

Project Title:

Evidence-based Emergent Literacy Approaches for Head Start

Grantee:

State University of New York at Stony Brook

Project Funding Years:

2001-2006

Project Staff:

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Head Start Partner:

Long Island Head Start Child and Family Development Services

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Project Abstract:

Emergent literacy consists of the skills, knowledge, and attitudes that are developmental precursors to reading and writing (Whitehurst & Lonigan, 1998). Children reared in conditions of poverty are at increased risk of falling short on the dimensions of emergent literacy in the preschool years, and have alarmingly high rates of poor academic achievement once in elementary school. Reading and writing are the foundations for academic achievement. Thus, attention to emergent literacy, which forms the basis for learning to read and write, is appropriate for preschool programs and has been emphasized in the most recent federal reauthorization of Head Start.

The primary objective of this project is to identify through careful comparative study, emergent literacy approaches that provide the most effective enhancement of emergent literacy for children in Head Start. We use the phrase evidence-based curriculum to denote an explicit and careful process of evaluating short- and long-term outcomes of curriculum interventions implemented in randomly assigned Head Start classrooms, thus providing the evidence for making decisions about one or more optimally effective curricula.

More specifically, the project purpose is: (1) to compare, in Head Start classrooms of four-year-old children, leading curricula that have as part of their goals the enhancement of emergent literacy and language skills; (2) to

replicate with new classrooms in the same Head Start agency, and to extend to a geographically distant and different Head Start agency, the use of the curriculum strategy or strategies comparing most favorably with the others, again in a random-assignment comparison design; and finally, (3) to follow all children in the project through early elementary school in order to obtain the broadest evidence-based support for the strengths of one or more of the curricula in terms of child outcomes in emergent literacy and early reading skills.

University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

Project Title:

Socioemotional Interventions to Enhance School Readiness

Grantee:

North Carolina Head Start Quality Research Center

Project Funding Years:

2001-2006

Project Staff:

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Chapel Hill-Carrboro Head Start

Chatham County Head Start

Orange County Head Start

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