low-income families (57%), but rising more dramatically in upper income families (72% in highest income bracket). A mother's level of education is also determinative of participation with a sharp distinction between those with some college (63%), a BA (65%) and post-BA (74%) and those with high school (56%) or less education (43%).(NCES, 2005). Not surprisingly, mothers that work full time are most likely to

have children in non-parental care (85%) than non-working mothers (31%). The only regional variation in non-parental care participation is in the West which has significantly lower participation rates (54%) than the Northeast (63%), South (62%) or Midwest (62%).

While much attention in ECE policy focuses on *public* programs, the fact remains that around 60 percent of the funding for ECE is still from families and private sources. The remaining amount is from federal (28%) and state sources (10 %) (Barnett and Masse, 2002). Total spending in this area can be estimated at around \$58 billion – the sum of \$16.4 billion federal, \$7 billion state and \$35 billion private spending.¹ Spending per child varies widely with each program and for each family. Head Start spending is around \$6,700 per child (Head Start Bureau, 2007), and the average state investment (for states spending on state preschools) is \$3,600 per child (NIEER, 2007). Likewise family spending on childcare varies. The SIPP reports that of the 4.9 million women who are employed and have children under the age five, childcare expenditures are on average \$4888/year per child, which accounts for an average of 8.57 percent of their monthly household income (SIPP, 1999). This cost proves to be regressive with those mothers making the least (less than \$1,500/month) paying the highest percentage of their income (31.6%) towards childcare expenses (SIPP, 1999). As income is highly correlated with education level, this is also true for the least educated mothers who pay 14 percent of their income on childcare compared to the highest educated at 7.75 percent (SIPP, 1999).

¹ This is a rough estimate based on federal spending figures totaling \$16.4 billion in 2006 and using Barnett and Masse's ratio of 60% private, 28% federal and 12% state. NIEER estimates \$3.72 Billion were spent on state preschools in 2007, and the remaining state money is for other ECE programs such as Head Start supplements, CCDF matches, etc.

There are different types of care available to young children across the country. Participation in each type also varies with age, income and race. Generally speaking, non parental care is made up of three or four categories: center-based care (which includes day care centers, preschools, and Head Start programs); non-relative home care (which includes home-run day cares and group day cares); and relative home care (when a relative watches a youngster either the child's or the relative's home). Over 33 percent of young children are in center-based care (with the number rising to 73 percent for five year olds). Around 16 percent of young children are in nonrelative home day care (this is more common for one and two-year-olds – 20 and 18 percent, respectively). Finally, 22 percent of young children receive relative care with little variation based on age, but much variation based on ethnicity (most likely for black children) (Mulligan, et al, 2005; NCES, 2005).

ECE programs are funded and operate at all levels of government and in private for-profit and non-profit settings. The largest single program is Head Start which now serves more than 900,000 children each year with a budget of over \$6.8 billion –roughly \$6,900 per child (Head Start Bureau, 2006). HS serves children ages three through five not yet enrolled in kindergarten and provides support for their families (Head Start Bureau, 2006). Head Start agencies, sometimes called preschools, provide a range of services including education, early childhood development, medical, dental, mental health, nutrition and parent involvement. It serves children from families that are at or below the federal poverty level (FPL), via its mix of educational programming for the children and these support services for the children and families.

While Head Start serves as the dominant federal program for *preschool* programming, federal *child care* programming has grown to now serve more children than Head Start though with slightly lower federal dollars. The Child Care Development Block Grant was enacted as part of the Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1990 (PL 101-508) establishing the primary source of dedicated federal funding for child care (Butler and Gish, 2003). The main purpose of this program is to send money via block grants to states to be used to subsidize child care expenses for families that are considered low-income or on welfare for their children under age thirteen (ibid). The CCDBG was significantly amended and overhauled in this vein as a part of the Welfare Reform laws enacted in 1996, most notably in the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (PRWORA) which established the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) to replace the existing welfare entitlement programs (P.L. 104-193). The CCDBG is now a combination of discretionary and entitlement funds called the Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF). What is most significant for ECE in the revised CCDF is that for the first time, child care provisions were tied to welfare recipients' (and low-income, non-TANF recipients') efforts at self-sufficiency. The most striking feature of the TANF program was to allow states to establish time limits for welfare recipients so that after a given number of years, persons are no longer eligible for TANF funds, though no such time restriction exists in six states and no such time limits are in the CCDBG law (Butler and Gish, 2003). Currently, there are over 1.8 million children ages zero through thirteen that benefit from the CCDF with approximately 60 percent of these or 1.1 million under age six (Child Care Bureau, 2006). Almost \$5 billion was appropriated for the CCDBG in 2006.

In addition to Head Start and the CCDF – the two largest programs in terms of funding and children served – there are range of other federal programs for childcare, preschools and early childhood programs. These include a series of funding streams administered by two federal agencies: the Department of Education and Health and Human Services (HHS). Programs funded through Education legislation include Title I Preschools, Early Reading First, Even Start, Special Education Preschool Grants and Early Childhood Educator Professional Development Grants. In FY2005, funding for these Department of Education Programs totaled almost \$1.3 billion. Programs funded through HHS appropriations include Head Start, Early Head Start, the Child Care Development Fund (CCDF), TANF funds and transfers from SSBG. In FY2005, appropriations for these programs totaled \$15.1 billion (Schweinhart and Fulcher-Dawson, 2006). Besharov and Higney estimate that since 1997 (first year of welfare reform provisions) spending on these programs has doubled (Besharov and Higney, 2006).²

Currently, thirty-eight states fund and run forty-eight preschool programs (Barnett, et al., 2005). Twenty states appropriate supplemental Head Start funds, either to serve more children or to support a range of things that the federal money does not sufficiently cover, such as administration and coordination of training. For four states this is the *only* state investment in early childhood. These state preschool programs range from full-day preschool for all four year olds to smaller, targeted half day programs for poor children not eligible for Head Start (NIEER, 2007).

² Besharov and Higney use a slightly different set of federal programs to calculate this including the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP), but the funding increase is roughly equivalent.

The National Institute for Early Education Research (NIEER) now publishes an annual preschool yearbook with evaluations of preschool commitments of all fifty states and has recently released its third such report (Barnett et al., 2006). As of 2004-2005, NIEER reported that more than 800,000 children are served in the United States by state-funded preschool programs. This represents 17 percent of all four year-olds and 3 percent of all three year-olds nationwide. And it means that state preschools now serve almost the same number of children as Head Start.

It is possible to estimate the number of children served by public programs, by combining the numbers of each program above and comparing this to the national number of young children. However, these are rough estimates as there is often overlap in the children served by these programs (some children attend both Head Start and state preschool programs). So a rough estimate shown in Table 1.2 reveals that around 17 percent of all children under age six in the United States go to *public* early childhood programming. This number rises when you consider only children from low-income and poor families, where almost 40 percent of children receive government ECE programming.

Table 1.2: Estimates of children served by *major* public programs.

	Number of children served	Percentage of all US children under 6	Percentage of all low income and poor children under 6
Early Head Start and Head Start	982,000	4	9
State Preschool	935,000	4	9
Special Education	1,005,000	4	10
CCDF	1,114,500	5	11
	4,067,000	17	39

Sources: Head Start Bureau, 2008; NIEER, 2007; US Department of Education, 2006, HHS, 2007; NCCP, 2007.

Historical Trends

In the past forty years, there have been simultaneous trends in policy and society. As women increasingly worked outside the home, their child care needs increased and as public funding for child care and preschool increased more attention was paid to the importance of learning in early years. In addition, as the promise of preschool learning became more well-known, ECE as an issue area gained more champions and advocates across the country. These growth trends and evidence of support for ECE are discussed here in order to lay out the scope of the issue, the change over time and the appearance of momentum and consensus. Subsequently, I lay out countertrends and evidence of major shortfalls and disagreements in this policy area.

Beginning shortly after World War II, the number of women in the workforce increased each year. In the 1960s and 1970s this trend continued, but what changed was the number of women with young children (younger than six years old) began to increase as well. By the mid 1980s, 50 percent of all women with a child under age six worked outside the home and by the late-1980s, 50 percent with a child under age three worked outside the home (BLS, 2006). Figure 1.1 shows the growth in female employment over the last twenty years by the presence and age of the youngest child in the home (BLS, 2006). While the presence of all women in the workforce grew steadily, the rates of women with dependent children grew the fastest with school-age children, children under age six, and children under age three. Taken at face value this shows quite a clear demand or need for some arrangement for the young children of a majority of women.

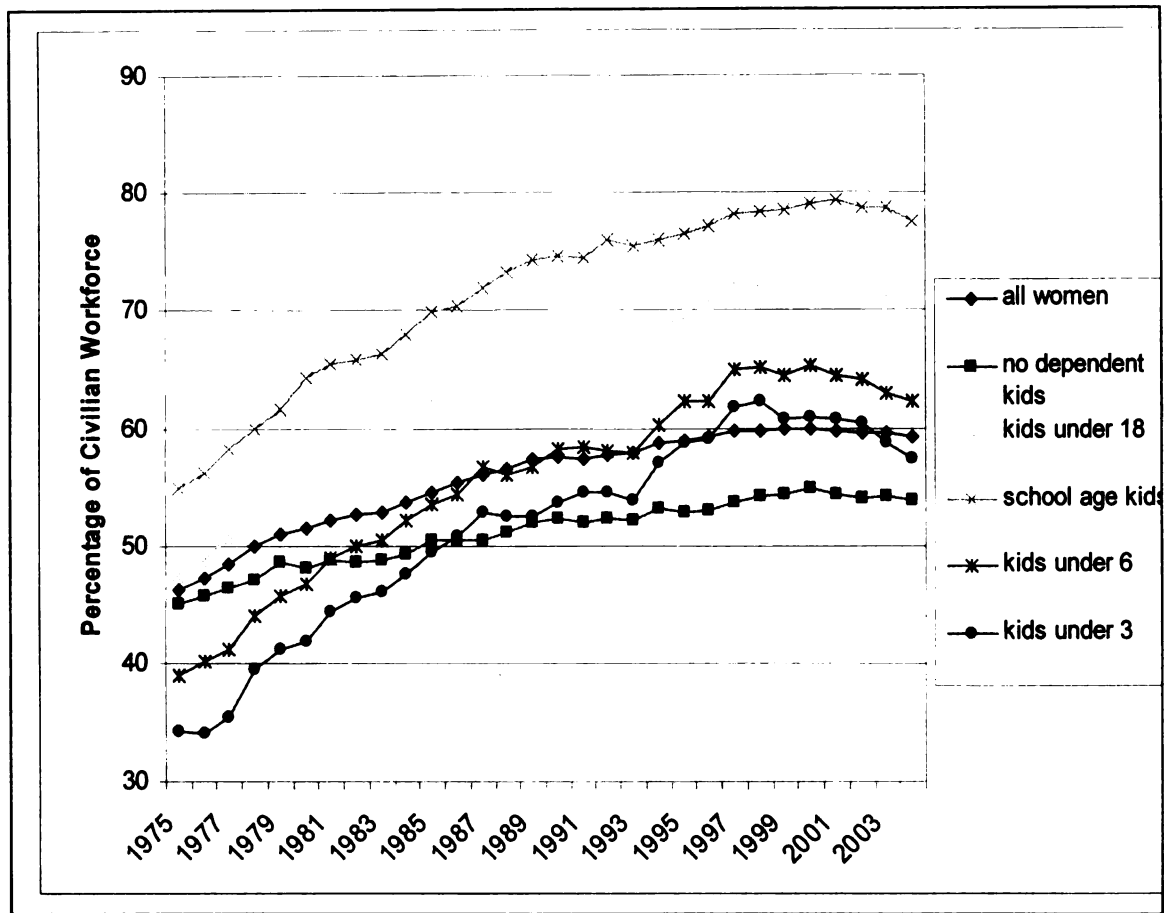


Figure 1.1: Working women by presence and age of youngest child: 1975-2004
Source: Women in the Labor Force: A Databook (BLS, 2005)

Not surprisingly, the growth in preschool enrollment tracks closely with the presence of women in the workforce. Figure 1.2 shows the enrollment in preschool by age and also shows the enrollment in kindergarten for purposes of comparison. It is worth noting that at the time of Head Start’s enactment, less than 10 percent of all three and four year olds were in preschool. But since then, enrollment has grown each year; in fact, this enrollment has grown at a faster rate for threes and fours than women’s workforce participation – due likely to the fact that many children enroll in preschool even if their mother is not in the workforce. Unfortunately, such data for all ages in all arrangements is not available for this time period, but *the preschool enrollment data suggests that by*

2003 almost as many four year olds were in preschool as five year olds were in kindergarten.

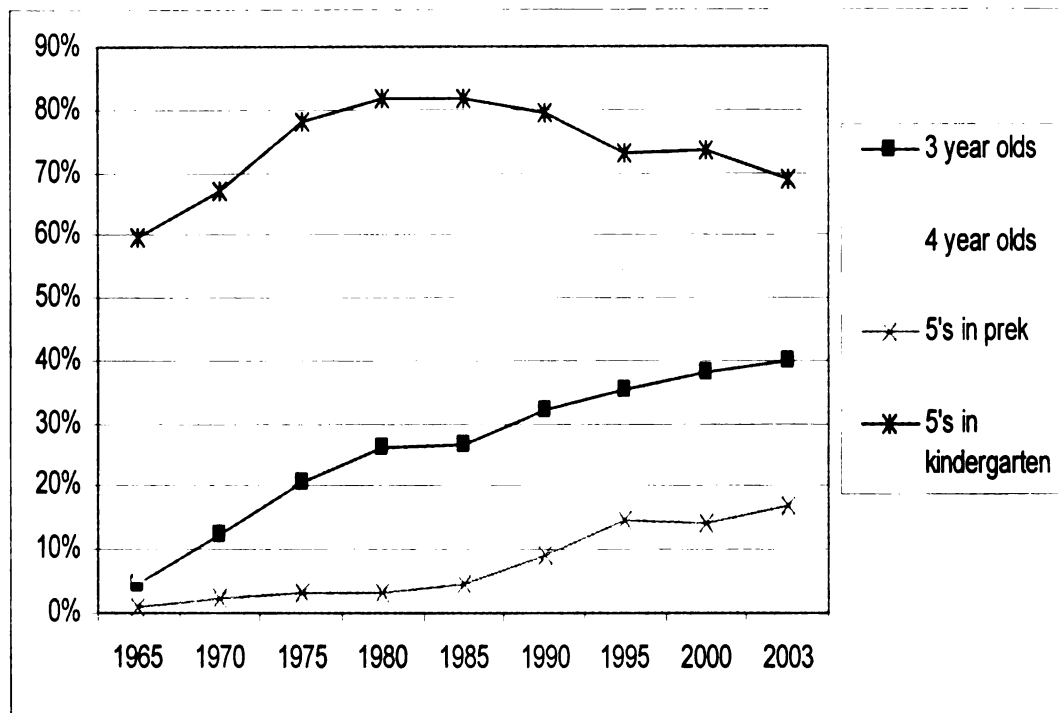


Figure 1.2: Historic Enrollment in Preschool and Kindergarten: 1965-2003
Source: NCES, 2003

While women's workforce participation and preschool/child care enrollment has grown, so too has the government's role in ECE. The real origin of government-based ECE policy is the passage of Head Start legislation in 1965. Initially passed as a summer-only program for four, five and six year olds and their families in poverty, Head Start has grown each year serving more children and their families (Vinovskis, 2002).

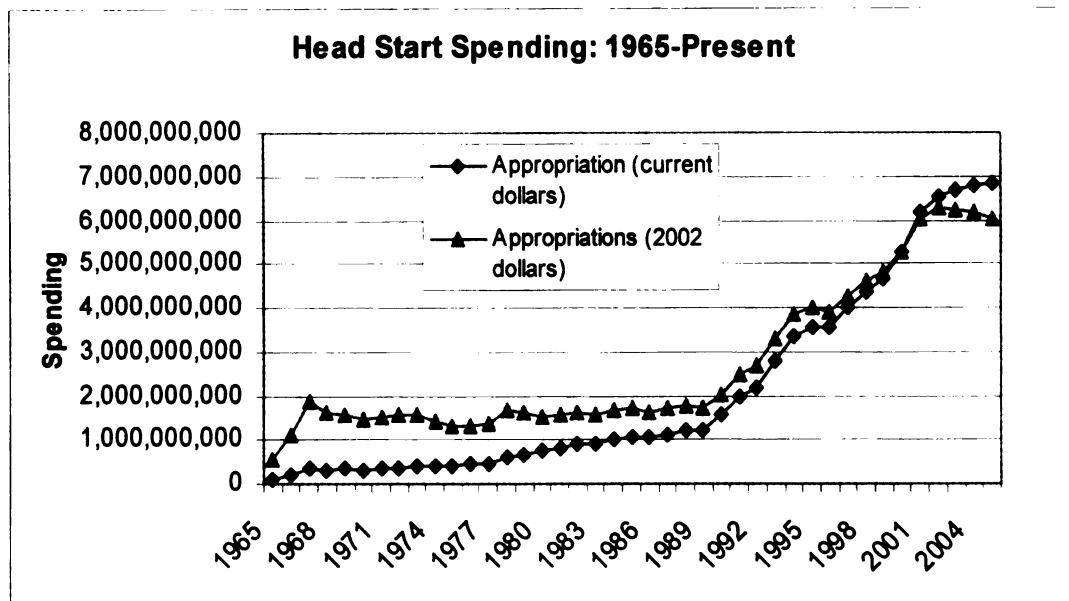


Figure 1.3: Head Start Spending
Source: Head Start Bureau, 2006

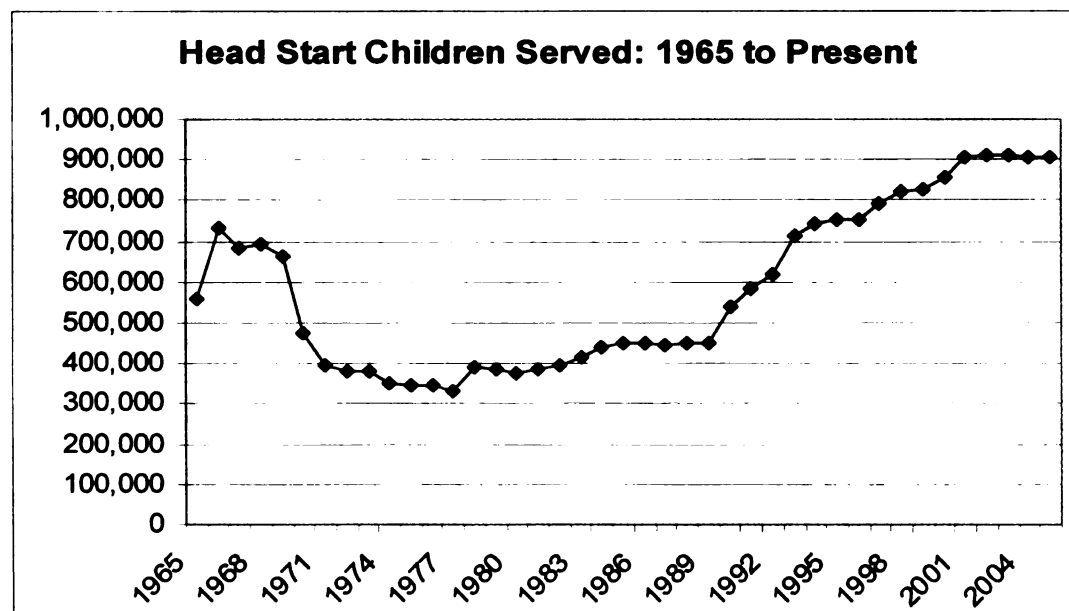


Figure 1.4: Head Start Children Served
Source: Head Start Bureau, 2006

Head Start funding (overall and per child) has increased roughly with inflation and while the number of children served has plateaued around 900, 000 over the last three or four years, other programs have been implemented and expanded during this time, such as

Early Head Start and Even Start which were added as complimentary programs to Head Start serving children before they enter Head Start and families via adult and family literacy programming (Good Start, Grow Smart, 2006). Figure 1.5 shows that per child spending has followed a slightly different trend plateauing from 1974 to 1990, increasing until 2000 and then plateauing again in the last few years.

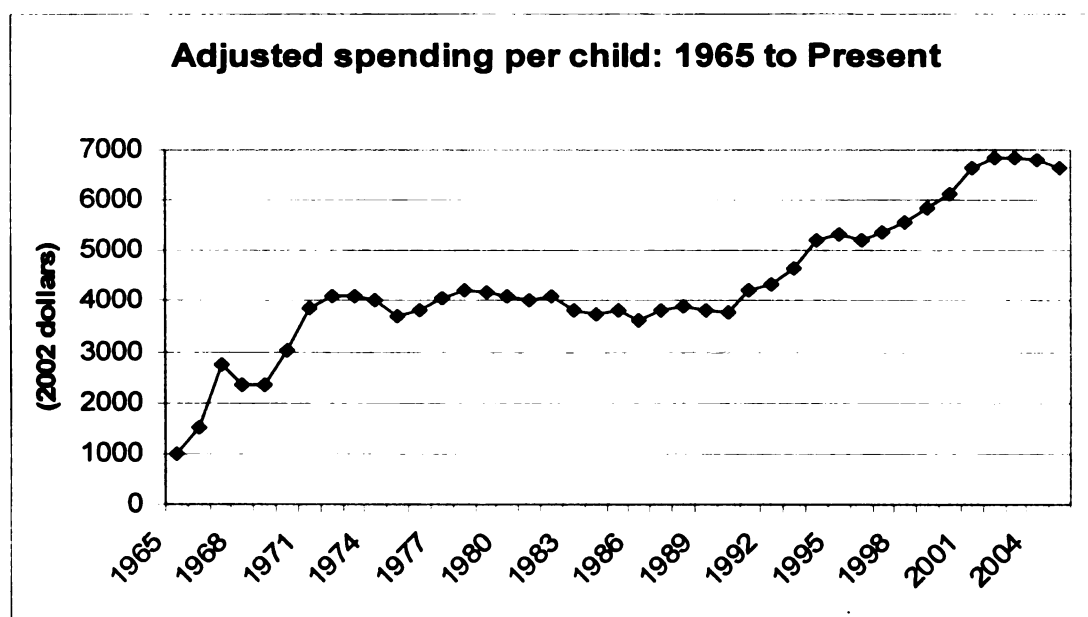


Figure 1.5: Adjusted Head Start Spending per Child
Source: Head Start Bureau, 2006

Like Head Start, federal child care funding has experienced growth. Currently, there are over 1.8 million children ages zero to thirteen that benefit from the CCDF with approximately two-thirds of these or 1.1 million under age six (Child Care Bureau, 2006). Almost \$5 billion was appropriated for the CCDBG in 2006 which is more than four-times the original amount for CCDBG in constant dollars³. In fact, as a part of welfare reform through PRWORA, child care funding saw its biggest jump in federal to state block funding because PRWORA repealed three older childcare laws via the old AFDC

³ The other three programs were AFDC Child care funded at \$470 million, At Risk child care funded at \$270 million and Transitional child care at \$113 million.

welfare rules and combined all funding into the CCDF. In 1990, funding for these three programs and AFDC was around \$1.5 billion, so that current CCDF funding still reflects a doubling of federal expenditures on childcare in the last fifteen years (Butler and Gish, 2003).

While Head Start programs were created to serve children from poor and low-income families and other families increasingly sought out preschools for their children in private arrangements, state governments were not initially involved in preschool policy. With the exception of California and New York where policies were developed and enacted simultaneously to Head Start policy (in 1965 and 1966 respectively), other states played at most a supporting or supplemental role in public preschool. However, beginning with Florida in 1978, states began to develop and enact preschool policies that did more by targeting specific populations or requiring certain quality standards (NIEER, 2005). Over time more and more states added state funding to the mix of federal and private offerings for preschool. Figure 1.6 demonstrates the growth in the number of states with state preschools over the last forty years.

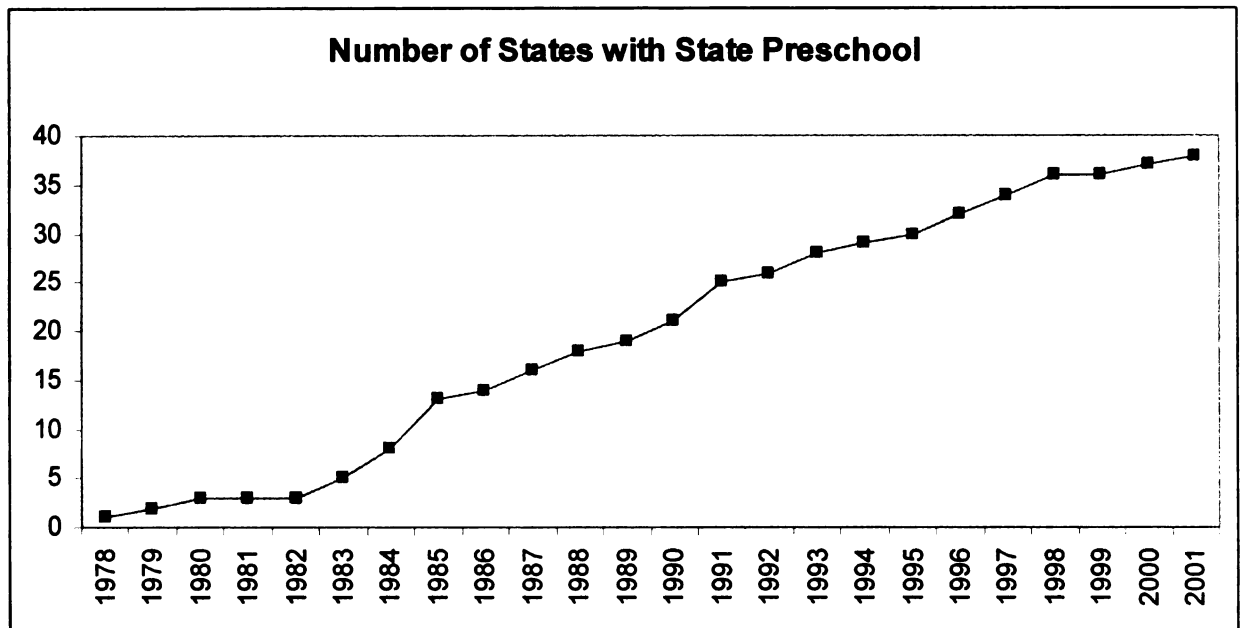


Figure 1.6: Number of States with State Preschool Policy 1978 - 2001

Source: NIEER, 2006; ECS, 2005

In examining these trends it is quite clear that there are positive historical trends overtime both the need for (women working), the increased usage of (enrollment) and the governmental involvement in ECE. There does, however, seem to be a plateauing in more recent years a subject I return to later in this chapter.

