

# Head Start Child Outcomes Research Support Consortium (CORS), Research Partners

## Bradley Hospital

*Project Title:*

Enhanced HS MAP Intervention: Linking Program Evaluation and Child Outcomes

*Principal Investigator:*

Susan Dickstein, Ph.D., Alison L. Miller, and Ronald Seifer

*Project Funding Years:*

2002-2007

*Head Start Partners:*

East Bay Community Action Program, Newport, RI

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*Project Abstract:*

Emma P. Bradley Hospital is conducting research to demonstrate the effectiveness of embedding a program evaluation system within the fabric of the Head Start program to maximize service delivery systems and improve child and family outcomes. More specifically, the Head Start Manualized Assessment of Progress: Birth to Five (HS MAP: 0-5) is a program evaluation system designed to monitor child and family progress over time. Teachers use the HS MAP:0-5 to monitor children's progress in 8 specific domains of development (according to the HS Child Outcomes Framework including language, literacy, mathematics, science, creative arts, social-emotional development, approaches to learning, and physical development). Family Advocates use the HS MAP:0-5 to monitor family's progress in 3 general areas including Parent Self-Reliance (e.g., income, employment, food, housing, clothing, utilities, insurance, transportation, credit, child care, and education); Parent Promotion of Child Development (e.g., parenting skill; violence prevention, adult relationships, parent-child relationships,

neighborhood and home safety, parent involvement in the program, and community needs); and Health, Nutrition, and Mental Health.

### *Results and Implications*

- Based on HS MAP: 0-5 findings, Head Start children made substantial (statistically significant) progress on all developmental goal domains from the Fall to the Spring. This adds to the scientific literature suggesting that Head Start is an effective preventive intervention program for high-risk children developing in poverty contexts.
- Ratings of child development using the HS MAP:0-5 system were significantly correlated with scores obtained using standardized assessments of child development. This provides initial evidence that the HS MAP:0-5 is a valid system of child assessment. When teachers are provided with support, training, and a rating system that is embedded in everyday classroom activity, their assessment of children's functional developmental abilities in the classroom are consistent with standardized assessment.
- Based on HS MAP: 0-5 findings, Head Start families made substantial (statistically significant) progress on target areas of need. The HS MAP:0-5 system helped to guide Head Start Social Service staff to engage with families on meaningful activities, resulting in substantial family progress in these areas.

### *Next Steps*

Continued research is required to further validate the system, and to assess associations among system components. An important next step is to broaden the availability and usability of the HS MAP:0-5 by developing and disseminating web-based applications.

### *Sample:*

N=1 Head Start program, 23 Head Start classrooms, 400 Head Start children

### *Measures:*

#### *Child Standardized Assessment*

Developmental Indicators for the Assessment of Learning, Third Edition (DIAL-3)

Bracken Basic Concept Scale-Revised (BBCS-R)

Preschool Emotion Knowledge and Understanding Interview

Child Psychological Impairment Rating Scale (Child PIRS)

*Teacher and/or Parent Report*

Preschool Learning Behaviors Scale (Teacher)

Child Behavior Checklist for ages 1½ - 5 (Parent and Teacher)

HS MAP Developmental Goal Levels (Teacher)

*Individualization of Child Programming*

HS MAP Progress Notes

HS MAP Goal Sheets

*Classroom*

Classroom Psychological Impairment Rating Scale (Classroom PIRS)

Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale-Revised (ECERS-R)

Student-Teacher Relationship Scale (STRS; Teacher report)

Number of Parent-Teacher Conferences/Year

## **John Hopkins University**

*Project Title:*

Implementation and Evaluation of a Collaborative Language and Literacy Training and Assessment Program for Head Start

*Principal Investigator:*

Barbara A. Wasik, Ph.D.

*Project Funding Years:*

2002-2006

*Head Start Partners:*

Baltimore City Head Start, Baltimore, MD

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*Project Abstract:*

The Johns Hopkins Language and Literacy Project (JHLLP) is a comprehensive professional development program and curriculum designed to train Head Start teachers in strategies that promote language and literacy development in young children. The project includes intensive, ongoing teacher coaching, 25 theme-based modules, and books and literacy activities related to themes. The training focuses on five components: oral language development, book reading, alphabet knowledge, phonological awareness,

and writing. The goal of the program is to promote vocabulary and language skills in Head Start children.

As a part of the CORS Head Start University Partnership grant, the JHLLP has been implemented and evaluated in 10 classrooms in Baltimore City Head Start in Maryland. The data from Year 1 and 2 show that intervention classrooms perform significantly better than control classrooms on measures of expressive and receptive language. The findings also indicate children who are in classrooms where teachers are implementing the language and literacy strategies perform better on the assessments compared to children who are in classrooms where teachers are not implementing the strategies. Measures of classroom quality indicate that the quality of the language and literacy usage changes due to the JHLLP intervention.

