

Head Start Quality Research Centers Consortium I (QRC), Research Partners

Education Development Center

Project Title:

New England Research Center on Head Start Quality

Grantee:

Education Development Center, Inc.

Project Funding Years:

1995-2000

Project Staff:

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Project Abstract:

The objective of the New England Research Center on Head Start Quality (NERCHSQ) was to pursue integrated research studies designed to identify indicators of Head Start quality. The Education Development Center, Inc. collaborated with the Harvard University Graduate School of Education, the Boston College School of Education, the Massachusetts Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children, the Regional Head Start Office, and Head Start programs throughout the Northeast to develop the NERCHSQ. The research examined the ways in which demographic changes, such as immigration and shifts in poverty, affect program quality. Head Start managers' awareness of and response to demographic changes were examined as well as patterns of interaction and oral language used within classrooms and across program components. A combination of integrated observational studies, action research, and longitudinal examination of children and families were utilized to identify indicators of program quality. Coding systems were developed to rate classroom features and home environments, and to track child development and family functioning. The research teams were composed of Head Start staff and parents. Observational and interview instruments measuring language and social skills were developed and pilot-tested, and later used to chart child development, family well being, and support for child development. The center identified clusters of potential measures used in monitoring program functions, and addressed enhancement of current database capabilities.

Sample:

7 Programs

72 Classrooms

367 Children

Measures:

Child

Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test III (PPVT-III)

Early Phonemic Awareness Profile

Emergent Literacy Profile

Book Concepts

Bronson Social and Task Skills Profile

Social Skills Rating Survey

Teacher Evaluation of Language and Literacy Development

Child Observation Record (High Scope)

Teacher

Teacher-Child Verbal Interaction Profile

Teacher Language and Culture Questionnaire

Parent

Parent Interview

Family and Service Workers

Family Services Language and Culture Survey

Management Practices

Information and Management Practices Inventory

Selected Findings:

1. HLM analyses revealed that the quality of classroom support for literacy, as measured using the Early Language and Literacy Classroom Observation tool (ELLCO), accounted for significant variance in children's language, literacy, phonological awareness and social development.
2. Parents' reports of support for literacy and engagement in educational activities accounted for significant variance in children's language development.
3. The fall-to-spring changes in phonological sensitivity of children from Spanish speaking homes when assessed in English was highly related to ability to do the same task in Spanish. Growth of this ability when assessed in Spanish was highly related to improvement in English.

Publications:

Dickinson, D.K., & Sprague, K. (2001). The nature and impact of early childhood care environments on the language and early literacy development of children from low-income families. In D.K. Dickinson, & S. Neuman (Eds.), *Handbook of research on early literacy*. New York: Guilford Press.

Dickinson, D.K., & Tabors, P.O. (2001). *Beginning literacy with language: Young children learning at home and school*. Baltimore, MD: Brookes Publishing.

Dickinson, D.K., McCabe, A., & Anastasopoulos, L. (in press). A framework for examining book reading in early childhood classrooms. In Stahl & van Kleeck, *Book reading in classrooms*.

Smith, M.W., Dickinson, D.K., Sangeorge, A., & Anastasopoulos, L. (in press). *The Early Language and Literacy Classroom Observation (ELLCO)*.

Dickinson, D.K., McCabe, A., & Sprague, K. (under review). *Teacher Rating of Oral Language and Literacy (TROLL): Individualizing early literacy instruction with a standards-based rating tool*.

Dickinson, D.K., & McCabe, A. (under review). *Bringing it all together: The multiple origins, skills, and environmental supports of early literacy.*

Dickinson, D.K., Wolf, A., & McCabe, A. (under review). *Cross-language transfer of phonological awareness in low-income Spanish and English bilingual preschool children.*

Dickinson, D.K., McCabe, A., Anastasopoulos, L., Abbott-Shim, M., Lambert, R.L., & Peisner-Feinberg, E. (under review). *Phonological awareness in Head Start children: Relationship to language and literacy and parenting variables.*

Dickinson, D.K. (under review). *Shifting images of developmentally appropriate practice as seen through different lenses.*

Howard, C., Lewkowicz, C., & Dickinson, D.K. (under review). *Both sides now: An examination of the relationship between researchers and Head Start partners.*

Dickinson, D.K. (2000). Current research on bilingual program models and/or best practices. *NHSA Dialog*, 3 (3), 345 - 351.

Tabors, P.O., Aceves, C., Bartolomé, L., Páez, M., & Wolf, A. (2000) Language development of linguistically diverse children in Head Start classrooms: Three ethnographic portraits. *NHSA Dialog*, 3 (3), 409-440.

