

Head Start Graduate Student Research Program: 2004 Research Scholars

* 2004-2005 ** 2004-2006

J'Lene George*

Project Title:

An Investigation of Gender and Ethnic Differences in Approaches to Learning's Domain General Role in Head Start Children's School Readiness

Grantee:

J'Lene George

Project Funding Years:

2004-2005

University Affiliation:

University of Miami
Department of Psychology

Project Abstract:

The University of Miami will investigate individual differences in approaches to learning (ATL) and how these differences affect outcomes in other domains of school readiness. The study has two main objectives: (a) to investigate the relationships between ATL, ethnicity, gender, and other domains of school readiness, and (b) to develop and test a path model showing how ATL affects achievement in other domains that is sensitive to issues of gender and culture. Participants from the first data assessment year, 2002-2003, will include 15,413 Florida Head Start children who attend centers that use the Galileo School Readiness Assessment System. A similar sample will be used in the 2003-2004 academic year. Three domains of the Galileo data will be used in the study: ATL, language and literacy, and early math. Structural equation modeling will be used to explain how ATL functions with gender and culture. It is hypothesized that ATL will be predictive of achievement in other domains of school readiness, and that gender and ethnicity will not affect the total score in ATL, but instead the pattern of strengths and weaknesses in ATL.

Sample:

N=15,413 Florida Head Start children for year 2002-2003; similar sample for 2003-2004.

Measures:

Galileo School Readiness Assessment System

DeAnn Jones **

Project Title:

A Possible Biological Marker of Risk and Reactivity in Parents and Children

Grantee:

DeAnn Jones

Project Funding Years:

2004-2006

University Affiliation:

Utah State University

Department of Family, Consumer, and Human Development

Project Abstract:

Utah State University will investigate a potential biological marker, the ability to taste propylthiouracil (PROP), in relation to risk factors such as stress reactivity in mothers and poor emotion regulation in children. PROP is a harmless chemical that, genetically, some people can taste and others cannot. Participants include approximately 137 mother-child pairs who participated in the Early Head Start Research and Evaluation project, and 122 mother-child pairs from a middle income comparison group. All mother-child pairs were previously assessed during infancy. Data collection will include PROP tasting, observation of a challenging puzzle task, standardized testing, self-report measures, and previously videotaped interactions. Measures will include the general Labeled Magnitude Scale, to rate taste perception of PROP, the Differentiation of Self Inventory, to measure emotional and stress reactivity, and observational ratings of maternal sensitivity and support and child emotion regulation. Analyses will be conducted to determine characteristics of mothers and children who have the biological marker compared to those who do not. The primary aim of the research is to work towards the development of an intervention that addresses biological risk factors and promotes good parenting.

Sample:

N=137 follow up mother-child pairs who were part of the EHSRE project and 122 middle-income mother-child pairs

Measures:

Child

PROP Taste perception using the general Labeled Magnitude Scale
Observational coding of Emotion Regulation
EASI: Emotionality and Sociability subscales
Leiter-R: Self Regulation subscale
Behavior Rating Scale (subscale of the Bayley)

Mother

PROP Taste perception using the general Labeled Magnitude Scale
Observational coding of mother's sensitivity towards her child
Differentiation of Self Inventory (2 subscales: Emotion Reactivity and I
Position)
Parenting Stress Index-Short Form

Erika Joye*

Project Title:

Implementation of Dialogic Reading in the Early Head Start Classroom

Grantee:

Erika Joye

Project Funding Years:

2004-2005

University Affiliation:

University of Denver
Department of Child, Family, and School Psychology

Project Abstract:

