

Child Care & Early Education RESEARCH CONNECTIONS

A partnership of the National Center for Children in Poverty, the Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research, the Child Care Bureau, and the Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluation

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Linking Mental Health and Child Care and Early Education Services A Key Topic Resource List August 2007

Research Connections conducted a comprehensive search of its collection for resources focused on **linking mental health and child care and early education services**. This Key Topic Resource List includes an overview of the topic, as well as a listing of selected resources on the topic.

From the many results, *Research Connections* selected a limited number of resources of various types—including reports and papers, fact sheets and briefs, summaries, and reviews. Selection criteria included policy relevance and relatively recent publication. Based on the search results, resources were grouped into the following three categories:

- Links between Child Mental Health and Child Care and Early Education Services
- Mental Health Consultation in Child Care and Early Education
- Mental Health Services in Head Start/Early Head Start

Within each category, resources are organized according to publisher type and publication date. *Research Connection's* one-sentence description is included for each resource on the following list. For complete citations, which include abstracts and full text for some resources, click on the titles.

Overview:

The early years are crucial for the healthy **social-emotional development** and **mental health** of children. Social-emotional skills set the stage for exploration and readiness to learn, and constitute the foundation for all later development. Through interactions with caregivers, adults, and children around them, children's mental health is fostered or hindered. Comprehensive support to early childhood programs, families, and communities is imperative to address a range of children's mental health needs and to promote their positive social-emotional development.

Literature on this topic addresses child care as a support for parents of children with mental health needs and discusses the effectiveness of strategies to promote mental health in child care settings. Research highlights risk factors in early childhood that predict adverse behavior and academic outcomes, evaluates outcomes of existing policies and programs designed to promote children's emotional adjustment, describes effective initiatives and methods of intervention, and offers policymakers and administrators a variety of choices for confronting this issue. Also characteristic of this literature and research is a heavy discussion of Head Start programs, interventions, and services for children and families.

Research on the linkages between mental health and child care and early education services addresses questions such as the following:

- What makes children socially and emotionally ready for school? What are the characteristics, practices, and organizational factors of child care programs that are associated with quality care for children with emotional or behavioral disorders?
- What program-friendly tools can be used to accurately assess young children's level of emotional development? At what age should services and interventions begin?
- What skills and experiences should be required of mental health professionals in order for services to be provided across the continuum of promotion, prevention, and intervention? How could training and professional development systems be improved to educate them better on relationship-based mental health practices?
- What are the lessons learned from the evaluation of Head Start and Early Head Start strategies, and what are the implications for policy, practice, and research?
- What kinds of investments should policymakers be advised to make? To which age-group(s) of children and to what types of settings should funds be directed?
- How can access to and coordination of services be increased so that families receive the services and supports they need immediately rather than relying on later interventions?

Links between child mental health and child care and early education services

Government

- Huffman, L. C.; Mehlinger, S. L.; & Kerivan, Amy. S. (2000). [In a good beginning: Sending America's children to school with the social and emotional competence they need to succeed.](#) Bethesda, MD: The National Institute of Mental Health.
An overview of research on social and emotional risk factors that predict adverse early childhood academic and behavior outcomes, with an examination of federal policies that aim to improve these outcomes and critical discussion of the disparities between available research and early education practices addressing these risk factors.
- United States. Head Start Bureau, United States. Administration on Children, Youth, and Families. Commissioner's Office of Research and Evaluation. (2000). [A commitment to supporting the mental health of our youngest children: Report of the Infant Mental Health Forum, October 23-24, 2000.](#) Washington, DC: U.S. Administration on Children, Youth and Families.
A summary of information presented at the Infant Mental Health Forum of 2000 on why it is important to address infant mental health; the principles that should guide any research, training, program and policy directives; the issues that warrant further attention and deliberation; suggested action steps; and potential partners.

Journals

- Denham, Susanne A., (2006). [Social-emotional competence as support for school readiness: What is it and how do we assess it?](#) *Early Education and Development*, 17(1), 57-89.
A review of research and available measures of children's socio-emotional outcomes, and a discussion of available assessment tools that meet assessment best practice criteria.

