

# Head Start University Partnerships, Research Partners

## Michigan State University

*Project Title:*

Nutrition Education Aimed At Toddlers Project

*Grantee:*

Mildred A. Omar

*Project Funding Years:*

2001-2004

*Contact Information:*

Michigan State University

College of Nursing

A320 Life Sciences Building

East Lansing, MI 48824-1317

Phone: (517) 355-8360 Fax: (517) 353-9553

Email: [millie@msu.edu](mailto:millie@msu.edu)

*Project Abstract:*

This project is aimed at promoting toddler development and self-regulation by improving toddler feeding practices. Specifically, the project is designed to explore whether completing a feeding and nutrition education program: (1) improves parents' feeding attitudes, knowledge, confidence and behavior; (2) positively influences toddler food consumption; and (3) positively influences toddler growth and health. The focus of the Nutrition Education Aimed at Toddlers (NEAT) intervention will be to promote healthy eating behaviors and balance responsibility between Early Head Start (EHS) parents and their children during the eating process. This project will compare toddler feeding self-regulation behaviors and toddler-parent feeding interactions among families in the intervention group receiving the NEAT intervention and families in a control group. The NEAT intervention consists of two core components: (1) in-class structured lessons on child development, feeding, food, nutrition, mealtime, and parenting practices; and (2) in-home structured reinforcement in the same context. The first core component of the NEAT program consists of four weekly in-class lessons taught by trained paraprofessional nutrition instructors. The second core component consists of weekly home visits over a six month period by trained EHS home visitors. All families enrolled in five collaborating EHS programs with a toddler between the ages of 11 and 25 months will be recruited for participation. Researchers estimate that approximately 250 families will

meet the inclusion criteria for the study, with approximately 100 intervention and 100 control families. Researchers hypothesize that toddler-feeding self-regulation will be more positive in the intervention group when compared to the control group at 4-week and 6-month post-intervention assessments. In addition, researchers believe that toddler-parent-feeding interactions will be more positive in the intervention group when compared with the control group at 4-week and 6-month post-intervention assessments.

*Sample:*

n=200 toddler-parent dyads

*Measures:*

*Child*

Children's Eating Behavior Inventory (CEBI)

Feeding Relationship Assessment Tool (FRAT)

Twenty-Four Hour Diet Recall

Block Food Frequency Questionnaire (FFQ)

Toddler Physical Growth

Parent Self-Report of Toddler's Visits to Health Care Facilities for Routine or Sick Care

*Parent-Child Interaction*

Behavior Checklist for Use During the Observation of Meals

*Parent*

The NEAT Attitude, Knowledge, and Confidence in Nutrition Scale

Family Dinner Time Routines of the Family Ritual Questionnaire (FRQ)

Self-Efficacy Questionnaire

Social Influences Questionnaire

Caregiver's Attitudes and Behaviors Towards Feeding Toddlers Questionnaire

Nutrition Attitudes Questionnaire

## **Purdue University**

*Project Title:*

Building Early Head Start Relationships: What Benefits Children and Parents?

*Grantee:*

James Elicker

*Project Funding Years:*

2001-2004

*Contact Information:*

Purdue University

Department of Child Development & Family Studies  
1269 Fowler House  
West Lafayette, IN 47907-1269  
Phone: (765) 494-2938, Fax: (765) 494-0503  
Email: [elickerj@cfs.purdue.edu](mailto:elickerj@cfs.purdue.edu)

*Project Abstract:*

Researchers at Purdue University are investigating the effectiveness of Early Head Start services, focusing on interpersonal relationships that develop between staff and families within the program. Specifically this project will: (1) assess and describe the relationships that develop between Early Head Start staff, children, and parents; (2) examine staff-family relationships in several Early Head Start service delivery models (center-based, home-based, and community-based child care) and in relation to variations in staff characteristics and family characteristics; and (3) determine if higher quality staff-family relationships are associated with better outcomes for Early Head Start children and parents. The first year of the study will serve as a planning year for the subsequent years' evaluations. During this planning year, researchers will conduct in-depth qualitative interviews with 30 Early Head Start parents, who will be selected to represent diversity in ethnicity, income level, employment, and involvement in the partnering Head Start programs. Goals of this first year are to understand the qualities and influences of the relationships that develop between staff and program participants and to field test parent and child outcome measures. In the second and third project years, researchers will conduct a quantitative, short-term longitudinal study with a sample of at least 100 families from the participating Early Head Start programs. It is estimated that 60 families will be followed for two years while 40 families will be followed for one year. Data from this quantitative study will be used to test a mediational model of projected associations between program, staff, and family variables, staff-family relationship quality, and child and parent outcomes.

