

Head Start Graduate Student Research Program: 2006 Research Scholars

* 2006-2008 ** 2006-2007

Mary Dallas Allen*

Project Title:

Attributes of Effective Head Start Mental Health Consultants: A Mixed Method Study of Rural and Urban Programs

Mentor:

Eileen Brennan

Project Funding Years:

2006-2008

University Affiliation:

Portland State University, Graduate School of Social Work,
Research and Training Center on Family Support and Children's Mental Health

Project Abstract:

In collaboration with Head Start programs in Oregon and Alaska, Portland State University will seek to better understand the skills and attributes of rural and urban mental health consultants that contribute to the effectiveness of mental health consultation in Head Start programs. The study will seek to answer the following questions: (a) what attributes of mental health consultants are most strongly associated with teacher reported effectiveness of mental health consultation for improving child outcomes in rural and urban Head Start programs? (b) what attributes of mental health consultants are most strongly associated with teacher reports of the quality of mental health consultant and staff relationships in rural and urban Head Start programs? (c) what are early childhood mental health consultants' perceptions of how to best develop relationships with staff in rural and urban Head Start programs? (d) what are mental health consultants' perceptions of the professional skills, attributes, and supports needed to build positive relationships with staff and to produce positive consultation outcomes in rural and urban Head Start programs? and (e) what are the challenges and barriers to providing mental health consultation in rural areas? A secondary analysis of data from a national survey of 648

Head Start staff and 68 mental health consultants will be conducted to explore the attributes of consultants in rural and urban Head Start programs. Additionally telephone focus groups will be conducted to determine urban and rural mental health consultants' perceptions of the skills, attributes, and supports needed to build positive relationships with Head Start staff. Results of the study are expected to enhance the early childhood mental health consultation services provided by both rural and urban Head Start programs.

Sample:

648 Head Start Staff (survey)
68 Mental Health Consultants (survey)
25 Mental Health Consultants (focus groups)

Measures:

Head Start Mental Health Services Survey: (a) *attributes of mental health consultant*, (b) *effectiveness in helping child outcomes*, (c) *quality of relationships between staff and mental health consultant*

Rebecca Sandford DeRousie*

Project Title:

Sustainability of Evidence-Based Curriculum in Head Start Classrooms

Mentor:

Karen Bierman

Project Funding Years:

2006-2008

University Affiliation:

The Pennsylvania State University
College of Health and Human Development

Project Abstract:

The Pennsylvania State University will examine the factors that contribute to successful implementation and sustainability of an evidence-based preschool curriculum, the Head Start Research-based Developmentally Informed (REDI) project. The specific aims of the project are to: (a) evaluate implementation quality in the Head Start REDI randomized trial; (b) ascertain what factors contribute to variability in implementation quality; (c) determine what aspects of the REDI curriculum are sustained after teachers are no longer required by the research project to implement it; and (d) determine which factors are associated with a high level of sustainability and maintenance of the REDI curriculum. The sample will include 22 lead

teachers in the intervention classrooms of the larger Head Start REDI trial. A mixed-methods approach will be used which will include teacher reports, REDI mentor reports, classroom observations, and a qualitative teacher interview. Findings from this study are expected to provide Head Start with a concrete example of how to implement and maintain evidence-based programs.

Sample:

42 Head Start Classrooms (22 Intervention, 20 Control)

Measures:

Teachers

The Background Information Survey

Professional Development Questionnaire

Center for Epidemiological Studies of Depression Scale (CES-D)

Self-Efficacy Scale

The Organizational Culture Scale

Intervention Teacher Self-Report Addendum

Intervention Teacher Self-Report Sustainability Addendum

Head Start REDI Qualitative Sustainability Questionnaire

Classroom

Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS)

REDI Trainers

REDI Training Implementation Ratings

REDI Trainer Process Ratings

REDI Trainer Sustainability Ratings

Sustainability Process Ratings

Linnie Green*

Project Title:

A Play Intervention with Mothers and Their Young Children

Mentor:

Christine McWayne

Project Funding Years:

2006-2008

University Affiliation:

New York University

Steinhardt School of Psychology

Department of Applied Psychology

Project Abstract:

New York University will implement a dyadic, mother-paired play intervention that focuses on the importance of mother-child play as an avenue for enhancing children's social and emotional competence. The specific objectives of the study are: (a) identify mothers of young children who demonstrate positive play skills with their children, as well as those who do not appear to demonstrate these skills; (b) implement an intervention to enhance the manner in which mothers engage with their children during play to promote children's social and emotional competence; and (c) evaluate the effectiveness of the dyadic, mother-paired play intervention by examining child outcomes, mother outcomes, and mother-child outcomes via pre-post assessments. The proposed intervention will include 80 mother-child dyads recruited from a target Head Start center. The mother-child dyads will be randomly assigned to an intervention or control group. Mothers' beliefs about child development will be measured using the Knowledge of Infant Development Inventory (KIDI), children's social-emotional functioning will be assessed using the Vineland Social-Emotional Early Childhood Scales and the Social Competence and Behavior Evaluation. Results of the study are expected to help aid in building capacity for programs like Head Start.

