

TITLE: A Comparison of One-Star, Two-Star, and Accredited Child Care Programs in Oklahoma

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OBJECTIVE: The purpose of this study was to explore if and how child care centers in Oklahoma varied as a function of Star status, geographic region and program auspice.

METHODOLOGY: Participants included 71 child care centers (83% response rate), matched by geographic region and auspice. Approximately 39% were rural. Dependent variables included structural aspects of child care environments, for example, licensed capacity, enrollment, group size, teacher:child ratios, number of Master teachers and teacher and director education, experience, and income. Process quality variables included environmental quality, developmentally appropriate practices, teacher beliefs about professional beliefs and practices, and director beliefs about leadership as well as teachers' beliefs about their director's leadership. Directors and teachers completed the LPI-Self and LPI-Observer respectively. Cronbach's alpha scores for the LPI-Self were .78 and for the LPI-Observer alpha scores were .98. The response rate on the LPI-Self was 93% (N=66) and a total of 381 LPI-Observer were completed (62% response rate).

KEY FINDINGS: A correlation between the directors' views of their leadership practices with those from their staff was not found. Teachers rated directors as more democratic when directors had more years experience at the center. However, there was no relationship between teacher experience and director leadership. Directors of rural One-Star centers described their leadership behaviors less democratically than urban One-Star directors. However, this pattern was not repeated across the Two-Star and accredited levels. All in all, the author concludes: "regarding director leadership, this study raises more questions than it answers" (p. 151).