Through a partnership with the Clayton Family Futures Early Head Start (EHS), the University of Denver will use the Dialogic Reading technique to promote emergent literacy skills in EHS classrooms and homes. The study seeks to answer the following questions: (a) What supportive coaching strategies are successful in achieving teachers' consistent inclusion of Dialogic Reading practices in the classroom; (b) How do adult reading styles change after learning the Dialogic Reading technique; and (c) How much improvement occurs in children's expressive language production as a result of one-on-one reading with an adult? Children and teachers in two Head Start classrooms will participate in the study. Researchers will observe each teacher's reading sessions' with four children, gathering data about adult reading behaviors, adult reading language/style, and child utterances. Subsequent consultations with teachers will focus on feedback and suggestions about reading style techniques. Additional observations will be

conducted, to show teachers the progress of Dialogic Reading in the classroom. The primary aim of the research is to improve the understanding of Dialogic Reading implementation in EHS classrooms, and its effectiveness in improving language development.

Sample:

N=2 Early Head Start classrooms

Measures:

Child

Observation Form for Children's Language Production

Record Form: Amount of Dialogic Reading per week/per child

Teacher

Assessment: Adult Reading Style (a coding form for observational data)

Leanne Kallemeyn**

Project Title:

School Readiness, Assessment, and Accountability: Enhancing Local Head Start Programs

Grantee:

Leanne Kallemeyn

Project Funding Years:

2004-2006

University Affiliation:

University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

Bureau of Educational Research

Project Abstract:

The University of Illinois will examine a local Head Start program's understanding of school readiness and experiences with evaluation and accountability activities related to school readiness, focusing on the federal (i.e., National Reporting System) and local levels (i.e., on-going child assessments, expectations of public schools and parents). Participants will include approximately 100 Head Start staff members, 100 Head Start parents, 60 kindergarten teachers, and 150 Head Start children. Head Start staff, parents, and kindergarten teachers will complete various surveys to assess their understanding of practices related to school readiness and evaluation. Child data will be drawn from the program's National Reporting System and Creative Curriculum Progress and Outcomes Reporting Tool (CC-PORT). Classroom observations will be carried out based on the eight Head

Start Child Outcome Domains. Finally, interviews will be conducted with Head Start staff and parents regarding school readiness and accountability. Combining survey data with child assessments, classroom observations and interviews, the researchers plan to gain insight into the program's understanding of, and experiences with, accountability and evaluation. The researchers aim to answer questions pertaining to the program's practices regarding school readiness and the effects of evaluation activities and accountability requirements on the program.

Sample:

N=100 Head Start staff members; 100 Head Start parents; 60 kindergarten teachers; 180 Head Start children

Measures:

National Reporting System
Creative Curriculum
Surveys and Interviews

Addie Lafferty**

Project Title:

Promoting Emergent Literacy Skills with Bilingual Children: Examining Children's Outcomes Using a Spanish-English Print Referencing Intervention

Grantee:

Addie Lafferty

Project Funding Years:

2004-2006

University Affiliation:

Arizona State University
Infant Child Research Programs

Project Abstract:

In a two-year longitudinal study Arizona State University will examine the efficacy of a Spanish-English print referencing intervention for bilingual preschoolers. The specific goals of the project are to: (a) promote children's literacy development in the domains of print and phonological awareness through a classroom-based intervention using print referencing strategies in Spanish and English; (b) determine the efficacy of a bilingual print referencing intervention; (c) track the literacy outcomes of children participating from preschool through the end of kindergarten; and (d) to disseminate the study's results. Approximately 150 children and 44 teachers and assistants from 22 Head Start classrooms will participate in the

research. Participants will be divided into two groups, consisting of intervention classrooms and contrast classrooms. In the intervention classrooms, teachers will be trained in the use of print referencing strategies and will use these techniques during small group book reading. In the contrast classrooms, children will receive the standard curriculum. All children will be pre-tested in Spanish and English to assess their vocabulary, alphabet knowledge, print knowledge, and phonological awareness. Teachers will be videotaped at the beginning and end of the project to measure changes in the use of print referencing strategies of interest during book reading activities. Children and teachers will be tracked over the course of the project to determine the efficacy of the intervention. After the intervention year and at the end of kindergarten, children will again be tested in English and Spanish to assess their emergent literacy skills and determine longer term effects of the intervention. Researchers believe the project will help identify strategies to prevent delays in early literacy development among children who are English Language Learners (ELL).

