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Project Abstract:

Harvard University partnered with several Early Head Start (EHS)/Head Start programs in Boston and Lawrence, MA, to achieve two primary goals. First, project staff investigated the feasibility of combining parent and teacher reports of toddlers' vocabulary over time, with the ultimate goal of developing accurate, efficient means for EHS/Head Start staff to assess and monitor the vocabulary development of toddlers, particularly those from Spanish-speaking homes. Second, researchers focused analysis on developing a deeper understanding of language development and attrition in toddlers and preschoolers who are acquiring more than one language. Participants included a sample of approximately 75 toddlers from Spanish-speaking homes and a peer sample of approximately 45 toddlers from English-speaking homes. Children and families entered the study at child age 2, 2½, or 3 years. Children were followed through their pre-kindergarten year of Head Start. Results informed development of an integrated system to identify appropriate reporter(s) and languages to be assessed, integrate reports from multiple reporters, and to display results over time.

Sample:

Core Sample: N=75 toddlers from Spanish-speaking homes

Peer Sample: N=45 toddlers from English-speaking homes

Measures:

Parent

Parent Interview

The MacArthur Communicative Development Inventory: Words and Phrases
Inventario del Desarrollo de Habilidades Comunicativas-Palabras y
Enunciados

Child

Woodcock Language Proficiency Battery-Revised (WLPB-R) - Picture
Vocabulary and Memory for Sentences Subtests

Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test-III (PPVT-III)

Test de Vocabulario en Imagenes Peabody (TVIP)

Parent-Child Interactions

Spontaneous Speech Samples

Michigan State University

Project Title:

Culturally Sensitive Measurement of Toddler-Parent Mealtime Behaviors

Principal Investigator:

Mildred A. Horodynski

Project Funding Years:

2004-2007

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Project Abstract:

Michigan State University, working with eight Early Head Start (EHS) programs, developed a measure for assessing toddler-parent mealtime feeding behaviors. This measure can be used to (1) identify key issues in mealtime feeding behaviors that may inform appropriate intervention strategies and (2) evaluate family and EHS program progress in the area of toddler-parent mealtime feeding behaviors and toddler nutrition. Participants included African American mother-toddler dyads (N = 200) and Caucasian mother-toddler dyads (N = 200) enrolled in EHS. The study was conducted in three phases. Phase one consisted of focus group sessions with low-income, African American families with toddlers, with the goal of tailoring existing instruments developed for Caucasian EHS families with toddlers. Phase two employed survey methods to collect responses to survey items generated in the focus group sessions, with the goal of testing the psychometric properties of the measure within the two target populations and testing the validity of the self report measure. In Phase three, EHS staff were trained to use the measurement instruments. The expected outcome of this study was an observational measure that directly assesses parent-toddler mealtime feeding behavior as well as a companion self-report mealtime behavior measure that is culturally appropriate for use with both African American and Caucasian EHS families with toddlers.

Sample:

N=200 African American mother-toddler dyads

N=200 Caucasian mother-toddler dyads

Measures:

Parent

Toddler and Parent Mealtime Behavior Questionnaire (TPMBQ)

Toddler-Parent Mealtime Observation
Feeding Self-Efficacy Questionnaire
Social Support Instrument

The Pennsylvania State University

Project Title:

Development of Early Arithmetic, Reading, and Learning Indicators for Head Start Populations

Principal Investigator:

James C. DiPerna

Project Funding Years:

2004-2007

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Project Abstract:

The Pennsylvania State University partnered with the Lebanon County Head Start Program to develop a set of progress-monitoring measures to assess key early literacy and mathematics skills for 3-and-4-year old children enrolled in Head Start. The project carefully developed skill probes in the early literacy domain (including alphabet recitation, letter identification, letter-sound correspondence, and phonemic awareness) and in the early mathematics domain (including number recitation, number identification, counting, and subitizing). Participants included approximately 200 Head Start children per year. The measures developed for this study can help ensure that children are developing key literacy and mathematics skills and can provide data regarding when a child is at risk of later academic difficulty and would benefit from change in instruction.

Sample:

N=200 Head Start children per year

Measures:

Child

Early Literacy Probes

Early Mathematics Probes

Woodcock-Johnson III Tests of Cognitive Abilities and Achievement