Sample:

80 Mother-Child Dyads

Measures:

Parents

Knowledge of Infant Development Inventory

Children:

Vineland Social-Emotional Early Childhood Scales

Social Competence and Behavior Evaluation – Preschool Edition

Mother-Child:

Maternal Behavior Rating Scale

Jessica Krueger*

Project Title:

Evidence Based Practices with Head Start Students At-Risk for Later Behavior Problems: Using an Evidence-Based Parent Training Program

Mentor:

John Carlson

Project Funding Years:

2006-2008

University Affiliation:

Michigan State University
Department of Counseling, Educational Psychology, & Special Education
College of Education

Project Abstract:

Michigan State will examine the acceptability, integrity and effectiveness of the use of the *Incredible Years Parent Training Program* in a self-administered format to parents of children enrolled in a local Head Start program. Specifically, the study objectives are to investigate the use of the program on improving children's behavioral functioning and parent interactions with their children within actual practice and bring research into practice in a university-community collaboration. Study participants will include 40 Head Start parents who rated their children as being significantly at-risk for behavioral problems. The participants will be randomly assigned to receive the intervention from within the agency or outside of the agency. Parents will complete the Devereux Early Childhood Assessment (DECA), the Parent Practices Interview, the Behavior Assessment System for Children-Monitor for ADHD, and the Global Change Form to measure children's behaviors. Results of the study are expected to contribute to the current knowledge on effective treatment of at-risk children and the prevention of behavioral problems.

Sample:

40 Head Start Parents

Measures:

Parents

Devereux Early Childhood Assessment (DECA)

Parent Practices Interview

Behavior Assessment System for Children-Monitor for ADHD-Parent

Global Change Form

Goal Attainment Scale

Teachers:

Behavior Assessment System for Children-Teacher Rating Scales Monitor

Devereux Early Childhood Assessment (DECA)

Pelin Munis**

Project Title:

An Investigation of the Role of Temperament on Head Start Children's School Readiness

Mentor:
Darryl Greenfield

Project Funding Years:
2006-2007

University Affiliation:
University of Miami
Department of Psychology

Project Abstract:

The University of Miami will investigate the role of temperament on children's school readiness. Specifically, the study has two main objectives: (a) to determine if approaches to learning is the mechanism through which temperament influences Head Start children's school readiness; and (b) to determine if approaches to learning influences school readiness differently for children with different temperament styles. The study will use data on 274 Head Start children as part of a larger project for improving Head Start children's school readiness. For this expansion study, a teacher measure of children's temperament, the Preschool Temperament Classification System (PTCS), was developed and used to identify children's temperament as undercontrolled, resilient, or undercontrolled. In addition, children's approaches to learning was measured using the Preschool Learning Behaviors Scale, a battery of structured tasks, and the approaches to learning subscale of the Galileo System for Electronic Management of Learning. Children's school readiness was measured using a direct assessment, the school readiness composite of the Bracken Basic Concepts Scale – Revised, as well as teacher reports using the language and emergent literacy, early math, and nature and science subscales of the Galileo. Results of the study are expected to establish a better understanding of the effect of temperament on Head Start children's learning and development, as well as a better understanding of children's approaches to learning.

Sample:
274 Head Start Children
Head Start Teachers

Measures:
Teacher
Preschool Temperament Classification System (PTCS)
Preschool Learning Behaviors Scale (PLBS)
Galileo System for Electronic Management of Learning

Children:
Direct Assessment of Approaches to Learning (persistence, curiosity,

problem-solving flexibility, cognitive inhibition)
Bracken Basic Concepts Scale-Revised (BBCS-R)

Jessica Vick*

Project Title:

Teacher-Child Relationships: Examining Relations Among Children's Risks, Relationships, and Externalizing Behaviors in Head Start

Mentor:

Brenda Jones Harden

Project Funding Years:

2006-2008

University Affiliation:

University of Maryland, College Park
College of Education
Department of Human Development

Project Abstract:

The University of Maryland will explore how the interaction between teacher-child relationships and family risk factors impacts children's externalizing behaviors. The specific study objectives are to: (a) examine whether teacher-child relationship quality moderates the impact of family risk (parental mental health and family functioning) on children's externalizing behaviors; (b) examine whether teacher, child, and classroom characteristics are associated with high quality teacher-child relationships; and (c) develop a partnership with Head Start to determine how researchers and practitioners can work together to enhance teacher-child relationships. The study will be implemented in 13 Head Start classrooms with 100 children, their primary caregivers, and their teachers. A latent variable structural equation model will be tested to examine relations among variables. Parents' mental health will be indicated by depression and parenting stress. Family functioning will be indicated by family conflict and cohesion. Teacher-child relationship quality will be assessed using both teacher reports and an observation measure of teacher child interactions. Children's externalizing behaviors will be assessed using the Caregiver-Teacher Report Form 1 ½ -5. Results are expected to aid Head Start in determining how the program can be more effective in helping to protect high-risk children from developing externalizing behaviors.

Sample:

N = 100 Children,

N = 100 Primary Caregivers

N = 13 Teachers

Measures:

Teachers

Student Teacher Relationship Scale

Lead Teacher Background Information Questionnaire

Caregiver-Teacher Report Form 1½ - 5

Primary Caregivers:

Background Questionnaire

Family Environment Scale

Center for Epidemiological Studies of Depression Scale (CES-D)

Parenting Stress Index

Observation:

Observational Record of the Caregiving Environment