Areas of Consensus

Perhaps the most convincing element of the current ECE policy scene today is the evidence of research itself. This comes from two separate fields of study – one hard science (neuroscience), one social science (educational evaluation of programs) - that now converge along several concrete findings. In addition, several major federal reports and one international one have been issued that summarize the findings of this research, but also highlight the growing knowledge of best practices in ECE.

With improvements in technology, the field of brain research, or neuroscience, has been able to literally *show* (via such things as positron emission tomography and

MRIs) the effects of different environments on children's brains. A separate line of research looks at children with localized brain damage (National Research Council and Institute of Medicine, 2000) and identifies the conditions that are dangerous to developing brains. The major findings are that young children's brains are harmed by such things as abuse, neglect, and harsh environments.

In a parallel set of findings, there is a set of three studies of ECE programs - *The High/Scope Perry Preschool study*⁴, *the Carolina Abecedarian Project study*⁵, and *the Chicago Child-Parent Centers study*⁶ - that are widely cited for their longevity and design quality. They offer consistent and valid evidence of both the short-term and the long-term effects of quality preschool programs. While the studies varied slightly in design, scope and program elements, their findings converge along a common dimension: ECE programs result in immediate and long term benefits to the child especially in terms of academics⁷. Participants saw significant gains over non participants on such things as graduation rates, school achievement test scores and decreases in such things as special education placement, retention and dropping out (Schweinhart and Fulcher Dawson, 2006). Beyond educational benefits, these model ECE preschool programs have significant impact on future economic status (income) and criminal behavior (decreased

⁴ See for example, Schweinhart, Montie, et al.

⁵ See for example, Campbell and Ramey or Clarke and Campbell

⁶ See for example, Reynolds, et al.

⁷ From Schweinhart and Fulcher-Dawson, 2006): "Programmatically, the Abecedarian program was a full-day child care program serving children from shortly after birth to kindergarten entry, while the High/Scope and Chicago programs provided part-day preschool education to children 3 and 4 years old and related services to them and their families. The Abecedarian and Chicago programs provided a range of family and health services, but only the High/Scope program provided weekly home visits to parents and their participating children. The High/Scope project provided no follow-up program in elementary school, while both the Abecedarian and Chicago programs did provide school-age programs, although the Abecedarian study did not find these school-age programs to contribute to children's success as did the preschool child care program in the same study."

Because these programs all served poor and low income families and their children, a great deal of attention has been paid to the economic impact of these programs. The economic impact is calculated based on the savings to taxpayers on things such as welfare, criminal incarceration, grade retention, and taxes paid on higher earnings. Based on the program costs, and the future cost savings on such societal spending, the cost to benefit ratio for each ECE program has been calculated with the Perry Program at \$17 saved for each \$1 spent, Chicago at \$7 and Abecedarian at around \$4 (Schweinhart and Fulcher Dawson, 2006). These cost benefit calculations have compelled several top economists to argue that the benefit of ECE programs is stronger than the evidence for most other public investments (Heckman, 2006; Rolnick & Grunwald, 2003).

In addition to these three well-cited and well-regarded longitudinal studies of quality preschools, several national and international reports have been issued in recent years offering compendia of the various research and evidence in all fields pertaining to early childhood. The National Research Council and Institute of Medicine prepared an excellent report on the research from neuroscience, *From Neurons to Neighborhoods: the Science of Early Childhood Development*.ⁱ The National Research Council Committee on Early Childhood Pedagogy published the book, *Eager to Learn: Educating our Preschoolers*, which “represents the first attempt at a comprehensive, cross-disciplinary synthesis of the theory, research, and evaluation literature relevant to early childhood education” (National Research Council, 2000). The authors state that, “as the twenty-first century begins, there can be little doubt that something approaching voluntary

universal early childhood education, a feature of other wealth industrialized nations, is also on the horizon here” (National Research Council, 2000).

In addition, the IEA Preprimary Project examined various types of early childhood settings and their relationship to child outcomes, not only in the U.S., but also in other countries around the world. It was sponsored by the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA) and coordinated by the High/Scope Educational Research Foundation (Montie, Xiang, & Schweinhart, 2006; Olmsted, & Montie, 2001; Weikart, Olmsted, & Montie, 2003). The study examined 1,300 to 1,897 children from age four and one-half to seven in ten countries, with an overall retention rate of 86 percent of the original samples in the participating countries to see how process and structural characteristics of community preprimary settings affect children’s language and cognitive development. Across these different international settings, researchers found that children’s language performance at age seven improved when children freely chose their activities, when the teacher had more full-time schooling, when children did less whole-group activities and when there were a greater number and variety of equipment and materials.

Beyond the compelling evidence coming out of various research disciplines, there is a great deal of consensus politically for ECE policy. Head Start has largely developed as a bipartisan or possibly nonpartisan issue which parallels the increases in government involvement in child care and preschool under a variety of partisan and unified or divided government make-ups. Every president since LBJ (except Nixon) has mentioned activity on policy in either Head Start, preschool or childcare in at least one of their State of the Union addresses (Woolley and Peters, 2008). The major party platforms

(Democratic and Republican) increasingly attended to the policy issues and necessities for ECE (Woolley and Peters, 2008). This is most remarkable in the Republican party which initially (early 1970s particularly with Nixon) was against government involvement in or support of child care claiming it was a private, family matter, but in the late 1970s and early 1980s, the Republican party switched tacks and began to endorse childcare and preschool spending with the condition of increased privatization and allowances for faith-based organization involvement (Cohen and Sardell, 2002).

As mentioned before, states are increasingly seen as the locus for policy innovation and development for ECE. In 2007 alone, nineteen of the governor's giving speeches spoke of ECE in their State of the State Addresses. Since 2000, more than seventy different ECE initiatives and laws have been acted on in the states (ECS, 2007). Both the National Governor's Association has been a strong voice for both aligned systems of ECE and "have taken the lead in recognizing each state's fundamental responsibility for a seamless progression in education for citizens from their earliest years through college and into lifelong learning" (NGA, 2007). The National Conference of State Legislatures supports early learning and a more comprehensive approach to ECE policy via improved federal-state interaction (NCSL, 2007). What is perhaps most remarkable is that all of these state efforts have been either bipartisan efforts or have been supported in different places by different parties reflecting the reality at the federal level that ECE is largely a non-partisan issue.

In parallel with these government and political supports for ECE, there has been growth and coordination among the ECE advocacy and interest groups across the nation. Nationally, there are a set of strong, prominent advocacy groups that increasingly support

various ECE policy efforts at the state and national levels. Some usual suspects have emerged as prominent advocates whose voices and policy positions are widely heard including the Head Start Association (and its affiliate state groups), the Children's Defense Fund(CDF), Birth to Three, the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC). In particular, the CDF is widely cited as a major influence in the growth of advocacy organizations and in the coalition of them to advocate policy in Washington (Cohen and Sardell, 2002). Between the 1970s and the late 1980s the major coalition for child care grew from twenty organizations to more than one hundred largely due to the CDF's leadership (ibid). In addition, the influential NGA and U.S. Catholic Conference came to be pivotal supporters of ECE through their child care advocacy efforts in the 1980s and 1990s (ibid). For the most part these advocacy groups come together to support major initiatives in ECE though they may have particular elements of the policies that are more pertinent to their own groups. What results is a great deal of consensus and coordination in ECE lobbying and advocacy efforts. Recently, the UPK movement led by the Pew Charitable Trust has gained prominence in its support of state universal preschool efforts.

In recent years, a group of advocates have emerged to champion various ECE initiatives that are not "insiders" in the ECE world. These are both individuals and outsider groups. For example, Rob Grunewald of the Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis and James Heckman, Nobel Laureate of Economics have both in recent years become vocal advocates for investing in Early Childhood Education largely based on evaluations of the striking economic return for such investment in the model preschool programs mentioned above. In addition, more well-known national figures such as the

actor Rob Reiner who championed California's recent attempt at Universal preschool and First Lady Laura Bush, have been visible supporters of ECE. Outsider groups parallel this as they come largely from business sector, such as the Business Roundtable and the Economic Policy Institute who have both promoted increased attention and funding for ECE.

Countertrends?

While there is a body of evidence supporting the momentum and consensus view of ECE, there is also a set of information that is less encouraging, but equally informative. As such, I now turn to what I call "countertrends" that arguably are more of a "glass-half-empty" viewpoint, but this is crucial to fully realizing the accurate landscape of this policy area, rather than just the pretty picture often presented incompletely. Most notably, the areas of poor children served, spending instability, overall quality ratings, CCDF quality concerns show discouraging and downward numbers. Most prominent are two other issues: teacher quality issues and evidence issues.

First of all, given that many ECE programs aim to help poor children, in particular, because of the known negative consequences of a childhood of poverty, it is discouraging to know that only around forty percent of all poor and low-income children participate in public ECE programs. This means that a full 60 percent of young children are not benefiting from knowledge of early learning or the public will to help them. Furthermore, private or family spending on ECE is highly regressive with families in the lower income brackets paying the highest percentage of their income toward childcare – a

Catch Twenty-Two situation in which families earn too much to qualify for federal or state programs, but make little enough that ECE expenses are particularly burdensome.

A second and related point then is to the issue of funding which drives the number of children being served and the quality of programming. While funding for larger federal programs remains high, it has plateaued in recent years as is most evident in the Head Start and CCDF appropriations failing to keep up with inflation in the last five years. More concerning are state preschool funding streams which seem particularly susceptible to public manipulations and budget cuts. After controlling for inflation, eleven states had lower spending on preschool programs in 2004-05 than in 2001-02; eighteen states had the same amount of funding. In constant dollars, overall spending per child decreased in the U.S. by 7.3 percent from 2001-02 to 2004-05.

Overall quality of ECE programs remains an issue across the board. Recent efforts have surely been aimed at Head Start to increase the number of teachers with BA's and to assess achievement in participating children, but no radical changes have been made such that quality concerns remain. States have been slowly improving the quality of existing programs, though the progress has been slow and unsteady, with inconsistent funding and changes in program definitions. New programs that states implement tend to have higher quality ratings, though not always. Currently, there are twenty-two states whose programs have a quality rating of six or higher (on the NIEER ten-point scale⁸), sixteen states have scores between one and five, and twelve states have

⁸ NIEER ranks states in three ways: access to preschool, quality and resources. The quality ranking depends on meeting a checklist of ten factors that includes: early learning standards (comprehensive), teacher degree (BA), teacher specialized training (specializing in prekindergarten), assistant teacher degree (CDA or equivalent), teacher in-service training (at least fifteen hours/year), maximum class size (twenty or fewer), staff-child ratio (1:10 or better), required screening/referral and support services (vision,

no scores due to lack of program. It is worth noting that the NIEER ratings and rankings are not scaled or weighted, for example, serving a meal at a preschool is counted and valued the same as having a well-qualified and trained teacher, even though evidence supports the value of teacher quality quite highly. Only Arkansas meets all ten benchmarks, and only five other states meet nine of the ten. It is of concern that of the thirty-eight states with programs, twenty-one of them meet five or fewer of the quality benchmarks.

The CCDF program has certainly grown to serve more children with more money since its original incarnation eighteen years ago; however, quality is still largely an afterthought as the main outcome goal of CCDF – under the umbrella of all welfare reform – is to get families off welfare. As such, jobs for parents is the number one goal, and care for children while their parents work is a subsidiary goal with less attention to quality than custodial care. This is nowhere more evident than in the fact that almost 30 percent of all CCDF care providers are unregulated and even regulated providers have minimum regulations aimed at health and safety concerns, rather than developmental, social or academic quality concerns (Child Care Bureau, 2006). This means that more than 200,000 friends, families and neighbors (FFN) are given public funding to care for children regardless of any true credential or training to do so (Child Care Bureau, 2006).

Major countertrends: teacher quality and short-term evidence

Perhaps the most discouraging trends and current information in this policy area center around the teachers who are most critical to making the programs work. The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) released a report

hearing, health; and at least one support service), meals (at least one a day), and required monitoring (site visits).

containing the “Critical Facts about the Early Childhood Workforce” based largely on data from multiple sources including the US Department of Education, the National Child Care Information Center (NCCIC) and the Center for the Child Care Workforce. As reported in this brief, there are more than 2.3 million paid teachers and caregivers for children ages zero to five. Of these 24 percent are in center-based settings, 28 percent are family childcare providers, 35 percent are paid relatives and 13 percent are paid non-relatives (e.g. nannies) (NAEYC, 2002).

The training requirements for each type of early childhood worker vary widely by type of worker, setting and by state. For child care centers, thirty states have NO pre-service training requirements for new workers, while eleven states (numbers include the District of Columbia and New York City separately) require it of lead teachers, twenty-two of teachers and forty require it of center directors. Most states require some form of annual professional development (PD) for current workers (forty-five for teachers, forty-three for directors). For family child care (home providers) there are fewer states with requirements – preservice training is required only in eleven states and only thirty-four require ongoing PD. (NAEYC, 2002). As of 1995, 80 percent of teachers working in centers had some college education, with one-third having bachelor’s degrees. For family home day cares, approximately 55 percent have some college-level education while only 17 percent have Bachelor’s or more. The childcare workers average hourly wage is \$7.43 while preschool teacher’s average is \$8.56. The average turnover rate for all early childhood workers nationally is 30 percent annually (NAEYC, 2002).

In addition, to concerns of teacher quality are concerns about the evidence of ECE outcomes. While the noted long-term studies such as High/Scope Perry Preschools,

Chicago Child Parent Centers and Abecedarian, demonstrate clearly the major impact of *high quality* ECE programming for young children, the evidence from short-term studies of the larger-scale public programs that aimed to replicate these model programs is not so clear. Generally speaking publicly funded ECE programs have been shown to improve literacy and social skills of children and have positive effects on parental behavior (Schweinhart and Fulcher-Dawson, 2006). These scaled-up programs like Head Start and State preschool generally have more modest and short-term effects on the children than the model programs show⁹. For example, in the FACES¹⁰ study children in Head Start gained on average four points on the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test while children in Perry preschools gained on average eight points on the same test which is a twofold difference (Schweinhart and Fulcher-Dawson, 2006).

Conclusions

The current status of ECE demonstrates a great deal of activity in this issue area. And while most historical trends point to overall growth over time in terms of supply and demand of ECE, this masks a great deal of inconsistency and instability in this issue area. While programs continue to receive funding and new programs are enacted, quality provisions are still dropped in lieu of funding and access concerns. In order to save money and/or serve more children, teacher pay and training, classroom size and length of program are cut despite evidence that these are crucial to the outcomes in ECE. In addition, solid long-term evidence used to garner support for policy is hampered by short-

⁹ There are several short-term findings from a set of studies that includes: the Head Start Impact Study, FACES, an evaluation of Early Head Start, the Head Start Comprehensive Child Development Program Evaluation, evaluations of Even Start and Barnett, et al.'s examination of the effects of five state preschools.

¹⁰ The Head Start Family and Child Experiences Survey (FACES) was done with two cohorts entering HS in 1997 and 2000 totaling 6,000 children.

term evidence of actual to-scale public implementations supposedly based on these model programs. Recent data suggest a plateauing of enrollments, percentages of working women and funding suggesting, though not in any way conclusively, that the size and scope of this issue has reached a peak or a stopping point. Percentages of children in non-parental care do not seem likely to climb significantly higher causing demand to remain steady. It is possible then that if access is truly close to maximized, quality can be more fully addressed.

Chapter Two: Understanding ECE Policy- a Theoretical Proposition

Given this picture of the past and present of ECE, I now turn to theory to establish a framework for answering the questions at hand: why is ECE policy the way it is? Why is it so varied? There are several ways to go about responding to these questions. Over time, several theories of policymaking have been developed and empirically tested producing a menu of options for those seeking to understand how, why and when policies are made and to what effect. For purposes of understanding ECE policy, and more specifically, why there is the current variation and history in this policy area, a few such theories seem appropriate for examination. The attendant concerns of this paper are to understand variation, particularly with regard to time and policy “space” or domain. As such, theories examined here are chosen specifically because they attend to one or both of these concerns.

Change and development over *time* is a particularly important aspect of policymaking. Victor Hugo proposed that “Greater than the tread of mighty armies is an idea whose time has come” which presumes both that ideas arise and that the idea’s resonance in a community is dependent on time. ECE has a relatively “short” history in the United States, a fact which naturally limits study of it to the last forty years (though some might argue that this should be the last 150 years since the infant school movement in Massachusetts took place briefly in the early-mid 1800s). Yet even in this short time period there have been both gradual and dramatic changes in this policy area.

Change and development over *space* or in policy terminology *domain* is equally important in policymaking. This notion is perhaps more ambiguous than time in that it is measured in terms of differing areas of government activity, different values people have

and in different goals for the modern state. Yet it is measurable and extremely important to understanding how and why policies develop in variable ways. While time may make certain changes seem inevitable at the incremental level, understanding the values, government activity and goals in policy domains makes it possible to explain non-incremental change and variation.

Three theories are presented here as separate, though related theories of policymaking. As much as possible, they are presented in a way that allows for both a comparison and a combination of the four in order to then thoughtfully apply them to ECE. As such, this examination presents for each theory: the type of theory it is, assumptions and need for it, elements and definitions, mechanics, evidence and counterclaims. I have divided them into two types: two that attend to the policymaking process and one that attends to policy development over time. In the Appendix, Table 2.1 contains a tabular comparison of the three. Finally, I propose how each is suited to helping with the enterprise here: to heighten understanding of the variation and policies of ECE.

The Policymaking Process: Frames, Streams and Windows

A critical examination of any policy begins actually prior to the policy's enactment – during the policymaking process. John Kingdon's work on policy streams and windows is one of the most prominent in modern day policy analysis and theory. Kingdon's basic premise is that policies depend on a confluence of ideas, people and events coming together at a critical time (window) leading to placement on the agenda. A small part of Kingdon's theory has to do with the framing of a problem (problem definition) and the resultant solution frames. While framing theory is one element of

Kingdon and streams theory, it is considered here more fully as it has been treated by sociologists (and more recently some political scientists and educationalists). The reason for this is that framing theory focuses on both what is considered (what's in the policy frame) and what's not (what's outside of the frame and therefore not considered valid for a given policy discussion). In this way, framing is a pivotal part of policymaking. It is not an easily captured phenomenon, however, and yet as will be seen in subsequent chapters it is certainly measurable and empirically present in policymaking processes.

Multiple Streams, the Garbage Can Model and Kingdon

Multiple Streams (MS) theory is one that aims to explain policy formation by looking at policy choices under ambiguity (Zahariadis, 1999). It is an attempt to answer questions of how policymakers' attention is rationed, how issues are framed and how/where solutions and policy problems are searched for (Ibid). John Kingdon contributed fundamentally to this theoretical field by expanding the "garbage can model" of policymaking to the US federal government. He particularly illuminated two elements of this process: agenda setting and alternative specification. His theory focuses on the system-level of analysis (either the entire system is studied or a separate decision). Kingdon asks how information affects choice between alternatives, that is, how inputs transform into outputs (Kingdon, 1995).

MS begins with the ambiguity that policymakers face in their decision matrices. Ambiguity is the reality that they are faced with many competing and non-reconcilable ways of thinking about the same problem or situation (March and Simon, 1994). In addition, policymakers must act within a specific time frame and are generally focused on more than just the single issue at a time. The garbage can model developed by March,

Cohen and Olsen proposes that individuals cannot process all this information rationally selecting a “correct” solution (March, et al., 1972). Rather there are actually limited bands of choice (between alternatives) and the problem definitions are vague and shifting (Zahariadis, 1999). Kingdon expands on the garbage-can model and focuses on agenda setting. His theory makes it possible to explain non-incremental change and non-rational decision-making. MS is important and unique because "it seeks to explain policy precisely when the assumptions of clarity and self-interest are inappropriate descriptors" (Zahariadis, 1999).

Kingdon argues that there are three elements of the policymaking process that come together to produce policy: problems, policies and politics. At critical points or windows in time, all three are put together, usually by a policy entrepreneur in such a way that it increases the odds of attention and agenda placement. *Problems* are defined either by statistics that demonstrate the magnitude of an issue; by dramatic events or crises, or by feedback from an existing program. (Rocheft and Cobb, 1994). *Policies* are made up a mixture of ideas that swirl around in a policy “primeval soup”, with only a few ever actually chosen and enacted (Kingdon, 1995). Policies are selected based on a) *technical feasibility*-whereby the more difficult they are to implant, the less likely they are to be considered or b) *value acceptability*- whereby the further they are from policymakers’ values, the less likely to be considered (Kingdon, 1995). *Politics* is made up of three elements: the national mood, pressure group campaigns and administrative and/or legislative turnover.

These three elements interact to lead to policy creation or reinvention. Two concepts are critical to the production of policy in this model: coupling and policy

windows. *Policy windows* are critical moments in time when all three streams (problem definition/s, policies and politics) are joined together in a process Kingdon refers to as “coupling”. *Coupling* depends on the presence of policy entrepreneurs-be they governors, lobbyists, celebrities- who must attach problems to their solutions and get politicians to agree. As Kingdon notes, “solutions come to be coupled with problems, proposals linked with political exigencies, and alternatives introduced when the agenda changes” (Kingdon, 1995, p. 173). *Windows* - during which coupling must be done - are short and either predictable (like an annual budget allocation) or unpredictable (like an earthquake). It is precisely during this part of policymaking that non-incremental change and seemingly non-rational decision-making occurs.

MS focus: Agenda setting + alternative specifications

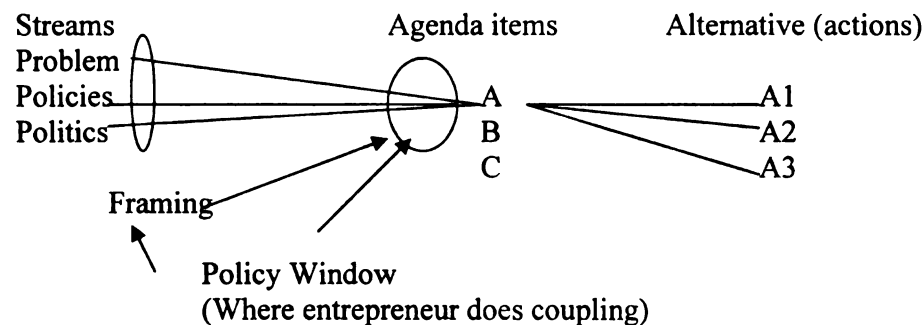


Figure 2.1: MS Theory and Kingdon

While Kingdon made major advancements to help clarify the field of MS theory, since his seminal work, additional tweaks have been made to the theory. First of all, Kingdon's unit of analysis was the national government and its multitude of issues, but MS can also be used to look at a single issue (Zahariadis, 1999). In addition, Zahariadis proposed that the three elements of the politics stream – national mood, pressure groups

and turnover – can accurately be combined into a single variable of ‘ideology of governing parties’ (Zahariadis, 1999, p. 79). And while Kingdon’s laid a foundation for improved work in this field, he focused on only the predecision process, while MS looks at the whole policy process.

In addition to these modifications of Kingdon, there have been several challenges to MS theory that continue to arise for researchers utilizing this theory for policy analysis. One such challenge is the independence of the streams, for there is evidence that the streams interact at times other than just during open windows. In addition, the role of the “window” in coupling is imprecise: some windows are open in problem streams, others in politics streams. Zahariadis argues that it depends on where the window opens – if in the problem stream, policymakers want a solution to fit a problem; if in the politics stream, they want to find problems to attach to their preferred solutions (Zahariadis, 1999). Furthermore, some issues always have open windows, so the projection that policymaking is dependent on a small finite coming-together is inaccurate at times. In contrast, to these critiques, there is empirical evidence that MS does at least predict that the ideology of political parties is important and that bureaucrats shape solutions but *do not* change the agenda (Kingdon, 1995).

Issue Framing Theory

Issue framing theory (IF) - comes not from political theory, but from sociology, particularly, the theories of social movements. IF stems largely from Goffman who argued that frames help people discern what is “real” within a given context (Goffman, 1974). This theory suggests that the crux of social movements is in how an issue is framed; the frame focuses the public and the debate on certain things and thus renders

other facts and arguments moot (Schön and Rein, 1992). In other words, issue frames provide people with boundaries of values within which they should *consider and act* on a policy.¹¹ Framing is then an element of Kingdon's conception of agenda setting and of alternative specifications.

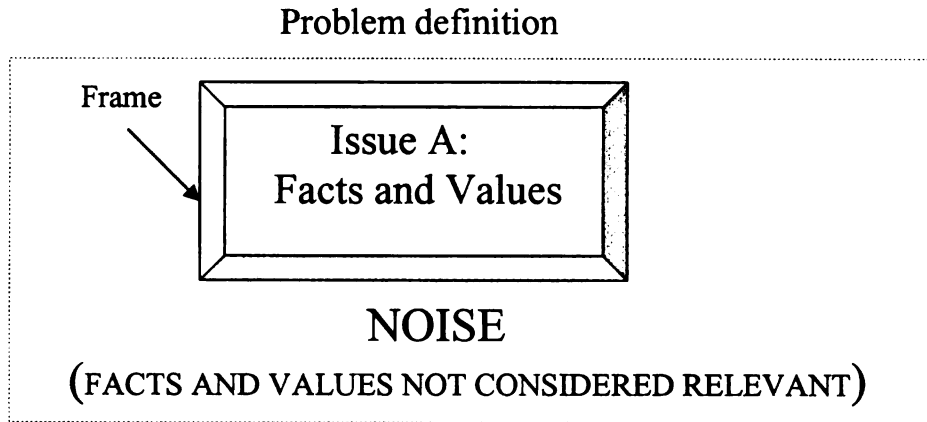


Figure 2.2: Framing and Problem Definition

The need for framing arises when there are policy disputes. There are two kinds of policy disputes: policy disagreements (PDs) that can be settled by reasoned discourse (appeals to fact and evidence) and policy controversies (PCs) those that are stubbornly resistant to resolution via the exercise of reason (Schön and Rein, 1994). Facts play quite different roles in PCs than in PDs. In PCs, policymakers pay selective attention to facts, give different interpretations of facts and contestants discount opponents' evidence.

