

Understanding how children's engagement and teachers' interactions combine to predict school readiness

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BACKGROUND

- Children develop more school readiness skills when teachers interact with them in ways that:
 - are responsive and sensitive (Connor et al., 2005; McCartney et al., 2007)
 - provide consistent behavioral expectations (Emmer & Stough, 2001)
 - provide cognitively-stimulating feedback (Taylor, Pearson, Peterson, & Rodriguez, 2003)
- How an individual child engages with teachers, peers, and learning activities is also important for their achievement and adjustment (Fredricks et al., 2004)
- Few studies have examined the quality of children's preschool experience from the perspective of how an individual child's engagement interacts with what the teacher provides

STUDY AIM & HYPOTHESES

- Examined engagement as a meta-construct to explore the complex interactions of children's engagement with teachers, peers, and tasks in the preschool classroom by taking a person-oriented approach
- Expected engagement profiles to differentially predict school readiness, and be moderated by the quality of teacher-level interactions
 - Children with positive engagement patterns → stronger gains regardless of classroom interaction quality
 - Children with less optimal engagement patterns → greater gains with high classroom-level quality

METHOD

Data collected as part of the National Center for Research on Early Childhood Education's (NCRECE) Professional Development Study

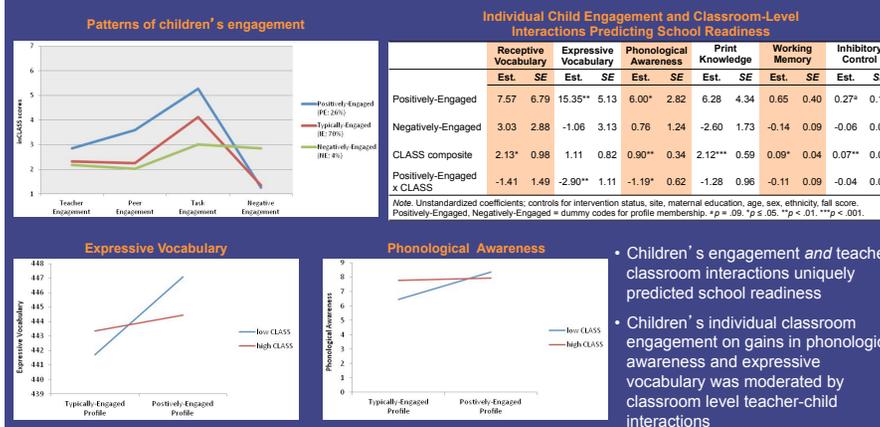
Participants: 605 children from 309 Head-Start and community-based classrooms (306 girls, 299 boys; mean age = 50.18 months [*SD* = 5.44])

Teacher's Interactions and Children's Engagement: Observed teachers and children during one visit in the winter alternating between inCLASS and CLASS.

School Readiness Outcomes (Fall and Spring)

Receptive Vocabulary (PPVT)	Expressive Vocabulary (WJ-III Picture Vocabulary)
Phonological Awareness (TOPEL)	Print Knowledge (TOPEL)
Inhibitory Control (Pencil Tap)	Working Memory (Backward Digit Span)

RESULTS



OBSERVATION MEASURES

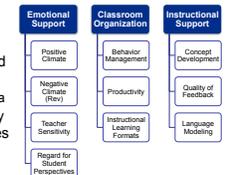
Individualized Classroom Assessment Scoring System

inCLASS measures children's competent interactions using 4 domains, 10 dimensions (Downer et al., 2010). Inter-rater reliability calculated across 20% of cycles (ICCs = .80; ranged .65-.87).



Classroom Assessment Scoring System

CLASS measures teacher-child interaction quality using 3 domains, 10 dimensions (Pianta et al., 2008). Inter-rater reliability calculated across 20% of cycles (ICCs = .83; ranged .78-.88).



CONCLUSION & IMPLICATIONS

- Findings emphasize importance of what the teacher brings to the classroom
 - Children's individual engagement appears to matter less in classrooms characterized by high quality teacher-child interactions
- Children classified as positively-engaged may show resilience to the negative impacts of lower quality classrooms
- Looking through both a teacher and child lens provides a better understanding of the transactional way children develop school readiness skills

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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