

# Head Start Graduate Student Research Program: 2010 Research Scholars

## Catherine Bracaliello

### *Project Title:*

Quantity, quality, and content: An empirical examination of key integrity components in Early Head Start home visiting

### *Mentor:*

Patricia Manz, Ph.D.

### *Project Funding Years:*

2010-2011

### *University Affiliation:*

Lehigh University

### *Project Abstract:*

Despite attempts to examine isolated components of service delivery, mixed outcomes regarding the effectiveness of home visiting call for a more comprehensive evaluation of program implementation and integrity (Sweet & Appelbaum, 2004). Specifically, the local Early Head Start (EHS) program is interested in examining the extent to which services are received by the culturally-diverse children and families in order to promote consistent, high-quality home visiting. The three goals of this project include: (a) to develop, in partnership with local stakeholders, the Home Visiting Process Scale (HVPS), a psychometrically-sound and practical measurement tool for EHS programs to use in assessing the quality of home visiting services; (b) to empirically examine the multiple integrity components of "quantity, quality, and content" in home visiting service delivery (Raikes et al., 2006); and (c) to comprehensively evaluate the local service delivery of EHS according to these indicators. Initial phases of this project will be devoted to partnership activities, followed by measurement development of the HVPS and retrieval of home visiting service delivery information. Rigorous statistical scaling procedures (i.e., Exploratory Factor Analysis) will be applied in investigating the underlying constructs of the HVPS. Furthermore, advanced Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) will be used to examine how the observed integrity indicators fit the conceptual model of Raikes et al. (2006). Regression analyses will be conducted to examine the implementation of local EHS home visiting services. Immediate results of this study will provide local EHS directors with the capacity to identify targets for program adaptation.

Moreover, expected benefits include meaningful directions and implications for future program evaluations and policy development. A clear outcome of this study will be the availability of an evaluation tool and a model of integrity assessment that can be used to tailor and monitor services in other EHS programs. In extended research, this model of integrity assessment will enable policy makers to understand the vital connections between EHS home visiting components and program outcomes, further promoting EHS home visiting as a viable intervention for culturally-diverse children and families.

*Sample:*

Approximately 150 families and young children from birth to three-years of age in a mix of urban and rural communities and served by an Early Head Start program located in the Mid-Atlantic. Latino families (62%) constitute the single largest ethnic group served. Over 43% of families are primarily Spanish-speaking. Children between two to three years of age are the largest age group served (56%) by the program.

*Measures:*

*Child/family demographic and cultural variables*

- Caregiver race and ethnicity
- Caregiver native/primary language
- Caregiver age
- Caregiver education
- Caregiver years in US
- Household income level
- Child race and ethnicity
- Child age at enrollment/exit
- Child's primary language spoken at home

*Quantity of home visiting*

- Number of visits received
- Duration of visiting (i.e., in weeks)
- Intensity of visitation (i.e., the average rate of home visits received each month)

*Quality of home visiting*

The multiple underlying dimensions of the Home Visiting Process Scale (HVPS) will serve as indicators of quality.

*Content of home visiting*

Goals identified in weekly home visit session records in the following broad areas:

- Child development and learning
- Child health/nutrition
- Family-focused objectives

## **Joy Lorenzo Kennedy**

*Mentor:*

Gigliana Melzi, Ph.D.

*Project Funding Years:*

2010-2012

*University Affiliation:*

New York University

*Project Title:*

Narrative development in dual-language learning Latino Head Start children:  
Coherence across tasks and languages

*Project Abstract:*

Information is lacking on the normative developmental trajectory of children's narrative skills across the preschool years, particularly for DLL children. This study seeks to address this gap in the literature by assessing narrative development among 125 DLL Latino children from three Head Start programs in New York City at three time points across the school year. Children engaged in three narrative tasks – chronicling a personal experience, telling a story based on a set of pictures, and narrating a wordless picture book – will be asked to relate each story in both English and Spanish. The primary objectives of the proposed study are: (1) to understand the developmental progression of children's narrative skills in both English and Spanish; (2) to examine the effect of narrative task and language spoken on the coherence of children's narratives; (3) to investigate the relationship between children's narrative ability and other standardized measures of language ability and pre-literacy; and (4) to develop a workshop series to share knowledge gained from the proposed study with teachers and parents.

*Sample:*

125 preschool children (59 boys; 66 girls) attending three Head Start programs in New York City, whose parents self-identified as Latino. Children come from a broad range of Latino backgrounds, including Dominican (42%), Mexican (32%), Puerto Rican (5%) and South American (5%), and all come from economically underprivileged homes. On average, children are