Framing is what is needed to move a policy controversy forward in a meaningful way when appeals to facts do not work. Frames focus attention on a few resonant features of

¹¹ Some concepts and theories have evolved and been established in the framing literature that are defined here for sake of clarifying some of the terminology used in this research. An *issue frame* is a set of ideas and values used to understand an issue (Gamson, Schön and Rein; Jacoby). *Framing* is the use of frames to move policy/society forward on an issue (Snow and Benfield; Davies). *Framing effects* are the effect of frames on policy outcomes, implementation and public opinion (Iyengar; Nelson et al). *Frame analysis* is the retrospective study of frames in an issue area with positive conclusions (Goffman, Gamson). *Framing policy* is the use of frames as a tool to get a policy enacted and implemented with normative implications (Schön and Rein, Coburn).

an issue that is otherwise too complex to comprehend. “Through the process of naming and framing, the stories make the ‘normative leap’ from data to recommendations, from fact to values, from ‘is’ to ‘ought’” (Schön and Rein, 1994, p.23). In this way a familiar set of ideas moves into a new situation, highlighting the problem and what must be done about it.

So when there are policy controversies, framing is needed to move an issue beyond the gridlock of conflicting frames, but there must also be political opportunity to do so (Davies, 1999). The opportunity for framing to “work” and move an issue forward then depends on changes in politics and society external to any framing activities. Political opportunities lead to a “tipping” point in a policy area where framing becomes possible and quite important in getting an issue on the newly defined or open agenda (Kingdon, 1995). The two major types of political opportunities are: dramatic events and cultural shifts (Davies, 1999). It is in this way that framing activity is quite dependent on time and chance as it works primarily when there are major events and/or there are major shifts in culture.

Frames have quite particular and specific attributes that distinguish them from such things as fabrication, political persuasion, “spin” and mere rhetoric. Frames are not merely semantic, nor are they merely words or matters of the mind (how one thinks about an issue), but also “affect the way an activity is organized especially for its main social agents” (Goffman, 1974, p.247). This is crucial to the conceptual presentation of frames –that they promote and guide both ideas *and* appropriate action.

Goffman set forth a set of five fundamental assumptions about framing (Goffman, 1974). First, it involves systematic transformation of an issue that is already meaningful

in a different way. Second, participants are meant to know and recognize that an alteration is involved in framing. Third, cues establish the beginning and end of a transformation. Fourth, frames are not restricted to certain types of events or classes of perspectives. And fifth, sometimes frames do not alter an activity dramatically, but may alter the fervor with which one acts or for what reason. (E.g. if you call checkers a friendly game, the aim is fun, if you call it a competition, the aim is winning).

There are two ways of classifying frames: by the purpose of the frame and by the values and norms appealed to. Snow and Benford provide a typology by purpose (Snow and Benford, 1986): diagnostic, prognostic and motivational. *Diagnostic frames* both define the problem at hand and assign blame for the problem. Such frames intentionally, and unintentionally, focus on some aspect of the problem and not others. *Prognostic frames* are solution oriented, in that they include a suggestion of how a problem may be solved, and provide goals and tactics for achieving them. Beyond the diagnostic and prognostic frames is the “*motivational frame*” which is a call to arms, a rationale for engaging in action. Gamson calls this the agency component of framing (Gamson, 1992).

Rein and Schoen highlight a typology of frames - based on the values and norms they embody - delineating three types of action frames - policy frames, institutional action frames and metacultural frames (Schön and Rein, 1994, p. 33). *Policy frames* are those that institutional actors use to construct the problem of a policy situation.

Institutional action frames are generic frames institutional actors use to construct policy frames. *Metacultural frames* are broad, culturally shared systems of belief (institutional action frames are local expressions of these, e.g. disease v. cure; natural v. artificial; wholeness v. fragmentation). “Metacultural frames, organized around generative

metaphors, are at the root of the policy stories that shape both rhetorical and action frames “(Schön and Rein, 1994, p. 34).

It is important to consider the effect (resonance) of framing on targets (constituents, mass publics, policymakers, practitioners). Resonance, or appeal of the frame to targets, depends on the consistency of the frame, the empirical credibility of the evidence, the credibility of the frame articulators and the salience of the issue and values with the targets (Snow and Benford, 2000). This gets at the psychological elements of framing, studied in depth in the field of psychology, but covered only cursorily here. The work by Nelson, et al will suffice to demonstrate the effect of framing in individuals. They found that “frames are distinct not only at the message level but at the psychological level as well; that frames differ from other message forms not just in their overt structure and substance but also in the way they affect popular thinking about public affairs” (Nelson, et al, 1997, p. 222). This can be represented by a simple equation $A = \sum v_i w_i$ where A is the summary attitude, v is the value of attribute i. (individual’s belief about the attitude object) and w is subjective weight of that belief. Attitudes can be arguably changed either by changing individual’s beliefs about the attitude object (persuasion) or by changing how the individual weights that information (framing). Thus framing affects the personal importance one places on different dimensions of an issue.

One last element of framing that must be attended to is that of the “framer”. The literature suggests that framing can occur at both the organizational and the individual level (Snow and Benford, 2000). As such, framing happens not only when political elites attempt to garner support for an issue and gain votes, but also during the discourse

involved in political discussion (Gamson, 1992) and policy implementation (Coburn, 2001). While framing may be done by elites and plurals, the activities and effects of each are often different, though the literature does not currently address these differences.

Policy over Time: Diffusion and Innovation

While the first two theories focus on the predecision part of the policymaking process and generally apply to a single policy or issue at a time, diffusion and innovation theory addresses how it is that policies change and are enacted over time. This is the notion that policy diffuses through different institutions over a certain period of time. Diffusion and innovation theory focuses on the process through which governments adopt new programs (Berry and Berry, 1999). The theory suggests that there are variables that must be considered when examining why a government enacts a given policy - in particular, state policy enactment depends on variables internal to the state as well as variables external to it (such as other states' adoptions, federal policy, national economic trends). This theory is important because it aims to explain what factors lead to policy adoption.

This literature is rooted in long-standing, but separate theories for policy innovation and for diffusion, but has begun to reflect a more thorough and unified framework for empirical analysis. Based on the early works of Walker, Gray and Dye, researchers segmented the field into two parts: the study of diffusion models and the study of determinants models. However the theoretical underpinnings for diffusion of innovation have seen major change and improvement in the past decade. Most notably the work Berry and Berry have done using event history analysis (EHA) utilizes both the regional diffusion and internal determinants models in a unified way.

Policy innovation is defined in the literature as any policy that is “new” to the state adopting it (Walker, 1969; Berry and Berry, 1999). *Internal determinants* models essentially argue that it is the political, economic and social characteristics of a state that determine when and if it will adopt a policy innovation. *Diffusion models*, on the other hand point to factors external to the states that affect such adoption. These models are the national interaction, regional diffusion, leader-laggard and vertical influence models. The difference between the models, according to Berry and Berry, is “the channels of communication and influence assessed to exist” (Berry and Berry, 1999, p. 171). For example, the regional diffusion models assume that states communicate with and are most heavily influenced by the states in proximity to themselves while the leader-laggard model assumes that there are certain states that other states look to for information and leadership when it comes to policy innovation.

Berry and Berry moved the policy innovation and diffusion field forward by using event history analysis (EHA) to test their combined model of state innovation and diffusion. Berry and Berry use a different dependent variable than had traditionally been used in the field: a hazard rate, which is the probability that a state (i) will adopt a policy during a time period (t). Using EHA, they define a “risk set” which consists in any given year of the states “at risk” for adopting the policy (essentially N minus the number of states who have already adopted it). The advantages of this model are that it allows researchers to test regional (diffusion) and internal (determinants) factors, it can account for factors that vary from year to year and it can make predictions about a certain type of state adopting the policy in a given year. Berry and Berry use this form of analysis to examine the innovation process for state lotteries. Their study shows significance despite

the fact that only a few states adopt some policies (in the case of lotteries it was only 3%) (Berry and Berry, 1990). It has also held up in more recent empirical applications on such things as school choice policy (Mintrom, 1997) and anti-smoking laws (Shipan and Volden, 2004).

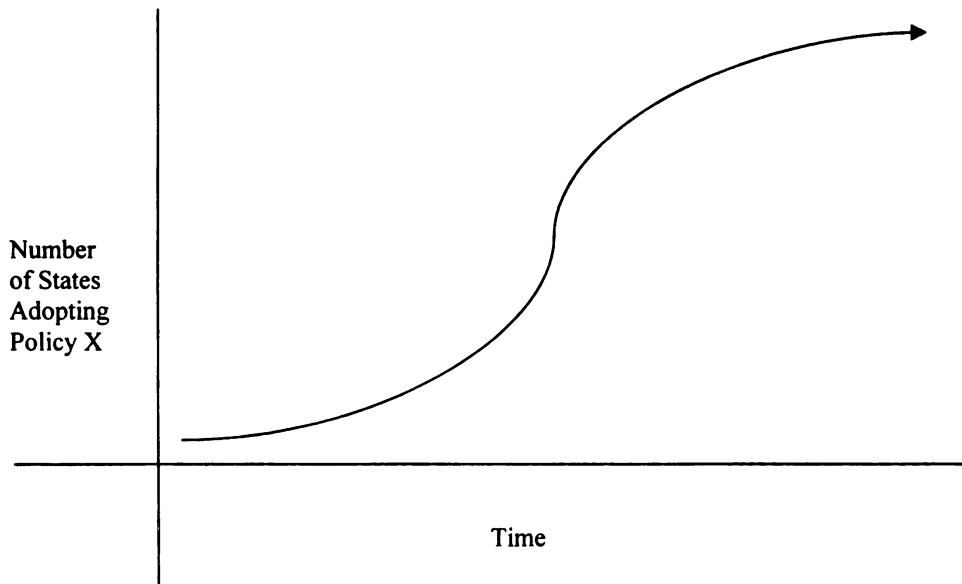


Figure 2.3: Diffusion Curve Model

While the EHA methodology now seems to be a standard one in this type of study, there are several other findings and theories of diffusion and innovation that have been proven and remain untested using this newer methodology. Glick and Hays argue that reinvention of policy and extent of adoption (differentiation of deep and superficial adoption) are highly relevant to the understanding of policy innovation, but are not reflected in current models (Glick and Hays, 1991). They demonstrate that a state adopting a policy later, may look less innovative than one adopting early because by time the late state adopts the policy it has been reinvented and is more innovative than in its earliest conception (Glick and Hays, 1991). They found that the early adopters (of living

will laws) have *less facilitative* laws, but that the correlation between early adoption and facility is not strong but is in expected direction (p. 843). Perhaps their major conclusion and contribution to the field is the finding that policy reinvention occurs along a “common dimension”, but that particular provisions lead to reinvention in more than one direction (p. 847). As such, it is unclear how to treat states that adopt immediately after the first one.

There is a wealth of evidence in the fields of welfare policy and education policy that demonstrate the context of state policy domains in which ECE must operate. Welfare policy, a big target of the devolution revolution of the 1980s, allows for testing of the role of federalism in state policy. Liebermann and Shaw found is that national, not state factors are most important in shaping state policies for welfare (Liebermann and Shaw, 2000). Peterson and Rom found that in the absence of federal regulation, there is wide variance across states in how they set their benefits levels and how they respond to increases in the poverty rate (Peterson and Rom, 1989). Soss et al. found that when the federal government enacted major welfare reform in the form of TANF legislation, states were simultaneously forced to respond to a reduction in federalism. They found that political and social characteristics of the state were most determinative of how stringent a state’s policy response would be (Soss, et al, 2000). Wong tested the “parity to dominance” theory of state financial support for education and found that in fact only a few states actually moved from parity to dominance (Wong, 1989). Finally, Welch and Thompson argue and produce support for the view that “incentives provided by the federal government do stimulate the diffusion of policies through the states” (Welch and Thompson, 1980). They found that federal affected policies do have significantly faster

rate of diffusion than state preserve policies and that positive fiscal impact policies have a faster rate (than negative or indirect impact policies) (Ibid, 1980).

Theory and ECE Policy

Based on the above summaries, and on the presumption that these theories are particularly suited to address *any* policy, it is now appropriate to turn to how this all applies to an examination of ECE policy. One attribute of ECE Policy is that over time it does appear to have areas of both incremental change (Head Start budgets go up marginally each year) and major change (large increases in state preschool funding in the 2000s). As such, MS theory offers structures through which to understand this policy area. Furthermore, their specific elements of why incremental change happens when it does and why major change happens when it does, promise to shed light on the development of ECE policy.

An additional attribute of ECE Policy is issue framing and agenda setting. As ECE policy has been developed over time, different problem definitions have set this policy domain on widely different courses. Via frames, policymakers have limited the options available for use at different times in the history of ECE policy in order to get the issue on the agenda and enact policy. Yet the alternative policy solutions resulting from this framing often has led to watered-down policy that strays far from the original intentions of experts and politicians.

Finally, diffusion policy presents a framework for examining the spread of ECE through the states – the current hotbed of policy. This is an invaluable quantitative presentation of how different attributes of states, national policies and framing affect

policy outcomes in this issue area. An EHA of ECE policy holds a great deal of promise for understanding why states adopt policy.

In the following three chapters of the paper, I apply these theories with as much fidelity as possible to ECE policy. I examine problem definition (and attendant solution alternatives) for what I designate as the three eras of ECE policy. I examine framing of ECE policy by comparing it to frames for welfare policy and education policy – the two policy parents of ECE. Finally, I perform an EHA analysis for ECE policy in the 50 states shedding light on what state factors affect ECE policy adoption and how reinvention occurs among adopting states.

Chapter Three: Problem Definitions in ECE Policy

The current realities of ECE policy seem to present a mixed message: There is growth in this policy direction. But there is also stasis. There is consensus and political will, but there are also competing policy domains. In order to begin to clarify the attendant issues of ECE, I begin with the “problem definition”. Based on Kingdon’s theory of multiple streams being dependent on problem definitions, framing of an issue and attaching solutions to problems (or vice versa), it is clear that while policy evolves incrementally at times, there are times when a burst of activity results in more major change. The problem definition – that is how key players in a given policy domain capture the current public, political and/or academic definition of what problem in society they are addressing – is key to the outcome in policymaking. As such, this is where I begin. In order to do this I present a brief history of ECE in the United States paying particular attention to a) the definitions of the “problem” at different times b) the concepts of who such policies serve and c) the goal and role of government action in ECE. This is certainly not the only way to arrange this information. However, it is my primary goal to highlight the competing and sometimes conflicting definitions and goals in this policy arena. And by going back to the origins of this policy arena, I hope to better illustrate the notion that the variation in ECE policy that we see today has deep political, sociological and historical roots that directly affect the policies developed and enacted today.

I separate the history of ECE policy into three general eras. The general dates of each era are selected to reflect times when major shifts seem to have occurred in this policy area. In this policy area, there are the pre-Head Start Era, the Head Start Era and

the post-Head Start or Modern Era. As such, I divide my analysis of ECE problem definition this way.

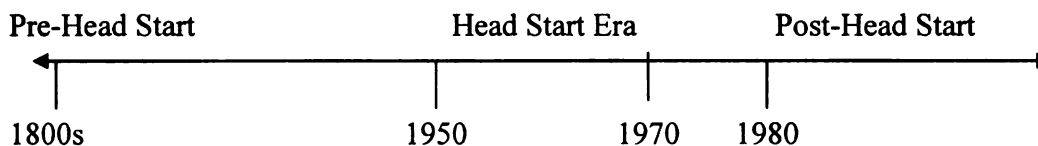


Figure 3.1: Three Eras of ECE Policy Timeline

It is clear to see that these “eras” are not of equal time; however, I selected them precisely because they represent different eras of problem definition and policy formulation. The choice to present a “post-head start” era is likely to be challenged. It is defensible, however, because beginning in the late 1970s HS had failed to fulfill the steep promises made on its behalf to serve poor kids and ECE policy shifted away from federal action to the states (Vinovskis, 2002; Kirp, 2007). Beginning in the 1980s, many state governments escalated their efforts at preschool policy enactment and federal child care policies were developed sending money to the states for welfare families at funding levels rivaling those of Head Start. It is clear that at some point, Head Start was no longer the dominant horse in the race for ECE policy. In fact, in 2004, the number of children in state preschools eclipsed the number being served by Head Start.

I present the problem definitions for each era by first presenting the policies of that era and then analyzing the problems policymakers and academics of each time was concerned with solving. I focus on a few of Kingdon’s concepts of policymaking namely that problems are defined either by statistics revealing a concern, a dramatic event or feedback from an existing policy. Policy solutions then are analyzed for either having technical feasibility or value acceptability

Pre Head Start Era Policy

There were four ECE policies publicly enacted prior to Head Start (1965). They are related only in that they were attempts at ECE policy prior to the large program known as Head Start. The first two took place in the 1800s: the infant school movement (beginning in the 1820s and dying out in the 1830s, primarily in colonial New England) and the kindergarten movement (the first one in Wisconsin, 1856; the first English language one in Boston, 1861) (Fuller, 2007). The infant school movement rose and fell quickly, but led the way for a second public attempt at ECE in the form of kindergarten in the 1860s. While kindergartens took time to gain universality (1920: 481,000 kids → 1950: 1,000,000 kids), they were also quickly absorbed into the grammar school policy arena, with less and less attention paid to the different needs of young children or the different developmentally appropriate practices and teaching methods (Tyack and Cuban, 1995; Vinovskis, 1995).

The second two pre-Head Start Era policies happened in the midst of major national economic events: the Great Depression and World War II. Prior to the Great Depression, day care centers and nurseries were custodial in nature and largely used by poor working mothers (Vinovskis, 2002). In the 1930s as the country fell into the economic tailspin known as the Great Depression, the federal government funded emergency public nursery schools via the Federal Emergency Relief Act of 1933 (FERA) and then via the Works Progress Administration of 1934 (WPA). By 1937, WPA sponsored 1,900 nursery schools for 40,000 kids. By 1943, the WPA nurseries were gone. Yet, with WWII in full swing, there was a subsequent rapid increase in the number of working women including those with very young children (Vinovskis, 2002). As such,

Congress passed the Lanham Act in 1941 which funded child care centers for 600,000 kids (between 1942-46).

Problem Definitions in the Pre-Head Start Era

Vinovskis paints a vivid picture of colonial American families and schooling that demonstrates that the common goal of education generally was moral education. He notes that, “Rather than seeing the enactment of these early school laws as evidence of the disintegration of the stable family in New England, it is probably more accurate to see it as a reflection of the attempts to promulgate correct religious views and to overcome the growing indifference of many families to religion and home education” (Vinovskis, 1995, p.7). This reflects the colonial reality that educating and catechizing were done simultaneously and were interchangeable goals of families and churches...and subsequently of schools (Vinovskis, 1995). While many professed the *complementary* roles of family, church and school in young children’s lives, in many ways, the school came to be increasingly *dominant* - “the last bastion for civilizing youths growing up in the cities” (Vinovskis, 1995, p.12). This highlights the problem definition of the time for education generally: children growing up without values or literacy were a public menace.

Given this backdrop of the colonial family and the interweaving of morality and education, the infant school movement began with the lofty intentions of some of New England’s high society women. The “idea” of infant schools did not originate in America; rather it was an import idea from England. This “idea” emerged in the US in the opposite way as it had in industrial England (Vinovskis, 1995). While England’s leaders were concerned with social problems and *then* learned how to establish and

manage infant schools, in the United States, William Russell (an academic and first editor of the *Journal of Education*) and others took an intact English infant school system and integrated it into the primary system already in place in the U.S. ...with the focus on introducing new pedagogies, not creating new institutions (Vinovskis, 1995, p.22). Thus the problem definition for educationalists like Russell was lack of appropriate pedagogy and developmental practices for young children; the proposed policy solution was separate infant schools.

In the early 1820s, Infant School Societies emerged in New England. These were dominated by women, primarily, Trinitarian churchwomen bent on saving the city from moral and spiritual laxity (Vinovskis, 1995). Women and these same sorts of Societies had already helped start primary schools (for as young as age four); had brought religious instruction to city's seafarers, founded Sunday school program for poor children (not just on scripture, also writing and reading). Ironically, infant schools were originally set up to combat ills of urban life, but emerged and disappeared before the major boom in Boston's growth (Vinovskis, 1995, p.25). In contrast to the pedagogical focus of Russell and others importing England's infant schools, society women focused on the link between crime and education with the belief that crime was a growing urban problem and education (rather than incarceration) was the way to combat it starting with the youngest children. Without much regard for pedagogy, reformers focused on breaking the cycle of poverty, "by reaching young children and providing them with the social norms and necessary skills to escape from a life of continued dependence on society" (Vinovskis, 1995, p.26) Reformers sought reform as proactive policy (prevent ills of poverty) in the US, not a reactive one like in UK (keep kids from life of crime).

It was a quick policy movement, with the first school established in 1827 and by 1835 infant societies and schools were gone:

“By the end of 1835, almost all public comment on the infant schools in Massachusetts had ceased, and the activities of the once-flourishing infant school societies faded—not only from public memory, but even from the recollections of those who had actively participated in the movement. When kindergartens became popular in Massachusetts in the 1860s and 1870s, they were greeted as a unique European contribution with almost no association to the earlier infant school movement.” (Vinovskis, 1995, p.18)

Ironically, though they set out to address the moral and educational needs of poor children, the society women who funded and ran the infant schools ceased doing so not because the problems had gone away or been solved, but because it had become en vogue for them to be at home more with *their own* children since the early years were increasingly seen as so critical. Interestingly, it was this focus on what young children could demonstrably learn at younger and younger ages that captured the popular imagination, which was in contrast to Russell’s intent to introduce developmentally appropriate experiences for infants (Vinovskis, 1995, p.29). Russell wanted infant school pedagogies to influence primary schools; not for people to expect results of primary schools at younger ages with same methods (Vinovskis, 1995, p.30). This set the stage for a recurring theme in ECE problem definition: contrasting notions of what is possible and appropriate for young children’s learning and environment.

Even though the infant school movement essentially ended and ‘went away’, it at least gave some permanence to encouraging parents to send kids to school at young ages (Vinovskis, 1995, p.19). In the 1860s and 1870s, there was a resurgence of attention to early education as Froebel’s ideas on “kindergarten” spread from Europe to America. There are several reasons why the kindergarten movement “stuck” and the prior infant

school movement one did not. One big one is that the problem definition was more clear (it was not muddled between the society women's aims against crime and academic's focus on differing pedagogy). The problem kindergarten purported to address was the fallout of massive urbanization and industrialization for poor kids. In addition, the initial implementation of kindergartens in the United States (privately funded and run programs matching middle class women with poor children) meant that the program was away from the large entrenched bureaucracy. Two other aspects of the original kindergartens that had more broad appeal than their policy forbearers in the infant movement were that kindergartens took no children under three, so they were less threat to home/family influence, and that proponents of Froebel's kindergartens did not emphasize the intellectual development of young children (over other aspects). It is also notable to mention that the framing of this form of ECE as a "garden for children to grow in seemed more appropriate than institutional settings and rubrics" (Vinovskis, 1995, p.42).

The scientific and philosophical underpinnings of ECE policy are important to trace with the policy developments as they provide grounding in what information policymakers had available to them and what solutions were swirling around in the policy primeval soup. The understanding of young children and child development during the infant school movement originated from concurrent European intellectual traditions including Rousseau, Pestalozzi, Owen and Locke (Vinovskis, 1995). Yet these intellectual traditions were conflicting from the outset resulting in conflicting views both of early childhood and of the role of families and schools in these early years. While Rousseau's premise that education be a child's way to be freed from the corruptions of society led to the dominance of boarding schools for children, Pestalozzi viewed what

was done at home as equally important to anything done in school. Thus the problem was not “home” as a crude version of Rousseau might read, but that what was being done in both places was so important an intervention was necessary. Pedagogically, Rousseau’s application was very naturalistic - to expose kids to natural world in a way that they’d ask own questions and explore world in own way. However, it is important to note that none of the applications of Rousseau emphasized institutional settings for children under 5 (Vinovskis, 1995).

Pestalozzi’s evidence that infants could learn at an early age led to his own policy solution that girls and women (the most likely at home attendants of children) be taught the latest educational techniques (Vinovskis, 1995). His dual emphasis of early learning and *at home* educating were quite contrary to Rousseau’s notions of removal. Of great concern is that at this point no real attention was paid to families where parents weren’t enlightened or fit teachers of their children (Vinovskis, 1995). In England, Robert Owen (1816)’s *New View of Society* thesis advocated that government should educate starting at infancy leading to infant schools in 1818 and 1819, “the infant schools were perceived as a means of dealing with pressing social problems” (Vinovskis, 1995, p.21). At odds were the notions of holistic development versus academic emphasis *and* the administration of programs and services either at home versus public programs. As Froebel developed the early kindergartens (the first one in Blankensburg in 1837), he advocated, “creating a distinct organization that would serve young children. He believed that all youngsters would blossom in rather uniform ways if nurtured at home and in kindergarten according to his pedagogical principles” (Fuller, 2007, p.36).

The problem definition for kindergarten reformers was not only the lack of appropriate development for many young children, but also the lack of appropriate teaching methods of young children already in primary graded school. Nonetheless, the first effect of publicly funding kindergarten and including it into the public school system was that teachers could no longer be as personally nurturing to the children and did not have as much direct contact with the parents (Tyack and Cuban, 1995). More significantly, there was an instant conflict between the goals and pedagogy of the kindergarten and those of the rest of the school system (Tyack and Cuban, 1995). What slowly evolved was the aligning of both the pedagogy and curriculum of the kindergarten with the graded system (mostly the primary grades one through three). Thus the very reform that was supposed to cure problems – kindergarten - became a part of the system where these problems persisted. The problem became not just the social distress of troubled childhood, the problem bifurcated to include also the “problem” of *past policy enactment and implementation*. This masks an additional shift in problem definition in ECE policy at this point. Now not only were policymakers attempting to craft policy to help young children succeed, but also they were dealing with the “problem” of existing policy and practice trumping and transforming the intended implementation of ECE policy.

The ideas of balanced development in childhood became a fixture in ECE debates to come -whereby the intellectual, physical and spiritual needs are viewed as *all equally important*, but not all are attended to by policy. It was not so much the notion of balance that was challenged, rather, where the development would, should and could be nurtured. As infant schools faced pressures to prove themselves, the intellectual gains of the

children in the schools became the focus (Vinovskis, 1995). “It is also clear that in the short run, physical and moral development is much more difficult to demonstrate than intellectual (or academic) achievement” (Vinovskis, 1995, p.33). As mentioned in detail above, this reflected a larger academic debate on the developmental appropriateness of different activities in early childhood.

While infant schools and kindergartens had intellectual and scientific underpinnings, the developments of WPA nurseries and the Lanham Act, primarily had economic underpinnings. WPA nursery schools were set up essentially as job vehicles for out-of-work teachers (Vinovskis, 2002). While the WPA emphasized education, the teachers who filled these jobs were not trained to work with young children and the quality of these nurseries was much less than the quality in private nursery schools at the time. As WPA nurseries attempted in name to provide education to the children (by at least hiring teachers-though not specialists in early childhood), the Lanham Act had an entirely custodial view of public provision of services for young children. In order for women to work to support the American efforts in WWII, the Lanham Act funded child care centers for their non-school age children. Yet, many women still favored family, friend and neighbor care (FFN) choosing it over the publicly provided centers (Vinovskis, 1995).

