Marissa Owsianik, M.A.

Project Title:
Using Mixed Methods to Explore the Development of Underactive Head Start Preschoolers

Mentor:
Christine McWayne, Ph.D.

Funding Years:
2007-2009

University Affiliation:
New York University

Project Abstract:
In collaboration with a local Head Start program, New York University seeks to examine the development of Head Start preschoolers who engage in high levels of underactive behaviors. Specifically, the objectives for this project include: (a) identifying underactive children in the classroom, (b) quantitatively assessing the children's social and emotional adjustment in relation to social and academic outcomes, (c) comparing the reports of preschoolers peer play at home and at school, and (d) examining parents' and teachers' beliefs related to the development of underactive preschoolers (focusing on immigrant parents). Participants for this study will include 180 three and four year-old Head Start children and their families. Children's behavior in the classroom will be assessed using the Adjustment Scales for Preschool Intervention and competencies in peer play will be measured using the Penn Interactive Peer Play Scales. Children's developmental abilities will be assessed using the Preschool Child Observation Record, Second Edition and the Early Screening Inventory-Revised. Results from this study are expected to add to the existing knowledge base of young, low-income children with mental health needs. In addition, it is expected that this study will assist in supporting the development of underactive, Head Start children and their families.

Sample:
180 Head Start children and their families

Measures:
Children
Adjustment Scales for Preschool Intervention (ASPI)
Penn Interactive Peer Play Scales (PIPPS)
Preschool Child Observation Record, Second Edition
Early Screening Inventory-Revised

Parents/Teachers
Demographic Questionnaire

Erin E. Reid

Project Title:
Number*Fun*: Promoting Early Numeracy Skill Growth in Head Start Children

Mentor:
James C. Diperna, Ph.D.

Project Funding Years:
2007-2009

University Affiliation:
The Pennsylvania State University

Project Abstract:
The Pennsylvania State University seeks to develop and evaluate the effectiveness of an early numeracy skill promotion program, Number*Fun*, designed for use with children in Head Start programs. Specifically, the program will examine whether implementation of the Number*Fun* program is feasible in Head Start classrooms and whether it is effective in fostering early numeracy skills in Head Start children. Participants will include 240 Head Start children from eight classrooms. Classrooms will be matched on teacher and classroom characteristics and then one classroom from each pair will be randomly assigned to the Number*Fun* or control conditions. Children's early mathematics skills will be measured using the Test of Early Mathematics Ability, 3rd Edition and EARLI Numeracy Probes. In addition, implementation fidelity will be measured at several points throughout the year using the Implementation Fidelity Checklist and the Numeracy Instruction Self-report. Researchers anticipate that implementation of the Number*Fun* program will be feasible in Head Start classrooms and effective in promoting early numeracy skills in Head Start children. Results from this are expected to benefit curriculum, instruction, and assessment for Head Start centers and fill in the knowledge gap concerning numeracy development and instruction.

Sample:
240 Head Start children (eight classrooms)

Measures:
Children
Test of Early Mathematics Ability, 3rd Edition (TEMA-3)
EARLI Numeracy Probes