

Head Start Graduate Student Research Program: 2005 Research Scholars

* 2005-2007 ** 2005-2006

Laura Bellows*

Project Title:

Food Friends Get Movin' with Mighty Moves: An Obesity Prevention Pilot Project

Mentor:

Jennifer Anderson

Project Funding Years:

2005-2007

University Affiliation:

Colorado State University

Department of Food Science and Human Nutrition

Project Abstract:

Colorado State University will implement the Food Friends and Mighty Moves program to address the need for Head Start and preschool programs to promote healthy food choices, dietary variety, and increased physical activity with children and parents from low-income and minority populations. The specific goals of the project are to: (a) decrease the risk of overweight and obesity among low-income preschool children and their parents by providing a direct service program that teaches the importance of nutrition and physical activity while reinforcing school readiness skills; (b) design, develop, and assess a physical activity intervention, Fun Moves, for preschool-aged children and their families as part of the Food Friends program; and (c) impact the knowledge, awareness, and practice of preschool teachers and providers by providing specialty trainings, nutrition education, and physical activity program materials, and information on nutrition and physical activity for preschool-aged children. The Mighty Moves project will reach up to 160 children and families from eight Head Start centers across Colorado. Children and families will be evaluated based on pre-intervention measures and post-intervention measures. The results are expected to support the Food Friends and Mighty Moves program as an

effective approach to promoting healthy food choices, and improve child and family health.

Sample:

240 children and families

Measures:

Children

Body Mass Index (BMI)

Peabody Development Motor Scales (PDMS)

Pedometer

Activity Log

Teachers

Body Mass Index (BMI)

Pedometer

Activity Log

Process Questionnaire

Parents

Body Mass Index (BMI)

Parent Questionnaire

Pedometer

Activity Log

Margaret Caspe **

Project Title:

Educational Involvement Among Latino Head Start Families

Mentor:

Gigliana Melzi

Project Funding Years:

2005-2006

University Affiliation:

New York University

Department of Applied Psychology

Project Abstract:

New York University will investigate how educational involvement among Head Start Latino families contributes to young children's subsequent language and literacy development. The specific goals of the project are to: (a) uncover the family literacy patterns of Head Start Latino households in New York City; (b) understand how family literacy contributes to Latino

children's emergent literacy over time; and (c) work in partnership with Head Start teachers and parents to create a strengths-based family literacy project and to determine the influence the project will have on parental satisfaction with and participation in a family literacy program and teachers' perceptions of parents' educational involvement. The project will collect family literacy data on 90 Latino families to assess family literacy patterns and children's literacy skills. The first wave of the project will involve culturally appropriate observations and surveys conducted through home visits to investigate family literacy patterns. In the second wave, the project will assess children's literacy skills as a function of family literacy practices. The third and final wave of the study will incorporate previous findings to develop a family literacy program for Latino children. Results of the project are expected to advance knowledge about Latino children's literacy development and provide information about how Head Start programs could improve services for Latino Families.

Sample:

90 Latino Families

Measures:

Parents

Family Literacy Practices

Family Involvement Questionnaire

Mother-Child Book-Reading Task

Children

James Language Dominance Test

Concepts about Print

Letter Identification

Narrative Task

Feelings about Literacy

Katherine Driscoll **

Project Title:

Banking Time: Effectiveness of an Intervention Designed to Promote Supportive Teacher-Child Relationships

Mentor:

Robert Pianta

Project Funding Years:

2005-2006

University Affiliation:
University of Virginia
Curry School of Education

Project Abstract:

The project will implement and investigate the effects of the Banking Time intervention in Head Start classrooms. Specifically, the main objectives of the study are to (a) collaborate with Head Start Teachers to implement the Banking Time intervention; (b) examine the effects of the intervention on teacher-child relationships and outcomes; and (c) obtain feedback and provide resources for effective implementation of Banking Time in Head Start classrooms during and following completion of the study. Participants will include 40 Head Start teachers and 160 children from various Head Start classrooms. Teachers will be randomly assigned to either an experimental group (n=20), where they will implement the Banking Time intervention, or a wait-list control group (n=20), where they will maintain their typical classroom routine. Four children from each classroom will be randomly selected to investigate the impact of the Banking Time intervention. Researchers anticipate that the results of the study will provide evidence that consistent, positive interactions with teachers positively affect children.