The problem in the Great Depression was lack of jobs and WPA nursery schools were seen as a job opportunity for out of work teachers. Any education of the children in their care seems to have been subsequent to the economic policy aims. Likewise, the Lanham act saw child care provision as a means to support women’s work efforts in the war. As such, problem during WWII was not enough workers to support the economic

demands of the war and Lanham Act child care centers were a means to getting women fill this void. The primary policy solution was custodial care with little mention of education or developmental needs of the children receiving it. One unintended outcome of the Lanham Act was a post war *mentality* that it was okay for women to work and “good” child care centers were beneficial for kids (Vinovskis, 2002).

Children and Teachers in Pre-Head Start Era

The Pre-Head Start Era saw some variation in the number, type and ages of children served by ECE policy. The two dominant “groups” of children served by policy were poor children and children with working mothers (arguably these groups were often interchangeable in colonial and depression times but not necessarily in WWII Lanham centers). The children served by the infant school movement in colonial America were primarily poor children between eighteen months and school-age (generally five or six). (Vinovskis, 1995). The children served by *charity kindergartens* were initially poor children around age five or six, but this policy quickly came to encompass all children this age as kindergartens came to be a permanent part of the graded school system (Tyack and Cuban, 1995). The WPA nursery schools served poor children not of school age while their richer peers attended private nurseries in small, but increasing numbers. The Lanham Act included all children under school age whose mothers were working in wartime industries. Notably, many *companies* still frowned upon women with children under age two working, so children this young these were less likely to be at such centers (Vinovskis, 2002).

From these inauspicious origins, women have predominated ECE teaching – particularly white, middle-class women. Teachers and caregivers are a major element of

ECE policy. Women were seen as suited to running infant education and women were leading patrons (Vinovskis, 1995). There was little attention to training of teachers though debate centered on making such teachers (and the curricula) different from school teachers. Kindergarten policy faced some of the same concerns and focused on child-centered, nurturing settings with less initial attention to academics. As such, teachers were valued for nurturing, mothering and attention to health and manners (Tyack and Cuban, 1995). WPA nurseries were created to keep previously working teachers employed...with little attention to the fact that these elementary teachers were not trained or equipped to manage nursery classrooms filled with young children (Vinovskis, 2002; Fuller, 2007). Lanham Act centers were primarily custodial in nature and while some may have had academic components, this was not essential to, expected of or intended by the policy itself.

Government Role in ECE in Pre-Head Start Era

The public role in early childhood was evolving and changing during colonial times. While the church was certainly seen as an appropriate place for moral education, its links to literacy and other learning became strained as fewer went to church and such activities were taken on by public schools. In addition, there was a strain between the advocates of the movement and those already entrenched in primary education (Vinovskis, 1995). Russell, who is credited with importing the policy “idea” from England, wanted infant school pedagogies to influence primary schools; not for people to expect results of primary schools at younger ages with same methods (Vinovskis, 1995, p.30). In addition, primary schools and school boards were not sold on infant schools, citing “evidence” that primary teachers preferred students without training in infant

schools (Vinovskis, 1995, p.30). Likewise, there were differing views of how schools should be funded. Officials who were not spending much on primary schools were even less inclined to spend on even more expensive infant schools.

These conflicts over the institutional setting and funding of infant schools paralleled the growing concern about the appropriateness of educating infants in institutions *in the first place*. This foreshadows something critical in ECE policy: even after a program/policy is established, two ongoing debates rage on – the details of the program are debated and the very existence of it is challenged. Pestalozzi's ideas of infant development and home care came to America heightening the opposition to infant schools. "Both the theorists and the sponsors of infant schools belied their uneasiness in perpetuating the unnatural act of taking children from their homes when they defended the infant schools as homes themselves—homes likely to promote the happiness of both children and society in the ways that natural homes would never do" (Vinovskis, 1995, p.31). This tension between the natural "home" setting for young children and the unnatural "institutional school" setting for young children was not to go away. It was recognized that if most learning happened at home poor children were stuck in a losing cycle. Yet, the focus of the leading advocates – Boston society women – turned to their own efforts at child rearing as they quickly concluded that infants were better off at home with informed mothers [like themselves] (Vinovskis, 1995, p.32). As the funding, administration and purpose of infant schools were debated, the role of the public in early childhood was slowly inserted. A seed was planted that while it was debatable *what* role the government should have it was less of a concern than that the government had a role *at all*.

At the onset, kindergarten like its infant school predecessor was meant to be very different than graded grammar school. As Elizabeth Peabody articulated it, “this human scale-institution would *not* resemble a school but was a very different kind of setting” (Fuller, 2007, p. 39). However, as kindergarten grew and was more prevalent across the country, it was “absorbed into the public schools, its liberal-humanist ideals and the creative practices devised by Froebel and his descendants began to fade” (Fuller, 2007, p.39). Peabody spoke out against public takeovers of kindergartens (Fuller, 2007, p.39). This absorption was all-encompassing, effecting the materials presented to children, the teachers assigned to them and the expectations set for them.

“Kindergarten classes were sucked into streamlined school systems during the first half of the century, becoming yet another grade level, plugging into elementary school curricula and staffed by teachers adorned with higher credentials. Teachers’ home visits and warm relationships with parents gave way to professionals encased in classrooms, just like *real* teachers” (Fuller, 2007, p.40).

In fact, there is long a history of reform efforts in schools marked by slow and incremental impact on practice and learning. Like many preschool proponents today, the early proponents and founders of kindergartens in America saw public schools as a different type of schooling with a different type of pedagogy (Tyack and Cuban, 1995). Alternately, they thought kindergarten could be “a cure for the urban social evils as well as a model of education for young children” (Tyack and Cuban, 1995, p. 65). Activists saw kindergarten as a place where social ills and poverty could be cured and mitigated. In addition, policy makers thought that the child centered pedagogy and soft, open-ended curriculum of kindergarten would positively influence the graded public system

For WPA nurseries, the government’s role in setting this ECE policy was limited to providing jobs to displaced elementary school teachers – not unlike the focus of Head

Start on providing jobs to family and neighbors of enrolled children. This established a government precedent for assuming elementary teachers could simply be plugged into preschool classrooms without need for other training or certification. While policymakers at the time acknowledged a shortage of preschool teachers, this was not met with concern or additional policy to promote a credential; it was cast aside in lieu of job provision during economic hardship (Vinovskis, 1995). The Lanham Act centers made indelible the direct link between working mothers and ECE policy. It put forth a (weak) federal policy solution: custodial care for children of working mothers until the war's end. In other words the federal role in child care at this point was very limited and was based primarily on the economic needs of the country rather than the development needs of the children in care.

Conclusions on the Pre-Head Start Era

The origins of ECE policy set the stage for what was to come. The efforts of the infant school societies in 1820s New England were short lived, but demonstrate that from the beginning there were strains to establish early childhood as child-centered versus didactic, and as part of primary schools versus separate entities entirely. The kindergarten movement was more successful in that it lasted and kindergartens eventually ceased serving only poor children and became universal. However, the attempts to keep it separate from graded schools were thwarted as were original designs of home-visits, and play-centered developmental programs. The history of kindergarten demonstrates that targeted programs in early childhood, in order to appeal to the masses to gain support, are often co-opted both by the K-12 system *and* by the middle and upper classes realizing and seeking the professed benefits of a given policy for their own children. The

WPA nurseries and the Lanham child care centers demonstrate something entirely different about ECE policy – that in order to serve other policy and political ends (in this case economics) – the federal government has been able to step in and create policy from scratch. However, it is a cautionary tale as well, as in both cases quality was set aside in favor of achieving high numbers served (teachers employed in WPA and children of working women in care in Lanham). In addition, both of these policies were set up as temporary solutions to economic problems, not as long-standing federal involvements in either case.

In terms of problem definition, the pre-Head Start era shows how differing definitions and changing problems lead to disagreements about the policy intent and to varying outcomes. The infant schools were set up to address essentially two problems: the consequences of poverty for young children *and* the pedagogical inappropriateness of primary schools for early learning. This was a hint of subsequent challenges in this policy area as the “problem” policymakers were attempting to address often was as much the past policy shortcomings as the actual problems themselves. While kindergarten policy was longer lasting, it too saw the problem definition morph from the problem of poor children being ill-prepared for school and life (lack of hygiene, manners and literacy) to the problem of kindergartens being just one of another grade in schooling.

The WPA nurseries and Lanham Act centers were set up not to address early childhood or early learning needs, but rather to serve economic needs of adults. Thus the problem these ECE policies were attempting to solve were temporary economic concerns of working adults and the national economy. Compared to the child-centered problems infant schools and kindergartens were focused on, these seem ill-placed in this policy

arena. However, the long view of history allows us to see that this is not unique to this time period. Both Head Start and the Child Care-Welfare funding of the 1990s included adult employment as goals. This highlights something crucial about ECE policy: that it is interwoven into family policy and that the problems poor children face are also problems their parents and neighbors face. In ECE policy some have found a way to produce a single policy solution to meet both needs. The results are as confounding as the notion that jobs created for poor adults can double as quality programs for poor children.

Head Start Era Policy

The 1960s ushered in a whole new era for ECE policy. Compared to the aforementioned pre-Head Start era, this decade saw both a dramatic shift in domestic policy at-large and permanence to the issues and challenges of ECE policy in policy and public consciousness. Beginning with JFK's Administration, major changes were underway in education and social welfare policy. While JFK's attempts at major federal involvement in these areas were ultimately thwarted in lieu of other concerns, legislation and policy set under his tenure did pave the way for LBJ's massive domestic agenda - the Great Society Programs (Vinovskis, 2002).

As LBJ took office following Kennedy's tragic assassination, the stage and urgency was set for action on poverty and inequality. As the research and theories of Piaget, Hunt and Bloom, Gesell and others brought science and philosophy together demonstrating the critical importance of learning and development in the early years, attention to policy for early childhood expanded at rapid speed. Because of the broader movements in domestic policy, ECE policy was crafted not only in light of research findings, but also in light of political expediencies and realities of the times. Evidence of

the disparity of mental, health and education of poor families was featured in a series of commissions, taskforces and legislative committee hearings. Ultimately, the Economic Opportunity Act was enacted in 1964 establishing a massive set of programs aimed at winning the “War on Poverty”. These programs were largely administered by the newly establishing Office of Economic Opportunity (OEO) led by Sergeant Shriver and were implemented and run by local entities known as Community Action Programs (CAPs). While CAPs were allowed to and encouraged to include early childhood programs in their poverty programs, it was not required. By the time Project Head Start started in the summer of 1965, two significant realities were already in place: the Elementary and Secondary Education Act was enacted (April 11, 1965) and tension between OEO and local CAPs was already brewing. Interestingly, an estimated 60 percent of CAPs had in fact elected to include ECE in WOP programs by time Head Start began (Vinovskis, 2002).

The first summer of HS saw more than 560,000 children served at a cost of \$84 million (\$150 per child for eight weeks). Most of the initial funding went to daily operations (75%) with the remaining funding going to medical, dental and psychological care, nutrition, parent recruitment, research and administration. Most of the children were age four, five or six (though this is older than the current population of children served). In addition more than 100,000 jobs were created by this program including 60,000 neighborhood and parent workers (Vinovskis, 2002). It quickly grew into a year-round program as well. Yet early design choices made in the haste of political expediency seem to have had long-lasting and often negative effects. The choices to severely under-price the cost per child, to compromise teacher quality by ignoring the

shortage of qualified applicants and to hire non-trained neighborhood workers and parents of participants remain issues for policymakers today – forty years later. Because of the pressure to demonstrate success and keep the program on a grand scale, the professed “impact” of Head Start was overstated initially and furthermore, it made subsequent policy changes nearly impossible as no one wanted to tweak a successful program or spend more money on teachers, when the program was already supposedly working.

Subsequent to Head Start (almost immediately actually), policymakers and researchers saw the fade-out effects of Head Start once its students reached elementary school and set out to establish the Follow-Through program. Follow-Through was started as both well-intentioned program aimed to sustain the effects of Head Start for its participants and as political quick-speak to address initial shortcomings of a popular and well-funded program. It had initial support in terms of funding, research and political will, however, it was proposed during the changeover from LBJ to Nixon and during the escalation of the Vietnam War. Both factors proved detrimental to its success, however, it remained on the books and in a select number of schools in part because of its ties with the popular HS program, and because over time researchers and schools simply got better at implementing intervention programs in schools. In 1968, President Nixon was not prepared to expand ECE policy any further via Follow Through or any other program; instead, a status quo settled into the federal efforts at ECE.

Problem Definitions in the Head Start Era

The 1950s and 1960s in America were times of great social conflict and change. Perhaps the most dominant domestic issues were race and poverty, each seeming to boil

up into the wider public consciousness simultaneously, with varying policy results. The problem that ECE policy was trying to solve during this era, therefore, is quite complicated. That is the point: ECE policy via Head Start was wrapped up with the broader and deeper issues of racial inequality and rampant, cyclical poverty particularly in inner cities. Tracing these larger issues is not just a means of presenting the context of policy in this era; it *defines* social issues of this era. Head Start is in name an ECE policy, however, due to its origins in these tumultuous times, it is also meant to be a vehicle for racial equality *and* an end to poverty. Not surprisingly, subsequent policy, like the Follow-Through program and expansion of Head Start, were attempts not just to continue what Head Start had started, but also to fix the “problem” of insufficient and ineffective policy. It is evident that prior to many of the policies of this time, white, middle class Americans thought mistakenly that a) blacks were doing better overtime and that b) poverty did not exist in such an affluent society (See Moynihan, 1965; Harrington, 1962). Once these illusions were shattered, policies that ensued faced the tall task both of articulating the “problems” rampant in society and presenting solutions that not only solved the problems, but also appeared to do so quickly and authoritatively.

Race. Racial inequality was certainly at the forefront of policymaking in the 1950s and 1960s. Almost a century after the end of the Civil War that resulted in freedom for southern blacks, equal standing for them in society and the economy was far from a reality. As articulated by Daniel Patrick Moynihan, ‘The most difficult fact for white Americans to understand is that in these terms the circumstances of the Negro American community in recent years has probably been getting *worse, not better.*’ (Moynihan, 1965, p.2). While technically, there was equal opportunity for blacks in most

parts of the country, this belied two facts: a) underlying realities in black communities prevented opportunity from becoming reality and b) equal opportunity did not translate into equal results (Moynihan, 1965). Moynihan brought to light the notion that blacks as a group were at a disadvantage, and combined with racism, this meant the gap between white majority and black minority was widening not shrinking. Moynihan placed the blame on this squarely in the family structure of blacks at the time. For Moynihan the problem was clear, the instability of black families at the time (whatever the cause) trumped all other attempts at defining the problem policymakers were attempting to solve.

There were several major political events that occurred prior to the establishment of Head Start. As blacks around the country mobilized themselves in the Civil Rights Movement, both the Kennedy and the Johnson Administrations committed themselves to the cause of equality (Moynihan, 1965). The 1964 election (of LBJ) was indeed a referendum on this issue. Subsequent legislation proved to be earth-shattering: both the Economic Opportunity Act (in which HS was piloted) and the Civil Rights Act were enacted to abolish poverty and discrimination. In addition, the landmark *Brown v. Board of Education* case was the result of increasingly activist courts working to remedy past ill-treatment of blacks *particularly* in schools. The problem these policies aimed to solve was rampant, endemic inequality on the basis of race.

Moynihan argued that outcomes must be the new focus as opportunity alone had not been sufficient to lift up blacks as a group into the mainstream of American society. He found evidence that there were group differences between black and white families that were crucial to understand when crafting policy in this area. While there was a small

stable black middle class, the majority of black families were lower and poor class and as such the focus of Moynihan and his policies. At the time, black marriages were more likely to end in divorce, thus there were many single mothers. In addition, the number of “illegitimate” births in black families was much higher and growing at a rapid rate (Moynihan cites these stats: 1940-16 percent for blacks, 2 percent for whites; 1963-23.6 percent for blacks, 3.07 percent for whites)(1965). As a result, there was an increased welfare dependency and in fact most black children were on AFDC at some point in life (Moynihan, 1965). Moynihan traces the roots of many group differences in black and white families in the tragic legacy of black slavery in America which led to post-slavery urbanization, unemployment and ultimately a matriarchal family structure unsuited for the dominant paternal structure of the white middle class¹².

Poverty. Simultaneous to the civil rights movement was the so called “discovery” of poverty in America. It was not that there had never been poverty in the U.S., certainly as recently as the 1930’s Great Depression, much of the country was unemployed and destitute. However, the 1950s and 1960s was a time of great stability and more

¹² He notes that American slavery was the worst in the world, and that Jim Crow laws during Reconstruction were more devastating to black males who were made dependent and separated arbitrarily from their families. Since the strong male father figure was the middle class standard of the time, this made family structures of the two groups fundamentally different (Moynihan). Built upon this legacy of slavery is the urbanization of black which was fast and frustrating-exposing persistent racism and the devastating effects of hopelessness among blacks in urban areas. Urbanization also exacerbated the problem of unemployment and therefore poverty. Unemployment led black families into a tailspin of devastating consequences: exhaustion of credit, entry of wife into workforce, day-to-day existence, welfare dependence, marriage dissolution (Bakke’s 6 stages of adjustment of family to unemployment, via Moynihan). Even in the face of employment, the minimum wage was based on an individual’s expenses, so for black families, women had to work as well, removing them further from the middle class standard of the day (Moynihan). This all coupled with the cycle of black poverty and entrenchment: blacks have many kids at a young age, therefore, don’t finish school, therefore, achieve only low income level, therefore, deprive children of opportunities, therefore the cycle repeats (Moynihan). The primary structure of the black family is matriarchal which is problematic because it was not the mode at the time-so leadership and power positions were even harder for blacks to attain. Subsequent results on children are tragic as well, with higher delinquency rates, more arrests, more incarceration and the subsequent effects of such crime (Moynihan).

importantly, the rise and stabilization of the heralded American middle class. As prosperity in America led to major economic changes for much of society, there was a subsequent presumption that this prosperity spread to all sectors and all peoples in the American society. The discovery of poverty was simply the recognition, as highlighted by academics, grassroots activists and a growing number of politicians, that many in America were devastatingly poor and falling behind. Harrington articulated this phenomenon as such, “Even when money finally trickles down, even when a school is built in a poor neighborhood, for instance, the poor are still deprived” (Harrington, 1962, p.9). He noted that the poor at the time missed gains of the 1930s as “millions of people proved immune to progress” (Harrington, 1962). Furthermore, he noted quite presciently that the “new poverty” was not temporary, but permanent, cultural and without aspiration [prescient because the policies developed to combat such poverty naively, but gamely aimed to *eliminate* poverty within ten years]. Remarkably, his characterizations of poverty amidst a country of vast wealth hold true even today: the notion of the culture of poverty, the idea that it is not a temporary status for many and that it is precisely the progress America lauds and craves that causes at least some element of society to fall into the grips of extreme poverty. For Harrington, the major problem of the day was not just the idea of poverty as an “issue” but the status of poverty as a state of being.

Harrington’s presentation of poverty highlights two realities that were previously unheard and likely unbelievable. First, that the poor were “upside-down in the economy” such that societal progress actually meant worse jobs, food and shelter (Harrington, 1962, p.12). Second, that poverty is as much an attitude as an economic status. Harrington was particularly attentive to the different “types” of poverty: rural (as in Appalachia), urban

(black ghettos), drunken/drug induced poverty (from all classes) and elderly poverty. Harrington was before his time in noting the particular challenge of the “new-poor”, those who worked in jobs at the fringe of old and new economies that today might be classified as “working poor”. Harrington highlights the fact that while not all poor are mentally ill, nor are all mentally ill poor, these two conditions are certainly intertwined as neuroses and psychoses (sic) are more prevalent in poor people. In addition, he highlights the research of his day that noted not only that there were risk factors for mental health, but that they have a cumulative effect (Harrington, 1962).

An essential element to Harrington’s argument is the notion of the “culture of the poor”. Such things as feelings, emotions and values are different because they are formed by their harsh experience. Harrington argued that there were “two Americas” the affluent and the poor. And how the two perspectives they represented –a distorted economy vs. beyond history and progress ultimately arrived at the same policy goal: obliterating poverty. The paradox presents itself, however, in that poverty is not as deadly in the United States as elsewhere in the world, so there is both indifference and blindness to the hardships of American poor. In the U.S. poverty forms a culture and there is an embedded interrelatedness of the different subcultures of the poor. For example, if you start poor, you are highly likely to end poor. Harrington also pointed out that policies in the 1960s that promised a quick and definite “end” to poverty were misguided and destructive. Primarily because “case” poverty was misunderstood to be temporary, not chronic. Harrington advocated a *comprehensive* attack on the problem of poverty including not only programmatic aspects (social security and health care), but also change of attitudes in the US and creation of a shared sense of purpose. He argued

that the federal government was the only entity capable of such an endeavor, because cities were too damaged by urban flight and states were prone to political peculiarities. Furthermore, private agencies were not capable of something at such a large scale. He argued also that it should be implemented as locally as possible and that it was a matter of political will, not improved information.

Educational Outcomes. While racial inequality and poverty were the major problems policymakers looked to solve in the 1960s, more and more attention was paid to schools as both locus for change *and* as a source of the problem. In particular, the findings of the Coleman Report in 1966 demonstrated not only that most schools were still highly segregated (despite Brown v. Board's landmark decisions more than ten years prior), but also student achievement was linked more to parental background than to schools. As such, schools were seen simultaneously as both problem (perpetuating racial and economic inequality), and also as solution (a place to mitigate inequalities at home). This led to two critical and competing policy solutions: increased integration and focus on student outcomes (not just equal inputs into schools).

The Coleman Report in 1966 served as the major catalyst at the time for attention to differences in achievement by groups of children. Amid the revelations of Hunt and Bloom that IQ was not fixed, was the earth shattering revelation by the Coleman Report that family and SES factors were more determinative of student achievement than were schools. More specifically, Coleman et al, found that not only do black children enter school at a disadvantage (from their white peers), but they never catch up, *even when school factors are held constant* (Coleman, et al., 1966). These findings were not the expectations of the policymakers or the researchers who held vigilant the notion that with

the open access afforded by the civil rights movements and integration would come increased achievement for black children. Schools (now with truly open access and equally opportunity) were meant to be a great equalizer of children from all economic, racial and social backgrounds.

The Coleman Report had been commissioned by the Civil Rights Act of 1964 to be done by a group led by Coleman and Campbell. It was the most extensive and comprehensive of its kind with a sample of 570,000 students, 60,000 teachers, 4,000 elementary and secondary schools at a cost of \$1.5 million over two years -1965 dollars (Viadero, 2007). It was revolutionary and crucial to the policies of that era *not only* because of the shocking findings, but also because of the revolutionary use of achievement data to confirm and measure education disparities (previous education studies focused on inputs and input equalization). The findings were so shocking and disturbing to many of the authors and advisors that it took two years for the Advisory committee to sign off on it (Viadero, 2007). It was written essentially simultaneous to the passage of the ESEA and the Moynihan Report - a fact that now causes one to wonder what ESEA might have looked like if LBJ and Congress had had Coleman's report in hand prior to debate and enactment.

This shock and awe response the Coleman Report had two important effects. First, many of the secondary findings were obscured and underreported for years. In addition, many misinterpreted this to mean that schools do not matter. For example, second to the family, a student's "sense of control" affected outcomes. Gaps in education performance between blacks and whites were 1.9 years in 6th grade, but grew to 4 years by 12th grade (Coleman, 1966). And while there were certainly some resource

disparities, these were not as much as expected, particularly in the highly polarized and segregated south. In addition, they found that there were teacher effects in limited forms, for example, a teacher's verbal ability was linked with student achievement and "good" teachers were more important for black students than for white. The study found that on average schools have uniform effects on kids. However, the study could not distinguish effect of individual intervention. Unfortunately, the study results and subsequent studies fueled both sides of the raging segregation issue and this came to dominate the focus on the Coleman Report and its findings. Though certainly given the context of other policies at the time an equally important and lasting focus has been on outcomes and achievement rather than inputs. One key factor that the report did was reframe people's thinking. If financial resources among schools were near equal with unequal outcomes, it must be necessary to look inside schools to affect change/achievement. It is worth noting that the policy world still believed that the black-white achievement gap would be closed by end of century (this parallels the belief that poverty could be eliminated).

Problem Definitions and Head Start. Amid these different major problems defined by policy and academic prophets of the day, the political workings of first President John F. Kennedy and then President Lyndon B. Johnson, captured these "problems" from the policy primeval soup and produced a set of social policies unlike any in U.S. history. The trifecta of poverty, racial inequality and educational outcomes proved to be powerful motivators for policymakers of the day to do something major, fast and with immediate demonstrable results. It is in this context that Head Start policy must be situated and understood. It was *one of many* major domestic programs attempting to solve and mitigate these problems.

Early childhood education as a policy issue did not present itself immediately onto the mid-century political scene; rather it represents a coming together of many separate but related government and non-governmental activities. The 1960 Presidential Election (Kennedy vs. Nixon) was not dominated by education, and featured no mention of preschool children or preschool education. However, the education debates between JFK and Nixon centered on the role of the *federal* government in education (Vinovskis, 2002). Nixon was so adamant against major federal involvement because he felt that, “When the federal government gets the power to pay teachers, inevitably, in my opinion, it will acquire the power to set standards and to tell the teachers what to teach” (as quoted in Vinovskis, 2002, p.16). Ultimately, Kennedy focused on two targeted policies: construction funds and teacher salary increases. While JFK did not pass major education or preschool legislation, he did pave the way for increased federal role in education, for discussions on early education and for the Great Society programs (Vinovskis, 2002, p. 24-25)

As the government was slowly coming into the fold on early childhood education policy, there was a great deal of activity in the private sector in the 1950s and 1960s. There were experimental preschool sites in Nashville, NY and Syracuse, and on a larger scale there were the activities of the Ford Foundation in the Great cities School Improvement Program. The Ford Foundation Program did not specify ECE as a required element of city renewal programs; however it came to be a major element in participating cities (Vinovskis, 2002). Interestingly, as the Kennedy Administration focused more on ECE, the Ford Foundation shifted focus to other programs namely juvenile delinquency programs, though “early childhood education was seen as a normal and desirable

component of comprehensive efforts to improve deteriorating cities” (Vinovskis, 2002, p. 30). This privately funded activity paralleled the growing activity brewing in the federal government.

