

Head Start Graduate Student Research Program: 2001 Research Scholars

* 2001-2002 ** 2001-2003

Rebecca J. Bulotsky**

Project Title:

The Relationship Between Contextually Relevant Assessment of Emotional and Behavioral Adjustment in Head Start and Children's Social Adjustment and Academic Achievement in Primary Grades

Grantee:

Rebecca J. Bulotsky

Project Funding Years:

2001-2003

University Affiliation:

University of Pennsylvania
Graduate School of Education
Psychology in Education Division

Project Abstract:

The goal of this project is to use a developmental-ecological framework to better understand the relationship between preschool children's emotional and behavioral adjustment and their social adjustment, academic achievement, special education placement, and grade retention in the primary grades. An additional study objective is to use the information about these relationships to stimulate dialogue and increase awareness among Head Start teachers, primary school teachers, and parents of the educational experiences and trajectories of preschool children with early adjustment difficulties. The aim of this objective is to interpret research findings collaboratively and to determine ways that program activities and policies can best promote children's well-being and school readiness through early identification and intervention in Head Start. This study, a follow-up to a previous study of Head Start children's behavioral and emotional adjustment, will assess how the complex context of child development, including poverty, Head Start classroom characteristics, and the transition into elementary school, affects later child development and functioning. Participants in the present study include 938 of the original participants, who are now children in the second grade. During the 1998-1999 school year,

participants' teachers completed the Adjustment Scale for Preschool Intervention (ASPI). These results, along with other demographic information, will be used in conjunction with the Adjustment Scale for Children and Adolescents (ASCA), which will be completed by participants' second grade teachers. These teacher rating scales assess children's behavior across multiple situations. Indicators of primary grade school adjustment, academic performance, and demographic and contextual covariates will also be examined. Results from this study can help guide Head Start's mental health agenda and inform effective and appropriate intervention and kindergarten transition policies for this high-risk population.

Sample:

n=938 former Head Start children (1998-1999 Head Start cohort)

Measures:

Child

Reading, Mathematics, Science Stanford Achievement Tests (SAT-9)
Records of special education placement for learning-related disabilities and grade retention
Demographic information

Teacher

Adjustment Scale for Preschool Intervention (ASPI)
Adjustment Scale for Children and Adolescents (ASCA)
Report-card grades of classroom behavior, suspensions, truancy, and receipt of special education services for serious emotional disturbance

Family

Demographic information, including family structure, parent educational level, parental employment
Census information on neighborhood density of poverty

Rebecca Cortes*

Project Title:

Parents' Emotional Awareness and Childrearing Practices: Implications for Low-Income Children's Social Emotional Competence

Grantee:

Rebecca Cortes

Project Funding Years:

2001-2002