Sample

N=40 Head Start Teachers
N=160 Head Start Children

Measures:

Teacher

Questionnaire on Classroom Demographics
Questionnaire on Child Demographics
Student Teacher Relationship Scale (STRS)
Teacher-Child Interaction Task
Teacher-Child Rating Scale (TCRS)

Children

Young Children's Appraisals of Teacher Support (Y-CATS)
Teacher-Child Interaction Task

Teaching Assistant

Teacher-Child Rating Scale (TCRS)

Beth H. Garland *

Project Title:

Parenting Techniques and Parent Characteristics Associated with Child Externalizing Behavior Problems

Mentor:
Robert Heffer

Project Funding Years:
2005-2007

University Affiliation:
Texas A&M University
Department of Psychology

Project Abstract:

Texas A&M University will investigate the role of both positive and negative parenting techniques, as well as the role of parent characteristics (e.g., stress and distress), on early child externalizing behavior problems. Specifically, the study has two goals: (a) to examine the relations among both positive and negative parenting techniques, parent characteristics, and child behavior problems; and (b) to examine the contribution of both ethnicity and acculturation to the use of various parenting techniques and their influence on child behavior problems. Participants will include 300 primary caregivers from eight Head Start facilities in Texas and Mississippi. Parents and teachers will be surveyed in Spring and Fall 2006 semester of the school year. Results of the study will impact Head Start programs at the local classroom level, as well as the policy level. Results will assist with more precise early identification of at-risk families by Head Start staff, leading to: (a) better informed community referrals; (b) better understanding of the parental variables most influential on child behavior, which can be used to enhance parent training curricula, including those used by Head Start staff; (c) determining the benefits of parent involvement in Head Start programs; (d) consideration of the importance of ethnicity and acculturation on these relations to continue to foster a respectful and informed environment for Head Start families.

Sample:
N=300 Primary Caregivers
N=11 Head Start Teachers

Measures:
Primary Caregivers
Demographic Questionnaire
Alabama Parenting Questionnaire (APQ)
Parenting Stress Index (PSI)
Brief Symptom Inventory (BSI)
Bidimensional Acculturation Scale for Hispanics (BAS)
Behavior Assessment System for Children-2 (BASC-2)

Teachers

Behavior Assessment System for Children-2 (BASC-2)

Linda Lee *

Project Title:

Social Interaction with Peers, Peer Relationships, and Socioemotional Adjustment of Immigrant Children at Head Start

Mentor:

Carollee Howes, Rashmita Mistry

Project Funding Years:

2005-2007

University Affiliation:

Regents of the University California of Los Angeles
Graduate School of Education & Information Studies

Project Abstract:

The Regents of the University California of Los Angeles will examine the process by which experiences of immigration are related to children's socioemotional outcomes during the preschool period. The project seeks to answer the following questions: (a) how do the immigrant settlement experiences influence children's social interaction with peers and peer relationships at school? (b) do variations in children's social interaction with peers mediate the relation between settlement experiences and children's peer relationship? (c) how do classroom characteristics attenuate or strengthen the path from settlement experiences to socioemotional adjustment? Participants will include 125 families from Head Start preschools. Parent and teacher questionnaires, child interviews, and classroom observations will be conducted throughout a school year. The project aspires to develop intervention policies in Head Start that help mitigate risks inherent in the settlement process of children of immigrant families.

Sample:

125 families

Measures:

Teacher

Teacher Questionnaire

Pianta Student Teacher Relationship Scale

Child Behavior Scale (CBS)

Parents

Parent Questionnaire

Children

Howes Peer Play Snapshot Scale

Sociometric rating interview

Classroom

Teacher Questionnaire

Observer Rating of Child Behavior

Wendy Mages *

Project Title:

Does Drama Promote Early Childhood Development? The Effect of Drama on Language, Perspective-taking, and Imagination

Mentor:

Catherine Snow

Project Funding Years:

2005-2007

University Affiliation:

Harvard University

Graduate School of Education

Project Abstract:

This study will use a quasi-experimental multi-site design to investigate the impact of an innovative preschool drama program on urban Head Start children's development of language, perspective-taking, and imagination. This investigation seeks to answer the following research questions: (a) is participation in a high-quality drama program related to enhanced language, perspective-taking, and imagination development of young children enrolled in Head Start? (b) what are the key characteristics of the drama program that may contribute to Head Start children's enhanced language, perspective-taking, and imagination? Participants will include 155 four- and five-year-old children, 72 who participated in the drama program, and 83 who did not participate in the program. Children's language abilities, ability to construct a story, ability to comprehend emotions, and imaginative abilities will be assessed both before the start of the drama program and after it has concluded. It is anticipated that results from the study will support the preschool drama program as an engaging and pleasurable way to prepare Head Start children for school success.

