

Head Start Graduate Student Research Program: 2010 Research Scholars

Catherine Bracaliello

Project Title:

Quantity, quality, and content: An empirical examination of key integrity components in Early Head Start home visiting

Mentor:

Patricia Manz, Ph.D.

Project Funding Years:

2010-2011

University Affiliation:

Lehigh University

Project Abstract:

Despite attempts to examine isolated components of service delivery, mixed outcomes regarding the effectiveness of home visiting call for a more comprehensive evaluation of program implementation and integrity (Sweet & Appelbaum, 2004). Specifically, the local Early Head Start (EHS) program is interested in examining the extent to which services are received by the culturally-diverse children and families in order to promote consistent, high-quality home visiting. The three goals of this project include: (a) to develop, in partnership with local stakeholders, the Home Visiting Process Scale (HVPS), a psychometrically-sound and practical measurement tool for EHS programs to use in assessing the quality of home visiting services; (b) to empirically examine the multiple integrity components of "quantity, quality, and content" in home visiting service delivery (Raikes et al., 2006); and (c) to comprehensively evaluate the local service delivery of EHS according to these indicators. Initial phases of this project will be devoted to partnership activities, followed by measurement development of the HVPS and retrieval of home visiting service delivery information. Rigorous statistical scaling procedures (i.e., Exploratory Factor Analysis) will be applied in investigating the underlying constructs of the HVPS. Furthermore, advanced Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) will be used to examine how the observed integrity indicators fit the conceptual model of Raikes et al. (2006). Regression analyses will be conducted to examine the implementation of local EHS home visiting services. Immediate results of this study will provide local EHS directors with the capacity to identify targets for program adaptation.

Moreover, expected benefits include meaningful directions and implications for future program evaluations and policy development. A clear outcome of this study will be the availability of an evaluation tool and a model of integrity assessment that can be used to tailor and monitor services in other EHS programs. In extended research, this model of integrity assessment will enable policy makers to understand the vital connections between EHS home visiting components and program outcomes, further promoting EHS home visiting as a viable intervention for culturally-diverse children and families.

Sample:

Approximately 150 families and young children from birth to three-years of age in a mix of urban and rural communities and served by an Early Head Start program located in the Mid-Atlantic. Latino families (62%) constitute the single largest ethnic group served. Over 43% of families are primarily Spanish-speaking. Children between two to three years of age are the largest age group served (56%) by the program.

Measures:

Child/family demographic and cultural variables

- Caregiver race and ethnicity
- Caregiver native/primary language
- Caregiver age
- Caregiver education
- Caregiver years in US
- Household income level
- Child race and ethnicity
- Child age at enrollment/exit
- Child's primary language spoken at home

Quantity of home visiting

- Number of visits received
- Duration of visiting (i.e., in weeks)
- Intensity of visitation (i.e., the average rate of home visits received each month)

Quality of home visiting

The multiple underlying dimensions of the Home Visiting Process Scale (HVPS) will serve as indicators of quality.

Content of home visiting

Goals identified in weekly home visit session records in the following broad areas:

- Child development and learning
- Child health/nutrition
- Family-focused objectives

Joy Lorenzo Kennedy

Mentor:

Gigliana Melzi, Ph.D.

Project Funding Years:

2010-2012

University Affiliation:

New York University

Project Title:

Narrative development in dual-language learning Latino Head Start children:
Coherence across tasks and languages

Project Abstract:

Information is lacking on the normative developmental trajectory of children's narrative skills across the preschool years, particularly for DLL children. This study seeks to address this gap in the literature by assessing narrative development among 125 DLL Latino children from three Head Start programs in New York City at three time points across the school year. Children engaged in three narrative tasks – chronicling a personal experience, telling a story based on a set of pictures, and narrating a wordless picture book – will be asked to relate each story in both English and Spanish. The primary objectives of the proposed study are: (1) to understand the developmental progression of children's narrative skills in both English and Spanish; (2) to examine the effect of narrative task and language spoken on the coherence of children's narratives; (3) to investigate the relationship between children's narrative ability and other standardized measures of language ability and pre-literacy; and (4) to develop a workshop series to share knowledge gained from the proposed study with teachers and parents.

