# Lynn Bennett Early Childhood Education Center Report of Activities 2019-2021

The Lynn Bennett Early Childhood Education Center (referred to in this report as the Center) has continued the mission to provide an innovative site for early childhood research, teacher and professional training, and high-quality early childhood services to the Southern Nevada community. This report provides a summary of activities from 2019-2021 in relation to these goals and includes a strategic research plan for 2020-2025. This report is a follow up from a previous report of 2019.

## Summary of Community Engagement and UNLV/CSUN Preschool

**Total Families/Children Served:**

July 2019- June 2020 (T=192)

Summer 2020 (T= 64), Fall 2020 (T=94), Spring 2021 (T=110)

**Current/Renewed MOUs**:

Clark County School District (Special Education Inclusion)

Therapy Management Group (Early Intervention Play Group)

**Center Personnel:**

18 UNLV head staff members (FTE 1.00), 7 CCSD staff, and 40 UNLV student workers part time (FTE.50).

**Coursework and Programs Accessing the Center**

ECE 299 practicum students

ESP781 fieldwork students

FOCUS Project Vocational Training/Employment: 3 students

Early Childhood Assessment Center Access for ECE473 & ESP773

## National Accreditation and Quality Rating

The Center again received accreditation renewal through the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC)[1] in 2019 and 2020.

The Center maintained its 5-star rating with the Nevada Silver Stars Quality Rating and Improvement System[2].

## Response to COVID19

Following state orders, in March 2020, the Center closed due to COVID-19. During this time, staff

with disabilities through family-centered practices with a particular focus on how to use distance or virtual practices. Professionals will engage in synchronous learning sessions, communities of practice, and individualized action planning and consultation. Measures include changes in beliefs and practices as well as effectiveness of professional development experiences.

## Center-Supported Research Studies

*A Mixed Method Study on the Professional Resilience of Preschool Teachers in their Pursuit of Equity and Quality for their Students during the COVID-19* (in progress)
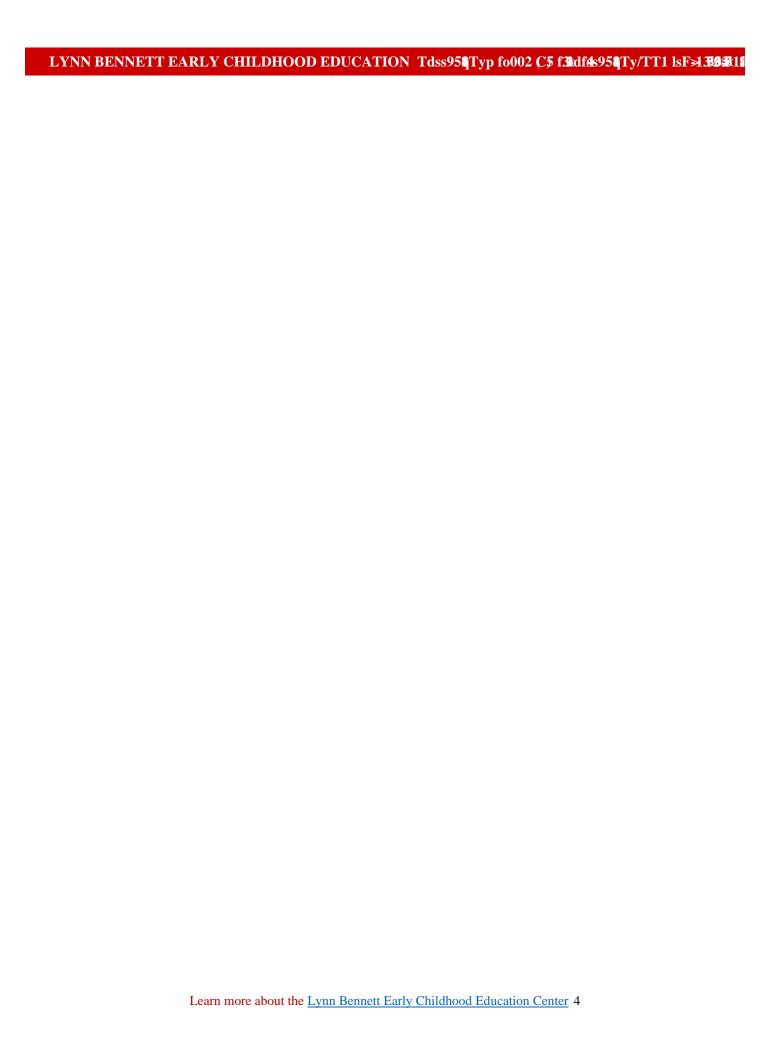Dr. Katrina Liu, Teaching & Learning; Dr. Richard Miller, Music, & Dr. Claire Tredwell, UNLV/CSUN Preschool

*Effects of Eye-Movement Modeling on the Social Attention of Typically Developing Children and Children with Autism* (Dissertation, pending approval)
Catherine Bacos, Doctoral Student—Teaching & Learning; Dr. Michael McCreery, Faculty Advisor

## Center-Supported Publications and Presentations

Yarczower, M., Weglarz-Ward, J. M., & Tredwell, C. (2021). Eliminating Exclusionary
Practices in Early Childhood in Nevada. *Policy Issues in Nq0 .cȟreW*nBT0.2 gȚT1 12 Tf22Ȕ25ǟ5.ȓ Td(. )TF̌(dual)-ȜǏȓ(

From our past research and through relationships with community partners, we have developed research priority areas to propel the Center's research presence. As presented below, priority research topics for the Center are:

*Early Childhood Assessment Lab*—in addition to having updated assessment materials, there is a need to establish a dedicated space for novice professionals and students observe and practice assessment activities. Funding in this area would support physical areas of the Center to be transformed for UNLV classes and training for professionals in Southern Nevada to practice assessment skills with young children and their families in typical early childhood environments. Estimated costs: $5,000

Materials and Supply Needs

*Current assessment materials*—in order to train professionals and conduct reliable research, the most current assessment materials are required. There is an urgent need to update and expand materials of the Early Childhood Assessment Center which has need received updates since 2014. Current assessment materials more appropriately address the needs of diverse children and families and may be available in multiple languages. Assessment materials include physical copies of implementation manuals, assessment protocols, and scoring forms; software programs to analyze and store data; and purchase of specified assessment materials (e.g., children's books, toys).
Estimated Costs:  $10,000 biennially
*Curricula and instructional materials*—to examine the implementation of evidence-based practices, curricula need to be maintained and materials purchased as needed to support instruction. Curricula materials include physical copies of published curricula and their

Research Scalability Needs

*LBECEC Research Fellowship Program,* The Center requires research affiliates to fulfill its mission aligned with the aforementioned priority research areas and needs. The LBECEC Research Fellowship Program is designed as a competitive seed funding opportunity to support high-quality graduate students and UNLV faculty to serve as research fellows for one academic year through the Center. Graduate students would be provided with up to $2,500 per project and faculty would be provided with $5,000 per project. Funding will be used to support research activities including: research costs for materials and measures; data analysis support including software and research assistance; participant recruitment and incentives; professional development; and dissemination activities. Fellows would engage in the following competitions:

- o *Applied research mini-grants*—these grants focus on research activities aligned with Center's Research Priorities and research questions that address the practical application of early childhood practices with young children birth to 5 years old.
- o *Community engagement mini-grants*—these grants focus on research that actively involves community partners in the research process to address questions related to the diverse, multi-cultural community of Southern Nevada.

Estimated costs: $15,000 annually

**Interested in conducting research at the Lynn Bennett Early Childhood Education Center?**

See our website or contact us at preschoolresearch@unlv.edu