

Head Start Graduate Student Research Program: 2006 Research Scholars

* 2006-2008 ** 2006-2007

Mary Dallas Allen*

Project Title:

Attributes of Effective Head Start Mental Health Consultants: A Mixed Method Study of Rural and Urban Programs

Mentor:

Eileen Brennan

Project Funding Years:

2006-2008

University Affiliation:

Portland State University, Graduate School of Social Work,
Research and Training Center on Family Support and Children's Mental Health

Project Abstract:

In collaboration with Head Start programs in Oregon and Alaska, Portland State University will seek to better understand the skills and attributes of rural and urban mental health consultants that contribute to the effectiveness of mental health consultation in Head Start programs. The study will seek to answer the following questions: (a) what attributes of mental health consultants are most strongly associated with teacher reported effectiveness of mental health consultation for improving child outcomes in rural and urban Head Start programs? (b) what attributes of mental health consultants are most strongly associated with teacher reports of the quality of mental health consultant and staff relationships in rural and urban Head Start programs? (c) what are early childhood mental health consultants' perceptions of how to best develop relationships with staff in rural and urban Head Start programs? (d) what are mental health consultants' perceptions of the professional skills, attributes, and supports needed to build positive relationships with staff and to produce positive consultation outcomes in rural and urban Head Start programs? and (e) what are the challenges and barriers to providing mental health consultation in rural areas? A secondary analysis of data from a national survey of 648

Head Start staff and 68 mental health consultants will be conducted to explore the attributes of consultants in rural and urban Head Start programs. Additionally telephone focus groups will be conducted to determine urban and rural mental health consultants' perceptions of the skills, attributes, and supports needed to build positive relationships with Head Start staff. Results of the study are expected to enhance the early childhood mental health consultation services provided by both rural and urban Head Start programs.

Sample:

648 Head Start Staff (survey)
68 Mental Health Consultants (survey)
25 Mental Health Consultants (focus groups)

Measures:

Head Start Mental Health Services Survey: (a) *attributes of mental health consultant*, (b) *effectiveness in helping child outcomes*, (c) *quality of relationships between staff and mental health consultant*

Rebecca Sandford DeRousie*

Project Title:

Sustainability of Evidence-Based Curriculum in Head Start Classrooms

Mentor:

Karen Bierman

Project Funding Years:

2006-2008

University Affiliation:

The Pennsylvania State University
College of Health and Human Development

Project Abstract:

The Pennsylvania State University will examine the factors that contribute to successful implementation and sustainability of an evidence-based preschool curriculum, the Head Start Research-based Developmentally Informed (REDI) project. The specific aims of the project are to: (a) evaluate implementation quality in the Head Start REDI randomized trial; (b) ascertain what factors contribute to variability in implementation quality; (c) determine what aspects of the REDI curriculum are sustained after teachers are no longer required by the research project to implement it; and (d) determine which factors are associated with a high level of sustainability and maintenance of the REDI curriculum. The sample will include 22 lead