



Banking Time in Head Start: Early Efficacy of an Intervention Designed to Promote Supportive Teacher-Child Relationships

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SUMMARY

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Past research has indicated that teacher-child relationships are important in promoting children's social adaptation through second grade. From both teachers' and children's perspectives, the emotional bond between adults and children in schools has been found to be a principal factor in students' school performance. Furthermore, supportive teacher-student relationships facilitate positive outcomes such as school adjustment, social-emotional competence, and academic performance.

While there are several school-based interventions targeting social-emotional outcomes, at the time of this study no programs were focused on supporting teacher-child relationships. This study is an evaluation of Banking Time, a dyadic intervention designed to promote positive teacher-child relationships. The sample consisted of 29 Head Start teachers and 116 children who had the largest school-adjustment concerns. Banking Time is a series of one-on-one meetings between teacher and child designed to achieve supportive relational goals. During each session, the child chooses an activity in which the dyad will complete. The meeting is child-led, while the teacher observes and narrates the child's actions, labels the child's feelings and emotions, and develops relational themes.

Study subjects participated in two six-week intervention periods. Children randomly were assigned to one of three conditions: intervention, within-class control, or wait-list control. Teachers consistently reported increased perceptions of closeness with student participants. Teachers also reported increased frustration tolerance, task orientation, competence, and decreased conduct problems for children in the Banking Time condition compared to peers in the within-class control.

The results did not show statistically significant differences in outcomes for children. Overall, the present study findings show preliminary support for Banking Time in increasing teacher perceptions of closeness and competent behaviors and decreasing reports of conduct problems. However, given several significant limitations of the study, including low statistical power, these findings should be used to inform future research of this intervention.

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