The 1950s and 1960s also saw many changes in the views of prominent psychologists and educationalists on child development. Until then, it was believed that IQ was fixed at birth and hereditary-therefore analysis was on groups not individuals. The work of Hunt and Bloom dramatically shifted the dominant view of IQ as fixed, by demonstrating that in fact IQ could be significantly altered via a changed environment (Vinovskis, 2002). Thus they argued that preschool could be used to counteract the effects of poverty on children. Bloom demonstrated that the first four years are the most critical for intellectual development, though neither Hunt nor Bloom at the time advocated or pointed to one program as best because it was not yet known (Vinovskis, 2002).

LBJ picked up the momentum built by JFK in attacking the problem of “poverty” largely by focusing on: education and training for disadvantaged youth, working adults, coordination of federal, state and local effort; and demonstration projects (Vinovskis, 2002). LBJ saw this as a ten year program with interim and end goals (Vinovskis, 2002, p.37). One key element of the War on Poverty and its subsequent policy incarnations was the notion of a Community Action Programs (CAPs) approach whereby local consortia efforts would be the ultimate arbiters of poverty progress. Most importantly here, preschool was seen at this point (of the debates) as an often necessary starting point of schooling to combat poverty, but it was *left to the choice of local implementers*.

Crucial to an understanding of the beginnings of ECE policy in this era is an understanding of Education's role in the War on Poverty - that is an understanding of the intertwining of education policy and economic opportunity and welfare policies. When the Office of Economic Opportunity (OEO) was created the then Secretary of HEW Celebrezze pushed hard to separate the Education bill from the WOP one (1964) (Vinovskis, 2002, p.40). However, for political reasons, LBJ advisors kept the education initiatives in the WOP bill to make it more palatable. The Economic Opportunity Act was passed in 1964 and Shriver was appointed as the head of the new OEO. Democrats supported the bill, Republicans largely opposed it and education's role in the WOP in particular was disputed. This reflected the looming concern that the problem of poverty was one with many smaller problems to solve, one of which was education of the poor.

While the Economic Opportunity Act ultimately passed, of note are both the Republicans' (failed) insistence on a more prominent role for early childhood and the importance of testimony by experts, such as Brofenbrenner, a child development expert. He noted poverty's debilitating effects on development in early years highlighting two issues: the critical early years need intervention the most and poverty's cumulative effect (Vinovskis, 2002). What came out of Brofenbrenner's testimony was not only the clarification of the importance of separate ECE programs, but also the support of key Republicans who latched onto the idea of ECE as critical in the fight against poverty (Vinovskis, 2002). Similarly, a few key articles by prominent journalists, like Silberman in the NY Times served to link (in the public's mind) the idea that the best way to stop poverty was via intervention in early years via developmental programs. Ultimately the *policy* link between poverty programs, education and early childhood was not yet to be

and LBJ chose to postpone education legislation in 1964 to focus on JFK's tax cut, the Civil Rights Bill and Anti-Poverty legislation.

As the implementation of the Economic Opportunity Act moved along, the 1965 legislative session saw several proposals more specific to early childhood. Shriver's 1965 proposal on the WOP was organized around four key stages in life including early childhood, with an emphasis on prenatal care, health and school readiness (Vinovskis, 2002). Meanwhile, the Office of Education's Office of Programs for the Disadvantaged (OPED) proposed a large-scale summer program to run for eight weeks in the summer of 1965 serving 100,000 kids in 300 to 400 communities (Vinovskis, 2002, p.72). On the advice of family friend, pediatrician Cooke, Shriver proposed a "project Head Start" that would include medical screening and nutrition help and would involve parents by requiring a quarter of staff be paraprofessionals-parents of enrolled kids.

Meanwhile, the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) was enacted in April of 1965 – a culmination of the work begun under Kennedy, debated in LBJ's first year and compromised into a passable federal education law. LBJ proposed five titles: aid to poor kids (five-sixths of the money), library funding, supplementary education centers education research labs and state departments of education. Enactment of the ESEA happened quickly, but did not include provisions for children under age five. This was despite the fact that Republicans, taking up on Brofenbrenner's beguiling testimony on early development, had proposed using title I for ECE. The Republican support behind preschool was led by Representative Quie who cautioned that if preschool policy was not enacted, any other federal aid would be in vain (Vinovskis, 2002, p.84).

Ultimately, ESEA was enacted with preschool only an *option* for local districts receiving

funds, *not* a requirement) a few short months before Project Head Start began its initial summer programs.

From the get-go there were talks of expansion of a program that was already exponentially larger than any experts proposed or recommended-sealing the fate of such things as teacher qualifications and low quality programs. The initial implementation was entitled “Project Rush Rush” by many because the application process was so quick and the incentive to approve many programs in order to help so many children led to oversights of quality on the order of an 82 percent application approval rate (Vinovskis, 2002). Ziegler expressed frustration from the onset that there was a wide-range of quality and too many poor quality ones had been funded, and proposed that poor performing ones should be closed down (Vinovskis, 2002). Unfortunately this proved hard to do and by the 1970s this was almost unheard of. Furthermore, as the summer program surged on, the year round program gained traction expanding from 20,000 kids served the first year to 218,000 by 1968 (Vinovskis, 2002).

This highlights two important issues in the problem definition of ECE policy in this Head Start Era. First, that political need for the appearance of a *massive* effort at poverty reduction meant small, well-designed and controlled demonstration size programs would not be politically palatable. Size was indeed a required part of the solution as poverty and the “War” on it framed the policy environment such that small solutions were seen as insufficient and inconsequential. Second, the link between size, cost and quality was in many ways sealed into law in 1965 – as efforts in the decades following to increase teacher qualifications, program quality and services offered have achieved modest success, but have not trumped or mitigated the effect of including non-

qualified paraprofessionals and parents in the quality equation. Unlike size (bigger being better), quality was not framed as important, only as secondary.

Paralleling the strain between Shriver and researchers and OEO and CAPs, were the differences in evaluation of OEO and HS programs. As results of the first program came out many policymakers and researchers failed to acknowledge challenges and shortcomings of the proclaimed success (Vinovskis, 2002). The national evaluation of HS had design concerns in part due to the variability of HS programs and due to conflicts over design of the evaluation and what outcome measure to use (educational ones or not). Ultimately, OEO funded a “quick” national assessment by Westinghouse/Ohio U, giving them less than one year to complete it. The report questioned HS’s efficacy in making *lasting* academic effects, *particularly in the summer program* (Vinovskis, 2002).

As LBJ’s term came to an end and Nixon’s administration was ushered in, the WOP and OEO were under funded (because of competing budgetary outlays for Vietnam and an anti-tax Congress). Serious concerns about HS’s administration (in HEW or OEO) and efficacy produced a series of new recommendations from two prominent task forces: the 1965 Interagency Task Force on Education and the 1966 Early Childhood Development Task Force. The former recommended a sharp divide between the federal role in K-12 education (age five and up to be served by HEW) and preschool (HS to be for three’s and four’s and kept in OEO). The latter recommended that preschool/HS was not sufficient for poor kids to succeed in school and proposed a follow-through element in later grades in public schools (Vinovskis, 2002).

The idea of a Follow-Through Program was developed modestly by LBJ who recommended such things as special classes and field trips when HS children were in

elementary school. Ziegler also warned that HS was “no simple panacea for disadvantaged children” (p.117). Furthermore that intellectual development and remediation were not sufficient to inclusion of poor in greater society (Vinovskis, 2002). Following the initial year of summer and full-year HS in 1965-1966, the focus of policy around the program centered on a more narrow set of issues, but never on the program itself. Debate continued on the appropriate place to house HS within the federal administration. Strain remained between the federal mandates for HS programs and the local authority of CAPs to administer all WOP programs (Vinovskis, 2002). In addition, the notion of a Follow-Through program was brought to fruition as a part of amendments to the Economic Opportunity Act of 1967.

While there was ongoing discussion surrounding the issue of teacher quality in HS programs, the fate of this issue was sealed with a combination of professed early success of the program as run by unqualified teachers, neighborhood caregivers and parents. Some attempts were made to coordinate HS with policies in ESEA, however, due to the administrative separation both at the federal and local levels this proved fruitless at this point. The 1968 election further locked the HS debate into place for the short-run as the focus shifted to the Vietnam War and to a decreased federal role in education and civil rights. Under Nixon the issues surrounding HS design, quality and evaluation were slowly tabled in favor of a status quo. This status quo was marked by a modified Follow-Through program, increased spending on HS and a shut-out of other ECE issues as demonstrated when Nixon vetoed the Child Care Bill of 1971 as too intrusive of states rights *and* family role in early childhood (Vinovskis, 2002).

Children and Teachers in Head Start Era

The children ECE policy aimed to serve in the Head Start Era were poor children whose lives were compromised by their environment in ways that were seen to effect their achievement in school and in life. Poverty was linked to family income and there were really no efforts to serve other children in this era. However, increasingly other children were indeed going to preschool and kindergarten was reaching more and more five year olds (as mentioned in Chapter One). Of issue then was not which children to serve by federal ECE policy, but how many could be served. As highlighted above, many researchers advising on the issue wanted to start with a demonstration project serving fewer children but serving them with the quality their development demanded and the teachers trained to do so. Yet, as HS was one effort at *ending* the War on Poverty, small was not politically viable. Shriver wanted as many kids served as possible in part to give the most the benefit and also to give the program itself more legitimacy. As such, over a half a million children were served in the first summer – estimated to be half of those in need (Vinovskis, 2002). The compromise was made between size and quality such that -more children served meant fewer dollars per kid which meant less pay for teachers which meant poorer quality. While the number served dipped during the early 1970s below the initial 500,000, the number served never dipped below 300,000 children which is exponentially higher than the initial recommendation of a quality demonstration program for 2,000-3,000 children (Vinovskis, 2002). During this era the issue of age of the children was not prominent, and as kindergarten was also still becoming more universal, there was variation in the ages served by HS. Initially the children served were much older than the three, four and five year olds served today.

Initially, four and five year olds dominated the programs, but due to kindergarten enrollments, this has shifted to three and four year olds.

As mentioned already, the issue of teachers and teacher quality were prominent in the HS Era, yet proved to be greatly expendable. Amid the implementation of Project Head Start were ongoing discussions not only of the size and scope of the initial program, but also the teacher ratio, the cost and the teacher qualifications. Estimates for class size ranged from a ratio of 30 students:1 teacher vs. 15 students:1 teacher with 2 aides. The *proposed cost* based on teacher salary was \$1000/child, however the *announced cost* was \$180/child based on political expediency and salience (Vinovskis, 2002). The result of this undercutting of the actual cost of quality teaching in the initial program proved to be deadly to the long term standing of the policy: local HS applicants could not ask for more because once the benefits (again exaggerated for political reasons) of the programs were announced at this low cost, there was no focus of increasing teacher quality. As such, when programs did ask for more money they did so to increase hours or numbers of kids served, not to improve teacher quality (Vinovskis, 2002).

The Republicans proved to be (as a party) more of a champion for ECE than their progressive Democratic peers. While prominent Democrats, led by JFK and LBJ advocated for ECE, they did so as a part of the larger agenda against poverty. In contrast, the Republicans led by Representative Quie advocated not only for ECE as an *educational* issue but also insisted on quality preschool as essential to other federal educational interventions. For example, Quie's amendment to ESEA (that failed) recommended a specially trained corps of teachers and called for higher qualifications for teachers of poor children especially (Vinovskis, 2002). "Ironically, although most

experts and policymakers initially saw HS as a way to compensate for or overcome the educational and cultural limitations of the home experiences of poor children, many of these youngsters soon were to enter HS projects taught by semiliterate parents or neighbors rather than professionally trained teachers” (Vinovskis, 2002, p.151)

Government Role in Head Start Era

Three elements of government involvement were present during this Head Start Era of ECE Policy. First, the role of the *federal* government in education and social welfare programs was hotly debated. Second, the relationship between the federal government and local entities (both school districts and CAPs) was of issue. Finally, the notion of comprehensive services and a comprehensive approach to the myriad challenges of poverty was put in contrast to a more targeted, limited approach.

The role of the federal government in education exploded with the passage of ESEA in 1965 and has never been the same since. And while there were debates prior to the time of enactment about whether or not the federal government *had an appropriate place* in education policy, ultimately enactment of ESEA silenced this debate for at least a decade. Likewise, the Economic Opportunity Act committed the federal government to a major funding effort against poverty (on the order of close to \$1 billion per year). These social and economic and educational programs however were to be carried out by CAPS – local government and community entities for whom the OEO was seen primarily as a funder, not a regulator or rulemaker. In contrast to the initial permutation of ESEA which saw limited federal prescriptions for implementation, the OEO was heavily involved in what and how CAPs did their work. But as with education, the debate about

federal involvement ceased to center on whether it should or should not be involved and shifted to *how* it should be involved (simply as funder or also as implementer).

The grass roots success of the civil rights movement helped to fuel the notion that local community based action worked best for local communities. However, from the federal perspective this meant wide variability and wide swaths of quality in programming across the country. While local CAPs were likely best at sensing and meeting local needs, they too faced political compromise. This variation and strain between a heavy handed federal role and a loose-oversight role, trickled over into Head Start and ECE policy at the time. While HS was more politically popular, it suffered at the hands of wide variation in quality and administration. In major ways the employment function of HS was seen as outweighing the educational function for children (Vinovskis, 2002). This variation from the start meant challenges in evaluation and policy reframing for years to come.

A final concern about government involvement at the time involves the notion of comprehensive policy and comprehensive services. Both Harrington and Moynihan argued for policy that addressed all the attendant needs of the poor and of black families. Harrington presciently noted that simply giving jobs to poor people was insufficient as it ignored the endemic issues of chronic poor health care, mental illness and family dysfunction. Likewise, Moynihan cautioned that any piecemeal approach was insufficient and that, “A national effort is required that will give a unity of purpose to the many activities of the Federal government in this area, directed to a new kind of national goal: the establishment of a stable Negro¹³ family structure” (Moynihan, 1965, p.2).

¹³ While Moynihan used the term “Negro” which was possibly appropriate at the time, I use the term black and black American interchangeably with his term Negro, as it is more colloquially acceptable today.

These paralleled the discussions among researchers and policymakers about the approach to ECE policy – should it just be academic, or include a full range of developmental and social services.

Conclusions on the Head Start Era

The 1960s were an era of major domestic and social change in the United States. The issues of race, poverty and educational opportunity exploded simultaneously onto the national political agenda in many ways overwhelming a system meant to limit quick, swift, major federal policy activity. The results at the time were astonishing: major legislation on Civil Rights, Education, Poverty and Early Childhood Education. Policymakers and experts at the time were tasked with the daunting challenge of ending poverty and racial inequality *and fast*. Emerging information from research demonstrated that IQ was not fixed, that environment mattered to a child's full development and that something could be done about it. This was a compelling area in which to focus the solution and success of the agenda against social and racial inequality. The idea was made colloquial that the federal government should and would fund preschools for poor children and would be successful in helping those children escape the grasp of impoverished lives.

While the problems that HS was professed to be solving were daunting, so too was the task of implementing a politically popular program with the weight of the policy world on its back. The notions of small, smart demonstration programs gave way to large-scale programs with watered down quality provisions. The notion of solid evaluation to determine effectiveness of the program gave way to quick shot evaluations and political reports framing the results as successful – at the expense of the actual

success of the programs. In effort to demonstrate that the problems of poverty for children were being “solved” by Head Start, a new problem began to bubble up from policy primeval soup: the policies themselves. The subsequent efforts at Follow-Through to sustain supposed success in raising IQ in Head Start were not ever given a chance because they were sustaining a myth and they were competing with a change in administration and a massive and unpopular military involvement in Vietnam (Vinovskis, 2002).

Problem definition in the Head Start Era demonstrates two crucial things. First, in terms of problem definition there is the sense of attaching small sellable solutions to a massive (possibly incurable) problem. Early childhood education was just being understood to be immensely important for all children in terms of IQ and life success. That this happened at a time when issues of racial inequality and devastating poverty were being attacked is consequential. This coupling of early childhood and the problems of poverty has proved long-lasting as it is rampant in ECE policy efforts today. What it meant for ECE policy was that the first major long-lasting attempt at ECE policy was set on a foundation of enormous expectation and was set forever between the world of education (where learning and achievement are the goals) and the world of welfare and social services (where jobs and self-sufficiency are the goals). By attempting to solve both educational and economic concerns in early childhood policy, the Head Start program design was somewhat stranded in the balance – it did provide programming for preschoolers, but it did so without trained or well-paid teachers in order to fulfill the economic needs of parents.

Post-Head Start Era Policy

As the focus on changing HS faded and modest tweaking and general political glad-handing perpetuated the program into the 1980s, there was a shift in ECE policy in many palpable ways. The problems HS aimed to address did not go away and while the policy streams running into the federal government dried up, states became a new arena or venue for ECE policy. In addition, due to both the “success” of working women during WWII, the feminist movement and the increase in single-parent families, what was dubbed “child care” policy also came to the forefront of many a domestic policy agenda. In addition, the late 1970s and early 1980s saw the K-12 education reform movement reach a fever pitch as commission after commission chided the current ability of American schools (and students) to educate (and compete) in an increasingly global economic reality. These streams - state preschool policy, working women’s child care needs and K-12 school reform - came together in various ways in this Post-Head Start Era of ECE policy. In many ways this era reflects many of the pre-existing conflicts and issues of the HS era, however, while the HS era tended to focus on poor children in a targeted, albeit conflicted goals, way, the modern era has come to encompass all children, all families, all K-12 school issues, all working family child care needs and all early learning spectrum goals. The modern era is a glut of problem definitions and solutions, not the least of which is the problem of past policy that so entrenched, there is little impetus for real change.

State ECE policy began slowly during the 1970s but really accelerated during the 1980s as a part of standards-based education reform and the 1990s as a part of accountability reforms. At the time Head Start was enacted only New York and

California put policy in place to serve preschool children. It was not until the 1980s that significant numbers of children began to enroll in state-run and funded preschools and ECE programs. As of 2007, thirty-eight states have enacted at least one ECE policy and the number of children served by state preschools now roughly equals the number served by Head Start preschools (NIEER, 2007). Funding has escalated rapidly as well, however, unlike HS which has seen a fairly steady increase in funds (see chapter One for more on this), state preschool funding is less stable and has not increased in such an incremental way. Nonetheless, state preschool is now a dominant force in the ECE policy arena.

While Head Start policy has been tweaked during the Modern Era, most efforts to do so have not significantly changed the design, implementation, teachers or children served. Recent efforts under Bush II's Administration have focused on increasing the number (or percentage) of teachers with Bachelor's degrees and on doing large-scale assessments to measure achievement of participant children. Yet many of the original design elements that are of concern, namely teacher qualifications and usage of neighbors and parents of participating children, have remained intact. As such, other federal efforts at ECE policy have focused on creating new programs and expanding the ideals of Head Start to other children. Early Head Start, enacted in 1994 as a part of the reauthorization of Head Start that year, serves children ages zero to three and models many of the same elements of Head Start: parent involvement and education, comprehensive health services, nutrition and family supports. An additional program, Even Start was initially authorized in 1988 as an amendment to the ESEA legislation. Even Start picks up on the 1960s notions of serving families in poverty more intensively with literacy programming

for adults and children bypassing the notion that preschools alone empower families via their children's education.

Child care policy arose most prominently in the mid-1980s on two fronts: demand from working women and federal welfare policies such as the CCDBG and later the CCDF. In the mid-1980s the number of working women with children under six tipped the scales (around 1985, the number climbed to more than 50 percent) and a few years later the number with children under age three also tipped the scales (around 1987, the number was more than 50 percent). (BLS, 2006; see Chapter One for full table). This certainly fueled the private demand for custodial services for children with working mothers on a scale that had not been previously seen in the United States. At the same time, federal efforts to reform welfare began to focus attention on the link between work and welfare and more finely pointed to the link between child care and working for former welfare recipients. The Child Care Development Block Grant program enacted in 1990 allowed states to support entities in child care provision for children under age thirteen from poor and low income families. The revised version of the CCDBG came about during the Welfare Reform of 1996 as the newly named Child Care Development Fund(CCDF) and was modified to focus more on the activities of families to remain eligible for services and vouchers. The CCDF represented an increase in funding over the CCDBG levels, primarily to get more families off the welfare doles by providing custodial care to their children so they could secure and retain jobs.

While these activities by states and the federal government aimed specifically at early childhood, other efforts were underway that would also affect this policy area. State education reform spurred by the discouraging findings of reports like the Nation at

Risk report of 1983 focused efforts on increasing standards for learning in schools and often, though not always or consistently, this included provisions for educating young children. The theory was that since young children entered schools unevenly prepared, and standards were newly set for them upon kindergarten entry, early childhood education was seen as a logical step towards achieving success via standards-based reform. Similarly, in the 1990s many states sought further reform to add “teeth” to the standards and expectations of prior reforms by holding schools and teachers accountable for the teaching and learning done in schools. As before, many states included or added early childhood provisions to their reforms in effort to front load the achievement of youngsters.

The Modern Era of ECE Policy has seen additional efforts in recent years culminating in more concentrated and coordinated efforts aimed at quality and access. A prime example is the current UPK movement which is made of a remarkable coalition of national, state and local advocates and policymakers who target states at the cusp of making ECE policy change and focus efforts into a single effort –universal preschool for four year olds (Fuller, 2007; Kirp, 2007). This type of concerted national campaign is not new to domestic policy; however, it represents a concerted effort by its members to focus policy efforts at a very narrowly defined policy seen as the most palatable and defensible for public attention. UPK advocates argue for and support voluntary universal preschool for all four year olds, and have aligned with the momentum of the accountability efforts in NCLB to focus on high-quality, standards-based academic preschools as part of the school system.

Problem Definition in the Post-Head Start Era

The Modern Era of ECE policy demonstrates an explosion of size and scope, but also of problem definitions and coupling. While the policies of the Head Start Era centered on a few *major* general problems (poverty and racial inequality), the policies of the Modern Era have focused on more specific problems leading to varied program, erratic quality provisions and generally, the establishment of a “permanent” policy window in this area.

The 1980s saw a dramatic cultural and societal change peak and really leap onto the policy agenda as working women with young children became a majority and their child care needs became more and more of issue. As more women with young children entered the workforce, dual-family needs became both a corporate and government concern as “the perennial question of how government and employers can help to strengthen working families and neighborhood supports” (Fuller, 2007, p. 54). Feminists argued that women should *not* have to choose *between* family life and a profession and urged a national network of child care centers as far back as 1966 (Fuller, 2007). While the number of providers and types of options slowly increased to meet the increased demand, there were concerns from the start about quality and the child care workforce. The problem for childcare, in contrast to most preschool policy was a need for at minimum custodial care for children in safe environments. This contrasted the problem for concurrent preschool policy aimed at serving developmental needs of young children.

State education reforms have been particularly important to ECE policy in this era. Standards-based reforms in the 1980s defined the problem as twofold: inadequate expectations for American students and America falling behind in a global economy (see

for example, The Nation at Risk Report, 1983). This twofold definition led to a few major policy solutions primarily done at the state and non-governmental levels. Most notable was the standards-based reforms whereby states developed statewide standards systems for students. Many states included some form of ECE policy in their standards reform, arguing that many students were ill-prepared for school once they got there, so early childhood was crucial to any reform efforts (Fuller, 2007). In this way, however, early childhood policy was more of an “add-on” policy meant to bring more children into the “fold” of the K-12 system with little attention for the actual needs or pedagogies of early childhood (Plank and Boyd, 1994). As such, the problem definition this ECE policy was meant to solve was to supplement a larger goal of higher academic achievement and economic participation in later grades.

State education reforms in the 1990s and into the 2000s took on a new bent with accountability being implemented alongside standards. Accountability policy with its heavy emphasis on measurable learning results favors standardized testing and a strong emphasis on academic, not social or behavioral concerns. Not surprisingly, many argue that this is ill-fit with the pedagogies of ECE, and concerns about “drill and skill” practices for young children have been raised (Kirp, 2007). However, for the UPK movement in particular the coupling of ECE with the momentum for accountability as presented in the No Child Left Behind Act of 2002 (NCLB), has been of utmost importance. A problem many see with the alignment and coupling of UPK with NCLB is that NCLB’s accountability (which came *after* accountability measures in many states) is very limited with an emphasis on alignment of prekindergarten learning with K-12 learning (Fuller, 2007). While alignment with accountability served to increase some

public support for UPK, preschool policy produced as a result of such a union may water down the developmental and pedagogical concerns the UPK movement and others in ECE strongly adhere to and protect. (Fuller, 2007, p.67). The NCLB accountability approach to ECE policy has truly been anti-humanist in the worst sense – it not child-centered, it is not developmentally appropriate and it is not balanced. The problem NCLB was established to address was a continued achievement gap among majority and minority children and a lack of attention to the learning needs (the measurable ones) of all children. This is a far cry from ECE problem definitions that include the needs of the young child and the particular concerns of children in poverty.

While there has been much activity in state education reform that has affected ECE in the Modern Era, there has also been dramatic growth in what is called “child care” policy, but is ultimately a form of “welfare policy”. In 1990, under the leadership of President Bush I the Child Care Development Block Grant (CCDBG) was enacted providing funding to states to subsidize child care for poor and low-income parents of young children. This was the first large-scale federal effort at child care since the temporary Lanham Act centers during WWII; however, there were remarkably few increases in quality provisions in this 1990 law from the 1941 law. The CCDBG set out primarily to assist adults in being able to secure and hold onto jobs by funding child care for their children. “Some UPK advocates would later claim that these huge policy steps, though they did expand child care, failed to advance the real thing – preschools linked to the public schools” (Fuller, 2007, p.53). The problem definition for the CCDBG and its later enactment the Child Care Development Fund (CCDF) was simple: poor and low-income adults need child care for their children if they are working or looking for work.

Thus, focus was on establishing a funding mechanism sending federal dollars to state coffers to be distributed to a cadre of providers meeting at best minimum health and safety standards.

One mark of ECE policy that seems to separate it from its policy parents is the solid evidence that not only concurs within the field, but also aligns with hard science to produce staggering scientific support for the need for solid early childhood experience for all young children. It is surprising then that one “problem” that has arisen recently is a watering down of the message of this evidence and often a blatant ignorance of its most vital component – quality of experience and care. Fuller proposes that for example the Perry Preschool success has become more legend than policy reality. As with the promotion of early HS successes masking underlying criticism and concerns, the amazing success of Perry has been not only in its measurable effects on participating children, but also in securing for the ECE policy community a permanent link between science and politics (Fuller, 2007). Fuller notes however that while the attention of large influential non-governmental groups was welcome in this policy domain, there was also a tendency to misuse or under interpret results better left to scientists. For example, the Carnegie Corp’s report over emphasized and misinterpreted the notion of “synapses” in young children’s brains, urgent that more and more was better when the key is actually, not just the number of synapses, but also the “pruning” of them for efficiency (Fuller, 2007, p.51). He argues that, “What has seeped into the UPK debate is the utilitarian logic” (Ibid, p.48).

