

Science

NIEER is studying how preschool policies and practices at school district, school, and classroom levels influence child outcomes. Here, Research Project Coordinator Kaitlin Northey answers questions about NIEER's research into the critical component of school leadership.

Q. What does NIEER mean by "school leadership"?

We will be working with lead classroom teachers, master teachers, principals, center directors, community parent involvement specialists, EC supervisors, assistant superintendents and superintendents. Leaders asked to participate will vary based on each school district's structure.

Q. Why is NIEER focusing on teachers and leaders?

In early education settings, quality is often discussed in terms of structural quality --size of classrooms, teacher qualifications, student-to-staff ratios--or process quality, such as interactions and activities.

New research shows classroom experience and teacher-child interactions can influence child outcomes. We want to explore if factors such as teacher stress, relationships with colleagues and access to professional supports also influence quality either directly or indirectly.

Q. How will NIEER collect this data?

Participating teachers will receive an email asking them to complete an online survey. School and district pre-K personnel and early education leaders will be invited to participate in an interview or focus group with NIEER's research team.

Q. How will results be used?

NIEER is studying the relationship between leadership and more traditional measures of quality, and how such a relationship is associated with children's development. Participating teachers and other ECE leaders will not be identified and specific responses will not be shared. Overall results will be shared to help districts improve practices across programs and districts.