*Sample:*

*Year One*

n=30 Early Head Start parents

*Year Two*

n=75 Early Head Start children, their parents, and staff

*Year Three*

n=100 Early Head Start children, their parents, and staff

*Child*

Attachment Q-Set (AQS)

Bayley Scales of Infant Development, 2nd Ed. (BSID)

Infant-Toddler Social & Emotional Assessment-Revised (ITSEA)

Howes & Stewart's (1987) Peer Involvement Rating Scale  
Rubenstein & Howes' (1979) Object Play Rating Scale

*Parent*

Brief Survey Questionnaire  
Videotaped Observations of Mother-Child Interaction  
Maternal Sensitivity Scale

*Staff*

Education and Training Questionnaire  
Staff-Parent Relationships  
Parent-Caregiver Relationship Scale (PCRS)  
Staff-Child Relationships  
Attachment Q-Set (AQS)  
Caregiver Interaction Scale (CIS)  
Howes & Stewart's (1987) Adult-Child Involvement Rating Scale

*Program*

"Dosage" Data on Program Contact with Families and Children

## **University of Miami**

*Project Title:*

A Multi-site, Multi-method Partnership for Improving Florida Head Start Children's School Readiness

*Grantee:*

Daryl B. Greenfield

*Project Funding Years:*

2001-2004

*Contact Information:*

University of Miami  
Department of Psychology  
P.O. Box 249229  
Coral Gables, FL 33124-0721  
Phone: (305) 284-3255, ext. 1, Fax: (305) 284-4795  
Email: [dgreenfield@miami.edu](mailto:dgreenfield@miami.edu)  
Website: <http://www.psy.miami.edu/Faculty/DGreenfield/>

*Project Abstract:*

The current project is a multi-agency collaborative effort designed to enhance an existing infrastructure of infant mental health services within Early Head Start. As part of the effort, intervention services and data

collection will be carried out by teams of Early Head Start social workers, community-based early intervention specialists, and university-based clinical and academic staff. The goals of this project are to provide effective and culturally competent mental health services to high risk families with young children, including families struggling with poverty, violence, and potential delays in children's development; test hypotheses related to transactional theories of child development in high-risk families across cultural groups; and contribute to the empirical literature on the efficacy of parent-infant psychotherapy in improving family and child functioning and development. The project will target 128 high-risk children and families in Miami-Dade County, for whom screening, including observations of parent-child interactions and children in their classrooms will be conducted. Following the screening, intensive parent-infant psychotherapy will be implemented with 30 families observed to be at risk for relationship difficulties and developmental delays. Assessments will include the quality of the parent-child relationship, multiple domains of child development, exposure to violence in the community and at home, parenting stress, and children's adaptive functioning. The project is designed to be longitudinal in nature, assessing both short- and long-term effects of parent-infant therapy on family and child functioning across multiple cultural groups.

*Sample:*

Year 1: n=100 preschool aged children

Year 2: n=360 Head Start children and their teachers

*Measures:*

*Child*

Galileo School Readiness Assessment

Devereux Early Childhood Assessment (DECA)

Battery to Assess Problem Solving Flexibility, Persistence, Preference for Challenge, and Curiosity

## **University of Virginia**

*Project Title:*

Teaching Attachment-Based Interventions for Head Start Dyads

*Grantee:*

Robert S. Marvin

*Project Funding Years:*

2001-2004

*Contact Information:*

University of Virginia  
Department of Psychiatric Medicine  
Box 801075  
Charlottesville, VA 22908-1075  
Phone: (804) 924-0228, Fax: (804) 924-8164  
Email: [rsm8j@virginia.edu](mailto:rsm8j@virginia.edu)

*Project Abstract:*

This project extends the work of a previous Head Start-University Partnership grant by developing an extensive manual for a brief, small group intervention protocol, the Circle of Security (COS). The COS is a 20-week intervention focusing on strengthening child-parent attachment security. In addition, this project will empirically test whether the COS protocol can be successfully taught to, and implemented on-site by, supervised, community-based service providers (i.e., community mental health center [CMHC] staff working in partnership with Head Start/Early Head Start [HS/EHS] staff). Researchers will complete 1-year post-intervention follow-up assessments for a group of child-parent dyads who participated in the initial partnership grant. In addition, researchers will complete a "Beta-version" manual for the COS protocol, including extensive coverage of the intervention protocol and a collection of the most commonly used intervention goals and individualized intervention plans developed during the initial partnership grant. During the second and third years of the study, researchers will recruit a sample of 44 HS/EHS child-parent dyads for participation in the COS intervention. Researchers will determine the degree of success of the protocol as implemented by trained CMHC staff and the HS/EHS center staff through measuring the changes in pre- and post-intervention assessments, and then comparing these changes to the changes found during the initial partnership grant. During the final year of the study, researchers will complete a final version of the COS protocol manual based on verbal and written feedback from the trained CMHC and HS/EHS staff as well as feedback from the supervision process. In addition, researchers will develop a dissemination plan for the manual and write a set of suggested procedures for creating similar HS/EHS - CMHC partnerships in other communities.

