

Parent Engagement Birth to Five: The Effects of the *Getting Ready* Intervention for School Readiness

Susan M. Sheridan

Nebraska Center for Research on CYFS

*With partners Carolyn Edwards, Lisa Knoche,
Kevin Kupzyk, Jim Bovaird & Chris Marvin*



CYFS nebraska
center for
research
children youth families & schools

Some Things We Know About Child Development...

- ✓ To get off to a good start, children need:
 - Affection and nurturance
 - Safe, predictable environments
 - Stimulation and opportunities to learn
- ✓ There are many opportunities for supporting young children:
 - 91% of a child's time birth to 18 is spent *outside* of school
 - Once in school, 70% of students' waking hours is out of school
 - How this time is structured can provide opportunities to build skills and diminish inequities
- Relationships matter deeply in ensuring a healthy start

The *Getting Ready* Intervention

- Frames school readiness in terms of *relationships*
- For young children, the most important relationship is with *the child's parent*
- Relationships *within* the family system, and *between* the family and other important support systems in a child's life, are central

The *Getting Ready* Intervention

Parent-child relationship:

- Parental warmth and sensitivity
- Support for a child's emerging autonomy
- Active and meaningful participation in learning and literacy

Parent-teacher relationship:

- Creating partnerships to strengthen children's learning and development
- Collaborating across home and school to establish connections and continuity across systems and over time



Parent in relationship with child +
Parent in relationship with teacher =
Engaged Parent

Getting Ready Intervention

A family-centered, strengths-based approach that aimed to:

- Build competence and confidence in parents and other caregivers as their child's first and most important teacher
- Engage parents as active participants in goal setting, planning, and decision making regarding their child's learning and development

