Parent
Circle of Security Interview (COSI)
Parenting Stress Index-Short Form (PSI)
Life Events Scale
Caregiver Behavior Classification

Child-Parent Dyads
Ainsworth's Strange Situation

Teacher
Conners' Teacher Questionnaire (CTQ)

Vanderbilt University

Project Title:
Building Social Communication Skills During Peer Interactions

Grantee:
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Project Abstract:
The goals of this study are to: (1) develop and test a multi-component intervention to teach peer-directed, pragmatic communication skills to children at risk for language and behavior problems; (2) determine the effects of this intervention on the development of language, pragmatics, social behavior, and play in children with identified language and behavior problems; and (3) determine the effects of this intervention on children who represent a range of early language and social skills. The intervention will include the use of storybooks to provide specific models of language, pragmatics, and conversation to be used during free play. In addition, corresponding thematic play materials will be used that support peer interactions, provide an opportunity to role-play and practice specific pragmatic skills. Finally, an advanced Play/Organizer/Play/Review sequence will be used to structure children's opportunities to acquire, practice, and

integrate their skills for talking with peers. Researchers have designed three separate studies to explore the relationship of their intervention to peer play and social interaction. The first study will test the proposed intervention with three dyads of children across six dramatic play activities. During this study, researchers will design the storybooks used to teach the targeted pragmatic skills, select and assemble materials and themes for play activities, modify an already existing plan/play/review protocol to include the storybooks, develop treatment implementation measures, and develop the protocol for assessing peer language and play outside the intervention context. The second study will examine the immediate and long-terms effects of the intervention. For this second study, 36 children with low language, low social skills, and elevated behavior problem scores will be randomly assigned to treatment or comparison groups. Their communication performance will be compared at three time points (pre-, post-, and 4-month follow-up). The final study will examine the effects of an intervention designed to increase children's skills in talking with their peers. The peer-directed intervention will be provided to children in Head Start classrooms by their teacher during center-based dramatic play activities. Approximately 64 4-year-old children enrolled in 16 classrooms will participate, with two boys and girls randomly selected from each classroom to participate. These classrooms will be randomly assigned to the intervention (8 classrooms, 32 children) or the comparison group (8 classrooms, 32 children). This final study is proposed as an intermediate step in developing a universal intervention for Head Start children. The primary objectives will be to determine the immediate effects of the intervention on children's development of language, pragmatic, and social skills, and determine the feasibility of classroom-wide implementation of the intervention.

Sample:
Study 1
n= 6 Head Start children

Study 2
n=36 Head Start children with low language, low social skills, and elevated behavior problem scores

Study 3
n=45 Head Start children and their teachers

Measures:
Child
Preschool Language Scale-3 (PLS-3)
Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test-III (PPVT-III)
Expressive Vocabulary Test (EVT)
Language Sample

Index of Productive Syntax (IPSYN)
Social Skills Rating Scale (SSRS)
Caregiver Teacher Report Form (CTRF)
Pragmatics Assessment (Ninio, et al, 1994)
Peer Play Code
Peer Language & Behavior Code (Revised)
Treatment Fidelity and Social Validity
Intervention Implementation Checklists
Social Validation of Peer Intervention
Treatment Fidelity of Peer Intervention