Sample:

N=150 Head Start children; and their 44 Head Start teachers and assistants

Measures:

Children

Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test-III (PPVT-III)

Test de Vocabulario en Imagenes Peabody (TVIP)

Phonological Awareness Literacy Screening-Pre-kindergarten (PALS-Pre-K)

Spanish Phonological Awareness Assessment (SPAA)

English and Spanish alphabet knowledge assessments

English and Spanish print and word awareness assessments

Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS)

Teachers

Videotapes of print referencing behaviors of interest

Classroom

Early Language and Literacy Classroom Observation (ELLCO)

Doré LaForett**

Project Title:

Utilizing a Risk and Protection Framework to Examine Moderators of Parental Depression for Preschoolers' Emergent Literacy and Socioemotional Skills

Grantee:

Doré LaForett

Project Funding Years:
2004-2005

University Affiliation:
Temple University
Department of Psychology

Project Abstract:

Temple University will examine the relationship between risk and protective factors, parenting practices, and children's emergent literacy and socioemotional development. The proposed research will place special emphasis on the implications of parental depression on parenting behavior and children's developmental outcomes. The study seeks to investigate how home environment impacts children's functioning at Head Start, the extent to which Head Start parents are in need of assistance with mental health issues, and how family strengths impact child and parent functioning. Participants will include 200 Head Start families and their teachers, with a subsample of 40 families selected for a 6-month follow-up. In the first phase of the research, parents will complete instruments addressing demographic information, depression, neighborhood characteristics, literacy level, social support, efficacy regarding their child's education, beliefs about their child's play, and their home learning environment. Children will be assessed on their receptive language, verbal intelligence and expression, and decoding skills in literacy development. Finally, teachers will evaluate the children's classroom social skills and emotional self-regulation. The second phase of the research will involve a follow-up study to examine differences between low-risk and high-risk families. Families will be classified as either high- or low-risk based on reports of parental depression. The researchers aim to reveal how home environment impacts children's functioning at Head Start, and the extent to which assistance with mental health issues, such as depression, can improve parenting behaviors and child development.

Sample:

N=200 Head Start families (with a subset of 40 families engaged in the follow-up study)

Measures:

Parent

Demographic Questionnaire

Center for Epidemiological Studies Depression Scale (CES-D) (shortened version)

The Neighborhood Characteristics Questionnaire (NCQ)

Reading task from the FACES parent interview materials

The Family Support Scale

The About Being a Parent Scale

The Parent Play Beliefs Scale
The Activities with Your Child subscale from the FACES parent interview

Child

Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test, Third Edition (PPVT-III)
The Expressive One-Word Picture Vocabulary Test-Revised
Twelve subtests of the Developing Skills Checklist

Teacher

Penn Interactive Peer Play Scale
Emotion Regulation Checklist

Shannon Monahan* *

Project Title:

Emergent Numeracy and Cultural Orientations: Optimizing Math Learning Outcomes for Philadelphia Head Start Children

Grantee:

Shannon Monahan

Project Funding Years:

2004-2006

University Affiliation:

University of Pennsylvania
Graduate School of Education

Project Abstract:

The University of Pennsylvania will identify culturally relevant instructional features that can be incorporated into Head Start mathematics instruction to achieve optimal outcomes for low-income African American children. The project has four main objectives: (a) to test the comparative effectiveness of alternative forms of theory-based instructional methods designed to teach preschool math in a meaningful way; (b) to establish and validate a measure of engagement for Head Start children; (c) to investigate the impact of different instructional methods intended to teach math in a meaningful way on children's engagement in math activities; and (d) to translate the research findings into useful practice and measurement tools for Head Start classrooms. Participants will include 120 Head Start children in a randomized pre-post design experiment. Children will be randomly assigned to Math-Only, With-Story, and Math-and-Movement instructional groups or an Attention Control Comparison group. Pretest and posttest assessments will be used to determine if meaningful context and/or movement during instruction affect the children's math learning. Data from these experiments,

questionnaires filled out by parents and teachers, and focus groups will be used to assess the psychometric properties of the Child Engagement Measure, and evaluate children's engagement in math activities.