- Webster-Stratton, Carolyn; & Reid, M. Jamila. (2004). [Strengthening social and emotional competence in young children: The foundation for early school readiness and success: Incredible Years Classroom Social Skills and Problem-Solving curriculum](#). *Infants and Young Children*, 17(2), 96-113.
An overview of the Incredible Years Dinosaur Social Skills and Problem-Solving Child Training Program designed to help preschool children develop emotional literacy, empathy, friendship and communication skills, behavior management, and general skills for transitioning to school.
- Collins, Raymond C.; Mascia, Janet L.; Kendall, Rosemary; Golden, Oxana; Schock, Lisa; & Parlakian, Rebecca. (2003). [Promoting mental health in child care settings: Caring for the whole child](#). *Zero to Three*, 23(4), 39-45.
A description and examination of key elements to the coordinated delivery of quality mental health services within the context of child care, including access to mental health consultants to support caregivers, individualization of services, and training and professional development of child care and mental health providers.
- Raver, C. Cybele. (2002). [Emotions matter: Making the case for the role of young children's emotional development for early school readiness](#). *Social Policy Report*, 16(3).
A report considering the important of emotional development for school readiness and reviewing research on the effectiveness of interventions at affecting emotional adjustment in preschool.

University and Research Organizations

- National Resource Center for Health and Safety in Child Care (U.S.), (2006). [Strengthening interdisciplinary partnerships in addressing children's early development: A think tank](#). Aurora, CO: National Resource Center for Health and Safety in Child Care.
[Full Report](#)
[Summary](#)
Report of a symposium on creating and maintaining partnerships among relevant disciplines in the area of young children's socioemotional health and early socioemotional development.
- Weatherston, Deborah J.; Moss, Barbara Dowler; & Harris, Deborah. (2006). [Building capacity in the infant and family field through competency-based endorsement: Three states' experiences](#). *Zero to Three*, 26(3), 4-13.
A description of the credentialing process developed by the Michigan Association for Infant Mental Health (MI-AIMH) to define the required skills and experiences of infant mental health professionals and establish a comprehensive endorsement system for these practitioners, and of the collaborative role of the MI-AIMH in efforts to establish endorsement systems for Texas and New Mexico.
- Boyd, Judi; Barnett, W. Steven; Bodrova, Elena; Leong, Deborah Jane; Gomby, Deanna; Robin, Kenneth B.; & Hustedt, Jason T. (2005). [Promoting children's social and emotional development through high-quality preschool](#). New Brunswick, NJ: National Institute for Early Education Research.
[Fact Sheet](#)
[Full Report](#)
A [fact sheet and] policy report discussing preschool children's socioemotional development, the role it plays in school readiness, and characteristics needed for preschool programs to enhance children's development.
- Johnson, Kay; & Knitzer, Jane. (2005). [Spending smarter: A funding guide for policymakers and advocates to promote social and emotional health and school readiness](#). New York: Columbia University, National Center for Children in Poverty.
A discussion of fiscal strategies to promote the emotional health of families and young children, highlighting opportunities for policymakers and describing effective social programs.

- Zeanah, Paula D.; Stafford, Brian S.; Nagle, Geoffrey A.; & Rice, Thomas. (2005). [Addressing social-emotional development and infant mental health in early childhood systems](#). (Building State Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems Series No. 12). University of California, Los Angeles, National Center for Infant and Early Childhood Health Policy.
[Full Report Executive Summary](#)
A policy report addressing several issues associated with infant mental health (IMH), including organization; delivery of services; and funding and training opportunities.
- Brennan, Eileen M.; Bradley, Jennifer; Ama, Shane; & Cawood, Natalie. (2003). [Setting the pace: Model inclusive child care centers serving families of children with emotional or behavioral challenges](#) Portland, OR: Portland State University, Research and Training Center on Family Support and Children's Mental Health.
An examination of child care programs that provide fully-inclusive, exemplary services to families of special needs children, with a description of program components, discussion of the meaning of "inclusion" and of addressing challenges to inclusive practices in early care and education settings, and a review of literature on educational inclusion.
- Raver, C. Cybele; & Knitzer, Jane. (2002). [Ready to enter: What research tells policymakers about strategies to promote social and emotional school readiness among three- and four-year-old children](#). (Promoting the Emotional Well-Being of Children and Families Policy Paper No. 3). New York: Columbia University, National Center for Children in Poverty.
An examination of emerging research on the efficacy of preventive and early interventions addressing the needs of young children at risk for poor social, emotional, and behavioral development, and discussion of the kinds of research-based education and care interventions considered to be most effective.
- Lally, J. Ronald; Phelps, Pamela; & Torres, Yolanda Ledon. [n.d.] [Caring for infants and toddlers in groups: Necessary considerations for emotional, social, and cognitive development](#). Washington, DC: Zero To Three.
An examination of sources of deficiencies in the planning and management of effective infant and toddler care, and an exploration of key components of group early care services, including group size, conditions of the physical environment and continuity of care, that determine care quality and opportunities for caring relationships in early care settings