Sample:

125 preschool children (59 boys; 66 girls) attending three Head Start programs in New York City, whose parents self-identified as Latino. Children come from a broad range of Latino backgrounds, including Dominican (42%), Mexican (32%), Puerto Rican (5%) and South American (5%), and all come from economically underprivileged homes. On average, children are

45.8 months old (SD = 6.5), and most (69.7%) speak Spanish as their first language.

Measures:

- Narrative coherence for three narrative tasks: recounting a personal experience, constructing a story from four pictures of a child playing in the park, and narrating a wordless picture book (Frog, Where Are You? [Mayer, 1969]).
- Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test (PPVT; Dunn & Dunn, 2007)
- Test de Vocabulario en Imágenes Peabody (TVIP; Dunn, Padilla, Lugo, & Dunn, 1986)
- Preschool Word and Print Awareness test (PWPA; Justice & Ezell, 2001)
- Letter/word identification task
- Demographic questionnaire

Kelley O'Carroll

Mentor:

Stephanie Jones, Ph.D.

Project Funding Years:

2010-2012

University Affiliation:

Harvard University

Project Title:

Beyond Barriers: The Relationship between Head Start Parents' Social Capital, Their Involvement, and Children's Preschool Competencies

Project Abstract:

Grounded in Head Start's commitment to parent involvement, this proposed study will explore whether parents' social networks and resources indirectly affect children's preschool competencies through parent involvement in learning at home and in Head Start among Puerto Rican, non-Hispanic White, and Latino immigrant families. In order to maximize parent involvement, programs can address barriers to involvement that many parents, especially immigrant and ethnic minority parents, face, including schedule conflicts, childcare needs, and work obligations (Lamb-Parker et al., 2001). In addition, programs might also boost factors that positively influence parent involvement and influence children's preschool competencies. One such factor is social capital, or resources exchanged

within social networks (Bourdieu, 1986). Race and ethnicity appear to influence the nature of social capital that parents deploy to support their children's education (Diamond, Wang, & Gomez, 2006; Louie, 2006). The relationships among social capital, parent involvement, and children's outcomes in ethnically diverse families have not been simultaneously examined in Head Start. The proposed study will extend prior research by examining social capital, parent involvement, and children's preschool competencies in Puerto Rican, non-Hispanic White, and Latino immigrant families in Head Start (n=250). Data will be gathered through interviews, parent questionnaires and child preschool competency assessments. Descriptive analyses will describe the characteristics of parents' social capital, and a path model will be tested that posits parent involvement as a mediator of the relationship between social capital and children's preschool competencies. Findings will inform Head Start strategies to build parent involvement and support children's school readiness in families of different ethnic backgrounds.

Sample:

Across three target programs, the survey sample will include 250 parents, roughly divided into three groups: 80 Puerto Rican, 80 Latino immigrant, and 80 Non-Hispanic White. Children of all parents participating in the surveys will be assessed. Finally, a sub-sample of approximately 40 parents as well as center-based Family Service Coordinators will participate in interviews about social capital.

Measures:

- Family Involvement Questionnaire (Fantuzzo, Tighe, & Childs, 2000)
- Bracken School Readiness Assessment (Bracken, 2007)
- Parent Education Communication Survey (This measure was designed for the study and will be refined through course of study)

Sandra Plata-Potter

Mentor:

Lisa Knoche, Ph.D.

