Integrating Research-based Supports into Existing Head Start Classrooms: The REDI Program

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Primary Goals of the REDI Intervention

- Build upon the foundation of strong Head Start programming (High Scope/Creative Curriculum)

- Foster the diffusion of research-based practices in two domains: 1) social-emotional competencies, and 2) language & early literacy skills

- Provide materials and support to teachers to help them implement the scope and sequence of these integrated learning activities

- Evaluate program impact, and develop supports for portable diffusion and sustainable implementation.
Intervention Components: Social-Emotional Competencies

Target Skills
- Prosocial Skills
- Emotional Competence
- Self Control
- Social Problem Solving

Curriculum Components
- PATHS Friendship Lessons
- PATHS Feeling Lessons
- PATHS Turtle Technique
- PATHS SPS Lessons

Teaching Strategies
- Positive Classroom Management
- Praise & Warm Involvement
- Emotion Coaching
- Induction Strategies
- Social Problem-Solving Dialogue
Preschool PATHS Lessons

Stories, puppets, and role plays introduce key concepts during circle time. Lessons focus on friendship skills, emotional understanding, self-control, and social problem-solving…
More Preschool PATHS…

Do Turtle!

STOP.

Take a deep breath.

Say the problem and how you feel.

The problem is... and I feel....

Excited
Calm or Relaxed

Scared or Afraid
Sad
Intervention Components:

Language and Literacy Skills

**Target Skills**
- Vocabulary
- Syntax
- Phonological Sensitivity
- Print Awareness

**Curriculum Components**
- Interactive Reading
- Sound Games
- Alphabet Centers

**Teaching Strategies**
- Language Expansions
- Rich & Targeted Vocabulary
- Questions & Reflections (to extend narrative)
- Decontextualized Talk
Interactive Reading Program

- Based upon the shared reading of Wasik, Bond & Hindman (2006) and dialogic reading of Whitehurst, Arnold et al. (1994).

- 2 books per week; 1 interfaces with PATHS.

- Provides examples of interactive questions.

- Uses a “prop box” to target vocabulary words.

- Emphasizes the use of rich, decontextualized language, and responsive expansions.
Sound Games & Alphabet Center

- Sound games are based on the work of Lundberg and colleagues (Adams, Foorman, Lundberg & Beeler, 1998).

- Teachers use a 10-15 minute activity at least 3 times per week.

- The games introduce phonemic awareness skills in a developmental sequence: listening, rhyming, alliteration, words and sentences, syllables, and phonemes.

- Alphabet center activities are developmentally-sequenced to support student learning (e.g., letter stickers, a letter bucket, art & craft materials for a range of letter-learning activities).

- Children visit the center several times per week; teachers track the children’s acquisition of letter names.
Professional Development Support

- Teachers received a 3-day workshop in August, and a 1-day “booster” workshop in January.

- Lead and assistant teachers met weekly with a REDI mentor, who reviewed lessons, visited the classroom, and encouraged self-reflective use of the target teaching strategies.
Research Design Overview

- Participants were 356 4-year-old children in 44 Head Start classrooms, and the teachers & assistant teachers in those classrooms.

- Sets of classrooms were matched on demographics, county, length of program day, and then randomized to intervention or “usual practice” comparison.
Measurement Strategy

- Observations of teaching processes
- Direct assessments child skills in social-emotional understanding and language/emergent literacy domains
- Behavioral ratings of children by teachers, observers, and parents
Random Effects Regressions: Intervention Effects on Teaching Practices

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Coeff</th>
<th>SE</th>
<th>P-value</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CLEO-Statements</td>
<td>1.27</td>
<td>.39</td>
<td>.001</td>
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<td>CLEO-Questions</td>
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<td>CLEO-Richness of Talk (Lead)</td>
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<td>.20</td>
<td>.08</td>
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<td>CLASS instructional support</td>
<td>.38</td>
<td>.21</td>
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<tr>
<td>CLASS emotional support</td>
<td>.32</td>
<td>.22</td>
<td>.11</td>
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<tr>
<td>TSRS positive emotion</td>
<td>.68</td>
<td>.30</td>
<td>.02</td>
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Direct Assessments: Child Language & Emergent Literacy Skills

