

Rena Hallam

Project Title:

Maternal Self-Efficacy in Mothers of Toddlers Enrolled in an Early Head Start Program

Grantee:

Rena Hallam

Project Funding Years:

1998-2000

University Affiliation :

University of Delaware

Department of Individual and Family Studies/Center for Disabilities Studies

Project Abstract:

Based on a social learning perspective, the construct of parental self-efficacy is explored within a small sample of low-income, culturally diverse mothers of toddlers enrolled in an Early Head Start program in New Castle County, Delaware. The intent of this study was threefold: (1) to determine relevant factors in the lives of low-income mothers that influenced mothers' parental self-efficacy; (2) to examine the relationship between maternal self-efficacy and behavioral interactions between mothers and their toddlers; and, (3) to examine possible associations between parental self-efficacy and participation in an Early Head Start program. Using questionnaire, observation, and interview methodologies, assessment of twenty mothers' parental self-efficacy was examined along with depression, knowledge of child development, perception of child temperament, life stress, and parenting stress. Mother-child interaction was also assessed. In general, mothers reported a high level of efficacy in the parenting role. However, mothers reported higher task-specific efficacy (e.g., efficacy regarding daily caregiving events) than more generalized notions of parental self-efficacy. Qualitative results indicate that many daily events that are particularly salient for low-income mothers, such as neighborhood safety and being the sole caregiver for their child, often more accurately reflect their feelings of efficacy. These issues are not typically included within current parental self-efficacy measures. Surprisingly, both the task-specific and generalized measures of parental self-efficacy were negatively correlated with maternal behavior. Thus, mothers reporting the highest levels of parental efficacy tended to demonstrate less positive, emotionally responsive behavior in their interactions with their toddler. Qualitatively, all of the mothers reported receiving child development and parenting information from the Early Head Start program. However, mothers who reported having an emotional

relationship with their Early Head Start service provider were more likely to describe the program as influencing their feelings of confidence as a parent. Implications for intervention and future research are discussed.

Sample:

n=20 mothers

Measures:

Demographic Survey

Life Events Checklist

Childhood Information Questionnaire

Toddler Care Questionnaire

Center for Epidemiological Studies Depression Scale (CES-D)

Parenting Stress Index

Observed Mother-Child Play Scenario

Semi-structured Mother Interview

Megan Noone

Project Title:

Contextually Relevant Assessment of the Emotional and Behavioral Adjustment of Head Start Children

Grantee:

Megan Noone

Project Funding Years:

1998-2000

University Affiliation :

University of Pennsylvania

Graduate School of Education, Psychology in Education Division

Project Abstract:

The primary purpose of this two-year research project was to develop an assessment tool to identify Head Start children with adjustment problems. The first objective was to develop a preschool version of the Adjustment Scales for Children and Adolescents (ASCA), which assesses emotional and behavioral adjustment. The appropriateness of situations addressed on the ASCA was examined and new suggestions were considered for inclusion on the preschool version. The second objective was to examine the validity of the preschool measure for use in Head Start. Age and/or gender differences in Head Start children's problem behaviors were investigated. The final objective was to explore the usefulness of the measure in identifying at-risk children and determining effective interventions. Quantitative and qualitative data were collected through interviews, surveys, and focus group meetings.