

EDUCARE NATIONAL AND LOCAL EVALUATION PARTNERS (NEP/LEPs)

Knowledge, Skills, and Roles in Supporting Educare Network Evolution

Jointly prepared by 19 LEPs and the NEP team

May 29, 2019

As the Educare Learning Network undergoes a shift in its identity and operation, it is important that one of the essential aspects of what it means to be an Educare school and a defining feature of our Network – being research-based and data-driven – is intentionally considered. The NEP/LEP consortium is committed to being a proactive and responsive partner to fully realize the envisioned value of the Network to its members. This document articulates the variety of contributions that many LEPs and the NEP currently make to local and national partners in the Network and our commitment to continue to do so as the Network evolves. We are eager to be responsive to the needs and priorities of Educare schools and the Network, and have based the information below on the Network's implementation plan related to the Value Proposition statements. We also ask that our voices be heard through active engagement in future planning meetings so that evaluation procedures and practices can continue to be modified to be most useful to the Network. Our capacity as a generative Network will be better through purposeful communication, collaboration, and a mutually respectful partnership.

In support of the Network's value propositions, the NEP and LEPs will partner with Educare schools and organizations, other Network stakeholders, and funders by:

- Engaging in collaborations designed to maximize shared learning, foster innovation, and improve practices by collecting, managing, analyzing, and sharing relevant data and research findings at the Network and local levels (e.g., research-program partnerships, research-to-practice briefs, and data dialogues) (**Value Proposition 1**).
- Serving as the research node in the Network and facilitating learning at the intersection of research-policy-practice (e.g., evaluating Acceleration grants and other innovations) (**Value Proposition 2**).
- Providing data and research findings to support program quality and sustainability through organizational capacity-building (e.g., human resources, administration, board relations), professional learning (e.g., training, coaching, consultation); and fundraising (e.g., grant writing, presentation, networking) (**Value Proposition 3**).
- Establishing and participating in Network and local level communication channels to share findings and, as independent evaluators, disseminating findings nationally via presentations and publications to increase public awareness of and support for Educare's approach to ensuring that vulnerable children and their families are prepared for school and life (**Value Proposition 4**).

The NEP and LEPs will continue to engage in the following activities at the Network and local levels to meet our mission to support and strengthen the Network's and local schools' practice, policy, and research agenda:

Local Data Sharing and Research-Program Partnerships

- Collect, manage, and process data on children's learning and development, classroom quality, family well-being and engagement, and staff experiences to answer school-specific questions
- Translate local and national (cross-school) data for local schools' ongoing routines of quality improvement
- Share and discuss these data and findings through a range of written and visual communication tools such as handouts, memos, reports, PPT slide decks or other data visuals
- Participate in local schools' strategic planning process
- Support program innovation by testing/evaluating pilot projects (e.g., Acceleration grants)
- Provide professional learning and development on identified areas of need and in which LEPs have expertise as members of early childhood science and practice communities, as well as help source professional learning opportunities as identified by school leaders and staff

National Data Sharing and Research-Program Partnerships

- Analyze and discuss current Network data and trends via data briefs, memos, and webinars
- Present and discuss local and national data that may inform Network goals and/or strategic plans or in response questions of interest to Educare leaders and practitioners
- Support program innovation by testing/evaluating pilot projects (e.g., Acceleration grants)
- Provide school-specific and cross-site data reports

Engaging Stakeholders

- Work as needed with Educare school leaders to set goals and address local issues
- Create user-friendly research and data communication tools tailored to different audiences
- Help with grant-writing for local evaluation funds and/or for other development activities to support program quality and sustainability
- Continue to advance the Network's research and evaluation agenda

Increase Public Awareness and Influence Policy through External Dissemination

- Conduct analyses and disseminate data from the Educare Implementation Study, Follow-up Studies, RCT, and other Network research and evaluation efforts to local and national policymakers, funders, the public, and research audiences
- Use multiple communication strategies and tools to disseminate research findings such as briefs, webinars, presentations at national/regional meetings (at least 85 to date), journal articles, and chapters (28 to date)

In addition to the ongoing activities above, the NEP/LEPs will implement the following new activities, if deemed constructive:

- Add a monthly Research to Practice/Policy corner on the new EducareShare site and/or monthly Educare Connections newsletter that will translate and communicate Network research findings or other relevant research and draw connections to practice and/or policy
- Write an annual State of Educare report using cross-school data and perhaps highlighting specific new data (e.g., Acceleration grant results, a site-specific effort, or a major new paper) (would require additional funding)
- Organize an Educare Research and Innovation Summit to share Educare research and evaluation findings, data, and practice-informed learnings with key ECE administrators, thought leaders, policy makers, and/or funders (would require additional funding)