Clark-Chiarelli, N., Miller, C., Sayer, A., & Sprague, K. (2000, March). *Analysis of the technical qualities of research tools developed by the New England Quality Research Center.* Newton, MA: Education Development Center, Inc.

Tabors, P.O., Aceves, C., Bartolomé, L., Páez, M.M., & Wolf, A. (1999, November). *Language development of linguistically diverse children in Head Start classrooms: Three ethnographic portraits.* NEQRC Technical Report #1.

Presentations:

Anastasopoulos, L, Dickinson, D.K., & Fahey, P. (2000, June). *Factors that influence job satisfaction among Head Start staff.* Poster session presented at the Fifth National Head Start Research Conference, Washington, DC.

Bronson, M.B., & Fetter, A.L. (1998, July). *Fall to spring changes in the social and mastery skills of Head Start children.* Paper presented at the Fourth National Head Start Research Conference, Washington, DC.

Bronson, M.B., & Fetter, A.L. (1999, April). *Assessing young children's self-regulated social and mastery task behaviors in the classroom settings.* Poster session presented at the biennial convention of the Society for Research in Child Development, Albuquerque, NM.

Craddock, K. (1997, October). *Literacy in early childhood education: A matter of narrative styles*. Paper presented at the 27th annual conference of the National Black Child Development Institute, Inc., Atlanta GA

Craddock, K. (1997, October). *Narrative styles of African-American children: Implications for early literacy*. Paper presented at Northeastern University, Dept. of African-American Studies, Fall 1997 Seminars, Boston, MA.

Dickinson, D.K. (1997, May). *The New England Quality Research Center*. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the National Head Start Training Conference, Boston, MA.

Dickinson, D.K. (1998, December). *Supporting emergent literacy: Recent research findings*. Paper presented at the New England Head Start Association conference on "Lighting the Way to the New Millennium," Springfield, MA.

Dickinson, D.K. (1999, March). *Language and phonemic awareness development in Spanish and English*. Paper presented at the National Association of Bilingual Educators, San Antonio, TX.

Dickinson, D.K. (1999, April). *Shifting images of DAP as seen through different lenses*. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, Montreal, Canada.

Dickinson, D.K., Bryant, D., Peisner-Feinberg, E., Lambert, R., & Wolf, A. (1999, April). *Phonemic awareness in Head Start children: Relationship to language and literacy and parenting variables*. Paper presented at the biennial meeting of the Society for Research in Child Development, Albuquerque, NM.

Dickinson, D.K. (2000, March). *Effective literacy practices in preschools. Putting research to work: Building literacy skills in children*. Invitational Conference Sponsored by the Harvard Children's Initiative, Cambridge, MA.

Dickinson, D.K., & Miller, C. (2000, April). *Developmental history and psychometric properties of the Early Language and Literacy Classroom Observation Tool (ELLCO)*. Poster session presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, New Orleans, LA.

Dickinson, D.K., Sprague, K., Sayer, A., Miller, C., Clark, N., & Wolf, A. (2000, June). Classroom factors that foster literacy and social development of children from different language backgrounds. In M. Hopmann (Chair), *Dimensions of program quality that foster child development: Reports from 5 years of the Head Start Quality Research Centers*. Poster symposium presented at the Fifth National Head Start Research Conference, Washington, DC.

Dickinson, D. (2000, June). Challenges and approaches to assessing young children's early literacy skills in two languages. In M.L. Lopez (Chair), *Continuities and discontinuities in the assessment of young bilingual children: Lessons learned and future directions for research*. Symposium conducted at the Fifth National Head Start Research Conference, Washington, DC.

Dickinson, D.K. (2000, September). *Cognitive, linguistic and social precursors to early literacy: Long-term consequences and policy implications*. Keynote address to the Early Literacy Seminar convened by ASHA and NICHD, Bethesda, MD.

Dickinson, D.K. (2000, September). *How states can support development in the preschool years: A language and literacy perspective*. Address delivered to the National Council of State Legislators, Boise, Idaho.

Dickinson, D.K. (2000, October). *Workshops on classroom language and classroom evaluation for teachers*. IRA Reading Forum, Minneapolis, MN.

Dickinson, D.K., Sprague, K., Sayer, A., Miller, C., & Clark, N. (2001, April). *A multilevel analysis of the effects of early home and preschool environments on children's language and early literacy development*. Poster session presented at the annual conference of the American Educational Research Association, Seattle, WA.

Dickinson, D.K. (2001, May). *How to conduct a local Head Start program evaluation: Keeping track of children's language and literacy growth*. Paper presented at the National Head Start Association, Orlando, FL.

