

Head Start Graduate Student Research Program: 2003 Research Scholars

* 2003-2004 ** 2003-2005

Heather Cohen**

Project Title:

Learning Behaviors as Protective Factors for Early School Readiness

Grantee:

Heather Cohen

Project Funding Years:

2003-2005

University Affiliation:

University of Pennsylvania
Graduate School of Education
Psychology in Education Division

Project Abstract:

The University of Pennsylvania will investigate how preschool learning behaviors impact school success at the end of Head Start and in kindergarten. The study has three objectives: (a) to determine the unique contribution of evidence-based dimensions of preschool approaches to learning to reading outcomes in Head Start and kindergarten; (b) to determine the unique contribution of evidence-based dimensions of preschool approaches to learning to mathematics outcomes in Head Start and kindergarten; and (c) to determine the degree to which instruction in learning behaviors is an explicit part of Head Start teacher's curriculum and whether the amount of classroom instruction is associated with children's level of learning behaviors. There will be two samples of participants. The first sample will consist of 200 Head Start children from 20 classrooms due to enter kindergarten the following year. The second sample will consist of 200 children from 50 Head Start classrooms. The first sample will be used to study the unique protective benefit of preschool learning behaviors on achievement in Head Start and kindergarten. The second sample will be used to evaluate the extent of explicit teacher instruction in learning behaviors, and the relationship of these practices to children's learning behaviors. The researchers expect results from this study will indicate

whether learning behaviors contribute to the resilience of children in high risk, urban areas. Researchers intend to use the findings to alter the Head Start curriculum and provide opportunities for Head Start leadership to reconsider the prioritization of learning behaviors in the existing curriculum.

Sample:

N=400 Children (200 from Sample 1, and 200 from Sample 2)

Measures:

Teacher

The Preschool Learning Behaviors Scale (PLBS)

Child

Test of Early Reading Ability, third edition (TERA-3)

Test of Early Mathematics Ability, second edition (TEMA-2)

Parents/Caregivers

Child & Family Demographics

Family Involvement Questionnaire (FIQ)

Gina A. Cook**

Project Title:

Early Environmental, Cognitive, and Social Indicators in Infancy: Relations to Second-Grade Reading Comprehension

Grantee:

Gina A. Cook

Project Funding Years:

2003-2005

University Affiliation:

Utah State University

College of Education and Human Services

Department of Family, Consumer, and Human Development

Project Abstract:

Utah State University will explore the influence of early environmental supports and other cognitive and social factors on literacy and reading comprehension. More specifically, the study seeks to answer the following questions: (a) What early environmental supports predict reading comprehension scores; (b) What early cognitive indicators in language, cognition, and emergent literacy predict reading comprehension scores; (c) Which early social indicators predict reading comprehension in second-graders; and (d) What combinations of early environmental and