Other

- Kupersmidt, Janis; McCabe, Lisa A.; & Bryant, Donna M. (2003). [Child welfare and mental health initiatives](#). In *Early Child Development in the 21st Century: Profiles of Current Research Initiatives* (pp. 163-180). New York: Teachers College Press.
An examination of three national, multi-site child welfare research initiatives, the Consortium for Longitudinal Studies in Child Abuse and Neglect (LONGSCAN), the National Survey of Child and Adolescent Well-Being (NSCAW), and the Head Start Mental Health Research Consortium (HSMHRC).
- Raver, C. Cybele, (2003). [Young children's emotional development and school readiness](#). (ERIC Digest No. EDO-PS-03-8). Champaign, IL: ERIC Clearinghouse on Elementary and Early Childhood Education.
A summary of longitudinal research on the relation between young children's emotional development and school readiness and early school success, and interventions designed for children entering school.
- Kenny, Holly; Oliver, Leah; & Poppe, Julie. (2002). [Mental health services for children: An overview](#). Denver, CO: National Conference of State Legislatures.
A brief description of the mental health needs of children and how early education and other services can foster their positive social-emotional development.

- Kaufmann, Roxane; & Perry, Deborah F. (2001). [Promoting social-emotional development in young children: Promising approaches at the national, state and community levels](#). In The Kauffman Early Education Exchange: Vol. 1, No. 1. Set for success: Building a strong foundation for school readiness based on the social-emotional development of young children (pp. 80-96). Kansas City, MO: The Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation.
A description of select programs that promote early childhood mental health, highlighting the range of approaches and exemplary features of various initiatives, including relationship-based services and interventions addressing the needs of children at risk for developing disabilities.
- Knitzer, Jane, (2001). [Promoting social and emotional readiness for school: Toward a policy agenda](#). In The Kauffman Early Education Exchange: Vol. 1, No. 1. Set for success: Building a strong foundation for school readiness based on the social-emotional development of young children (pp. 100-116). Kansas City, MO: The Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation.
An exploration of components, including policy and practice challenges and opportunities, of developing early childhood mental health initiatives that promote social-emotional development and school readiness, with discussion of the priority of preventive care and early intervention strategies.
- Thompson, Ross, (2001). [The roots of school readiness in social and emotional development](#). In The Kauffman Early Education Exchange: Vol. 1(1). Set for success: Building a strong foundation for school readiness based on the social-emotional development of young children (pp. 8-29). Kansas City, MO: The Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation.
An exploration of components, including policy and practice challenges and opportunities, of developing early childhood mental health initiatives that promote social-emotional development and school readiness, with discussion of the priority of preventive care and early intervention strategies.

Mental Health Consultation in Child Care and Early Education

Government

- Alameda County Child Care Planning Council, (2002). [Preventative mental health services for young children in Alameda County: An action plan to meet the urgent needs of children, caregivers, and families](#). Oakland, CA: Alameda County Child Care Planning Council.
This reports presents background information on the importance of child mental health services, findings on the need for enhanced mental health services in child care settings, and recommendations for improving these services.

Journals

- Alkon, Abbey; Ramler, Malia; & MacLennan, Katharine. (2003). [Evaluation of mental health consultation in child care centers](#). *Early Childhood Education Journal*, 31(2), 91-99.
This study reveals evaluation results of the impact of mental health services on teachers and child care centers aimed to enhance children's emotional lives and social abilities.
- Palsha, Sharon A.; & Wesley, Patricia W. (1998). [Improving quality in early childhood environments through on-site consultation](#). *Topics in Early Childhood Special Education*, 18(4), 243-253.
A description of a model designed to help improve quality in early childhood programs through on-site consultations and a discussion of the model's implementation, evaluation strategies, and effects on program quality.

University and Research Organizations

- **Heath, Jennifer M. (2005).** [Creating a statewide system of multi-disciplinary consultation for early care and education in Connecticut](#). Farmington: Child Health and Development Institute of Connecticut.
A study of the feasibility of implementing a system of providing professional guidance or services, in areas such as health, safety, administration, clinical practice and education, on-site at child care programs in order to improve overall program quality or address the individual needs of participating children and families.
- **Portland State University. Research and Training Center on Family Support and Children's Mental Health. (2004).** [Mental health consultation in child care centers: Data Trends, April 2004 #96](#). Portland State University. Research and Training Center on Family Support and Children's Mental Health.
A discussion of mental health consultations in early childhood settings.