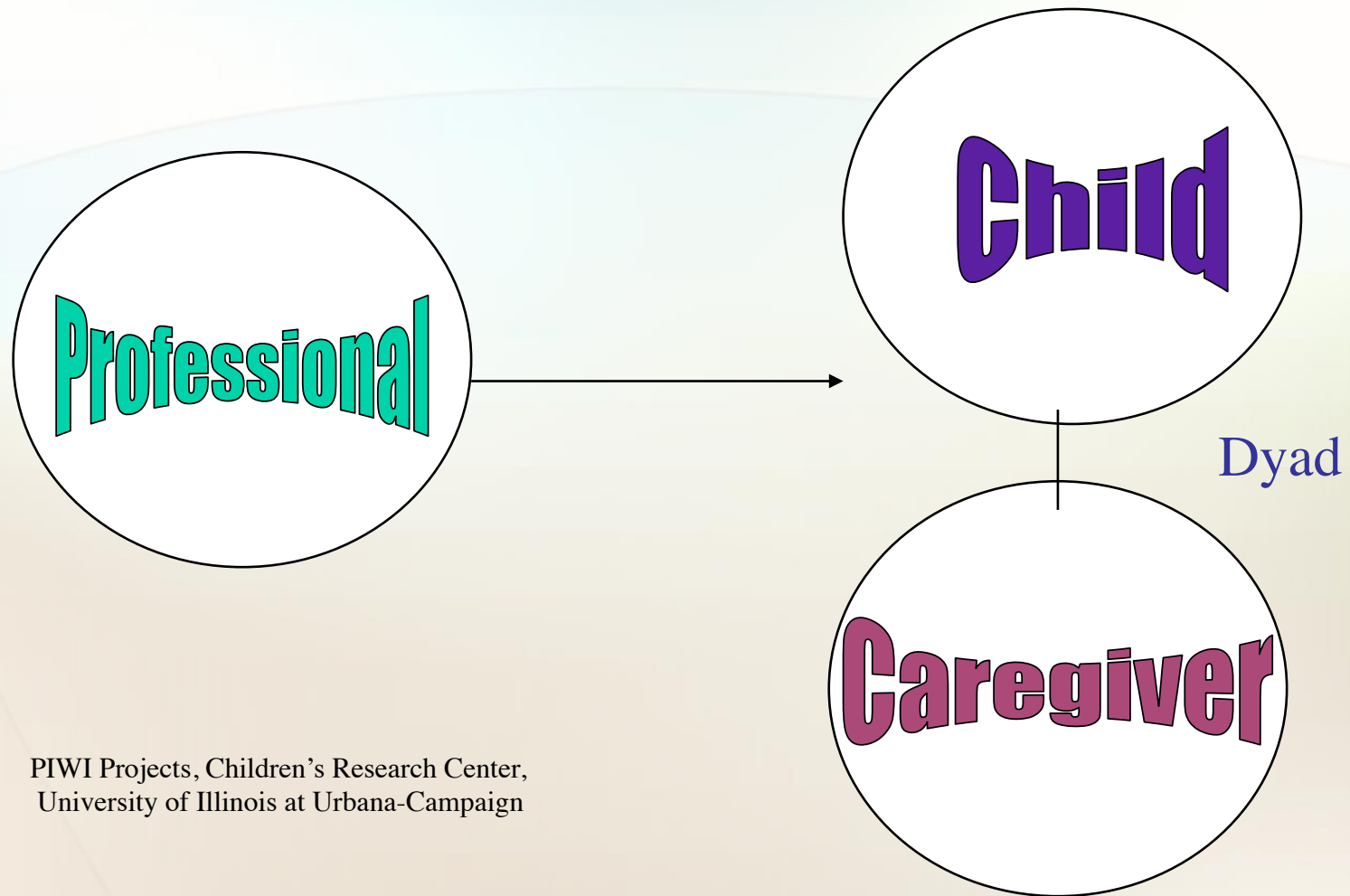
Getting Ready Intervention

Intervention is administered via early childhood professionals in naturalistic contexts of home visits, socializations, and center activities.



Not a change in classroom curriculum, but a systematic way for teachers to “give away” learning experiences to parents.

Relationships in Getting Ready



PIWI Projects, Children's Research Center,
University of Illinois at Urbana-Campaign

Structure for Home Visits: *Collaboration*

Parents and early childhood professionals jointly determine developmental goals, support cross-setting methods to achieve goals, and monitor child's growth and progress.





Structure for Collaborative Relationship in Home Visits

Getting Ready approach encourages teachers, together with parents, to:

- Share information, observations, knowledge about child
- Co-identify developmental expectations or goals for child
- Share/Explore methods by which parents and professionals can structure interactions with child to promote learning
- Brainstorm learning opportunities across settings that can support developmental goals
- Observe the child's growth and skill development, monitor child's progress, measure goal attainment
- Cycle to new goals and learning opportunities

Research Questions

1. What are the effects of the *Getting Ready* intervention on children's social-emotional outcomes?
2. What are the effects of the *Getting Ready* intervention on children's language and early literacy?
3. What child and family factors influence (moderate) the effects of the *Getting Ready* intervention?

Moderators of Interest

What moderates *social-emotional outcomes*?

- Child disability or developmental concern, language spoken by the child
- Family cumulative risk

What moderates *language and literacy outcomes*?

- Child disability or developmental concern, language spoken by the child
- Parent education, parent health, number of adults in the home

Research Partners

- **Head Start Child and Family Development, Inc.**
 - 16 Early Head Start home visitors, two rural communities
 - 1/3 of families are Hispanic/Latino; 6 bilingual family consultants
- **Blue Valley Community Action Partnership (BVCA)**
 - 4 Early Head Start home visitors, two rural communities
 - 1/3 of families are Hispanic/Latino; 1 bilingual family consultant
- **Lincoln Public Schools (LPS) E^xCITE**
 - District serves 31,000 students in 51 schools
 - Lincoln is midsized regional city of 225,000
 - **Student-Parent Program**
 - 4 high school child care centers
 - **Head Start/ Preschool Program**
 - 23 classrooms
 - Racially/ethnically diverse (approx. 52% non-White)

Performance Sites

PROGRAM	<i>Enrollment Baseline</i>	<i>Mean Age (baseline)</i>	<i>Infant/Toddler</i>	<i>Preschool</i>	<i>Home-based</i>	<i>Center-based</i>
Early Head Start (HSCFD; BVCA)	N=211	11 months	▲		▲	
LPS Student-Parent Program	N=81	9 months	▲			▲
LPS ExCITE (Head Start)	N=219	43 months		▲		▲
Total	N=511	26 months				

Findings presented here are for preschool sample only

Preschool Sample



- 51% male; 49% female
- 30% White; 25% Hispanic; 18% African American
- 98% public assistance
- 12% identified disability
- 23% parents no high school diploma
- 40% single parents
- 46% unemployed parents