Sample:

N=120 Head Start children

Measures:

Child

The Test of Early Mathematics Ability, Third Edition (TEMA-3)

Child Engagement Measure (CEM)

Children's Engagement Questionnaire (CEQ)

E-Qual Observational Coding System (E-Qual)

Home Movement Expressiveness Questionnaire (HMEQ)

Child Activity Questionnaire (CAQ)

Africentric Home Environment Inventory (AHEI)

Preschool Learning Behaviors Scale (PLBS)

Sonya S. Myers**

Project Title:

Contextual and Dispositional Influences on Low-Income Children's School Adjustment

Grantee:

Sonya S. Myers

Project Funding Years:

2004-2005

University Affiliation:

University of New Orleans

Department of Psychology

Project Abstract:

The University of New Orleans will examine associations between child temperament, parent, and teacher factors, and school adjustment in Head Start children. The study has three main goals: (a) to assess various temperament characteristics and their relations to school adjustment; (b) to examine how parenting and temperament interact to predict school adjustment; and (c) to study how the teacher-child relationship can buffer or enhance the links between parenting and temperament factors to predict school adjustment. Participants will include 120 Head Start children, their parents, and their teachers. Five shortened scales from the Child Behavior Questionnaire (CBQ) will be completed by parents and teachers to assess

child temperament on two dimensions: negative reactivity and effortful control. To evaluate the parent-child relationship parents will complete the Preschool Parenting Measure (PPM). The Psychological Control Scale (PCS) will be used to measure parenting behaviors and parental psychological control. Teachers will complete the Student-Teacher Relationship Scale (STRS), the Children's School-related Knowledge, Skills, and Behavior Questionnaire, and the Child Behavior Scale to evaluate their relationship with the child and the child's social competence and behaviors with peers. The researchers hypothesize that: (a) children with low effortful control and high negative reactivity will have a greater prevalence of school behavior problems; (b) children's relations with their parents and teachers will be strongly correlated with school adjustment, and (c) children with a vulnerable temperament and negative social relationships with teachers and parents will be most at risk for school adjustment difficulties.

Sample:

N=154 Head Start children, their parents, and their teachers

Measures:

Parent

Preschool Parenting Measure (PPM)

Psychological Control Scale (PCS)

Child Behavior Questionnaire (CBQ)

Teacher

Student-Teacher Relationship Scale (STRS)

Child Behavior Questionnaire (CBQ)

Children's School-related Knowledge, Skills (Teacher Perception of Skills)

Child Behavior Scale (CBS)

Jennifer Neal**

Project Title:

The Correlates of Proactive and Reactive Aggression in an Early Childhood Head Start

Grantee:

Jennifer Neal

Project Funding Years:

2004-2005

University Affiliation:

University of North Carolina at Greensboro

Department of Psychology

Project Abstract:

The University of North Carolina will investigate aggression in Head Start populations, with the specific goal of validating the proactive and reactive aggression subtyping system and identifying parent and child factors associated with each aggression type. The research is designed to facilitate treatment by matching interventions more closely with the problem behavior. Participants will include approximately 90-100 Head Start children, and their parents. Parents and teachers will complete the Behavior Assessment System for Children, which measures physical and verbal aggression, and the Emotion Regulation Checklist, which evaluates children's ability to regulate emotions and self-soothe distress. Parents will also complete instruments to evaluate parenting strategies, parental violence, and interparental violence. Analyses will be conducted to assess the appropriateness of the proactive/reactive aggression distinction in a Head Start sample and examine parent and child variables as correlates of each subtype. The researchers hypothesize that: (a) reactive aggression in early childhood will be associated with emotional and behavioral overarousal in infancy; (b) more children will be categorized as reactive aggressive than proactive aggressive; and (c) proactive aggression in early childhood will be more strongly associated with parental aggression and reinforcement for aggressive behavior than reactive aggression.