Sample:
155 Head Start children

Measures:
Children
Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test (PPVT- III)
Mages Measure of Story Comprehension (MMSC)
Diagnostic Evaluation of Language Variation (DELV)
Rabbit-Fox Test
Telephone Task
Assessment of Pretend Action

Teacher
Teacher Survey (based on FACES 2000 Head Start Teacher Interview)

Carola Matera *

Project Title:
Project WRITE! Benefits of Developmental Writing Instruction in Bilingual Head Start Preschool Children

Mentor:
Michael Gerber

Project Funding Years:
2005-2007

University Affiliation:
University of California
Center for Advanced Studies of Individual Differences

Project Abstract:
The University of California will use a randomized experimental design to evaluate an intervention for improving writing development for Head Start preschool children whose first language is Spanish. In addition, they will test the maintenance of learning gains when children begin kindergarten. The study seeks to answer the following research questions: (a) is an instructional intervention designed to facilitate writing development effective for Spanish-speaking children in Head Start? (b) do the effects of the intervention interact with initial levels of vocabulary knowledge? Eighty (N=80) Head Start children will participate in the study. The study will have an alternative treatment control group, who will receive an alternative treatment not related to writing, and a treatment group, who will receive an instructional activity based on targeted instruction and storybook examples. Writing samples will be collected and evaluated. Findings of the study are

expected to support instructional and curricular innovations in Head Start programs that produce more optimal development in reading and writing in kindergarten and first grade.

Sample:

N=80 Children

Measures:

Early Language and Literacy Classroom Observations (ELLCO)

Children

Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test-Revised (PPVT-R)

Test de Vocabulario en Imágenes Peabody

Concepts About Print

Instrumento de Observación de los Logros de la Lecto-escritura Inicial

Coded assessments of children's writing samples

Jennifer McCray *

Project Title:

Preschool Math Teaching: Relationships between Pedagogical Content Knowledge, Teaching Practices, and Child Outcomes

Mentor:

Jie-Qi Chen

Project Funding Years:

2005-2007

University Affiliation:

Erikson Institute

Project Abstract:

Erikson Institute, partnering with Head Start programs of the Children and Youth Services Division of the City of Chicago, will examine the relationship between teachers' pedagogical content knowledge for preschool math and both math-related teaching practices and gains in young children's mathematics achievement. The study has three main objectives: (a) to determine what types of and how much preschool math pedagogical content knowledge teachers possess; (b) to examine whether preschool math pedagogical content knowledge predicts math-related teaching practices; and (c) to compare preschool math pedagogical content knowledge and math-related teaching practices as predictors of children's gains in math achievement. Participants in the study will include 60 Head Start teachers and 360 four-year-old children. A new teacher interview based on literature

review and review by experts will be used to evaluate teachers' preschool math pedagogical content knowledge. Teacher speech samples, classroom observations and teacher background surveys will also be employed. Children's mathematical gains will be assessed using the Test of Early Mathematics Ability, 3rd Ed. (TEMA-3). Results from the study will be used to develop plans for teacher professional development to improve the mathematical skills of children in Head Start.