Setting & Data Collection

- All preschool children were enrolled in half-day federally funded program
 - 29 NAEYC-accredited classrooms in 21 school buildings using High/Scope curriculum
 - Class size = 18-20 students aged 3-5
- 29 certified teachers; average of 9 years experience
- Data on child outcomes were collected in the fall and spring over two years (4 assessment occasions)

Select Child Outcome Measures

- Social Competence and Behavioral Evaluation Short Form (SCBE-30; *Social Competency, Anxiety/Withdrawal*)
- Devereaux Early Childhood Assessment (DECA; *Attachment, Initiative*)
- Teacher Ratings of Language and Literacy (TROLL; *Language Use, Reading, and Writing*)
- Preschool Language Scale-4 (PLS-4; *Expressive Communication*)

Getting Ready Intervention Procedures

- *Getting Ready* delivered primarily in the context of 60-minute, agency-required home visits
 - Home visits occurred an average of 4-5 times per year
- Home visits were structured to provide opportunities for teachers to enhance parent-child interactions and learning experiences in the home, and create shared responsibilities
- The intervention included observation, goal setting, modeling, feedback, and creation of home-school plans with specific actions and responsibilities

Professional Development and Support

All early childhood educators received general training via a structured training institute, booster sessions, on-going group and individualized coaching.

Coaching involved ongoing support and video-mediated feedback to continually set goals, improve skills, and enhance teachers' use of collaborative problem solving

- Individual sessions
- Group sessions

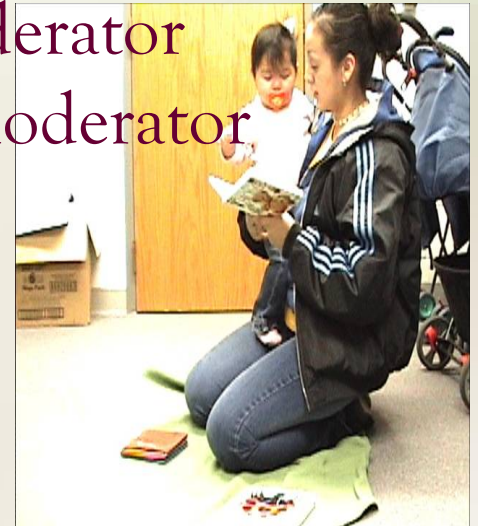


Research Design

- Participants were randomly assigned to treatment and control conditions at the level of the teacher.
- 4-level complex sampling design
 - Repeated observations [level 1] nested within each child [level 2], children nested within classrooms [level 3], and classrooms nested within schools [level 4]; no significant random effects for school or teacher were observed.
- Multilevel modeling (Snijders & Bosker, 1999) used to test growth curves among dependent variables with $\alpha = .05$; included fixed effects for treatment group, the linear effect of time, and the group by time interaction.
- Analyses were conducted with SAS PROC MIXED

Tests of Moderation

- Answers the question: *Under what conditions can we expect to see the effects of the Getting Ready intervention?*
- Both child and family variables were tested as moderators
- Tests of moderation were carried out by adding each moderator as a time X group X moderator effect, including the main effect of the moderator and each two-way interaction.



Results

Research Question 1:

What are the effects of the Getting Ready
intervention on:

Children's social-emotional development?

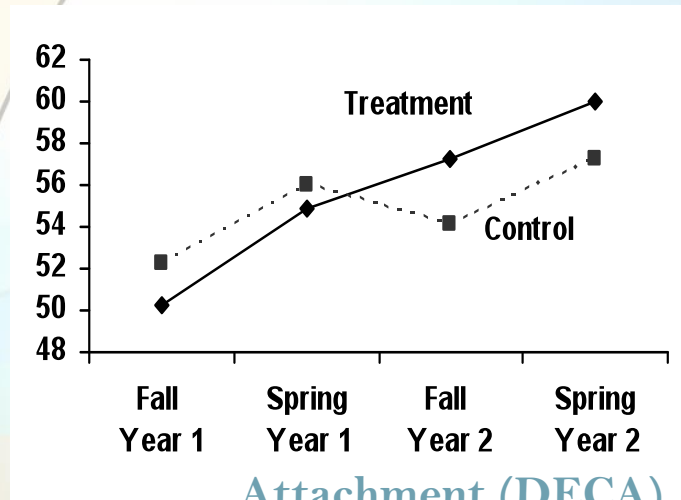
Children's language and early literacy skills?