Sample:

N=90-100 Head Start children, and their parents

Measures:

Child

Behavior Assessment System for Children
Emotion Regulation Checklist
Conflict Tactics Scale (revised)
Coping With Children's Negative Emotion Scale

Parent

Alabama Parenting Questionnaire
Parent-Child Conflict Tactics Scale

Amanda Quesenberry*

Project Title:

The Partnership Project: Social Emotional Foundations for Early Learning and School Readiness

Grantee:

Amanda Quesenberry

Project Funding Years:
2004-2005

University Affiliation:
University of Illinois
Department of Special Education

Project Abstract:

In partnership with the East Central Illinois Community Action Agency Head Start program, the University of Illinois will enhance the program's current practices in the areas of social and emotional development by identifying training needs and designing collaborative training and consultation services. Specifically, the project will address social emotional competence, challenging behavior, and effective interventions. Baseline data will be collected from East Central Illinois' 10 Head Start centers. One center will then be identified for specific project activities. The intervention will consist of training and follow-up support for the teachers at the identified center. Training sessions will be presented, during which teachers will work in teams to develop goals for implementation through action plans. In follow-up visits, the researchers will provide resources and support for implementing the identified strategies. Following the intervention, child outcome data and teacher attitude surveys will be collected for all children and teaching staff at the 10 centers. Data from the center that took part in the training will be compared to data from the other nine centers to assess the effectiveness of the intervention. Researchers hypothesize that the intervention will result in improved social and emotional outcomes among Head Start children.

Sample:
N=10 Head Start centers

Measures:
Inventory of Practices for Promoting Children's Social Competence

Mary Spagnola**

Project Title:
Family Routines and Rituals as Protective Factors for Physical and Mental Health in Children with Asthma Who Are Attending Head Start Preschool

Grantee:
Mary Spagnola

Project Funding Years:
2004-2005

University Affiliation:
Syracuse University
Department of Clinical Psychology

Project Abstract:

Syracuse University will study how family factors, including predictable routines and meaningful rituals, protect children from some of the risks associated with asthma. The study has four goals: (a) to determine the family correlates of health in children with asthma attending Head Start; (b) to determine the extent to which family functioning and the practice of predictable routines and meaningful rituals determine mental health outcomes in children with asthma attending Head Start; (c) to examine the extent to which children's stories about family life and family response to asthma symptoms are reflective of caregiver-reported family functioning; and (d) to develop workshops for teachers and parents attending Head Start based on the results of this study. Participants will include 80 Head Start children diagnosed with asthma and their caregivers. Caregivers and children will be interviewed separately. The caregiver interview will consist of a home observation and nine questionnaires. Topics assessed will include the home environment, caregiver burden, family routines, family functioning, severity of the child's asthma, and child's behavior. The videotaped child interview will consist of an exercise in which the child will be shown story boards involving families with an asthmatic child and asked to act out the story using dolls and props. . The researchers expect the results of the study will identify specific areas of family functioning that protect children with asthma from experiencing physical and psychological health-related difficulties. The aim is to develop methods that utilize this information to benefit children, families, Head Start staff, and the community.

Sample:

N=80 Head Start children with asthma, and their caregivers

Measures:

Caregiver

Demographic Questionnaire

Home Environment Questionnaire

Family Routines Questionnaire- Asthma Version

The Pediatric Asthma Caregiver's Quality of Life Questionnaire

The Family Assessment Device

Functional Severity of Asthma Scale

Child Behavior Checklist (CBCL)

Ages and Stages Questionnaire

Child

Family Narrative Consortium Child Storytelling Task