Sample:

N=60 Head Start Teachers

N=360 Head Start Children

Measures:

Teachers

Preschool Math Pedagogical Content Knowledge Interview

Math-Rich Environment Checklist

Math-Related Verbalization Coding per Klibanoff, Levine, Huttenlocher, Vasilyeva, & Hedges (in press)

Children

Test of Early Mathematics Ability, 3rd Ed. (TEMA-3)

Elizabeth McLaren **

Project Title:

Partnering to Encourage Transfer of Learning

Mentor:

Jennifer Grisham-Brown

Project Funding Years:

2005-2006

University Affiliation:

University of Kentucky

Special Education and Rehabilitation Counseling

Project Abstract:

The University of Kentucky, along with the Bluegrass Head Start Program, will introduce two methods of professional development follow-up that promote the transfer of learning from training to the Head Start classroom. The study seeks to answer the following research questions: (a) are follow-up professional development strategies effective to encourage the transfer of learning from the workshop to the classroom for Head Start teachers? (b) is peer support or consultant support related to higher levels of teacher

behavior change and child behavior change? Study participants will include 18 Head Start teachers and 50 students. All teachers will participate in in-service teacher training sessions, and participants in the two intervention groups will receive follow-up supports. It is expected that the training sessions will increase the teachers' knowledge and improve their teaching strategies related to social and emotional competence. It is anticipated that this will in turn improve classroom climate, increase children's social and emotional competence, and reduce challenging behaviors. The findings should help bring improved services to children and families.

Sample:

N=18 Head Start Teachers

Measures:

Consultant Rating Profile (Noell et al., 2005)

Treatment Acceptability Rating Form – Revised (Reimers & Wacker, 1988)

Pre-post tests

Teaching Pyramid Fidelity Checklist (Hemmeter & Fox, 2005)

Social Skills Rating System (SSRS)

Teacher Efficacy Scale (Guskey & Passaro, 1994)

Focus Group

Marissa Owsianik **

Project Title:

Building Capacity Within Head Start for Quality Whole-Child Assessment

Mentor:

Christine McWayne

Project Funding Year:

2005-2006

University Affiliation:

New York University

Department of Applied Psychology

Project Abstract:

New York University, partnering with a Head Start program in New York City, will establish co-constructed research goals with Head Start educational staff to enhance on-going whole-child assessment with an emphasis on building capacity for quality assessment of children's social-emotional strengths and needs. Specifically, the study has three objectives: (a) investigate the quality of information from existing child assessments; (b) work toward maximizing the use of information that is already collected to help inform

the program's planning around whole-child assessment; and (c) consider how to involve parents in the program around the issue of children's social-emotional development. Participants will include Head Start children (N=187). The psychometric properties of instruments that are employed in the program to measure children's progress in educational classroom settings will be examined and discussed with educational staff. Focus groups will be conducted with parents (N=16) and teachers (N=16) to investigate their perspectives on children's social-emotional development and their role in the process. Researchers anticipate that the results will help parents and teachers improve social-emotional development in Head Start children, and will help determine future steps toward a larger, co-constructed research agenda.

Sample:

N=187 Head Start Children

Measures:

Preschool Child Observation Record, Second Edition (COR)
Early Screening Inventory-Revised (ESI-R)
Adjustment Scales for Preschool Intervention (ASPI)

Amanda Quesenberry **

Project Title:

Examining the Relationship Between Child Guidance and Behavior Policies and Procedures, Teacher Perceptions of Competence, Support, and Job Satisfaction, and Child Outcomes in Head Start Settings

Mentor:

Michaelene Ostrosky, Mary Louis Hemmeter

Project Funding Years:

2005-2006

University Affiliation:

University of Illinois
College of Education

Project Abstract:

The University of Illinois will examine the potential relationship between program policies and procedures related to child guidance and the perceived levels of job satisfaction, support, and competence as reported by Head Start teachers. In addition, the relationship between program policies and procedures, teacher competence and support, and teacher reports of challenging behaviors and social skills in their classrooms will be examined.

Six Head Start programs will be selected based to participate in this study. Two sites will be randomly selected from each of the six identified programs. At these two sites, all classroom teachers providing consent will participate in a survey of their perceived level of job satisfaction, perceived competence in supporting children's social emotional development and addressing challenging behavior, and perceived level of support that they receive as it relates to working with children with challenging behaviors. Additionally, these teachers will complete the Social Skills Rating System (SSRS) (Gresham & Elliott, 1990) for each of the children in their classroom at each selected site. Results of the study are expected to show a better understanding of the relationship between challenging behaviors and later developmental issues of children in Head Start settings. The study is also expected to have an increased awareness of the preparation and support needed for teachers to effectively address children's challenging behavior.

Sample:

N= Approximately 65 Head Start Teachers

N= Approximately 1250 Children

Measures:

Directors/Teachers

Survey Created by Study

Social Skills Rating System (SSRS)