

## Developing a Multidimensional Measure of Family Engagement for Toddlers in the Early Head Start Program: A Mixed-Method Approach

**Project Team:** Johayra Bouza (Scholar) and Dr. Rebecca Shearer (Mentor/PI)

**Grant or Contract Number:** 90YR0096

**Period of Funding:** September, 2017 – September, 2018

### Project Description

We will validate a recently developed measure, Family and Provider/Teacher Relationship Quality (FPTRQ) questionnaires, which captures teacher-family relationship quality (reported by both teachers and families).

We will also develop a preliminary coding scheme for observable teacher-family interactions, in partnership with Early Head Start Child Care Partnership (EHS-CCP) staff and families of ethnically diverse toddlers.

### Research Questions/Objectives

- Establish construct validity evidence for the FPTRQ for ethnically diverse toddlers families enrolled in EHS-CCP programs
- Investigate the concurrent validity of the FPTRQ with other validated measures of family engagement, as well as children’s social emotional and language outcomes
- Develop and investigate the practical utility of family engagement measure protocols in informing appropriate and effective family intervention efforts in the EHS-CC programs
- Develop preliminary coding scheme to objectively capture observable teacher-family interactions

### Sample

Toddlers enrolled in Early Head Start –Child Care Partnership (EHS-CCP) programs, as well as their families and teachers will participate in this project (approximately 300 children). Based on previous sample data, we expect about 51% to be boys and 99% to identify as Black (60%) or Latino (39%). We expected about 30 families and/or teachers to participate in the development of coding scheme.

### Methods

We will use qualitative and quantitative methods.

- Collect concurrently the teacher- and family-versions of the FPTRQ, in addition to the validity

measures (listed in the Measures section)

- Conduct analysis to examine the psychometric structure of the FPTRQ (e.g., CFA) and item functioning (e.g., Rasch)
- Conduct bivariate correlation between FPTRQ and validity measures (e.g., the program report of family participation & PCRS dimensions)
- Conduct hierarchical modeling analyses to examine the relationship between FPTRQ dimensions and child outcomes
- Develop protocols and procedures, in partnership with the EHS-CCP programs to support them in using the FPTRQ data
- Conduct semi-structured interviews, focus groups, and video record teacher-family interactions
- Examine data using qualitative approaches (e.g., content analysis)
- Convene a panel of experts to develop a coding scheme for teacher-family interactions

### Measures

- *Program report of family participation.* Centers collect family sign-in sheets for all school events, workshops, and volunteer opportunities. We will calculate the total number of times families attended these activities across the year.
- *Parent-Caregiver Relationship scale (PCRS:* Elicker et al. 1997). The PCRS assesses both parents’ view and teacher’s view of their relationship
- *Family and Provider/Teacher Relationship Quality Questionnaire (FPTRQ;* Kim et al., 2015). Teacher-report and family-report of teacher-family relationship quality
- *Preschool Language Scale-Fifth Edition (PLS-5:* Zimmerman, Steiner, & Pond, 2011). The PLS-5 is a direct assessment of children’s language skills.

- *Brief Infant and Toddler Social and Emotional Assessment* (BITSEA: Visser, et al., 2010). The BITSEA is a teacher-report assessment of children's social and emotional behavioral problems.
- Semi-structured interviews, focus groups questions, video recording coding scheme of teacher-family relationship/interactions will be developed in a partnership with EHS programs and expert researchers

### **Progress Update**

Our major goal during year 1 was to build strong collaborative relationship with the local EHS-CCP newly hired leadership staff, teachers, and families and gather feedback from them as well as expert researchers on the goal of this project. Program partners and researchers suggested that we focus our efforts on validating an existing measure of teacher-family relationship quality and take initial steps in the development of an observational measure of teacher-family interactions (instead of developing a multi-dimensional questionnaire of family engagement). The decision to focus on teacher-family relationship quality, in addition to the delays of the larger project, caused major delays in the progress of the dissertation work. In advance of the grantee meeting, we will collect the FPTRQ from teachers and families and conduct preliminary psychometric analysis.

### **Implications for policy/practice & research**

This project will be the first validate the FPTRQ measure of teacher-family relationship quality, within a sample of ethnically diverse families of toddlers in center-based programs. As part of this project, we will also collaborate with EHS programs to develop protocols and procedures to support programs in utilizing the FPTRQ to make data-drive decisions for their family intervention efforts. Additionally, this study will be one of the few to investigate the relationship between teacher-family relationship quality and child outcomes. Additionally, this will be the first study to develop a preliminary coding scheme to capture teacher-family relationship objectively.

### **For more information**

Please refer to contact information below.

#### **Contact**

Johayra Bouza, M.S., M.S.Ed.  
 Doctoral Candidate  
 Applied Developmental Psychology  
 Department of Psychology  
 University of Miami  
 Phone: 305-284-4191  
 Email: j.bouza1@umiami.edu  
 Jaybee0831@gmail.com