

45.8 months old (SD = 6.5), and most (69.7%) speak Spanish as their first language.

Measures:

- Narrative coherence for three narrative tasks: recounting a personal experience, constructing a story from four pictures of a child playing in the park, and narrating a wordless picture book (Frog, Where Are You? [Mayer, 1969]).
- Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test (PPVT; Dunn & Dunn, 2007)
- Test de Vocabulario en Imágenes Peabody (TVIP; Dunn, Padilla, Lugo, & Dunn, 1986)
- Preschool Word and Print Awareness test (PWPA; Justice & Ezell, 2001)
- Letter/word identification task
- Demographic questionnaire

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Project Funding Years:

2010-2012

University Affiliation:

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Project Title:

Beyond Barriers: The Relationship between Head Start Parents' Social Capital, Their Involvement, and Children's Preschool Competencies

Project Abstract:

Grounded in Head Start's commitment to parent involvement, this proposed study will explore whether parents' social networks and resources indirectly affect children's preschool competencies through parent involvement in learning at home and in Head Start among Puerto Rican, non-Hispanic White, and Latino immigrant families. In order to maximize parent involvement, programs can address barriers to involvement that many parents, especially immigrant and ethnic minority parents, face, including schedule conflicts, childcare needs, and work obligations (Lamb-Parker et al., 2001). In addition, programs might also boost factors that positively influence parent involvement and influence children's preschool competencies. One such factor is social capital, or resources exchanged

within social networks (Bourdieu, 1986). Race and ethnicity appear to influence the nature of social capital that parents deploy to support their children's education (Diamond, Wang, & Gomez, 2006; Louie, 2006). The relationships among social capital, parent involvement, and children's outcomes in ethnically diverse families have not been simultaneously examined in Head Start. The proposed study will extend prior research by examining social capital, parent involvement, and children's preschool competencies in Puerto Rican, non-Hispanic White, and Latino immigrant families in Head Start (n=250). Data will be gathered through interviews, parent questionnaires and child preschool competency assessments. Descriptive analyses will describe the characteristics of parents' social capital, and a path model will be tested that posits parent involvement as a mediator of the relationship between social capital and children's preschool competencies. Findings will inform Head Start strategies to build parent involvement and support children's school readiness in families of different ethnic backgrounds.

Sample:

Across three target programs, the survey sample will include 250 parents, roughly divided into three groups: 80 Puerto Rican, 80 Latino immigrant, and 80 Non-Hispanic White. Children of all parents participating in the surveys will be assessed. Finally, a sub-sample of approximately 40 parents as well as center-based Family Service Coordinators will participate in interviews about social capital.

Measures:

- Family Involvement Questionnaire (Fantuzzo, Tighe, & Childs, 2000)
- Bracken School Readiness Assessment (Bracken, 2007)
- Parent Education Communication Survey (This measure was designed for the study and will be refined through course of study)

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