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## Healthy Children, Healthy Adults, in an Unhealthy Time

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So here we are, over a year since the beginning of the pandemic, and how some things have changed. We now have vaccines to keep us safer, some people are back to their daily activities and for myself, back to teaching in the classroom, face-to face. However, not much changed for early childhood educators, most of them have stayed the course, they have continued to show up to work, adapt, support, and care for our young children in child care centers in this ongoing pandemic world. I was recently working on a project to interview child care educators and directors via Zoom. The project had begun before the pandemic disrupted our world; however, during the interviews, the topic of Covid emerged in their responses and how it has impacted their work. What I heard, saw and learned from each of them provided more insight into their daily world and struggles. I saw many very tired (some on the brink of exhaustion), some teary, and stressed teachers. They missed the daily interaction/communication with parents (who now needed to drop the children off at the front door), they missed allowing the children to just move freely throughout the entire classroom, and the spontaneity that comes with children at play. They learned new regulations so they could conduct their work while keeping everyone safe. One thing they wanted, was for the children to see their smiles. Although directors' comments were similar, staff turnover, although a common issue in child care in a typical year, was now creating major difficulty finding and retaining individuals who are willing to do this work in a pandemic. In this political world, early childhood receives bipartisan support and is a unifying issue so we need to find a better way to support these essential workers, so people want to become early childhood educators - they are heroes!

In this issue, you will find a research article and research to practice summary by Hooper from the University of Alabama and Gaviria-Loaiza from the University of Delaware which looks at *Predictors of Head Start Teachers' Perceived Quality of Relationships with Parents*. The study explores the quality of the family-teacher relationship and its impact on teachers' job satisfaction, caregiving, and symptoms of depression. This article is so relevant, especially in the environment we find ourselves working in today and considering how Covid has disrupted that relationship.

The next article, comes out of the Oregon Research Institute and Influents Innovations, *Helping Young Children Develop Emergent Language and Literacy Skills: The Roles of Curriculum, Training, and Coaching* (by Gunn, Marquez, Compton, and Smolkowski) explores the need for Head Start teachers to receive more professional development so that they can better support language and literacy skills. This article specifically looks at the *ABCDuet* program that is developed to provide teachers with language and literacy skills to support children from various



backgrounds. The research to practice summary of this study offers an overview of the *ABCDuet* as well as teacher's recommendations that can assist in improving the program.

There are two research articles that address health in Head Start programs that come from researchers at Miami University. The first one, *Challenges and Best Practices in BMI Screening in Head Start: One Program's Perspective* is written by Miller, Nicely, Branscum. The article examines body mass index (BMI) screenings that Head Start conducts to address obesity in young children. The article is followed by a research to practice article that offers suggestions for best practice when measuring height and weight in Head Start preschoolers. Miller and Nicely follow up that article with another one, *Evaluation of Obesity Prevention in a Head Start Program*. This article examines an evaluation of active learning strategies, that are incorporated into the Head Start Preschool curriculum, *I am Moving, I am Learning*.

I hope you enjoy this issue and share it with your fellow researchers and educators. Please feel free to send any comments or thoughts to me at [shuepl@appstate.edu](mailto:shuepl@appstate.edu) or Dr. Rebecca Shore at [rshore6@uncc.edu](mailto:rshore6@uncc.edu).