

# Head Start Graduate Student Research Program: 2011 Research Scholars

## Elizabeth Bell

### *Project Title:*

Peer Play as a Context for Identifying Profiles of Children for Improving Academic Readiness in Head Start

### *Mentor:*

Daryl Greenfield

### *Project Funding Years:*

2011-2013

### *University Affiliation:*

University of Miami

### *Project Abstract:*

The purpose of this study is to examine the influence of peer play behaviors on rates of growth in academic readiness in a sample of multiethnic, low-income children enrolled in Miami-Dade County Head Start. The specific intent is to: (1) identify profiles of Head Start children based on their peer play behaviors; and (2) examine whether these profiles of children are differentiated by growth in multiple school-readiness domains. The study will employ a child-centered approach by utilizing peer play as a context to identify subgroups of children who display specific patterns of behavior, and will examine how the academic trajectories of math, literacy, and science of these children differ during one year of enrollment in Head Start. It is expected that results of the study will contribute to the understanding of the influence of peer play on academic readiness. Results could also contribute to the development of specific interventions or curriculum strategies within Head Start classrooms to support socially-mediated learning experiences.

### *Sample:*

900 Children from 90 classrooms in 20 Head Start Centers in Miami-Dade County, Florida

### *Measures:*

#### *Child Outcome Measures*

- Penn Interactive Per Play Scale (PIPPS)
- Learning Express (LE)

- Preschool Science Assessment (PSA)

## **Dipti Dev**

### *Project Title:*

The Role of Head Start and Child Care Classrooms in Early Childhood Obesity: A Cumulative Risk Model

### *Mentor:*

Brent McBride

### *Project Funding Years:*

2011-2013

### *University Affiliation:*

University of Illinois

### *Project Abstract:*

The proposed study will build on and extend work generated by the Synergistic Theory and Research Obesity and Nutrition Group (STRONG) Kids (SK) research initiative. The SK initiative is a multi-disciplinary project to study longitudinal determinants of obesity during early childhood. The proposed study will be an independent subproject within the SK initiative, gathering additional data from teachers, staff, and project administrators from Head Start and child care programs participating in the larger SK project. This study has three specific aims: (1) compute a cumulative risk index for childhood obesity using the Six-Cs model of environmental influences; (2) identify factors that influence Head Start and child care providers feeding practices and verbal communications during mealtimes; and (3) investigate Head Start and child care directors' perceptions of current nutrition standards for early care and education programs. An expected outcome of the study is effective prediction of children who are at greatest risk of childhood obesity. Information gained from this study will provide policymakers and early childhood professionals with new insights that can guide the development of interventions designed to more effectively address early childhood obesity.

### *Sample:*

- Objective 1: 500 Children and Families from 36 Head Start and Child Care Centers
- Objective 2: 90 Head Start and Child Care Teachers
- Objective 3: 12 Focus Groups of Directors and Administrators

*Measures:*

*Objective 1 Measures*

- STRONG Kids Panel Survey
- BMI z-scores based on Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Growth References for Children

*Objective 2 Measures*

- Child Feeding Questionnaire (CFQ)
- Caregiver Feeding Styles Questionnaire (CFSQ)
- Comprehensive Feeding Practices Questionnaire (CFPQ)
- Provider Mealtimes Comments Checklist
- Project-Developed Interview Protocol

**Anna H. Hall**

*Project Title:*

The Shared Pen Project

*Mentor:*

Jennifer Grisham-Brown

*Project Funding Years:*

2011-2012

*University Affiliation:*

University of Kentucky

*Project Abstract:*

This project will implement an interactive writing intervention in preschool to explore the effectiveness of interactive writing as a teaching strategy to strengthen alphabet knowledge skills. Interactive writing is a research-based teaching strategy that addresses the Head Start performance standards of promoting interaction and language use among children and between children and adults, and supporting emerging literacy development through developmentally appropriate materials and activities. Children will be assigned either to an Interactive Writing treatment group or a “business as usual” (BAU) control group. Specifically the project seeks to determine whether there is a difference between the Interactive Writing group and the BAU group on measures of (1) upper case letter identification, (2) lower case letter identification, and (3) letter sound knowledge. Study results are expected to expand the research base and contribute to information on

effective Head Start practices related to alphabet identification skills and letter sound knowledge.

*Sample:*

72 Head Start Children

5 Head Start Teachers

*Measures:*

*Child Outcome Measures*

- Letter Identification Subtest, Observation Survey of Early Literacy Achievement

## **Jisu Han**

*Project Title:*

Dosage Effects on Language, Literacy, and General Development for Children Enrolled in Multiple Intervention Programs: Head Start, Pre-Kindergarten, and Early Reading First

*Mentor:*

Stacey Neuharth-Pritchett

*Project Funding Years:*

2011-2013

*University Affiliation:*

University of Georgia

*Project Abstract:*

The purpose of this study is to examine dosage effects of early intervention programs on preschool children's language, literacy, and general development. Children will be assigned to one of three groups: (1) pre-kindergarten only, (2) pre-kindergarten and Early Reading First, or (3) pre-kindergarten, Head Start, and Early Reading First. Specifically the project seeks to determine: (1) whether children receiving multiple intervention services demonstrate greater gains in language and literacy outcomes than children participating in fewer programs, (2) whether children receiving multiple intervention services demonstrate greater gains in global developmental outcomes, and (3) how characteristics and quality of early intervention play a role in producing benefits. Results are expected to disentangle how multiple programs play a role in children's development and inform development of intervention services that could ultimately support individual children's language, literacy, and general development. The study

will also inform policymakers and program administrators regarding the appropriate level of dosage required for effective intervention efforts.

