## New England Quality Research Center

### Program-Delivered Literacy In-service Training

**Target Area:** Early Literacy

Education Development Center, Inc. (EDC) collaborated with Head Start partners to develop a program-wide, in-service professional development model delivered by Head Start staff. EDC supported program staff in the delivery of early literacy professional development through training, materials, and technical assistance. Modules developed for program delivery include book reading, extending conversations, phonological awareness, children's writing, print awareness, and literacy-integrated curricula. Using a range of qualitative and quantitative research methods, EDC examined the impact of the program on teachers' literacy-related practices and children's literacy development.

**Initial Results:** Results showed consistent and sustained improvements in teachers' literacy-related practices across several cohorts of teachers, and improved child outcomes in vocabulary and early writing.

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## State University of New York at Stony Brook

### Evidence-based Emergent Literacy Approaches for Head Start

**Target Area:** Early Literacy

The purpose of this project was to identify, through careful comparative study, curricular approaches that strengthen early literacy skills for children in Head Start. The project implemented and evaluated the effects of two literacy curricula in different Head Start classrooms, overlaid on the existing classroom curriculum, with full-day Head Start classes randomly assigned to one or the other curricular addition, or the comparison condition. Let's Begin with THE LETTER PEOPLE and the computer-based Waterford Early Reading Program Level 1 were the two curricula selected for study.

**Initial Results:** Results showed that several early literacy skills are strengthened by one or both of the literacy curricular enhancements provided in randomly assigned Head Start classes.

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## University of North Carolina

### The Preschool Behavior Project: A Socio-Emotional Intervention to Enhance School Readiness

**Target Area:** Social-emotional Development

In the Preschool Behavior Project, a project interventionist works with Head Start coordinators to provide 20 hours of workshops and weekly or biweekly in-class consultation for teachers and assistant teachers with the goal of increasing their skills in helping children develop positive social skills and decrease problem behaviors. The intervention components include the Second Step curriculum; dialogic reading; and principles of relationship building, the behavioral change process, and classroom management. Interventionist ratings of teachers' behavior and teachers' self-ratings are used as the basis of goal-setting.

**Initial Results:** Ratings and observations of positive behaviors, language, and numeracy skills increased over the school year, although the incidence and ratings of children's negative behaviors did not decrease.

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## University of Oregon

### First Step to Success

**Target Area:** Social-emotional Development

First Step to Success is a collaborative home and school intervention program, lasting approximately two to three months, geared to help at-risk preschool children get off to the best start possible in their school careers. Program components are coordinated and delivered in both classroom and home settings by a "coach" (e.g., social worker) who works closely in this process with participating teachers and parents-caregivers. Participating teachers and parents-caregivers receive training, technical assistance, regular debriefings, and continuing support and supervision from the coach.

**Initial Results:** The First Step teacher training intervention was found to significantly increase teacher ratings of children's prosocial behavior and reduce teacher ratings of children's problem behavior.

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## Columbia University

### Using Assessment to Improve School Readiness and Head Start Program Quality

**Target Area:** Child, Class, and Center Assessments

In partnership with two Head Start programs in Connecticut, Columbia implemented a three-tiered, child-sensitive observational assessment system. The intervention involved training Head Start staff to observe and assess children, classrooms, and programs; interpret and share results with parents, teachers, and staff; and collectively make improvements based on assessment results. The goal was to equip staff with a proven system of assessments which would allow them to critically examine their own work and empower them to improve program quality and school readiness for Head Start children.

**Initial Results:** Positive change occurred within each of the three tiers, such that intervention participants reported significant improvements in program climate, classroom quality, and child outcomes.

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## Quality Counts, Inc.

### Individualized Learning Intervention: A Structured Mentoring Program for Head Start Teachers

**Target Area:** Professional Development/Mentor & Protégé Teachers

Quality Counts evaluated the effectiveness of the Individualized Learning Intervention with three Head Start partners. The QRC worked with each partner to implement a mentoring system within the agency. Mentor training focused on the development of trusting relationships with protégés, communication and leadership skills, and the use of formative evaluation. Mentors supported the protégés' ability to individualize children's learning experiences based on developmental assessments. Mentor teachers met with protégé teachers throughout the Head Start year.

**Initial Results:** When fall to spring gains in treatment and control protégés' classrooms were examined, the difference in group effect sizes favored the treatment group on 16 of the 29 child outcome measures.

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## High/Scope Educational Research Foundation

### Achieving Head Start Effectiveness through Intensive Curriculum Training

**Target Area:** Professional Development/Curriculum Implementation

The premise of this work is that teachers contribute significantly to children's development when they are trained in, and consistently use, a scientifically-based curriculum of proven effectiveness. Lead and assistant teachers from 67 classrooms received the standard 20-day High/Scope Preschool Curriculum Course and up to 5 days of follow-up training. The course included all components of the High/Scope curriculum (content areas, active learning, learning environment, daily routine, adult-child interaction, assessment) and an additional focus on a problem-solving approach to conflict and literacy.

**Initial Results:** Compared to control group children, children in classrooms with trained teachers showed larger gains in book knowledge, copying shapes and letters, and math skills.

For more information contact:

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## Temple University

### The Companion Curriculum: Connecting Parents and Teachers to Promote School Readiness

**Target Area:** Parent Involvement/ Home-School Partnerships

The Companion Curriculum (TCC) promotes home-school connection in order to increase parent efficacy and involvement in education. TCC themes were developed using national standards and best practices for teaching young children. Parent Excellence workshops demonstrate home-based educational activities for parents and children that complement instruction occurring at school. Parents and classroom teachers receive materials including books, puppets, number cards, magnetic letters, family albums and personal gardens. Teachers model developmentally appropriate interactions that facilitate school readiness. TCC creates a supportive learning community among families and the school.

**Initial Results:** Parent involvement increased at home and school, particularly when parents attended at least three workshops. TCC participation and home-school connection related to children's school readiness.

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## For more information...

The Administration for Children and Families (ACF), an agency within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, is responsible for Federal programs that promote the economic and social well-being of families, children, individuals, and communities. ACF programs include family assistance (welfare), child support, child care, Head Start, and child welfare among others. Recent ACF Head Start research initiatives include:

**Head Start Family and Child Experiences Survey (FACES)**

**Head Start QRC Data Coordination Center**

**Head Start Impact Study**

**Head Start Research to Practice: Assessing Evidence-Based Head Start Program Activities**

**Early Head Start Research and Evaluation Project**

Visit the ACF website for more information about these and other studies:
**www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/opre/index.html**

or visit the Head Start Bureau's website
**www.acf.dhhs.gov/programs/hsb**
for more information about its quality initiatives.

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# Enhancing School Readiness: Head Start Quality Research Centers Consortium

## 2001-2006

### Mission

To support the continuous improvement of Head Start by developing, testing, refining, and disseminating interventions to enhance child outcomes in Head Start by working in partnership with Head Start programs.

**www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/opre/hs/qrc_two/index.html**