Project Funding Years:

2010-2012

University Affiliation:

University of Nebraska-Lincoln

Project Title:

Parental Literacy Belief and Engagement in Homes of Dual Language Learners: A Mixed Methods Study

Project Abstract:

The primary objective of the proposed study is to better understand how the engagement of Latino parents in a Head Start emergent literacy project evolves into tangible home literacy practices and how these contribute to their child's literacy outcomes. The hypothesis is that Latino parental engagement in a Head Start emergent literacy project and Latino parental beliefs regarding literacy practices relate to changes in their observed home literacy practices. It is further hypothesized that these home practices are related to child literacy outcomes. A concurrent triangulation mixed methods design will be used for the study. The quantitative component consists of secondary data analysis involving a hierarchical linear model (i.e., multilevel regression models) to statistically test the research hypotheses. For the qualitative component of the study, in-depth interviews will be conducted with a subset of the participating families. One hundred forty two Latino parents and their children from a rural Midwest community will be participants in this study. A better understanding of how Latino parental beliefs and engagement in home literacy practices relates to Head Start dual language learner outcomes will help to inform Head Start practitioners when designing and implementing strategies that are targeted at supporting Latino parents in their endeavor to create home environments that contribute to their children's literacy development.

Sample:

Participants for this study will consist of families who have self-identified as Latino residing in a rural Midwest community with a preschool age child, enrolled in a Head Start program. The quantitative component of the study will consist of 142 Latino families who have participated in an emergent literacy intervention program for preschoolers. For the qualitative component of this study, a subsample of 30 families from the 142 families will be invited to participate in in-depth interviews.

Measures:

Child measures:

- Phonological Awareness Literacy Screening – Preschool (PALS-PreK; Invernizzi, Sullivan, Meier, & Swank, 2004)
- The Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test – Third Edition, Part A and Part B (PPVT-III, Part A and Part B; Dunn, & Dunn, 1997)
- The Woodcock-Muñoz Language Survey–Revised Spanish Form (WMLS-R Spanish Form; Alvarado, Ruef, & Schrank, 2005)

Parental Measures:

- Parent attendance at Family Literacy Events (parent-child focused interactions held in the evening, twice monthly, at the center-based preschool program)
- Family Involvement Questionnaire (FIQ; Fantuzzo, Tighe, & Childs, 2000)
- The Family Literacy Portfolio (collection of documentation that demonstrates the actions of families learning and working together on literacy development)
- Parent Interview on experiences, opinions, values, behaviors and beliefs regarding emergent literacy

Bradford Wiles

Mentor:

Victoria Fu, Ph.D.

Project Funding Years:

2010-2012

University Affiliation:

Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University

Project Title:

Shared Reading, Guided Participation, and Mind-Mindedness among Appalachian Head Start Families

Project Abstract:

This study seeks to develop, deliver and evaluate the results of a program targeting family reading practices in rural Head Start families in Appalachia. Shared reading (i.e., the act of reading together) has profound implications for children's long-term cognitive and social-emotional development and on their home and school life. Additionally, shared reading is an authentic, meaningful, relevant activity setting that affords children from diverse backgrounds and abilities opportunities to learn about reading and literacy, taking into account their individual needs and level of development. To this end, the shared reading program provides opportunities for adults to understand the dynamic learning processes that occur in children's zone of proximal development (ZPD) and strategies for scaffolding children's development to gain reading and literacy skills. This project will assess the shared reading program's effects over time on adults' frequency and use of the scaffolding, guided participation, and mind-mindedness techniques presented in the program. This program meets the needs of the Head Start

families involved in the research through partnering with Head Start's existing literacy program and providing families with the training, techniques and knowledge to help their children to learn to read and gain knowledge, beliefs and behaviors that will help prepare them for kindergarten. A randomized, controlled trial will be used to examine differences in program effects on parent-child dyads from home-based Head Start programs, center-based Head Start programs, and combination (home and center-based) Head Start programs.

Sample:

Approximately 50 parent-child dyads from five Head Start centers in Southwest Virginia.

Measures:

- Four repeated videotaped shared reading sessions coded as per Fu, Wiles and Milne, 2007
- Mind-mindedness interviews (Meins, 1998)
- Child Observation Record (High/Scope, 1992)
- Phonological Awareness Literacy Screening (Invernizzi and Meier, 2002)
- A reading comfort and experience survey developed for the project
- Demographic information