Research Question 2:

What child and family factors influence the effects?

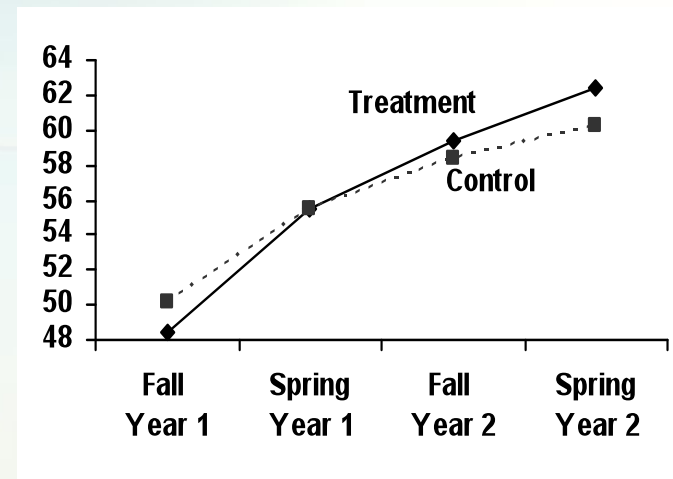
For whom is the intervention most effective?

Getting Ready: Child Social-Emotional Outcomes



Attachment (DECA)

$p < .05$; ES = .75

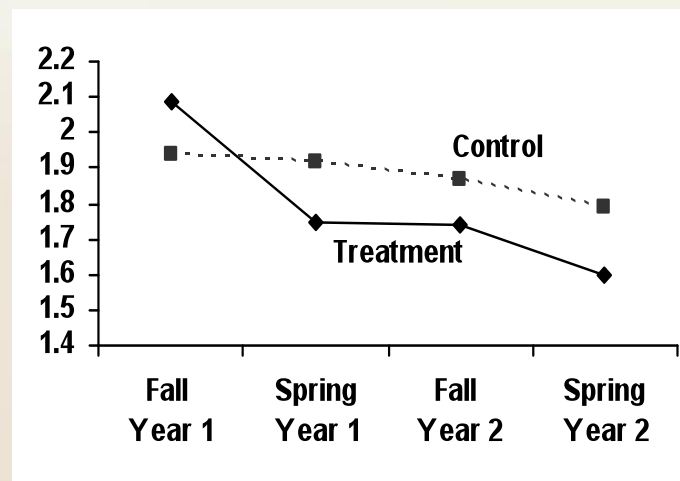


Initiative (DECA)

$p < .05$; ES = .56

Anxiety/
Withdrawal (SCBE)

$p < .05$; ES = -.74



What Moderates the Effects on Children's Social-Emotional Outcomes?

Language status (all outcomes)

- The *Getting Ready* intervention was more effective for children who did not speak English relative to those who did, and relative to the control group.

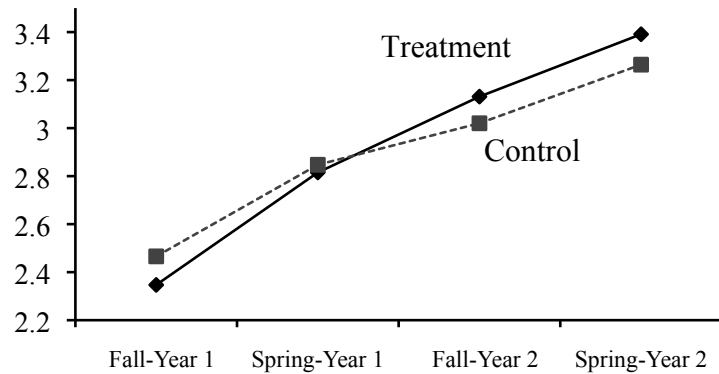
Disability status (Initiative and Social Competence)

- The intervention was significantly more effective at improving initiative and social competence for treatment group children with disabilities over those without.

