

Research Brief

Information for the full length
journal article:

Journal

*Early Childhood Research
Quarterly*

Article Title

Impacts of *Roots of Resilience*
Professional Development for
Early Childhood Teachers on
Young Children's Protective
Factors

Authors

Shannon T. Lipscomb
Oregon State University-Cascades

Bridget Hatfield
Oregon State University

Emiko Goka-Dubose
Oregon State University-Cascades

Hillary Lewis
Oregon State University

Philip A. Fisher
University of Oregon

2021

Roots of Resilience Research Team

Oregon State
University-Cascades

[http://blogs.oregonstate.edu/
u/earlychildhood/](http://blogs.oregonstate.edu/earlychildhood/)

ROOTS OF RESILIENCE

TEACHERS AWAKENING CHILDREN'S HEALING



Impacts of *Roots of Resilience* Professional Development for Early Childhood Teachers on Young Children's Protective Factors

This brief documents the impacts of the *Roots of Resilience* program from a small but rigorous intervention study.

Nurturing Resilience

Trauma poses challenges to children's developing neurobiology, behavior, and learning¹. Yet protective factors nurture resilience, helping children to overcome harmful effects of trauma². Protective factors come from individual skills like school readiness, from supportive relationships with adults, and from a sense of community, belonging, and connection to culture². Early care and education (ECE) is a promising avenue for nurturing resilience.

The *Roots of Resilience* Program

Roots of Resilience aims to strengthen trauma-responsive practice in ECE through professional supports for teachers in home-based and center-based ECE programs. Teachers complete an online course and/or video-based coaching.

Roots of Resilience focuses on every day moments between teachers and children, supports teachers' self-care, wellness, and self-regulation, overlays a trauma-informed perspective on best practices in ECE, and utilizes relationship-based approaches to professional development.

An earlier study found that *Roots of Resilience* was feasible for early childhood teachers to complete, and that teachers reported more knowledge and use of trauma-responsive practices with children³.

This Study

To test impacts of the program on children's protective factors, we recruited teachers to participate in *Roots of Resilience* and randomly assigned one-half of them to start the program (either the course or the coaching) while the others waited in a control group. We collected the same data with both groups - before and after the intervention group participated in *Roots of Resilience* - to compare data across groups and determine impacts.

Participants

Participants included 23 teachers from 17 classrooms: 48% were lead teachers, 13% were leaders of home-based programs, 39% were either a co-teacher, assistant, or aide (all referred to as teachers). Teachers worked in

home-based (17%), non-Head Start centers (43%), and Head Start (30%) programs. Teachers reported their race/ethnicity as 9% Latino or Hispanic and 96% White (91% White only).

The 61 participating children were identified by their parents as 62% female, 38% male, 0% transgender or non-binary. They were 4 years old, on average, with a range from 3-5 years. Children's parents identified their primary language as English (100%), and their race/ethnicity (all that applied) as: 1% Native American, 5% Asian/Pacific Islander, 5% African American, 3% Latino, 92% White (85% were White only).

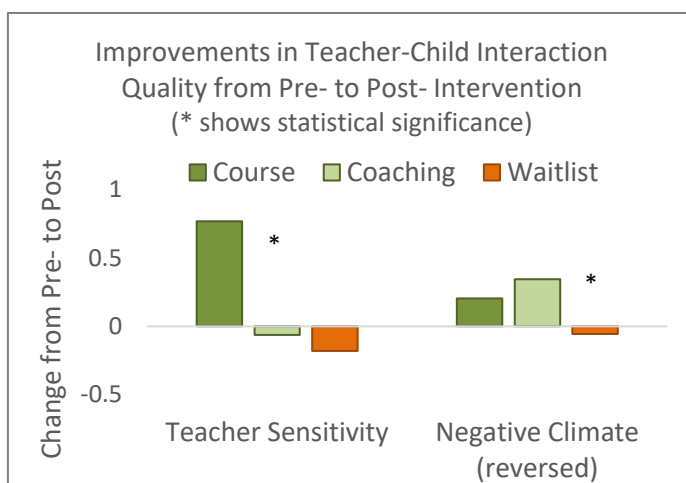
Data Sources

Researchers observed teacher-child interactions and children's engagement using reliable and valid measures. They also worked directly with children to assess their school readiness skills (early literacy, math, and self-regulation). Each measure was conducted both before and after the Roots of Resilience program for the intervention group and were collected at similar time points for the waitlist control group.

Results (see full article for details)

The Roots of Resilience program led to higher quality teacher-child interactions.

Teachers who participated in *Roots of Resilience* showed significantly greater improvement in emotionally supportive interactions from pre- to post- intervention than the teachers in the waitlist group, even while controlling for teachers' levels of education. When we explored the data more specifically, teachers who completed the course showed large improvements in one aspect of emotional support (Teacher Sensitivity) while teachers who completed the coaching improved in another aspect (Negative Climate; see chart). The size of the overall impact of *Roots of Resilience* on the quality of emotionally supportive teacher-child interactions is substantial compared to other studies⁴.



Roots of Resilience also showed positive impacts for children.

Children whose ECE teachers participated in Roots of Resilience showed decreases in their negative engagement (less conflict and more behavioral control) and improvements in their math skills. This is the first study showing impacts of a teacher-focused intervention on observed child engagement in ECE. It is especially promising that children showed less negative engagement because negative engagement may be particularly challenging for children impacted by adversity⁵. In the current study, most children (63%) had at least one Adverse Childhood Experience (ACE) and 48% had two or more ACEs.

Next Steps

Roots of Resilience is currently being implemented in partnership with local communities. Plans for future research include a longer-term study with a larger and more diverse population of teachers and children.

References

1. Fisher, P. A., Beauchamp, K. G., Roos, L. E., Noll, L. K., Flannery, J., & Delker, B. C. (2016). The neurobiology of intervention and prevention in early adversity. *Annual Review of Clinical Psychology*, 12, 331–357. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-clinpsy-032814-112855>
2. Masten, A. (2018). Resilience theory and research on children and families: past, present, and promise. *Journal of Family Theory & Review*, 10, 12-31.
3. Lipscomb, S. T., Hatfield, B., Lewis, H., Goka-Dubose, E., & Fisher, P. (2019). Strengthening children's roots of resilience: trauma-responsive early learning. *Children and Youth Services Review*, 107, 104510. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.childyouth.2019.104510>
4. Hamre, B., Pianta, R. C., Burchinal, M., ... & Scott-Little, C. (2012). A course on effective teacher-child interactions: Effects on teacher beliefs, knowledge, and observed practice. *American Educational Research Journal*, 49, 88–123. <https://doi.org/10.3102/0002831211434596>
5. Lipscomb, S. T., Hatfield, B. E., Lewis, H. R., Goka-Dubose, E., & Abshire, C. (2021). Effects of early adversity on children in early care and education programs. *Journal of Applied Developmental Psychology*, 72, 101218. doi.org/10.1016/j.appdev.2020.101218

The research reported here was supported by the Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education, through Grant R305A150107 to Oregon State University. The opinions expressed are those of the authors and do not represent views of the Institute or the U.S. Department of Education. The funder was not involved in the study design, nor in the collection, analysis, interpretation or reporting of the findings.