Likewise, there is the challenging issue of scale-up of the model programs that ECE policy is so tied to. While the evidence from these long-term studies points to

significant short and long-term benefits of *quality* preschool, the application of them as *public policy* has been frustratingly challenging. Quality concerns arise from the start as political tradeoffs are made in order to get policy enacted, thus compromising the possible benefits to children from the get-go. Thus, short-term findings from evaluations of such programs as Head Start, Even Start and some of the state preschool programs show more modest results in the short-term with many results particularly in math fading out quickly as children enter elementary school (see Chapter One for more information on these evaluations and findings). As such, a new problem has arisen in academic and evaluation circles as to how *and if scale-up* is possible on the scale needed to serve the children who most need it. This strain between solid design and evaluation of ECE programs hearkens back to the debates surround Head Start as policymakers like Shriver sought large-scale programs to serve a maximum number of children while contemporary academics urged initial programming on a smaller scale in order to work out kinks and evaluate program elements correctly (Vinovskis, 2002). Yet, there is an inherent challenge with attempts to try to rethink scale and implementation as now it is “the folklore around this early program that now matters most – these seemingly miraculous effects are taken as sacred truths by many early educators, advocates, and journalists across the country” (Fuller, 2007, p.47).

A final problem definition swirling around the ECE policy soup is that of economic return. Based on the findings of the model program, economists have calculated the costs to benefits ratios for these programs to staggering results. So in addition to the evidence of major benefits to ECE participants, there are also societal benefits, quantifiable in economic projects of costs saved on other public programs and

on such things as future tax revenue on increased income. As this evidence came forth, several prominent economists unrelated to ECE quickly jumped into this policy arena. Nobel Laureate, James Heckman and Federal Reserve Bank President Grunewald have added levity to this economic argument. This represents a shift in this policy area as the focus shifts from the benefit of the child to that of society. The problem here is defined as poor public investment; the solution is quality ECE programming to maximize public dollar for dollar return over most any other policy solution return. One thing that is lost in this connection between ECE and economic return is that while accountability coupling has led to ECE policy focused narrowly on academic outcomes, these economic studies profess the benefits of outcomes in many other areas including behavior (crime activity) and social outcomes (family choices such as delaying childbirth).

Children and Teachers in the Post-Head Start Era

The issue of which children should be included in ECE policy has fundamentally changed in the Post-HS era. It is somewhat a chicken-or-egg-comes-first-question, but the reality is that 60 percent of all children under age five have some weekly non-parental care arrangement and by age four (prekindergarten enrollment) this skyrockets more than 80 percent (NCES, 2005). In addition, between federal childcare programs and exemptions, state run preschools and HS, many children are already benefiting from government policy. The question of “who” should be served by *public* programs is still somewhat at issue, however, in such a modified form as to almost negate the prior notion that public involvement be solely to help poor children. In other words, now that there are arguments for and in six states programs to serve *all* children, all children are part of the policy area whether or not they are ever enrolled in a public program. This is a

dramatic shift or reframe of the “problem” in this issue area. Whereas before the problem was primarily the inequality experienced by poor and black children, now the problem is that all children do not receive public preschool.

The issue of teachers remains enigmatic in ECE policy. While the most solid effects come out of programs run by highly qualified teachers, this variable has not been isolated so convincingly as to eliminate the reality that most ECE teachers *are not* highly qualified. As demonstrated in Chapter One, Head Start does not require a Bachelor’s Degree (BA) of its lead teachers, but has only recently moved to require that a majority of them in each *state* have BA or more credentials (Good Start, Grow Smart, 2004). Admittedly, if HS is to be credited with advancing generally the cause of public ECE, state run preschools have done a better job of advancing the cause of quality in ECE programs. In fact, thirty-four of the forty-eight state programs require at least a BA for lead teachers (NIEER, 2007). However, only one state – Vermont – requires a BA of teacher aides who round out the class sizes and often function as full-teachers for all practical purposes. Quality is still sacrificed at the behest of cost and since teachers make up the most costly element of preschool funding, tweaks are often made to other quality elements such as class size, in-service training and support, and curriculum to accommodate budget cuts or funding concerns.

Government Role in Post-Head Start Era

The public role in ECE policy in this Era is solid-there is no longer much challenge to the notion that there should be at least some public commitment to young children. Yet interestingly, the government role is still largely that of funder and regulator. The federal government funds programs but these programs are run by local

groups and/or administered by the states. While ECE policy is primarily still a community effort, it is even more remarkable that it is also largely a private effort. For example, as HS developed, “the nonprofit sector has grown enormously in middle-class communities as well, with child care organizations representing one of the largest parts of it” (Fuller, 2007, p. 59)

As federal and state investment increases so too do opportunities for a mixed market of provision of services. Fuller argues that vital to the success of efforts by groups like UPK is not to presume or advocate for elementary schools to be the natural locus of housing preschools. He suggests that since there is already a mixed market that parents are continuing to select even when subsidies are available, public efforts should accommodate this existing market and work to improve quality, not to decrease variation (Fuller, 2007).

Problem Definition in ECE Policy

While young children were not an invention of any era of American history, the policies designed for them have made a dramatic change during the democracy’s development. What is most notable about early ECE policy is that linked with any sort of cognitive, educational aims of policymakers were moral aims—a sure mark of the colonial primacy of church and salvation in daily lives. As the American society evolved and changed, the tension between institution and home particularly for placement and rearing of young children established itself squarely in the ECE policy domain. As infant schools fell out of favor, home environments became more publicly important. And with the advent and swifter universalization of kindergarten came a startling demonstration of the power of grammars of schooling and society in encompassing a sweet, albeit non-

saccharine policy aimed at helping poor children with hygiene, manners and ABCs, into a larger institutional system that alienated a majority of the goals kindergarten set out to achieve. The other pre-HS policies were essentially stop-gap policies, the WPA nurseries to provide jobs for out of work depression-era teachers and the Lanham Act to allow women to work during WWII while their young children were in custodial care.

The problems defined by these early ECE policies are revealing: that morality and education are linked in family and society in very intricate ways. As such defining the “problem” in ECE policy was tenuous from the start: poor families were the problem-the solution teach their children outside of the home. In addition, the issue of social class dominated infant and kindergarten school movements with middle class values of education and economic stability promulgating the success (and ultimately failure for infant schools) of these policies. Interestingly, the WPA and Lanham Act programs were done essentially as temporary solutions to larger economic problems. Thus the focus of the programs was less on the need for them for children, but rather on the attendant needs of adults-out of work teachers for the WPA policy and working mothers in the Lanham Act policy. This highlights the direct relationship to macroeconomic forces and ECE policy as well as the microeconomic forces of families in care for young children.

These early policies also began to demonstrate the tenuous relationship between science and politics in the arenas of family and education policy. As Pestalozzi’s and then Froebel’s ideas of early learning and schooling spread from Europe to America, it became evident that while the science of early learning demonstrated the importance of early years for later schooling and success, the politics of forming policy for young children did not always follow science nor did science provide constant guidance.

Certainly the hard sciences experience such shifts as this area of social science, and perhaps the best analogy is Galileo's ostracism and excommunication for suggesting the helio-centrisitic universe to a world formed around earth-centric religion and society. For ECE policy, there is a similar tension between believers in a nurture-home based ECE and an academic-institution based ECE. The difference is that while eventually the universe was accepted as centering on the sun and Galileo was given his proper due, ECE has yet to resolve these opposing views of early childhood.

Chapter 4: Framing Early Childhood Education Policy

The amalgam of policies across the states alone makes it clear that momentum and consensus are misleading ways of understanding ECE policy today. It is not so simple to say that because most kids are already in ECE programs, because most states fund programs and because the federal government has been involved for so long, there is clear forward movement in this issue area. Rather, a more thorough understanding of how the existing policies have developed so differently is needed to shed light on what factors come into play in developing ECE policy. Fortunately or not, the wide-variety of programming across the fifty states, give us a range of policies to examine differences and developments of ECE policies. As such, my questions are simply: why has ECE policy developed the way it has and taken on such different forms across the states, in particular? What arguments are made and values appealed to in the development of these policies and to what effect?

One way of answering these questions is to look at policies that have been enacted and highlight the arguments, facts, values and justifications made prior to and during enactment. This involves a methodology called frame analysis – an examination of the frames used by policymakers in moving a social issue forward to a given point. Frame analysis comes from issue framing theory that posits that how an issue is framed – what facts and values are considered as “real” and valid – directly impacts the outcome of a social movement or policy controversy resolution (see for example, Schön and Rein, 1992). Frames are used by policymakers, advocates, and the media to limit the debates and outcomes in particular directions – and for a given policy controversy there may be opposing frames such that the only resolution will come through the various processes of

frame alignment, frame transformation, frame extension and amplification (Snow, et al, 2002). In this chapter, I present the results of a case study on issue framing in ECE. I utilize framing theory to examine how governors in two states – Oklahoma and Michigan – have used frames to present ECE as a policy and how these frames compare to those of education and welfare, the two policy parents of ECE.

Issue Framing and Frame Analysis

In trying to link research, policy and practice, educational researchers undertake a wide variety of methodologies to examine teaching and learning and then try to “translate” these findings into policy that will promote improved practice. Education policy employs a broad set of tools to bring about intended change and to anticipate and limit unintended consequences (McDonnell and Elmore, 1986). One such tool, issue framing, has been largely unexamined in education. Issue frames, are the underlying structures of belief, perception and appreciation that form the foundation of policy positions (Schön and Rein, 1992). In other words, issue frames provide people with boundaries of values within which they should *consider and act* on a policy.

Frames involve both policy research and policy design, “two different but potentially complementary traditions of inquiry: the study of the practical work through which policies are designed in action, and the study of the frames that underlie policy controversies – the assumptional structures held by participants in the forums of policy discourse and by actors in policy-making arenas” (Schön and Rein, 1994, p. viii). Because frames involve both research and design, theories of framing can address the gap between policy practitioners and researchers of policy.

Issue framing is not a new concept in social science research; rather it has been developed in the field of sociology and more recently adapted to empirical tests in political science. The seminal works of Gamson, Goffman, Snow and Benford, Schön and Rein, focused on the “collective action frames” examining the frames that form and guide social movements. To date much of the work done in this field has focused on three connected but distinct lines of inquiry: What are the frames used in a given issue area? (Gamson and Modigliani, 1989; Davies, 1997; Gamson, 1992; Benford and Snow, 2000). What are the effects of framing either in discussion (Gamson, 1992; Coburn, 2006) or on public opinion (Nelson, et al, 1997; Jacoby, 2000)? And, what are the theoretical and conceptual markers of frames (Goffman, 1974; Gamson, 1992; and Benford and Snow, 2000).

Some concepts and theories have evolved and been established in the framing literature that are defined here for sake of clarifying some of the terminology used in this research. An *issue frame* is a set of ideas and values used to understand an issue (Gamson, 1992; Schön and Rein, 1994; Jacoby, 2000). *Framing* is the use of frames to move policy/society forward on an issue (Benford and Snow, 2000; Davies, 1997). *Framing effects* are the effect of frames on policy outcomes, implementation and public opinion (Iyengar, 1996; Nelson et al., 1997). *Frame analysis* is the retrospective study of frames in an issue area with positive conclusions (Goffman, 1974; Gamson, 1992). *Framing policy* is the use of frames as a tool to get a policy enacted and implemented with normative implications (Schön and Rein, 1994; Coburn, 2006). Tables 4.13 and 4.14 in the Appendix summarize the mechanisms as presented in the framing literature.

Frames have quite particular and specific attributes that distinguish them from such things as fabrication, political persuasion, “spin” and mere rhetoric. Frames are not merely semantic, nor are they merely words or matters of the mind (how one thinks about an issue), but also “affect the way an activity is organized especially for its main social agents” (Goffman, 1974, p.247). This is crucial to the conceptual presentation of frames –that they promote and guide both ideas *and* appropriate action.

The distinct advantage of doing a frame analysis of ECE policy is that it will reveal the values and facts appealed to as policies were being developed and implemented. In addition, because this is a retrospective examination of policies that *have* in fact been enacted, it allows me as the researcher to select a set of policies that are quite different and were enacted a different time periods to examine both differences over time and potential differences in framing connected to differences in these policies.

Methodology and Findings

Based on an initial study of the state of Michigan, I modified this research program to make analysis of frames used in ECE more workable. For this study, I examined State of the State Addresses from governors in Oklahoma and Michigan from 1980 to 2005. I looked at three things in these speeches: frames used for ECE, for education and for welfare. I paid particular attention to the type of frames as categorized by Snow and Benford (1986): diagnostic, prognostic and motivational. In order to situate these frames in terms of spending in these three policy areas, I present spending data for education and welfare and note where initial funding of ECE policy compares to these trends.

These two states were selected because of the differences in their existing ECE policies. Oklahoma is one of three states to provide universal preschool to all of its four year olds putting it at one extreme of state involvement-full provision. Michigan is somewhere in the middle of the pack of states funding a targeted preschool program, the Michigan School Readiness Program (MSRP), as well as Project Smart Start - a modified SMART START type collaboration and coordination program. Because these policies were enacted at different times in the last 20 years, this set of state data also serves to cover the range of years during which many federal and national changes were taking place in the world of ECE. Figure 4.3 in the Appendix has a timeline reflecting this.

Oklahoma: A study of universal preschool enactment

The State of Oklahoma enacted statewide voluntary universal preschool in 1998 setting it apart from all but Georgia (at the time) in provision and funding of preschool for all four-year olds whose families elected to place them in preschool (NIEER, 2007). The act itself was put forth by an inexperienced legislator who was able to assemble a quiet coalition of support for the legislation (Fuller, 2007). It was highly unusual that Oklahoma, a relatively conservative state without a reputation for progressive policies, would be a frontrunner in an area that had befuddled state leaders such as California and New York. Nonetheless, it stuck – and now Oklahoma consistently has the highest number of four year olds served of all the states – around 92 percent of the four-year olds in Oklahoma attend *publicly funded preschool* (with 68 percent in the state program, 18 percent in Head Start and 6 percent in Special Education preschools) (NIEER, 2005).

Between 1980 and 2005, Oklahoma had five different governors. The political party switched each time a new governor took office, establishing an interesting pattern.

Under Governor Nigh, a previously enacted pilot preschool program was run, but quickly fizzled out. Under Governor Bellmon, the state made provisions that allowed for an expansion of pre-existing Head Start programs. And finally, in 1998, under Republican Governor Keating, Universal Preschool was signed into law. As Table 4.2 demonstrates this happened when the state government was in fact divided – both political parties held either a chamber majority or a governorship.

Table 4.1: Oklahoma Governors, by Term, Political Party and ECE Policy

Name	Term	Political Party	State Enactment of ECE policy
Nigh	1980-1986	Democrat	1980; Pilot program – dropped
Bellmon	1987-1990	Republican	1990; Head Start expansion
Walters	1991-1994	Democrat	
Keating	1995-2002	Republican	1998; Universal Preschool
Henry	2003-2006	Democrat	

Table 4.2: Oklahoma Governors by Term and Divided or Unified Government Status

Name	Term	Unified	Divided
Nigh	1980-1986	*	
Bellmon	1987-1990		*
Walters	1991-1994	*	
Keating	1995-2002		*
Henry	2003-2004 2005-2006	*	*

Spending in Oklahoma on social programs and education has followed a distinct pattern. From 1980 to 1990, education funding increased very incrementally rising from \$1.6 billion to \$2.4 billion (U.S. Census, 2004). After reaching a peak in 1998 at \$3.9 billion, funding hovered around \$2 billion for most of the early 2000s. This reflects changes in state funding formulas primarily, demonstrating that the state “share” in education in recent years has fallen. Welfare expenditures in Oklahoma grew incrementally over this time period, with a more rapid increase in the last five years.

What is perhaps most interesting is that while spending in these areas has remained relatively flat, the percentages of total expenditures of welfare and education have dropped somewhat dramatically. State education expenditures were around 39 percent of total direct state spending in 1980, but only around 17 percent in 2005. State welfare expenditures were 13 percent of total in 1980 and jumped to above 20 percent between 2000 and 2005. State preschool funding falls squarely in this set of expenditures with initial funding in 1999 of around \$45 million.

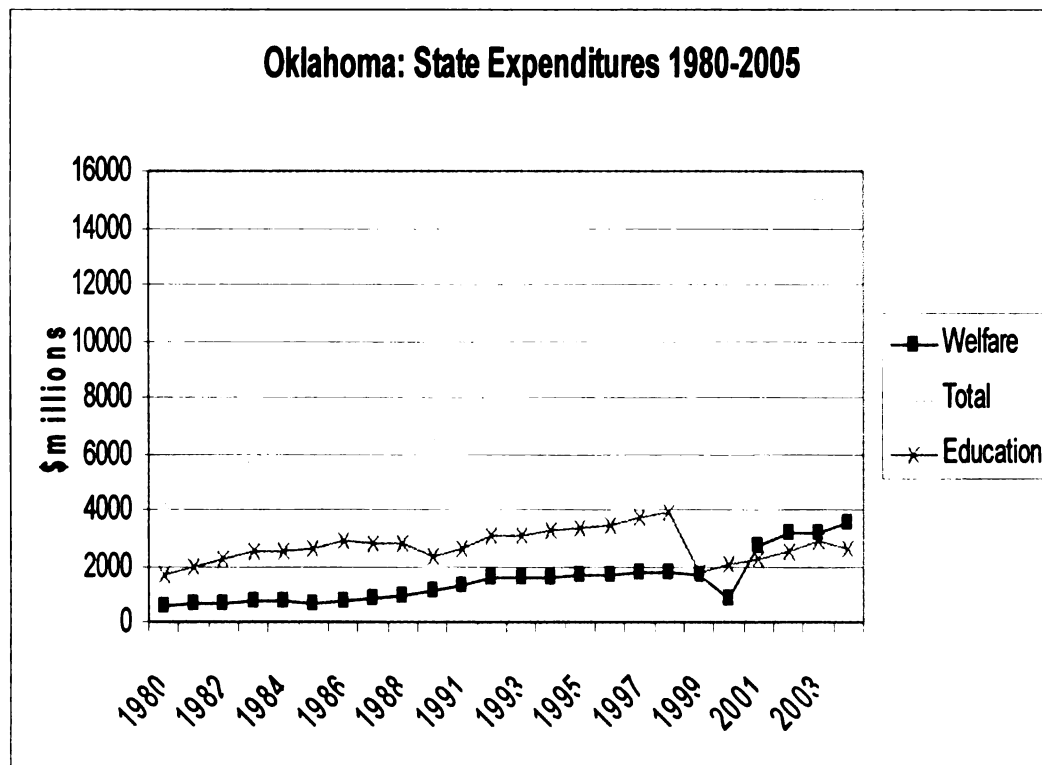


Figure 4.1: Oklahoma expenditures data for education, welfare and totals (U.S. Census Bureau)

Governor Bellmon was the first Oklahoma governor to mention early childhood education (ECE) in his State of the State address in 1987. It was covered in *most, but not all* subsequent speeches including in seven of the next eighteen SOS speeches (1989,

1994, 2001, 2002, 2003, 2004 and 2005), though to varying degrees¹⁴. Table 4.3 lists the major frames used in these speeches to present the issues of education, welfare and ECE. Education and Welfare are certainly larger issue areas in size, scope and funding, however, once ECE was introduced it tended to be covered as either a welfare “child care” issue or later as a school “issue” once universal preschool was in place. For the most part frames used in education and welfare do not overlap – with exceptions being the frames of “parents” and “investment”. However, while the “investment” frame in education is usually motivational, in welfare it is more prognostic. ECE frames are more limited partly because it is a program of much smaller scope and also likely because it is a relatively new area of state activity. While frames for “child care” forms of ECE tend to be “care” and “market”, those for preschool are focused on “achievement”, “research” and “investment”.

Table 4.3: Oklahoma: Frames used in Education, Welfare and ECE

	Education	Welfare	ECE
Frames	Schools and Job Link Funding Basics School Choice/Market Standards Reform Model for other States Efficiency Accountability Competition Teacher Achievement Parent Involvement Investment	Temporary Safety Social Costs of Poverty Family Values Crime Responsibility Fraud Parents Investment	Care Research Private Market Achievement Working Parents Investment

Governors used frames to both establish links between programs and professed outcomes (motivational) and to diagnose a problem (diagnostic frames) and propose its

¹⁴ Oklahoma State Archives. SOS speeches for Governors Keating, Walters and Nigh. Found on the website at <http://www.odl.state.ok.us/oar/governors/home.htm>. SOS speeches for the current Governor Brad Henry found the State of Oklahoma’s website <http://www.governor.state.ok.us/index.php>.

solution (prognostic frames). Interestingly, the frames in education were predominantly motivational and prognostic, while the frames in welfare were more diagnostic and prognostic. ECE frames tended to be motivational and prognostic. Some examples of the verbiage used to do this “framing activity” help demonstrate how these frames are used and how each type “works”.

Table 4.4: Oklahoma Education Frames

1. Governor Bellmon (1989) “The highest priority for spending new funds is in the area of education because, clearly, economic development is built on a solid educational foundation”. This is a *motivational frame* in that it links education to economic development in hopes establishing support for education funding increases.

2. Governor Keating (2002) “We must put I place a stronger remedial education program to help those who lag behind, catch up and succeed”. This is a *prognostic frame* as it ties the problem (children who are behind in school) to a solution (stronger remedial education programs).

Table 4.5: Oklahoma Welfare Frames

1. Governor Bellmon (1989). “\$1.9 million in state dollars is being proposed to expand the funding of Aid to Families with Dependent Children Program, to include two-parent families. It is shortsighted for the State to provide aid to individuals only after they have agreed to destroy their legal family relationship. It is wise state policy to strengthen, not destroy, families. The current program ignores the fact that families are now driven apart in hard times simply to receive survival aid.” This family frame is *prognostic*, Bellmon asserts that the current program does not support families and proposes a solution – funding to include two-parent families.

2. Governor Keating (2002). “If you can take care of yourself to be truly human, to participate in this glorious event we call ‘life’, you have to take care of yourself. And as a result of the reduction of your welfare roles (sic), we have many men and women who have never worked that are actively members of the Oklahoma economy”. This is a *motivational frame* as it promotes the great success in welfare programming in encouraging personal responsibility.

Table 4.6: Oklahoma Early Childhood Frames

1. Governor Bellmon (1989). “All employers, public and private, must begin to accommodate the changing character of the work force. Funding will be provided through the Commission on Children and Youth to encourage the development of private sector day-care programs”. Again this is a *prognostic frame*, establishing the “problem” as increased working families and providing a solution- funding for private day cares.

2. Governor Henry (2004): “All Oklahoma families should have access to child care and early education programs in their communities. By expanding and strengthening early childhood programs, we can achieve our state goal for the public schools of having 90% or more of third-grade students reading at their grade level by 2007”. This “achievement” frame is also *motivational*, promising great results in achievement later on with investments in early childhood now.

An examination of how Oklahoma Governors have framed the issues of education, welfare and ECE does seem to show evidence of different framing activities for each

policy area with some overlap. Figure 4.4 in the Appendix shows a graphic presentation of how these frames interact in these three policy areas.

Michigan: A Study in mixed state involvement

The State of Michigan enacted a targeted state preschool program beginning in 1989 to serve primarily children who were not eligible for Head Start, but were still from low-income families or had other risk factors deemed necessary for preschool intervention. The MSRP program was piloted in 1985 and then under the leadership of Governor Blanchard who fought for it in all subsequent years, it was enacted in 1988. In 2003, newly elected Governor Granholm promoted a “Project Great Start” legislation modeled largely on North Carolina’s heralded SMART Start program that provides a large amount of state funding to support collaboration and coordination of local ECE efforts. Project Great Start was enacted in 2003, but it was not until 2005 when the Governor formed the Early Childhood Investment Corporation to oversee and implement it that it began to direct sizable grants to communities. Compared to Oklahoma, Michigan’s MSRP program serves only a small amount of the state’s four-year olds (19 %) such that only 39 percent of the state’s four-year olds attend *publicly funded preschools* (NIEER, 2005).

Between 1980 and 2005, Michigan had four different governors. As in Oklahoma, the political party switched each time a new governor took office, establishing an interesting pattern. Governor Blanchard was the primary champion for the MSRP program and following him, Governor Engler did little to change the status quo for ECE in Michigan, focusing on larger efforts at school funding reform, school choice and welfare reform. Governor Granholm has championed ECE and added the weight of the

state's resources to the ECIC in order to support ECE, but under extreme budget shortfalls. Table 4.5 shows that both ECE programs in Michigan were enacted under divided governments as both Blanchard and Granholm worked with Republicans to achieve these programs.

Table 4.7: Michigan Governors by Term, Political Party and ECE Policy

Name	Term	Political Party	State Enactment
Milliken	1980-1982	Republican	
Blanchard	1983-1990	Democrat	1985; Pilot MSRP preschool; 1988; full funding
Engler	1991-2002	Republican	
Granholm	2003-2006	Democrat	2003; Project Great Start 2005; ECIC

Table 4.8: Michigan Governors by Unified or Divided Government Status

Name	Term	Unified	Divided
Milliken	1980-1982		*
Blanchard	1983 1984-1990	*	*
Engler	1991-1993 1994-1996 1997-1998 1999-2002	* *	* *
Granholm	2003-2006		*

Spending in Michigan on social programs and education has followed an interesting trend. Welfare spending has increased at a slow, but constant rate growing from \$2.7 billion in 1980 to \$9.4 billion in 2005. Unlike welfare funding, education expenditures have had a few dramatic changes over time. From 1980 to 1986 there was steady growth (from \$6.4 billion to \$9.4 billion). There was then a dramatic plunge in state expenditures during the late 1980s and early 1990s. Then after the passage of Proposal A which changed the state school funding formula, there was a sharp increase between 1994 and 1995 (from \$8.7 billion to \$13 billion) reflecting the larger *state* share

in school funding. That was followed by a period of almost zero growth and then a second “plunge” in 1999 due largely to the state’s economic downturn and cuts in education expenditures. State preschool funding falls squarely in this set of expenditures with initial funding in 1989 of \$25 million for MSRP.