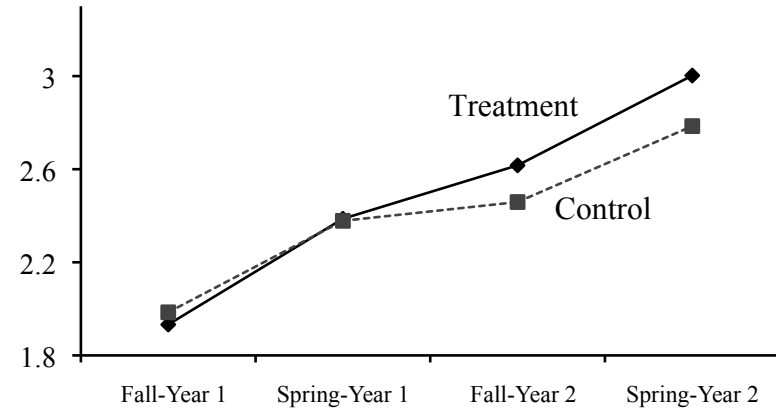
Family cumulative risk (Social Competence)

- The intervention was effective at raising social competence only for children who experienced few risk factors.

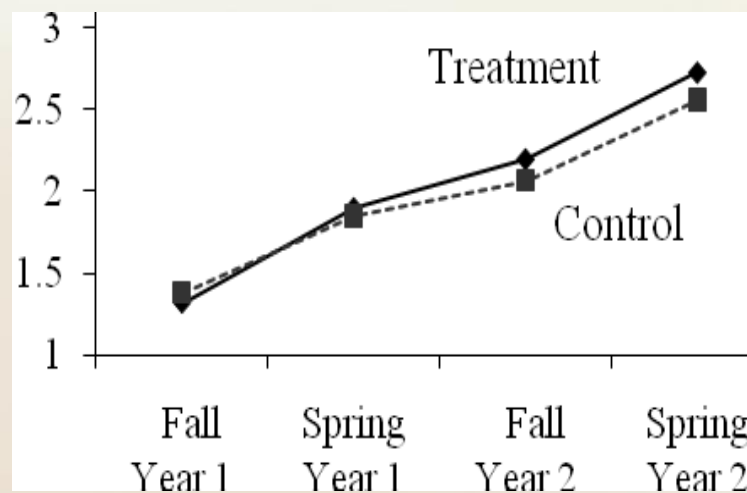
Getting Ready: Child Language and Literacy Outcomes



Language Use (TROLL)
 $p < .01$; ES = 1.11



Reading (TROLL)
 $p < .01$; ES = 1.25



Writing (TROLL)
 $p < .01$; ES = .93

What Moderates the Effects on Children's Language and Literacy?

Developmental Concern (all outcomes)

- When a concern was noted upon entry into preschool, children in the treatment group demonstrated significantly greater gains on all language outcomes relative to no concerns, and to controls.

Child Language (Language Use, Reading)

- When a child entered preschool not speaking English, they made greater gains on Language Use and Reading subscales than English-speaking peers, and relative to controls.

Low Parent Education (Expressive Communication)

- When parents' low education (<HS) placed the family at risk, there was significantly less improvement in expressive language (PLS) relative to no risk, and relative to controls.

Parent Health (Language Use)

- When parents reported more health concerns compared to fewer concerns, children made fewer improvements on language use (TROLL).

Number of Adults (Language Use)

- *Greater improvements* were noted in language use (TROLL) with more adults residing in the home compared to fewer adults, and compared to controls.

Interpretation of Findings

- Effects for children are above and beyond those seen in an excellent Head Start program
- Most effects were pronounced for children
 - who had an identified concern or disability
 - who did not speak English upon entry to preschool
- The *Getting Ready* intervention did not require extra teacher implementation time, significant resources, or changes in classroom curricula
- The *Getting Ready* intervention presumably expanded the learning opportunities for children by strengthening relationships and environments outside of the classroom (“curriculum of the home”)

Future Research

Our research is still exploring:

- The effects of *Getting Ready* on parents' behaviors and the parent-child relationship
- The effect of the intervention on observed child behaviors
- The mechanism by which (how) the *Getting Ready* intervention produces gains for children
- The maintenance of treatment effects as children transition to Kindergarten and beyond
- Outcomes of the intervention for infants/toddlers (0-3)

Thank you!

For more information, please contact

Dr. Susan Sheridan

ssheridan2@unl.edu

*Nebraska Center for Research on Children, Youth,
Families and Schools*

www.cyfs.unl.edu

This research was supported by a grant awarded to Drs. Susan M. Sheridan and Carolyn Pope Edwards by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, Administration for Children and Families, and Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation; and by the U.S. Department of Education Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (Grant 1R01H00436135).