- EOWPVT
  - Comparison: P<0.02
  - Intervention: P<0.001

- Blending
  - Comparison: P<0.001
  - Intervention: P<0.001

- Elision
  - Comparison: P<0.001
  - Intervention: P<0.001

- Print
  - Comparison: P<0.01
  - Intervention: P<0.01
Direct Assessments:
Child Emotional Understanding and Social Problem-Solving Skills

Comparison
Intervention

ACES  ERQ  SPS-Agg  SPS-Comp

$P<.06$

$P<.03$

$P<.04$

$P<.01$
Behavioral Improvements

- Teacher-rated social competence (p < .10)
- Teacher-rated aggression (p < .05)
- Observer-rated social competence (p < .08)
- Observer-rated task orientation (p < .02)
- Parent-rated communication skills (p < .02)
- Parent-rated attention problems (p < .06)
## Project Timeline: Moving from RCT into Sustainability

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Recruit, pretest &amp; train Cohort 1</td>
<td>RCT- Head Start (20 classrooms)</td>
<td>Follow into Kindergarten</td>
<td>Follow into First Grade</td>
<td>Follow into Second Grade</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Recruit, pretest &amp; train Cohort 2</td>
<td>RCT – Head Start (24 classrooms)</td>
<td>Follow into Kindergarten</td>
<td>Follow into First Grade</td>
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<td>Train all remaining teachers</td>
<td>“Train the Trainers” for internal program capacity-building</td>
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<td>Develop mentoring manual &amp; fidelity monitoring to support sustainability</td>
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Administrative Issues: “Big Picture”

- “Adding on” new requirements/components contributes to overloaded and fragmented programming.
- Administrators make decisions faced with multiple (sometimes conflicting) pressures and demands (e.g., balancing new programming opportunities with Head Start regulations).
- To foster implementation, researchers need to address issues of “fit” and “interface” within the Head Start system and respond to program needs.
Administrative Issues: Systemic Change to Promote Program Improvement

- Committing to new programming requires administrative commitment to address budget and staffing demands

- Professional Development Needs
  - Staff turnover is an ongoing challenge
  - Need for ongoing training workshops
  - Mentoring is critical (especially first year)

- Supervision Needs
  - Supervisors need to be “on board”
  - Quality monitoring & evaluative feedback to teachers need to be in “alignment” with program goals
Partnering with Teachers

- Program impact is dependent upon the quality of teacher implementation.
- Teacher understanding of, commitment to, and “ownership” of the program motivates practice and use.
- An ongoing goal of mentoring and supervision is to help teachers accept, embrace, and integrate new program components into their daily schedule and teaching orientation.
Fitting Everything In…

- Teachers worried about adding new REDI program components to their full schedules
- Interfacing theme-based units with year-long PATHS and REDI programming was a particular challenge
- Support from an “internal” program mentor and experienced teachers was very helpful
- “Rolling out” the program components and teaching strategies over time in mentoring meetings also helped
Explicit Curricula Guides vs. Responsive and Creative Teacher Implementation

- Explicit program scripts and curriculum guides were especially welcome the first year of teacher implementation.
- Teacher adaptations that were “true” to the program model emerged over time as teachers became more familiar with the method and model.
- An ongoing program goal is to develop and use ongoing monitoring through supervision to support flexible and high-fidelity program implementation.
Mentoring and Supervision

- REDI mentoring allowed teachers to explore, question, and try out new approaches to teaching. It provided regular, supportive, non-judgmental opportunities for self-reflection.

- Program supervisors monitor teaching practices and provide corrective feedback and evaluations.

- An on-going goal is to align mentoring and supervision.
Conclusions and Next Steps

- Researcher-program collaborations are important relationships for improving practice.
- Introducing new research-based components with external funding (as in the context of an RCT) can help foster sustainable program improvements, but the process is complex.
- The researcher-program partnership with attention to sustainability must be in place for initial program design, and continue after the evaluative research, to support sustainable program accommodation and ownership.