*Sample:*

3,000 four-year-old children from Pre-Kindergarten and Head Start programs

*Measures:*

*Child Measures*

- Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test-III, IV (PPVT-III, IV)
- Phonological Awareness Literacy Screening for Preschool (PALS-PreK)
- Get it Got it Go (GGG)
- Developmental Profile-3 (DP-3)

*Classroom Measures*

- Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS)

## **Grace Hubel**

*Project Title:*

Identifying Risk for and Preventing Child Maltreatment in Early Head Start Families

*Mentor:*

David Hansen

*Project Funding Years:*

2011-2013

*University Affiliation:*

University of Nebraska-Lincoln

*Project Abstract:*

The proposed study will examine how families' participation in Early Head Start can lead to reduced likelihood of child maltreatment and the reduction of associated risk factors. Specifically the study will address current gaps in literature on early intervention and prevention of child abuse and neglect by (1) examining how participation in four Early Head Start components is related to the reduction of risk factors associated with child maltreatment, the prevention of child maltreatment, and reduction of problems that lead to out-of-home placement after maltreatment has occurred; (2) examining the relationship between presence of risk and court-substantiated maltreatment;

(3) examining how change in risk relates to parent's progress in alleviating out-of-home placement of their children and their ability to maintain parental rights; and (4) explaining how Early Head Start engages and retains families so potentially preventative interventions can be delivered. The long-term goal of the study is to provide Early Head Start administrators, practitioners, and policymakers with information necessary to develop and provide early intervention and program components in a manner that reduces risk and prevents child maltreatment. Study results will also contribute to the efforts of Early Head Start and other home visitation programs to reduce child maltreatment for infant and toddlers, as well as support young children's development of social, emotional, and cognitive competence.

*Sample:*

410 Early Head Start families with children under 3 years of age

*Measures:*

- Secondary data analyses of EHS archival data
- Juvenile Court records from the Nebraska JUSTICE system
- Center for Epidemiologic Studies Depression Scale (CES-D)
- Behavioral, Emotional, and Social Screening Checklist for Head Start Children (BESS)
- Semi-Structured Program Interview: family strengths and need for services
- Mental Health Referral Forms

**Lucía I. Méndez**

*Project Title:*

A Culturally and Linguistically Responsive Vocabulary Approach for Dual Language Learners

*Co-Mentors:*

Elizabeth Crais

Dina Castro

*Project Funding Years:*

2011-2013

*University Affiliation:*

University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

*Project Abstract:*

The purpose of this study is to examine the effectiveness of a Culturally and

Linguistically Responsive (CLR) English vocabulary approach designed to support vocabulary development in Spanish-speaking dual-language learners (DLLs). The approach incorporates research findings on instructional strategies, including strategic use of the home language and home culture, delivered through a shared reading activity. The CLR approach will be compared to an English-only Culturally Responsive (ECR) approach and a “business as usual” (BAU) English-only classroom approach. The ECR approach includes the cultural but not the linguistic aspect of the CLR approach. Children will be randomly assigned to a CLR group, an ECR comparison group, or a BAU control group. Expected results include additional data to inform Head Start and Early Head Start policymakers and administrators as well as instructional procedures to support and improve the quality of services to culturally and linguistically diverse preschool children. Findings could also positively impact the development of Head Start policies on: (1) effective vocabulary instructional strategies that support oral language development in DLLs; and (2) content for multicultural professional development training for both monolingual and bilingual providers serving diverse children.

*Sample:*

72 Spanish-speaking dual language learner preschool children from Head Start classrooms

*Measures:*

*Child Vocabulary Measures*

- Receptive One Word Picture Vocabulary Test: Spanish Bilingual Edition (ROWPVT-SBE)
- Picture Vocabulary Subtest of Woodcock-Johnson Test of Achievement III (WJ-III)
- Picture Vocabulary Subtest of Bateria III
- Receptive English Vocabulary Probe (REVP)
- Receptive Spanish Vocabulary Probe (RSVP)

*Family Measure*

- Family Demographic Data Form

**Catherine Tsao**

*Project Title:*

Predicting Infant/Toddler Social-Emotional Outcomes From Intrapersonal Caregiver Characteristics and Child Care Process Quality

*Mentor:*  
Carollee Howes

*Project Funding Years:*  
2011-2013

*University Affiliation:*  
University of California, Los Angeles

*Project Abstract:*

This study will examine the impact of two intrapersonal caregiver characteristics - self-regulation and internal models of caregiving - on infant/toddler social-emotional outcomes and classroom child care process quality. Specifically the project will examine whether: (1) intrapersonal caregiver characteristics of self-regulation and internal working models of caregiving predict ratings of sensitive and responsive care for infant/toddlers; (2) process quality predicts child outcomes in the social-emotional domain of emotion regulation and security of attachments with the primary caregiver; and (3) the two specified intrapersonal caregiver characteristics predict domain-specific child outcomes. The study will also examine the moderating influence of certain psychosocial stressors on the association between intrapersonal caregiver characteristics and child care program quality. Results are expected to provide new research on infant/toddler care to promote effective teaching through professional activities aimed at improving teaching practices and child outcomes.

*Sample:*

100 Caregiver-Child Dyads in approximately 33 to 50 Early Head Start and Community Infant/Toddlers Classrooms

*Measures:*

*Caregiver Measures*

- Difficulties in Emotion Regulation Scale (DERS)
- Teacher Relationship Interview

*Classroom Observation Measure*

- Modified Observational Ratings of the Caregiving Environment (M-ORCE)

*Child Outcome Measures*

- Attachment Q-Set (AQS)
- Emotionality, Adaptability, Sociability (EAS) Temperament Survey