*Sample:*

n=44 child-parent dyads

*Measures:*

*Child*

Achenbach Child Behavior Checklist (CBCL)  
Barkeley Disruptive Behavior Checklist (BDDBS)  
Ainsworth's Classification System for Infants or the Preschool Attachment Classification System

*Parent*

Circle of Security Interview (COSI)  
Parenting Stress Index-Short Form (PSI)  
Life Events Scale  
Caregiver Behavior Classification

*Child-Parent Dyads*

Ainsworth's Strange Situation

*Teacher*

Conners' Teacher Questionnaire (CTQ)

## **Vanderbilt University**

*Project Title:*

Building Social Communication Skills During Peer Interactions

*Grantee:*

Ann P. Kaiser

*Project Funding Years:*

2001-2004

*Contact Information:*

Vanderbilt University  
Box 328 GPC  
Nashville, TN 37203  
Phone: (615) 322-8160, Fax: (615) 343-1570  
Email: [Ann.Kaiser@Vanderbilt.edu](mailto:Ann.Kaiser@Vanderbilt.edu)

*Project Abstract:*

The goals of this study are to: (1) develop and test a multi-component intervention to teach peer-directed, pragmatic communication skills to children at risk for language and behavior problems; (2) determine the effects of this intervention on the development of language, pragmatics, social behavior, and play in children with identified language and behavior problems; and (3) determine the effects of this intervention on children who represent a range of early language and social skills. The intervention will include the use of storybooks to provide specific models of language, pragmatics, and conversation to be used during free play. In addition, corresponding thematic play materials will be used that support peer interactions, provide an opportunity to role-play and practice specific pragmatic skills. Finally, an advanced Play/Organizer/Play/Review sequence will be used to structure children's opportunities to acquire, practice, and

integrate their skills for talking with peers. Researchers have designed three separate studies to explore the relationship of their intervention to peer play and social interaction. The first study will test the proposed intervention with three dyads of children across six dramatic play activities. During this study, researchers will design the storybooks used to teach the targeted pragmatic skills, select and assemble materials and themes for play activities, modify an already existing plan/play/review protocol to include the storybooks, develop treatment implementation measures, and develop the protocol for assessing peer language and play outside the intervention context. The second study will examine the immediate and long-term effects of the intervention. For this second study, 36 children with low language, low social skills, and elevated behavior problem scores will be randomly assigned to treatment or comparison groups. Their communication performance will be compared at three time points (pre-, post-, and 4-month follow-up). The final study will examine the effects of an intervention designed to increase children's skills in talking with their peers. The peer-directed intervention will be provided to children in Head Start classrooms by their teacher during center-based dramatic play activities. Approximately 64 4-year-old children enrolled in 16 classrooms will participate, with two boys and girls randomly selected from each classroom to participate. These classrooms will be randomly assigned to the intervention (8 classrooms, 32 children) or the comparison group (8 classrooms, 32 children). This final study is proposed as an intermediate step in developing a universal intervention for Head Start children. The primary objectives will be to determine the immediate effects of the intervention on children's development of language, pragmatic, and social skills, and determine the feasibility of classroom-wide implementation of the intervention.

*Sample:*

*Study 1*

n= 6 Head Start children

*Study 2*

n=36 Head Start children with low language, low social skills, and elevated behavior problem scores

*Study 3*

n=45 Head Start children and their teachers

*Measures:*

*Child*

Preschool Language Scale-3 (PLS-3)

Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test-III (PPVT-III)

Expressive Vocabulary Test (EVT)

Language Sample

Index of Productive Syntax (IPSYN)  
Social Skills Rating Scale (SSRS)  
Caregiver Teacher Report Form (CTRF)  
Pragmatics Assessment (Ninio, et al, 1994)  
Peer Play Code  
Peer Language & Behavior Code (Revised)  
Treatment Fidelity and Social Validity  
Intervention Implementation Checklists  
Social Validation of Peer Intervention  
Treatment Fidelity of Peer Intervention