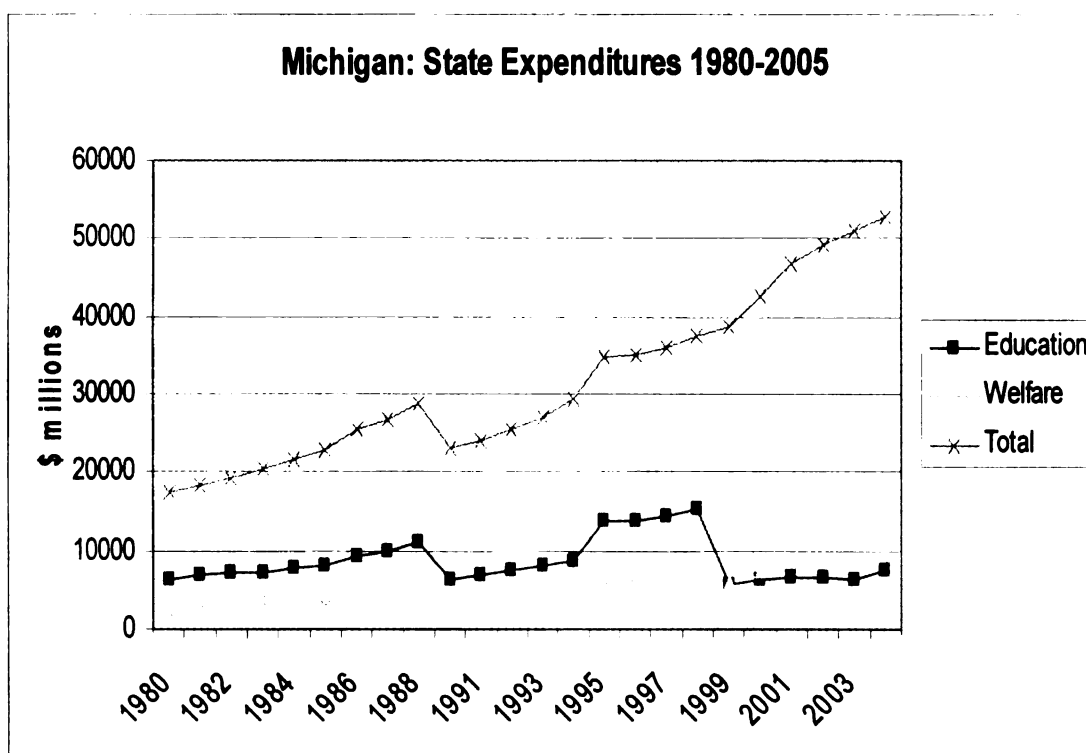


Figure 4.2: Michigan Expenditures for education, welfare and totals (U.S. Census Bureau)

Governor Blanchard was the first Michigan governor to mention early childhood education (ECE) in his State of the State address in 1986. It was covered in *most, but not all* subsequent speeches including in thirteen of the next nineteen SOS speeches (1987, 1988, 1989, 1991, 1992, 1994, 1996, 1998, 1999, 2000, 2003, 2004 and 2005), though to varying degrees¹⁵. In two years, 1996 and 1998, Governor Engler did not address

¹⁵ Michigan Senate Journal. SOS speeches for Governors Milliken and Blanchard were pulled from bound copies of The Michigan Senate Journal held at the State Archives in Lansing, Michigan. SOS speeches for Governors Engler and Granholm were pulled from the State of Michigan’s website

preschool or “early childhood education”, but did address child care elements of his welfare plan. Table 4.9 lists the major frames used in these speeches to present the issues of education, welfare and ECE. Education and Welfare are certainly larger issue areas in size, scope and funding, however, ECE shares several frames with these two issue areas. For the most part frames used in education and welfare do not overlap – with exceptions being the frames of “spending”, “parents” and “state role”. The “parents” frame in each are is usually “prognostic” as the governors sought to profess what parents *should* be doing either educationally for their children or in being financially responsible for them. ECE frames overlap with those of welfare and education more in this Michigan sample, than they did in Oklahoma. However, interestingly, the overlaps of ECE with welfare and education are in areas that welfare and education overlapped already – possibly pointing to a set of common frames in social policy more generally “spending”, “at-risk”, “parents” and “state role” featured prominently in framing all three issues. ECE did have a set of exclusive frames that were not used in either other issue area: “readiness”, “early learning”, “research/evidence” and “economic return”.

Table 4.9: Michigan: Frames used in Education, Welfare and ECE Policy

	Education	Welfare	ECE
Frames	Schools and Job Link Accountability School Failure Parental Choice Schools as Investments Spending At-Risk Parents State Role	Dependence Opportunity Need/Helplessness Responsibility Model of Reform Spending At-Risk Parents State Role Family Values	Readiness Early Learning Research Economic Return Spending At-Risk Parents State Role Family Values

http://www.michigan.gov/gov/0,1607,7-168-23442_21981---,00.html, for Governor Granholm and www.michigan.gov/documents for Governor Engler.

Governors used frames to both establish links between programs and professed outcomes (motivational) and to diagnose a problem (diagnostic frames) and propose its solution (prognostic frames). Interestingly, the frames in education were predominantly motivational and prognostic, while the frames in welfare were more diagnostic and prognostic. ECE frames tended to be motivational and prognostic. Some examples of the verbiage used to do this “framing activity” help demonstrate how these frames are used and how each type “works”.

Table 4.10: Michigan Education Frames

1. Governor Blanchard (1986): The “quality of our educational system determines the economic strength of our state and our quality of life”. This is a *prognostic* frame proposing the solution of economic weakness is quality education.
2. Governor Engler (1999): “the quality of our future depends on the quality of our schools. Better schools and skilled graduates equal higher incomes and stronger families.” This links schooling to the economy and to families and demonstrates a *prognostic frame*.
3. Governor Granholm (2004): “Never in history have businesses so badly wanted precisely what we as parents want – highly-skilled , value-oriented citizens who will be successful in life and in the new knowledge-based economy”. This is a *motivational frame*, lauding the alignment of business and private family goals for education.

Table 4.11: Michigan Welfare Frames

1. Governor Blanchard (1986): “we cherish our responsibility to improve the lives of those with legitimate needs. But as I said earlier, our strategy demands that ‘government be innovative and efficient in working to create independence, not dependence’”. This incorporates two frames a *diagnostic* “needs” frame and a *prognostic* “create independence” frame.
2. Governor Engler (1999): “Another area where Michigan’s compassion has really made a difference is our strategy to strengthen families. Thanks to our decisions and the efforts of our communities, the number of people on welfare has fallen to the lowest level in 30 years.” This “family” frame is *prognostic*, the problem was weak families, and the solution, welfare changes, has worked.

Table 4.12 Michigan Early Childhood Frames

1. Governor Blanchard (1986): “There is a consensus nationwide, and we’ve seen it even in Michigan, that early pre-school education may make the most differences of all in providing hope and opportunity to our children. Head Start, I think proved that. That is one great program there is unanimity on.” This contains both a *motivational* frame promoting the amazing benefits of preschool above all others. It also contains the “*evidence*” frame that sets ECE apart from education and welfare.
2. Governor Engler (1999): “The launch of the READY (Read, Educate and Develop Youth) program was successful. The goal this year is to make this reading readiness kit available statewide to parents of young children. The goal of our strategy – for every child to be a good reader no later than the end of third grade....If you cannot read, you will not succeed”. This is another *prognostic* frame, linking early reading with later success.
3. Governor Granholm (2004): “Last year we began a revolution in education when we publicly declared that education in our state will begin at birth, not when a child enters kindergarten. Breakthroughs in medical science have taught us that 85 percent of a child’s brain development occurs in the first three years of life. It’s now an accepted fact and groups from the American Academy of Pediatrics to the Business Roundtable have recognized that we must act on this knowledge to give every child a great start

in life.” This selection contains both a *motivational frame* and demonstrates the “*evidence*” or “*research*” frame that is unique to ECE in these speeches.

An examination of how Michigan Governors have framed the issues of education, welfare and ECE does seem to show evidence of different framing activities for each policy area with some overlap. Figure 4.5 in the Appendix shows a graphic presentation of how these frames interact in these three policy areas.

Analysis and Conclusions

This study has produced modest evidence of frames used by governors in education, welfare and comparatively in ECE. There are certainly common frames used in both Oklahoma and in Michigan in each policy area. There is also some overlap between them, though less in Oklahoma than in Michigan. ECE frames seem to be fairly consistent at this point in time. There is a great deal of framing around “investment”, “readiness”, “family” and “parents”. One outstanding or unique frame that presents itself in this analysis is that of “research” or “evidence”. This is a strong frame used to promote ECE as a worthy policy and to demonstrate that it “works”. This frame appears to be unique in this study to ECE.

The next step in this process of framing would be to create a way to link frames to policy outcomes. Furthermore, to link frames to implementation and child outcomes. Those are projects for another time. A frame analysis such as this is limited in causality and efforts to expand its use may prove fruitless. However, it does allow me to examine how it is in the midst of all the differing information, goals and policies available, a single policymaker – in this case a governor – selects frames to support ECE.

Chapter 5: A 50-State Diffusion and Innovation Study of ECE Policy

Using the state as a fundamental unit of analysis, political scientists have examined the diffusion of policy innovation and have continued to improve the models for further research. However, little is known about the effect of competing policy domains on innovation diffusion. In other words, how does a single policy diffuse when it arises and operates in different policy domains? This paper explores how a single policy diffuses in the states based on the relative strength of the competing domains.

Policy innovation is defined in the literature as any policy that is “new” to the state adopting it (Walker, 1969). Essentially, there are two theories of how state innovation policies are adopted: internal determinants and diffusion. Internal determinants models argue that it is the political, economic and social characteristics of a state that determine when and if it will adopt a policy innovation. Diffusion models, on the other hand point to factors external to the states that affect such adoption. These models are the national interaction, regional diffusion, leader-laggard and vertical influence models. Based on Berry and Berry’s initial work in this field using event history analysis (EHA), recent researchers have been able to utilize both the regional diffusion and internal determinants models in a unified way (Berry and Berry, 1990; Mintrom 1997; Volden, 2004).

Yet, there has been less done to examine policy innovation in the context of multiple policy domains. Glick and Hays argue that reinvention of policy and extent of adoption (differentiation of deep and superficial adoption) are highly relevant to the understanding of policy innovation, but are not reflected in current models. They theorize that states reinvent innovations for many reasons, thus state laws differ in

important ways and that this impacts the breadth of research on diffusion of policy (1991, p. 838). They do find that policy reinvention occurs along a “common dimension”, but that particular provisions lead to reinvention in more than one direction (1991, p. 847). This furthers the understanding of innovation diffusion, yet their work focuses on a single dimension when some policies may diffuse over two.

Given the complex history of ECE policy and the nature of the present expansion into so many different policies and stakeholders, both diffusion and reinvention are critical to understanding what leads states (now the dominant activity centers of ECE policy) to take action. A diffusion model allows me to test for what factors within a state effect adoption of policy and what factors external to it affect likelihood of adoption. This chapter examines ECE policy diffusion in the American States. Through an event history analysis of state adoptions of *state* preschool, it demonstrates the effect of two state institutional domains - welfare and education - on a single policy. The evidence supports the hypothesis that the relative strength of one policy domain –in this case education- directly impacts the adoption of a policy. In addition, I present evidence of a great deal of reinvention by states (early adopters are more likely to reinvent) which has accelerated in recent years. Finally, I present a brief study of non-adopting states and what ECE looks for them-they have significantly greater participation in federal programs.

State Preschool as a Policy Innovation

Policy innovation is defined in the literature as any policy that is “new” to the state adopting it (Walker, 1969). To understand the impact of state institutions on policy innovation, I will examine the adoption of state preschool programs. I will use the

innovation, I will examine the adoption of state preschool programs. I will use the approach developed by Berry and Berry, but will add to it measures of institutional strength. I do this by looking at the institutional choice of a state for state preschool policy. The goal is to determine if competing institutions add a dimension to the diffusion of innovation.

In the United States there are separate systems of education for young and old children. Almost universally, children ages five to eighteen attend “school”, while children younger than five have less predictable situations: childcare, home or “preschool”¹⁶. At the state level these separate systems are reflected in the different institutions and agencies that operate and regulate schools and those that operate and regulate childcares and preschools. This is not to say that there is no overlap, interaction or cooperation between the school and childcare systems. Certainly both serve children and their parents.

Recent K-12 school reform efforts, including standards based education and federal accountability, have included preschool programming and funding as an *element* of K-12 school reform. This aligns with the steady push in the early childhood education community for universal preschool because of the well-evidenced notion that preschool is important to success later on and because universal preschool would legitimize childcare as both an institution and as a profession. Both reflect the societal demand for quality

¹⁶ For the sake of clarity it is necessary to lay out some of the terminology involved in this paper. First of all, generally speaking “child care” refers to any non-parental care arrangement for any child between the ages of zero and five. (For the sake of this paper, “child care” will not include the care of school age children when not in school). Similarly, “early childhood education (ECE)” includes programming for children ages zero to five. “Preschool” refers only to a center-based child care arrangement for children ages three and four (sometimes 5-year-olds are included). Children ages zero to one are “infants”, one and two-year-olds are “toddlers” and three- and four-year-olds are “preschoolers”. Finally, “universal preschool” means voluntary publicly funded preschool for 3 and 4 year olds. (Schweinhart and Fulcher-Dawson, 2006).

The private market and informal arrangements have increased to meet some of the demand for childcare and preschool, and the federal government has also been a long-term actor in it, through the Head Start program.

State preschool programs as a policy innovation involve two separate institutions: schools and childcare systems (largely through welfare agencies). When a state considers funding a “state” preschool program it does so in the context of K-12 school systems and their standards as well as in the context of the early childhood education community in their state. One is a formal system, one informal, but they are intrinsically connected to the other. In addition, because there are policies and needs at other ages besides “preschool” age, policies aimed at preschoolers may also effect or include younger children. In light of these institutional constraints, why and when do states adopt state preschool programs? What types of reinvention happen once a policy is enacted? How are non-adopting states using federal programs?

Data and Methodology

History and existing policy certainly affect the continuing development of preschool. Historically, public aid for preschool and childcare has come primarily in the form of needs-based programs Head Start and the Child Care Dependent Fund (or AFDC or CCDBG its precursors). In contrast, most public aid for schooling -from state and local sources - has applied to and demanded equal treatment of all children regardless of race, income or ability.

In order to test the effect of relative policy domain strength on adoption of state policy, this current analysis uses a method, as introduced by Berry and Berry into state policy and politics research, called event history analysis (EHA). This method is also

policy and politics research, called event history analysis (EHA). This method is also deemed hazard analysis and provides a quantitative way to answer the question: Given that a state has not adopted state preschool policy, what is the probability that it will do so in a given year?

To proceed with this analysis, I collected annual data from forty-six¹⁷ states from 1978 to 2000. The analysis starts in 1978 because that is the year Florida passed a state preschool policy. I chose to start in 1978 with Florida's Migrant Preschool Education law because it represents the first effort of a state to enact preschool policy after Head Start had already been well-established. While California and New York had enacted state policies in 1965 and 1966, these policies do not represent an innovation in the same way that later ones do. I would argue that in the initial years following Head Start passage, states simply supported Head Start, but did not fund preschool as state programs. However, after Head Start had been around for over a decade a series of states began to adopt state preschool policies.

The data involve discrete time periods¹⁸ (yearly data) rather than continuous time intervals. My goal is to understand the variables leading a state to adopt a preschool policy. I define my event of interest as passage of state preschool policy (it should be noted that in a few cases, the passage of such policy was not immediately funded or implemented, but lagged one or two years) (ECS, 2004). The dependent variable is state preschool program coded as 0 in the years prior to adoption, 1 in the year a state adopts it

¹⁷ States not included are California and New York as they passed legislation simultaneous to Head Start legislation, Nebraska as it has a nonpartisan legislature and Pennsylvania as it enacted a law that allowed four year olds to be a part of the K-12 system in 1966, but this is not considered preschool programming, rather is implemented as developmental kindergarten which is not relevant to this current endeavor.

¹⁸ Typically, a lifetime T is left or right censored if instead observing T we observe a finite nonnegative random variable Y and a discrete random variable with values 0, 1 or 2. By definition, when A=0, Y=T, when A=1, YT.

in the data set for each year represent the “risk set” for that year. The hazard rate for a given year is the number of states adopting state preschool programs divided by the risk set. The risk set is the set of all states that have not previously adopted state preschool policy.

I use a Cox Proportional Hazard model, which works similar to a conditional logit model with fixed effects. The model is used to estimate the probability p that a state (i) will adopt a policy in a given year (j). The goal is to determine what factors affect the hazard rate during a certain time period (See Allison, 1982 and Berry and Berry, 1990, for further explanation of using EHA for diffusion analysis). I regress the political, school, socioeconomic and diffusion variables against the hazard rate to establish a baseline (See Mintrom, 1997). Following this, I use this model to measure the impact of relative policy domain strength on the hazard rate.

The dependent variable in this model is a simple dichotomous representation of state preschool policy adoption. I gathered this data from two aggregate sources, the Education Commission of the States and the NIEER Preschool Yearbook. Whenever there was disagreement between the two or need for clarity, I utilized the websites of each state to verify the dates of initial legislation. I define the parameters “state preschool policy” to include state enactment of a program targeted specifically at preschool populations. I do not include programs that are simply state supplements of Head Start (although I do consider these if the supplement is actually not just a funding stream, but also a state effort to support additional preschool programming). I do include policies that were passed as either stand-alone legislation or as a part of a more comprehensive bill either in education or childcare/early childhood education. In addition, I consider

bill either in education or childcare/early childhood education. In addition, I consider only the year of first adoption of any state preschool policy without regard for size or scope or for whether or not the state subsequently changed or reinvented the policy.¹⁹ (I present reinvention by states in the next section).

Policy Domain Strength Variable

A primary measure of interest in this analysis is relative policy domain strength. I am most interested in examining the impact of the relative strength of education policy to welfare policy in the states. In order to measure this, I have calculated a simple ratio of direct education spending to direct welfare spending by states over the years of interest. The calculation is done so that the higher the number, the higher the fiscal effort of states on education is in relation to welfare effort. It is clear that this ratio masks a host of variations that may occur within states in these two policy domains, however, education and welfare remain the two largest areas of state spending and as such, this ratio serves as a proxy of the relative strength of their policies.

Policy Domain Ho: The higher the relative education to welfare spending in a state, the more likely that state is to adopt preschool policy in a given year.

Diffusion Tests

A regional influence independent variable is included on the assumption that states are more likely to adopt a state preschool program if neighboring states have done so. This variable is simply a proportion of the states bordering a state that has passed

¹⁹ In NIERR's Annual Preschool Yearbook, they define 'state preschool policy' slightly differently than I do here. As such, while they include Pennsylvania, they do not include Rhode Island or Florida under their definitions. However, a primary purpose of their state preschool yearbook is to provide rankings based on access and quality and it is under those restrictions that their list of states with preschool policies is slightly different than mine. I do not focus on either access or quality for this analysis, rather focusing on state preschool as an innovation based on adoption of *any* preschool specific policy.

diffusion and innovation literature finds this variable to be highly statistically significant (See for example Mooney, 2001 for a detailed examination of this variable).

Explanations for such findings range from the idea that states learn from their neighbors to the argument that states compete with each other to implement policies.

Regional Diffusion Ho: The more neighbors a state has that adopt the policy, the more likely a state is to adopt

Political Variables

There are several ways to measure the impact of politics on state policy diffusion. However, preschool policy presents an interesting case, as it does not necessarily have one or the other party as its champion. While Democrats may be seen to be more supportive of social programs like welfare and education and Republicans more likely to support limited government, preschool policy has moved from the federal government to the states. As such, policy is implemented in the states as a devolved policy that promotes the notion of states rights also favored by Republicans generally. The continued bipartisan support of Head Start at the federal level does much to support the notion that preschool is either a bipartisan or a nonpartisan policy issue. In other words, there are no strong assumptions about which party is more likely to enact state preschool policy. As such, I employ a set of political covariates that will help demonstrate if there is an ideological bias to this policy or if it happens regardless of ideology of citizens or state governments.

I include a dichotomous control variable for unified versus divided government. Here I code a government as unified if the governorship, upper and lower houses of the legislature are all held by the same majority party (1= unified). In contrast to other measures, this measure does not differentiate control by party; rather it aims to test if

policy passes regardless of unification and is bipartisan (or nonpartisan). Practically speaking a unified government always has a greater chance of passing any policy, however, in this instance; unification may be sufficient, but not necessary for the passage of preschool policy.

In order to test ideology and public opinion, I employ two measures developed by Berry et al (2003). One is a measure of citizen ideology and the other of state government ideology. Both involve using a continuous scale of ideology to calculate annual “scores” for both citizen ideology (representing public opinion) and government ideology. Both measures read from right to left across the ideological spectrum, with higher numbers representing more liberal ideologies.

Unified Government Ho: States with a unified government (both houses and governorship controlled by same party) are more likely to adopt (as it is easier).

Citizen Ideology Ho: The more liberal the citizens in a state, the more likely it is to adopt any social policy-including ECE.

Government ideology Ho: The more liberal a state's government, the more likely it is to adopt any social policy-including ECE.

Social and Economic Variables

There are several different ways to capture the social and economic determinants of a state adopting preschool policy. The effects of quality preschool seem to significantly benefit children in their subsequent social, economic and educational well-being. This is especially true for high-risk populations such as minorities and children from poor families (Barnett, 1996). I use the poverty rate for each state, though the data for this variable was calculated by the Census in a different way for part of my data set.²⁰

An additional economic variable I use is the labor participation rate of women which

²⁰ Beginning in 1990, data collect from the Current Population Surveys using revised procedures and is not comparable directly to other years. However, across states, data is comparable for each year in this dataset.

for this variable was calculated by the Census in a different way for part of my data set.²⁰

An additional economic variable I use is the labor participation rate of women which reflects the demand for preschool in general based on the need for care while mothers are working outside the home.

Poverty Ho: The higher the poverty rate, the more likely it is to adopt ECE policy.

Working Women Ho: The higher the rate of working women, the more likely a state is to support and adopt ECE policy.

School Variables

The educational variable I use is the per pupil expenditure in constant dollars. This variable is one that demonstrates the weighted level of educational spending in each state. While it does not reflect state proportion of such expenditures, the policy domain variable explained above captures this in a different way. Per pupil expenditure is a common variable to use in educational finance literature, though some argue it has little direct relationship to achievement outcomes (see for example, Hanushek, 1991).

Ho: The higher the per pupil funding, the more likely a state is to adopt ECE policy in order to "protect its investment".

EHA Results

Table 5.1 in the Appendix displays the results of the Cox Hazard Regression for the data on state preschool policy. The first model demonstrates the significance and sign of the various covariates described above. Regional effects were negative demonstrating that states whose neighbors had preschool policy were less likely to adopt preschool policy. The political variables turned out as expected with unified government increasing the log likelihood of adoption, though not at a significant level. The ideology measures

²⁰ Beginning in 1990, data collect from the Current Population Surveys using revised procedures and is not comparable directly to other years. However, across states, data is comparable for each year in this dataset.

percentage of females in the workforce, the lower the likelihood of state adoption of preschool policy. This variable might be made more accurate in future models perhaps by using a variable for females in the workforce with young children. As expected, the poverty rate variable was directly related to adoption and at a significant level. The state per pupil spending amount demonstrates again a negative coefficient where the higher a state's per pupil spending, the lower the log likelihood of preschool adoption. This baseline or null model serves primarily as a comparison model for Model 2 which tests the "policy domain variable" of this study which sets it apart from other diffusion EHA tests in the literature. However, this model could be more fully specified by including interest group variables, competing agenda variables (what other social policy variables were on the docket the year these ECE policies were decided on) or possibly other welfare benefits variables.

Model 2 includes the policy domain strength variable, which is found to be positive and significant at the .01 level. Thus, the higher a state's educational spending relative to its direct welfare spending, the more likely it is to adopt preschool policy, all else being held constant. The remaining control variables keep both their signs and size of coefficients from model 1 to model 2. Table 5.2 in the Appendix presents the hazard ratios for model 2 only and shows the interpretation of such ratios similar to odds-ratios. For the purpose of this current analysis it is clear that the relative policy domain strength of education to welfare has a great impact on a state's adoption of preschool policy. What is less clear is how other state variables affect the adoption of ECE policy. Future EHA models based on this project might include professionalization of the legislature, percentage of female legislators, national actions related to ECE policy and percentage of

child care spaces available pre-policy adoption. As such, this set of EHA results should be considered preliminary.

Reinvention of Preschool and ECE Policy in the States

A second way to capture the institutional impact on diffusion is to use a multi-adoption model. This model would allow me to capture “repeat buyers” of state preschool policy (Mahajan and Peterson, 1985, p. 48). Essentially, this would allow me to capture in each year, both new adopters and repeat adopters. As a policy evolves over time, it encounters reinvention and diffusion models have a hard time capturing this (Glick and Hays, 1991). The multi-adoption model might allow for the incorporation of the institutional variable in a different way. I would hypothesize that as the issue of public preschool has evolved since the advent of Head Start in 1965, early adopters have modified and reinvented their original policies to be more like the ones new adopters enact. If these early adopters also change the institution that implements the policy, this would be evidence of policy reinvention that Glick and Hays speak of, but also of an institutional dimension to diffusion. For example, say state A is an early adopter of a state preschool modeled on the needs based program of Head Start for four year olds and the state family services welfare agency runs it. When states B and C adopt the policy, but include three-year olds, state A may readopt state preschool, by simply adding three-year olds to their existing program a form of simple reinvention. Alternately, if states B and C adopt a universal preschool policy as a part of sweeping standards based school reform, it would impact the reinvention of and the institutional choice of state A for re-adoption.

Using the descriptive qualitative presentations of preschool and early childhood programs provided by ECS and NIEER (as used above in the EHA calculations), it is possible to discern both the level and type of reinventions happening in state ECE policy. For this analysis, I have reselected all states (not dropping CA, PA, NY or NE which were dropped for model specification in the Cox-Proportional model). What I present below are tables and analysis of ECE policy *reinvention* described as adoption of additional legislation once a state has previously adopted initial legislation in ECE. First, I present level of reinvention which is simply a calculation of how many times since a state adopted its initial ECE policy, that is has adopted new policy. This also involves comparisons of early and late adopters and the frequency of policy adoption. Second, I present the type of reinventions that states are adopting which allows me to differentiate, for example, if a state is adding teacher quality standards, increasing the population served and/or making funding formula changes.

Table 5.3: ECE Policy Reinvention in the States: 1965 to present

	Total Reinventions By Adopters	Average Number of Reinventions
	70	1.75
Early Adopters (pre-1990) N=21	42	2.0
Recent Adopters(post-1990) N=19	28	1.47

While a total of 70 reinventions have been adopted by states that initially adopted state ECE policy, early adopters were more frequent in reinventing ECE policy than more recent adopters. This is likely due to the fact that as policy in this area evolved, early adopters modified their programs to accommodate modern needs and political goals. In addition, states reinvented policy along several dimensions of this policy area. The most

common type of reinvention was involving the number and/or type of children served, seconded by funding either a new funding stream or a change in funding formula.