Other

- **Elias, Carlita F.R. (2004).** [Mental health consultation services in community based early childhood settings: A survey of preschool teachers](#). Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Hartford, Hartford, CT.
A descriptive study of mental health consultation services in community-based child care settings, examining service availability, preschool teachers' definitions of problems that would elicit mental health referrals, and teachers' opinions regarding mental health issues related to early childhood.
- **Donahue, Paul J. (2001).** [Promoting social and emotional development in young children: The role of mental health consultants in early childhood settings](#) In *The Kauffman Early Education Exchange: Vol. 1, No. 1. Set for success: Building a strong foundation for school readiness based on the social-emotional development of young children* (pp. 64-79). Kansas City, MO: The Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation.
This paper from the Kauffman Early Education Exchange in 2001 discusses the role for mental health consultants in early care settings to promote infant and child mental health, and promising approaches at the national, state, and community levels.

Mental Health services in Head Start/Early Head Start

Government

- **United States. Administration for Children and Families. (2003).** [Research to practice: Depression in the lives of Early Head Start families](#). Washington, DC: U.S. Administration for Children and Families.
A discussion of the impact of parental depressive symptoms on child development, including a description of the role of Early Head Start (EHS) programs in addressing mental health needs and an analysis of the impacts of EHS programs on parenting and children's socio-emotional development.
- **United States. Head Start Bureau, (2003).** [Responding to the mental health needs of infants, toddlers and families](#). (Early Head Start Program Strategies). Washington, DC: Early Head Start National Resource Center.
A report highlighting how 10 Early Head Start programs respond to the mental health needs of infants, toddlers, and their families.

Journals

- Miller, Alison; Gouley, Kathleen K.; Seifer, Ronald; Dickstein, Susan; & Shields, Ann. (2004). [Emotions and behaviors in the Head Start classroom: Associations among observed dysregulation, social competence, and preschool adjustment](#). *Early Education and Development*, 15(2), 147-165. *An observational study that examined Head Start children's emotional and behavioral dysregulation and whether observed classroom behaviors were related to children's behavior and peer interactions.*
- Peterson, Sandy; Bair, Katherine; & Sullivan, Anita. (2004). [Emotional well-being and mental health services: Lessons learned by Early Head Start region VIII programs](#). *Zero to three*, 24(6), 47-53. *A summary of results from two Early Head Start (EHS) programs that implemented the Pathways to Prevention (PTP) initiative to help improve the mental health components of their EHS services.*
- Lopez, Michael; Tarullo, Louisa B.; Forness, Steven R.; & Boyce, Cheryl A. (2000). [Early identification and intervention: Head Start's response to mental health challenges](#). *Early Education and Development*, 11(3), 265-282. *An overview of the structure and purpose of Head Start, and a discussion of proposed and nascent initiatives to increase general understanding of and the availability of reliable research data on the types, trajectories, treatments and prevalence of mental health problems affecting young children served through the Program.*
- Forness, Steven R.; Serna, Loretta A.; Kavale, Kenneth A.; & Nielson, Elizabeth. (1998). [Mental health and Head Start: Teaching adaptive skills](#). *Education and Treatment of Children*, 21(3), 258-274. *A discussion of the use of a self-determination curriculum in Head Start programs as an early mental health intervention to help young children cope with stress and conflict and aid in the development of problem-solving and decision making skills.*

University and Research Organizations

- Borg, Amy; & Irwin, Martha. (2002). [Strategies to support the emotional wellness of children, families, and staff: Findings from a Head Start mental health task force](#). Newton, MA: Education Development Center. *A Head Start mental health task offers findings on creative and effective strategies and program elements that have been used to support the emotional wellness of children, families, and teachers in a New England Head Start program, including screening tools, curricula, positive working environments, and additional supports and community resources.*
- Yoshikawa, Hirokazu; & Knitzer, Jane. (1997). [Lessons from the field: Head Start mental health strategies to meet changing needs](#). New York: Columbia University, National Center for Children in Poverty. [Full Report](#)
[Executive Summary](#) *This report offers key findings on strategies to improve mental health of children in Head Start settings, as well as recommendations for what can be done at the Head Start and community levels, as well as the state and national levels.*

To suggest additions to this Key Topic Resource List, please email us at contact@researchconnections.org.

To view and sort the full search results from which these resources were selected, you may use the Recreate Complete Search function. The full results came from `mental health consult* exact phrase` or `title: mental health exact phrase` or `title: emotion* social all of the words` or `description: consult* emotion all of the words` or `title: consult* emotion all of the words`.

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