Dickinson, D.K., Howard, C., & Rafal, C.T. (1997, November). *Describing teacher support for language in preschools*. Paper presented at the annual conference of the Division for Early Childhood of the Center for Exceptional Children, New Orleans, LA.

Dickinson, D.K., Rafal, C. T., & Merianos, L. (1998, April). *The structure of Teacher-Child Verbal Interaction in preschool classrooms: Results from the Teacher-Child Verbal Interaction Profile*. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, San Diego, CA.

Dickinson, D.K., & Smith, M.W. (1997, November). *Describing language and literacy environments: Research tools for practitioners*. Paper presented at the National Association for the Education of Young Children, Anaheim, CA.

Dickinson, D.K., Smith, M.W., & Haine, R. (1996, August). *Predicting kindergarten literacy from preschool discourse*. Poster session presented at the XIVth Biennial Meetings of ISSBD, Quebec City, Canada.

Dickinson, D.K. & Wolf, A. (1999, April). *Phonemic awareness development in Spanish-English bilingual preschool children*. Poster session presented at the annual meeting of the Society for the Scientific Study of Reading, Montreal, Canada.

Howard, C., Dodi, C., & Lewkowicz, C. (2000, June). *Creating authentic researcher partnerships: A view from both sides*. Poster session presented at the Fifth National Head Start Research Conference, Washington, DC.

Howard, C., Dodi, C., & Lewkowicz, C. (2000, November). *Creating authentic researcher partnerships: A view from both sides*. Poster session presented at the annual conference of the National Association for the Education of Young People, Washington, DC.

Howard, C. (1998, April). Life in the real world: *Creating and sustaining authentic Head Start-researcher partnerships*. Paper presented at the annual training conference of the National Head Start Association, Seattle, WA,

Miller, C., Sprague, K., & Sayer, A. (2001, April). *An initial examination of the psychometric properties of tools that examine preschool literacy environments and teacher-child interaction*. Poster session presented at the annual conference of the American Educational Research Association, Seattle, WA.

Miller, C., Sprague, K., Sayer, A., & Dickinson, D.K. (2001, April). *Using HLM to examine the effects of early environments and language background on children's social development*. Poster session presented at the biennial meeting of the Society for Research in Child Development (SRCD), Minneapolis, MN.

Páez, M. (2000, June). Variations in teachers' and children's language use in bilingual and multilingual early childhood education classrooms. In M.L. Lopez (Chair), *Continuities and discontinuities in the assessment of young bilingual children: Lessons learned and future directions for research*. Symposium conducted at the Fifth National Head Start Research Conference, Washington, DC.

Páez, M., & Tabors, P. (2000, June). *Teachers' beliefs and practices related to second language learning in Head Start classrooms*. Poster session presented at the Fifth National Head Start Research Conference, Washington, DC.

Robinson, D.R., Sayer, A., Sprague, K., & Dickinson D.K. (2000, April). Parental reports of family routines as predictive of language and literacy development of Head Start children. In D.K. Dickinson and C. Snow (Chairs), *Examining the impact of parenting on low-income children's development: Results from the four Head Start Quality Research Centers*. Symposium

conducted at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, New Orleans, LA.

Smith, M.W., Haine, R., & Dickinson, D.K. (1997, April). *Teacher's assessments of children's language and literacy skills: Predictive power and consistency*. Paper presented at the Biennial Meeting of the Society for Research in Child Development, Washington, DC.

Snow, C., Aceves, C., Páez, M., & Wolf, A. (1998, July). *Language development of linguistically diverse children in Head Start classrooms: Three ethnographic portraits*. A symposium conducted at the Fourth National Head Start Research Conference, Washington, DC.

Tabors, P. (2000, June). What are some concerns related to doing educational research with young bilingual children? In M.L.Lopez (Chair), *Continuities and discontinuities in the assessment of young bilingual children: Lessons learned and future directions for research*. Symposium conducted at the Fifth National Head Start Research Conference, Washington, DC.

Tabors, P., Baker, M., Caswell, L., Flavin, L., Kelly, R., & Wolf, A. (1997, May). *Assessment of second language learners' progress in learning English*. Presentation at the National Head Start Association's Annual Training Conference, Boston, MA.

Dickinson, D.K., Howard, C., & Theriault, S. (1999) *Research, literacy, and Head Start: Informational sessions for Region I*. Newton, MA: Education Development Center, New England Quality Research Center, Center for Children and Families.

Georgia State University

Project Title:

Georgia State University Research Center on Head Start Quality

Grantee:

Georgia State University, Center for the Study of Adult Literacy

Project Funding Years:

1995-2000

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