

replicate with new classrooms in the same Head Start agency, and to extend to a geographically distant and different Head Start agency, the use of the curriculum strategy or strategies comparing most favorably with the others, again in a random-assignment comparison design; and finally, (3) to follow all children in the project through early elementary school in order to obtain the broadest evidence-based support for the strengths of one or more of the curricula in terms of child outcomes in emergent literacy and early reading skills.

University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

Project Title:

Socioemotional Interventions to Enhance School Readiness

Grantee:

North Carolina Head Start Quality Research Center

Project Funding Years:

2001-2006

Project Staff:

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Chapel Hill-Carrboro Head Start

Chatham County Head Start

Orange County Head Start

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Project Abstract:

The focus of this project is on intervention research to promote preschoolers' social behavior and emotional development, one of the five developmental domains important for children's social competence and school readiness (National Educational Goals Panel, 1999). Many early school problems children have are related to many of the same underlying risk factors noted in studies of social and emotional behavior problems among seriously disruptive children. Furthermore, the risk factors that are associated with the development of social and emotional problems are more likely to be found in families and communities that Head Start programs typically serve (i.e., low income communities with limited resources; families that may be disorganized, experiencing higher than normal rates of emotional, economic, or marital stress). The present study is designed to reduce behavior problems and improve socioemotional functioning in young children through an intervention, which enhances the provision of supportive mental health services, basic overall classroom quality, parent involvement, and specific classroom strategies.

The proposed intervention is a modification of the Preschool Behavior Project, an evidence-based intervention program for aggression requiring intensive intervention with parents and teachers by highly-trained and supervised clinical consultants (Bryant, Vizzard, Willoughby & Kupersmidt, 1999). Unlike most intervention programs, we have implemented the PBP in Head Start and have preliminary evidence supporting its effectiveness in reducing disruptive behavior and thereby improving classroom functioning. The goal of the current project is to develop and evaluate a less intensive, but still effective, self-sustaining intervention that ultimately can be implemented as a broad quality improvement strategy by the existing Head Start T/TA network.

The evaluation will address six broad categories of research questions. (1) Why do Head Start staff choose to implement specific practices, how do they get their information, and how do they form beliefs about practices? (2) Using this information, what are the best ways to intervene in Head Start programs to enhance quality, specifically for improving classroom and program practices vis a vis mental health? (3) What is the most efficacious model for changing information, beliefs, and behaviors? Specifically, what are the strategies and supports needed for teachers and parents to acquire the skills that the PBP intervention addresses and how long does the change process take? (4) Which practices should be put in place to maintain

treatment fidelity of an intervention as a self-administered program component? (5) Can a Head Start program achieve the same reduction of problem behaviors and improvement of social skills in a self-administered program as in a research study? (6) What supports are needed for programs to develop local capacity for self-evaluation so they can gather relevant outcome data more systematically as part of their program improvement process?

The results expected from this project include the development of an exportable intervention program with supporting materials, developed in collaboration with Head Start partners and training and technical assistance experts, which has been tested in terms of its effectiveness and ability to be implemented in the Head Start setting. In addition, dissemination of a variety of products to a range of audiences will be an important focus, including empirical articles on effectiveness of intervention, treatment manuals, and practitioner-oriented publications.

University of Oregon

Project Title:

Head Start Adaptation of First Step to Success: Preparing Children for Social/Emotional Success at School

Grantee:

University of Oregon

Project Funding Years:

2001-2006

Project Staff:

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Head Start Partners:

Head Start Partner: Head Start of Lane County, Springfield, OR
KIDCO Head Start of Linn and Benton counties

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