Two assessments that support the program have been developed as part of the CORS grant. One assessment is consistent with the format of the Creative Curriculum assessment yet has specific items that assess the five language and literacy component of the JHLLP model. The assessment includes both a child and teacher component. The teacher observes each child and determines whether the child is demonstrating certain target behaviors such as the child's ability to acquire new words, the child's knowledge of print, and the child's ability to express his/her ideas in words. The teacher also assesses their own practices that support the language and literacy development of the children. The assessment is designed to help teacher modify the curriculum to meet the needs of the children.

A second assessment was developed to measure the vocabulary development of children. Throughout the curriculum there are target vocabulary words that are taught through the books, props, and center activities. The vocabulary assessment is designed to determine whether children have acquired both expressive and receptive understanding of the target words. Children are shown a picture with the objects that represent the vocabulary and, through a series of prompts, are asked to identify the objects. This assessment provides the teacher with an individualized summary of the child's word knowledge. Piloting of this measure is currently taking place.

In sum, the JHLLP has shown to have a positive impact on Head Start children's language and literacy development. Training teachers to learn to talk and interact with their children in order to facilitate the development of children's language and vocabulary skills requires ongoing support and feedback from trained staff.

*Sample:*

N=20 Head Start Classrooms (10 intervention, 10 controls)

*Measures:*

*Child*

Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test-III (PPVT-III)

Expressive One Word Picture Vocabulary Test (EOWPVT)

Blending Task (A phonemic sensitivity task)

Letter Knowledge Measure (Westat measures)

*Teacher*

Early Language and Literacy Classroom Observation (ELLCO)

Video Taping of Adult-Child Interactions

Teachers' Attitudes and Beliefs Scale (modified version of N. Karweit's measure)

## **University of Cincinnati**

*Project Title:*

Improving Outcomes for Head Start Children: ACTing Squared: Active Curriculum Training and Accelerated Child Trajectories

*Principal Investigator:*

Victoria Carr, Ed.D. and Mary Boat, Ph.D.

*Project Funding Years:*

2002-2006

*Head Start Partners:*

Cincinnati-Hamilton County Community Action Agency Head Start,  
Cincinnati, OH

Clermont County Head Start, Batavia, OH

Northern Kentucky Community Action Commission Head Start, Newport, KY

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*Project Abstract:*

The University of Cincinnati is investigating data collection methods and teaching quality with regard to Head Start outcomes. The four specific goals of this project are to: (a) identify and configure a data management system for analysis of child outcome data, (b) evaluate teacher effectiveness with regard to the planned and active curriculum, (c) provide professional development to teachers and supervisory staff with regard to teacher effectiveness and collection of outcome data, and (d) provide continuous program improvement through the use of outcome data that ultimately improves early learning environments for Head Start children. Researchers will determine if the planned curriculum leads to expected child outcomes, if the active curriculum (e.g., what happens in the classroom) is effective in accelerating performance and scaffolding development, and how child outcome data is analyzed for decision-making with regard to continuous improvement in Head Start. Participants include approximately 1650 Head Start children and 100 Head Start teachers randomly assigned to either a control group, a component control group, or an experimental group. Control group teachers receive no services, component control group teachers participate in a workshop on effective teaching and management, and experimental group teachers participate in the workshop and also receive ongoing feedback and support. The researchers aim to provide Head Start and the early childhood community with a unique, reasonable, and "doable" model for managing data; observing teacher effectiveness; providing feedback to teachers, parents, and staff with regard to child outcomes; and approaching professional development as a continuous improvement process.

*Sample:*

N=1650 Head Start children, 100 Head Start teachers

## **University of Kentucky**

*Project Title:*

Project LINK: A Partnership to Promote LINKages Among Assessment, Curriculum, and Outcomes in Order to Enhance School Success for Children in Head Start Programs

*Principal Investigator:*  
Jennifer Grisham-Brown, Ed.D.

*Project Funding Years:*  
2002-2007

*Head Start Partners:*  
Community Action Council for Lexington-Fayette, Bourbon, Harrison, and Nicholas Counties (CAC)

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*Project Abstract:*  
The Department of Special Education and Rehabilitation Counseling at the University of Kentucky in collaboration with the Community Action Council for Lexington-Fayette, Bourbon, Harrison, and Nicholas Counties have developed an authentic assessment process aligned with the Head Start Child Outcomes Framework, with an emphasis on the mandated child outcomes. This assessment system is based on authentic assessment processes, using a combination of the Assessment, Evaluation, and Planning System<sup>1</sup> in activity-based formats, coupled with ongoing portfolio development for Head Start children. Specifically, the Project LINK model uses these authentic assessment processes to develop and monitor individualized child plans that inform ongoing curriculum planning in Head Start preschool classrooms.