Learning standards and coordination of programs were also prominent forms of reinvention for these states. There is less obvious variation between early adopters and recent adopters in these specific types of policy. In other words, while early adopters are more likely to reinvent policy, they do so in all different aspects of the policy domain along with their recent adoption peers.

Table 5.4: Types of Reinvention by States

	Children Served	Teacher Quality	Accreditation	Learning Standards	Funding	Comprehensive Services	Coordination of programs
States	31	10	10	21	24	6	16
Early Adopters	16	4	7	11	15	2	10
Recent Adopters	15	6	3	10	19	4	6

States without Preschool Policy

One final way to consider this policy area is to look at the states with no state preschool policy. Given the significance of the regional diffusion variable in the EHA model above, it is not surprising that a majority of such states are concentrated in one area: the mountain-plains (Idaho, Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota and Wyoming all fall on this list). But other states are perhaps more surprising, ranging from New Hampshire to Mississippi. In order to consider ECE policy in these states, I looked at two sets of information: rates of usage of federal ECE programs and comparisons between these averages and the US average. This information is helpful, because under diffusion and innovation theory the role of federal policy on state adoption can either be a

pressure-valve where federal policy decreases a state's perceived need for additional policy or a snow-ball effect where federal policy creates momentum for a state to adopt additional or complementary policy (See Shipan and Volden, 2004).

Table 5.5: Head Start and Special Education Percentage Enrollments by Non-Adopting States

	Head Start enrollment 4s	Head Start enrollment 3s	Special Education Enrollment 4s	Special Education Enrollment 3s	State Head Start Supplement
Alaska	16%	11	8%	4	Yes
Idaho	12	4	7	4	Yes
Indiana	9	5	7	5	No
Mississippi	38	25	6	3	No
Montana	23	15	6	3	No
New Hampshire	6	3	7	5	No*
North Dakota	24	16	8	4	No
South Dakota	20	15	9	6	No
Utah	9	3	6	4	No
Wyoming	18	10	16	11	No
Average	18	10.7	7.2	4.9	
US Avg	11.3	7.3	6.2	3.9	
Z score	0.65*	0.47*	0.26*	0.43*	*significant difference

As Table 5.5 demonstrates, the usage of federal preschool programs in states that have not adopted their own preschool policy is varied. Most striking are the high numbers of three and four-year-old children using Head Start in some of these states: Mississippi, Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota and Wyoming. Mississippi stands out in particular because of the 38 percent of four-year-olds reported to participate in Head Start. Wyoming stands out as well as not only is Head Start enrollment well above average, special education enrollment is as well for both four and three year olds. A simple Z-score calculation of the means of this group of states in terms of federal program usage and the US means in the same programs shows that there are significant

differences in usage in states not-adopting policy, however because of the outliers and small sample size, this is due primarily to a few states, not all of the non-adopters.

Conclusions

The primary purpose of this chapter paper was to determine what if any effect competing policy domains and their relative strength has on policy diffusion across the states. In the case of preschool policy, it is clear that relative policy domain strength, as measured by a ratio of direct state spending, has significant positive effect on policy adoption. It remains to be seen and examined whether or not this holds true for other policy areas where two or more domains compete for a policy. In addition, it is possible that there are better measures to capture this concept than the ratio of direct spending. However, the results here are promising in contributing to the further understanding of policy diffusion and innovation in the states.

An additional conclusion from this analysis is that, in fact, preschool policy does appear to have little or no ideological ties. While the citizen and government ideology measures both had positive coefficients, they translated into rather small hazard ratios (2.5% and 3.4% more likely to adopt). This is reflective of the policy scene at the national level with the constancy of bipartisan support for Head Start preschool programming. Finally, in terms of education policy, it seems clear that states that spend more on education relative to welfare are more likely to adopt preschool policy. As such, policymakers wishing to garner support and develop programming would be wise to consider preschool policy from an educational perspective, rather than just as a needs-based program.

Additional examinations of reinvention of state policy demonstrate that early adopters of preschool policy are most likely to reinvent (adopt revised or increased legislation) than those who have adopted more recently. In addition, states reinvented in many areas of ECE policy: children served, teacher quality, accreditation, learning standards, funding, comprehensive serves and coordination of programs. While changes to the number and/or type of children served and funding were the most common type of reinvention, the range and frequency of all the types demonstrates further the scope of ECE policy.

While this analysis is promising for understanding policy diffusion generally and preschool policy specifically, it is clear that there is more work to be done in this area. This analysis was limited by not allowing for inclusion of state's subsequent policy adoption and not differentiating between the types of policies being adopted (in terms of size or scope). In addition, some more in-depth analysis of the variables affecting preschool policy is warranted, as some of the covariates were surprising in terms of their size and sign. Finally, research is needed on the impact of preschool policies on preschool usage as well as the interactions of several federal educational policies (the Nation at Risk Report and the No Child Left Behind Act, to name a two) with preschool policy programming in the states.

APPENDIX

Table 2.1: Comparison of Three Policy Theories and Proposed Application to ECE Policy

	Multiple Streams	Framing	Diffusion
Type of theory -unit of analysis	Explains policy formation -system -decision	Explains how frames affect policy outcomes; -system, -single policy -social movements	What influences policy enactment; -single policy over time -states -survival
Presumptions	Ambiguity, temporal order, windows as temporary	Frames always intentional	State-state comparisons always valid Conservative about effect of time
Elements and definitions	3 streams: problems, policies and politics; policy windows and coupling	Policy controversies=stalemates Frames proposed by group/individual move issue forward Types of frames	Internal determinants External factors Leader-laggard Regional effects Vertical diffusion
Mechanics	Policy entrepreneur couples 3 streams in window to get issue on agenda. Alternative solutions then proposed	Actors use frames to alter facts and values considered valid and important to acting on issue	State level variables and external variables affect survival rate of policy in year x
Evidence	Usually case studies Consistent findings: ideology of parties is key; bureaucrats shape solutions NOT agenda	Varied-qualitative descriptions of social movements; identification of problem definitions Measures of resonance and frame arcs	Supports use of EHA Supports regional effect Snowball Pressure valve
Challenges	Heuristic Non-predictive Some issues' windows always open Some issues always incremental	Vague and hard to measure Seems semantic Can be confused with spin	Ahistorical Imprecise measure of action "policy" in some cases
Major contribution considered for this paper	Explains non-incremental change; conditions under which an item is on agenda	Explains why some solutions are off the table Explains how stalemates/stasis is moved past	Can test adoption of state ECE policies to see what effects adoption

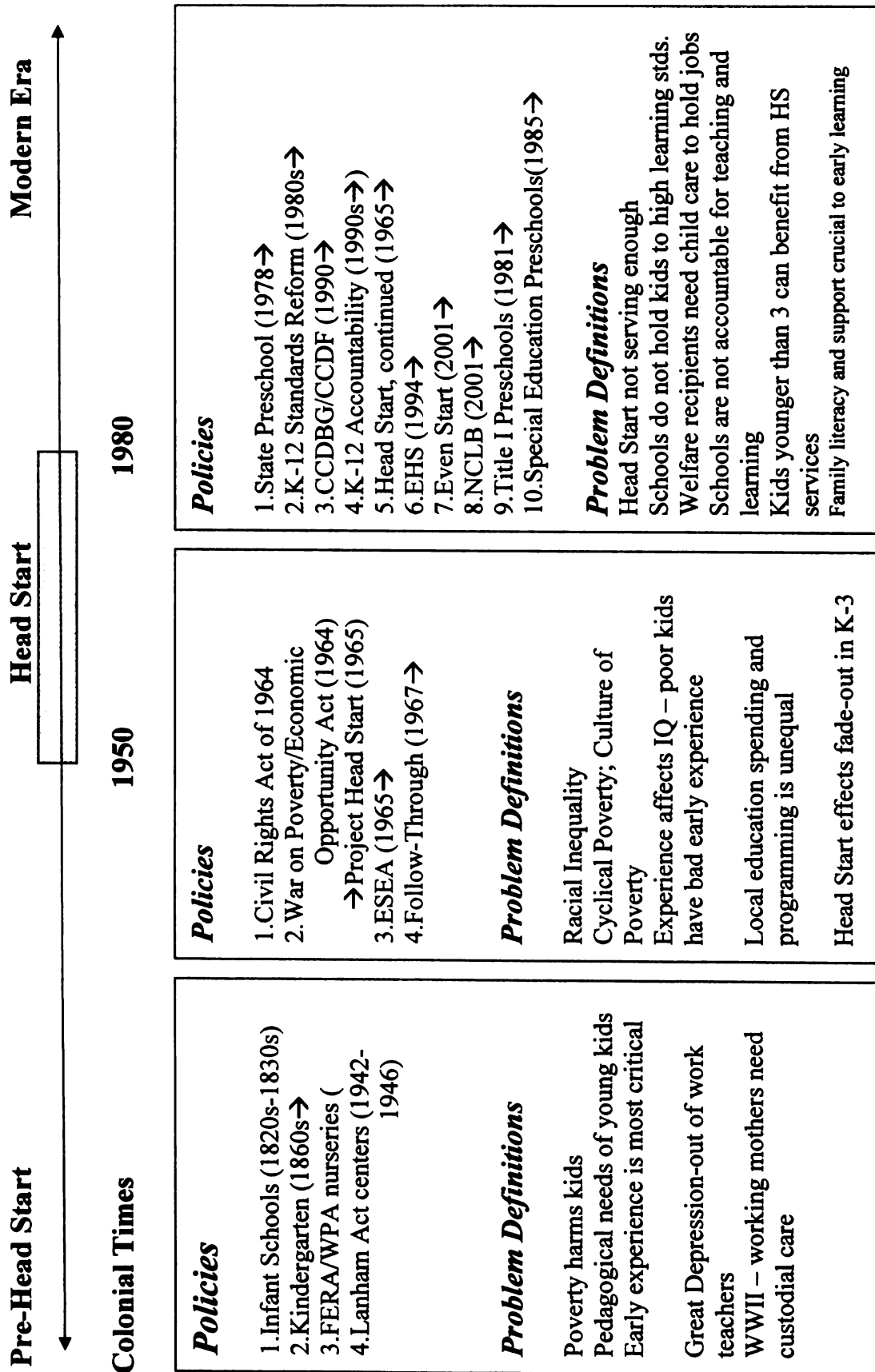


Figure 3.2: Problem Definitions for Pre-Head Start, Head Start and Modern Eras

Table 4.13: Policy Controversies, Framing Processes and Political Opportunity

The process and organization of framing	Terminology	Definition
Types of Policy Disputes (Schön and Rein, 1994) The need for framing arises when there are policy disputes	policy disagreements (PDs) policy controversies (PCs)	that can be settled by reasoned discourse (appeals to fact and evidence) those that are stubbornly resistant to resolution via the exercise of reason; disputes in which the contending parties hold conflicting frames
Framing processes/actions The “success” of framing depends on... (Snow and Benford)	Alignment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bridging • Extension • Amplification 	the activities of the “framers” <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • introduction of a frame or two to realign individual’s perceptions of an issue with a new conception and plan of action • leaders extend and elaborate the goals and activities of a movement “so as to encompass auxiliary interest not obviously associated with the movement in hopes of enlarging its adherent base • elevating and highlighting a given frame of an issue by either appealing to currently held values or beliefs; <i>Value amplification</i> involves identifying, and elevating one or more values already fundamental to individuals. <i>Belief amplification</i> involves the heightening or exaggeration of beliefs about a) the seriousness of an issue b) the locus of blame c) stereotypes about antagonists 4) the probability of change and 5) the necessity of action (Snow and Benford, 2000, p.470) • new values may have to be planted and nurtured, old meanings or understandings jettisoned and erroneous beliefs or misframings reframed in order to garner support and secure participants
Political Opportunities Leading to framing (Davies)	<p>Resonance Dispute or contest; the frame-reframe process</p> <p>Dramatic events</p> <p>Cultural shifts</p>	<p>effects on the targets; degree of usage of a given frame</p> <p>Can stall the process of resolving a policy controversy; a stalemate of the framers and the reframers.</p> <p>dramatize a glaring contradiction between a salient cultural value and prevailing social practices” (p.5) creating an opportunity for framing of an issue that was previously thought to be neutral</p> <p>make available to social movements new ‘master frames’ (p.5) that have great political currency</p>

Table 4.14: Issue Framing Definitions and Classifications

Frame classification	Name	Description
By purpose of frame (Snow and Benford, 1986)	Diagnostic	both define the problem at hand and assign blame for the problem
	Prognostic	solution oriented, in that they include a suggestion of how a problem may be solved, and provide goals and tactics for achieving them
	Motivational	a call to arms, a rationale for engaging in action. Gamson calls this the agency component of framing (Gamson, 1992).
By values/norms embodied (Schön and Rein, 1994)	Policy Institutional action Metacultural	institutional actors use to construct the problem of a policy situation generic frames institutional actors use to construct policy frames broad, culturally shared systems of belief (institutional action frames are local expressions of these, e.g. disease v. cure; natural v. artificial; wholeness v. fragmentation). "Metacultural frames, organized around generative metaphors, are at the root of the policy stories that shape both rhetorical and action frames" (Schön and Rein, 1994, p. 34).
By where framing occurs-which kind of policy discourse (Schoen and Rein, 1994)	Policy debate – rhetorical frames Discourse of policy practice-action frames	underlying the structure and argument in debate informing policy practice
By media news coverage type (Iyengar, 1996)	Episodic Thematic	illustrations of issues via specific instances depict issue broadly placing them in some context – "historical, geographical or otherwise" (p.62)
By degree of content of frame (Jacoby, 2000)	General	"an interpretation that focuses on the disputed governmental activity itself. Little attention is paid to the underlying causes or consequences or any policy initiatives that may result from the resolution of the issue
	Specific	Explicitly links governmental activities with targets in society. Statements of this type not only promote certain policy initiatives; they also identify the reasons that such steps are necessary, along with the beneficiaries (or victims) of governmental action.

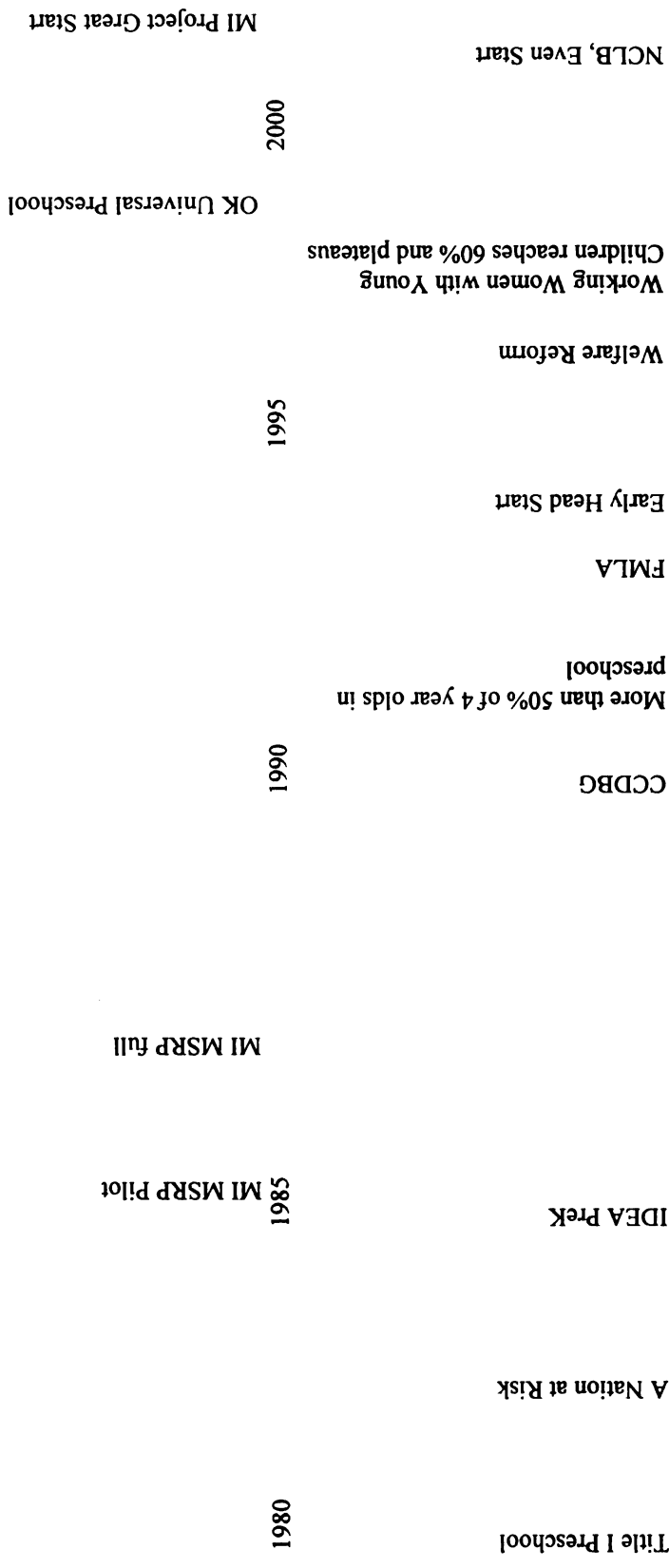


Figure 4.3: Timeline of 2-state data and Federal policies: 1980-2001

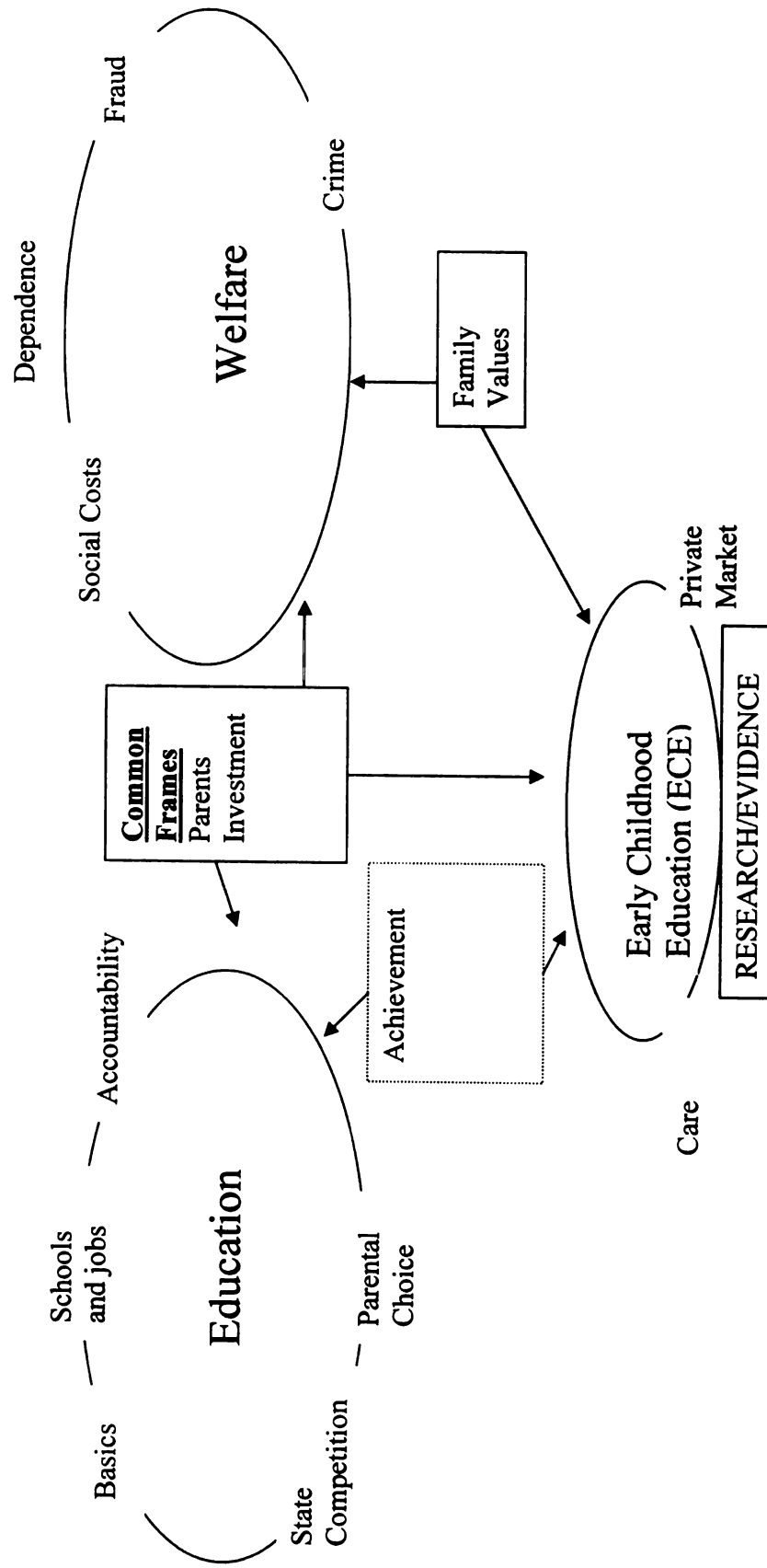


Figure 4.4: Oklahoma Frames for Education, Welfare and ECE

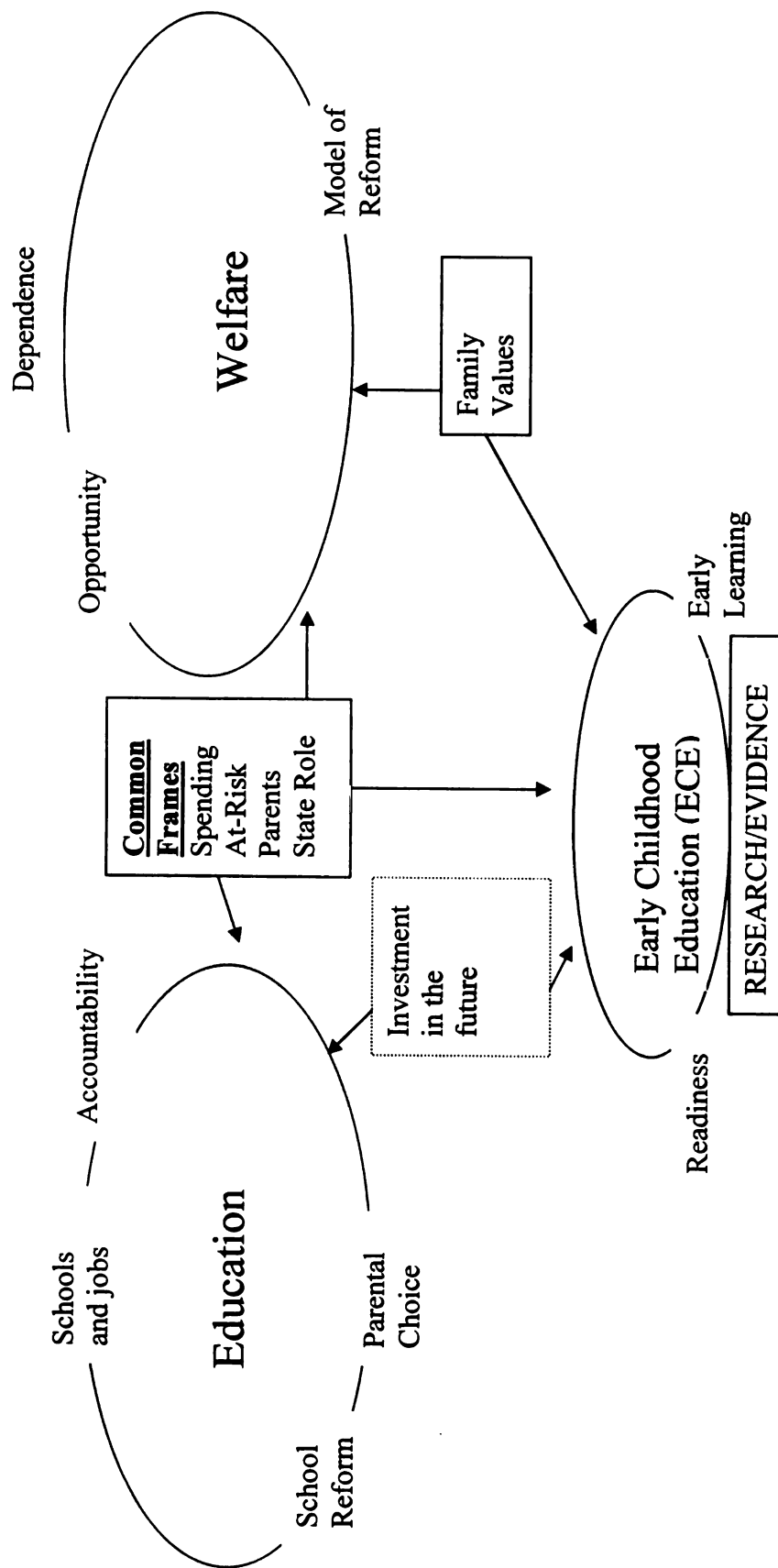


Figure 4.5: Michigan Frames for Education, Welfare and ECE

Table 5.1: State Adoption of Preschool Policy, 1978-2000

Relative Policy Domain Strength		(1)	(2)
Education: Welfare		-----	0.450*** (0.125)
Diffusion	Regional effects	-0.010 (.007)	-0.009 (.008)
Political	Unified	0.462 (0.384)	0.462 (0.384)
	Citizen Ideology	0.020 (0.018)	0.025 (0.018)
	Government Ideology	0.033*** (0.011)	0.036*** (0.012)
Socioeconomic	% females in workforce	-0.116** (0.053)	-0.107** (0.053)
	% Poverty	0.027* (0.016)	0.034** (0.017)
Education	Per pupil spending	-0.172 (1.401)	-0.332 (1.386)
Observations		666	666
Log Likelihood		315.62	308.11
Standard errors are in parentheses. *significant at 10%, **significant at 5%, ***significant at 1%			

Table 5.2: State Adoptions of Preschool Policy (Hazard Ratios), 1978-2000.

		Model 2	Likelihood of adoption
Relative Policy Domain Strength	Education: Welfare	1.568***	57% more likely
Diffusion	Regional effects	0.991	
Political	Unified	1.587	
	Citizen Ideology	1.025	
	Government Ideology	1.037**	3.7% more likely
Socioeconomic	% females in workforce	0.898**	10.2% less likely
	% Poverty	1.034**	3.4 % more likely
Education	Per pupil spending	0.740	
Observations		666	
Log Likelihood		308.11	
*significant at 10%, **significant at 5%, ***significant at 1%			

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