This assessment model for preschool children is currently being evaluated in the Head Start partnership site that operates 26 direct-managed Head Start classrooms. In this sample of 26 preschool classrooms across five counties, eight classrooms were selected as pilot classrooms and have been receiving the intervention for three years. Eighteen classrooms were originally stratified by urbanicity and randomly assigned to intervention and control groups. The intervention classrooms received the intervention for two academic years. Classrooms participating in the intervention receive a minimum of three days of teacher training on the assessment model and weekly technical assistance on the implementation of authentic assessment practices as well as using authentic assessment data to inform their curriculum planning. Teachers in intervention and pilot sites also use Project LINK implementation forms including individualized child plans and lesson plans.

Preliminary data analysis suggested that intervention and pilot classrooms were rated higher on their language and literacy environments as measured by the Early Language and Literacy Classroom Observation.<sup>2</sup> Specifically, post scores on the ELLCO classroom observation scale were significantly higher for intervention and pilot classrooms ( $F=4.581$ ,  $p<.05$ ). Change scores for each of the three groups were also calculated to examine change in scores from pre to post data points. Comparisons of these scores yielded statistically significant differences on the two of the three ELLCO subscales, literacy environment ( $F=4.823$ ,  $p<.05$ ) and the classroom observation scale ( $F=10.098$ ,  $p<.01$ ). Differences on the overall ECERS-R scores were not significant, however, differences on specific subscales and indicators were found. Project LINK is currently in its fourth year of implementation. These measures were repeated in intervention and control classrooms during the third year and data are presently being analyzed to determine differences between the two groups. Pre and post data also were collected on child outcomes in intervention and control sites using a modified version of the FACES child battery. These data also are currently being analyzed. Fourth year pre test data are presently being collected on both classroom environments and child outcomes.

*Sample:*

(pilot)

N=8 Preschool Classrooms

*Intervention:* N=7 (2 classrooms dropped during fourth year)

*Control:* N=7 (2 classrooms dropped during fourth year)

*Measures:*

*Classroom*

Document Review

IEP Analysis Form - adapted

Kentucky Teacher Internship Lesson Planning Form - adapted

Early Childhood Environmental Rating Scale, Revised Edition (ECERS-R) – dropped during fourth year

Early Language and Literacy Classroom Observation

*Child*

Learning Accomplishment Profile – Diagnostic (LAP-D)

Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test-Third Edition (PPVT-III)

Woodcock-Johnson, Revised (WJ-R) Letter-Word Identification

Woodcock-Johnson, Revised (WJ-R) Applied Problems Test

Woodcock-Johnson, Revised (WJ-R) Dictation Test



## Washington State

*Project Title:*

Spokane Head Start Outcomes Initiative

*Principal Investigator:*

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*Project Funding Years:*

2002-2006

*Head Start Partners:*

Spokane County Head Start, Spokane, WA

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*Project Abstract:*

Washington State University has developed strategies to assure that children's outcomes guide the organizational development of local Spokane Head Start programs, and develop a model for organizational change that can be adapted by other Head Start programs. Work has been organized around three goals. In Goal 1, the capacity of the Head Start organization to systematically use outcome information in program development is being enhanced. Program objectives include the development of expanded management information systems, staff training in the use of information systems, and pilot research programs that improve the quality of child assessment in Head Start. Data on approximately 500 to 700 Head Start children are being collected using the Child Observation Record (COR), Creative Curriculum Assessment System (CreaCurr), Devereux Early Childhood Assessment (DECA), and a battery of individual child assessment tools used by the Family and Child Experiences Survey (FACES) during the

initial program year at three assessment points. In addition, data obtained from the FACES battery are being compared to findings from the COR and CreaCurr on a random sample of 200 children. In Goal 2, the training and administrative structures that are needed to improve ways in which outcomes information guides program planning are being created. Program objectives in Head Start address the use of information in program planning, supervision, and classroom activity planning for children. In Goal 3, a "learning community" is being developed that establishes an ongoing relationship between early childhood practitioners and Washington State University programs in early childhood education. Researchers are establishing "Head Start Scholars," who will be Head Start staff working with university faculty to develop professional training and translate what is learned from Goals 1 and 2 into practical and accessible training papers and materials for practitioners.

*Sample:*

N=500 to 700 Spokane County Head Start children

*Measures:*

*Child Outcome Assessment*

Child Observation Record (COR)

Creative Curriculum Assessment System (CreaCurr)

Devereux Early Childhood Assessment (DECA)

*FACES Child and Family Instruments*

Woodcock-Johnson Letter-Word Identification Scale

Woodcock-Johnson Dictation Scale

Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test (PPVT)

McCarthy Draw-A-Design Test

Achenbach Child Behavior Checklist

Family and Child Experiences Survey (FACES) Parent Interview

*Classroom Assessment*

High/Scope Program Quality Assessment (under consideration)

*Head Start Staff*

Focus Groups/Key Informant Interviews

Outcome Framework Survey