**University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill**
**Consent to Participate in a Research Study**
**Adult Participants: Head Start Teachers**

**Consent Form Version Date: _____**
**IRB Study #** 21-2939
**Title of Study**: Evaluation of Ready to Learn through Relationships (RLR) in Head Start
**Principal Investigator**: Desiree Murray
**Principal Investigator Department**: Center for Health Promotion and Disease Prevention
**Principal Investigator Phone number**: (919) 843-1904
**Principal Investigator Email Address**: desiree.murray@unc.edu
**Funding Source and/or Sponsor:** Education Development Center, Inc.

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The purpose of this study is to evaluate a program for bringing trauma informed care to preschool classrooms called the Ready to Learn through Relationships (RLR) Toolkit and Framework. Participating teachers will receive different levels of training and coaching so that we can find out what level of training is most useful for promoting trauma-informed classroom practices. Program activities include approximately four hours of virtual trainings in trauma and varying levels of support for implementing trauma informed strategies in the classroom, including meeting with a coach and a Toolkit of strategies and activities for creating trauma sensitive classrooms. To evaluate the program, all teachers will complete web-based surveys before and after participating and will be asked to do brief surveys multiple times per day on their phones for five different weeks across the school year. Some teachers will also be invited to participate in a focus group to share feedback. Participation will last for approximately 9 months, from August/September of 2022 to May/June of 2023.

The greatest risk to you of participating in this study is a loss of confidentiality. However, we have put several procedures in place to protect the privacy of information you share with us.

**What are some general things you should know about research studies?**
You are being asked to take part in a research study. To join the study is voluntary. If you do not want to participate and there are not enough interested teachers, your Center will not be able to join the study. However, we will not tell your director or colleagues who was interested or not.

You may choose not to participate, or you may withdraw your consent to be in the study, for any reason, without penalty.

Research studies are designed to obtain new knowledge. This new information may help people in the future. You may not receive any direct benefit from being in the research study, although we are providing training and supports that you may find beneficial. There also may be risks to being in research studies.

Details about this study are discussed below. It is important that you understand this information so that you can make an informed choice about being in this research study.

You will be given a copy of this consent form. You should ask the researchers named above, or staff members who may assist them, any questions you have about this study at any time.

**What is the purpose of this study?**

The purpose of this research study is to determine the intensity of professional development supports needed for preschool teachers to effectively use trauma-informed care practices in their classrooms, and to evaluate the relative benefit of more intensive supports. Although practice-based coaching is recognized as a best practice for early childhood educators, it is not clear what types of coaching or how much coaching is needed. This study could inform approaches in early childhood training and technical assistance (TTA) in the future, particularly those used in Head Start, which is the focus of this work. We will also learn about a new way of evaluating teacher practice change through brief daily reports called Ecological Momentary Assessment (EMA) that may be useful for education research more broadly.

Specifically, we will examine the following research questions:

1) How well does the RLR program work when implemented with different levels of coaching?
2) How satisfied are teachers and coaches with the RLR program?
3) How much does knowledge and attitudes about trauma-informed care change with participation in the RLR program?
4) How do teacher practices change in key areas associated with trauma-informed care, including creating a safe environment, building healthy relationships, supporting emotion regulation, and using self-care.

You are being asked to be in the study because your Center has applied to participate in this study for Head Start teachers who work with preschool-aged children. Your Center director has agreed to support your participation in this study.

**Are there any reasons you should not be in this study?**

You should not be in this study if you do not expect to remain at your Center through this school year.

**How many people will take part in this study?**

Approximately 70 people at about 10 Head Start Centers will take part in this study, including teachers, coaches, and directors.

**How long will your part in this study last?**

Your participation in this study will last approximately 10 months, over the course of the 2022-2023 Head Start school year. All evaluation activities can be completed remotely through web-based surveys and virtual interactions. As described in detail below, we estimate that the total time required for evaluation activities is approximately 8 hours spread out across this time period. Total time for TTA activities is estimated at 5-20 hours, depending on the type of coaching received. After the program is completed and final questionnaires done, there is no further follow up.

**What will happen if you take part in the study?**
Your Center will be assigned by chance to be in either the Low or High Intensity TTA group in this study. Participants in both groups will be asked to complete the same evaluation activities.

**PROGRAM PARTICIPATION**
Your participation in training and technical assistance activities (TTA) will vary based upon which group your Center has been assigned to: High- or Low-Intensity.

**Teachers in Low-Intensity Centers** will be invited to participate in two 120-minute or three 90-minute foundational trainings presented virtually. Topics covered include: 1) Impact of Trauma on Children and Communities, 2) Trauma, Racism, and Inequity: Fostering Resilience and Implementing Strategies, and 3) Provider Self-Care and Adult Social-Emotional Learning. All participants will also receive the RLR toolkit of handouts with activities to support building a trauma-informed classroom. If you are in this group, you can work with a coach outside of the RLR program, but they will not be participating in other RLR training and consultation activities.

**Teachers in the High-Intensity Centers** will also be invited to participate in the foundational trainings and receive the RLR toolkit. If you are in this group, you will also meet with an RLR trained coach who already works with your Center one or two times per month for about an hour per month. RLR program staff may also join these classroom visits. Meeting time would be scheduled in coordination with your Center director so that your classroom stays within ratio.

**EVALUATION ACTIVITIES**
**Ecological Momentary Assessment (EMA) surveys:** EMA is a survey approach that involves very brief (3-4 minute) surveys that will be sent to you on your phone four times per day Monday through Friday for 5 different weeks across the school year (anticipated to occur during August, October, December, February, and April). Questions will ask you about your interactions with students in the past hour and the last day. We will send these to you at times you tell us are ok for you to respond, and you will have up to an hour to do so.

**Other Surveys:** Before and after you participate in the program, you will be asked to complete web-based surveys that take approximately 30 minutes. These will ask you about your background (e.g., training, education, and years of experience), attitudes related to trauma-informed care, and about your experiences and satisfaction with the program.

**Classroom Observations:** Twice during the school year, program staff will observe your classroom environment and rate how it aligns with indicators of trauma-informed care. They will be there for about 15 minutes twice one day each time.

**Focus Groups:** Some, but not all teachers will be invited to participate in a focus group (i.e., a group interview) at the end of the program so that we can learn more about experiences in the program and perceived benefits. If you are invited to participate and you choose to do so, our research staff would virtually meet with you and 3-5 teachers from other Centers for about an hour during May of 2023. During the focus group, we will direct questions to the whole group. You may choose to respond or not respond at any point during the discussion. The focus group discussion will be audiotaped so we can capture comments in a transcript for analysis.

You can choose whether or not you would like to participate in this additional focus group activity. Check the line that best matches your choice:
_____ I would like to participate in the focus group.
_____ I do not want to participate in the focus group.

Research staff will provide instructions for completing all evaluation activities and will be available to provide technical assistance as needed. We may also follow up with you to problem-solve any difficulties or to remind you to complete surveys. You may choose not to answer any questions for any reason.

**What are the possible benefits from being in this study?**
Research is designed to benefit society by gaining new knowledge. The benefits to you from being in this study may be that you would gain knowledge and skills related to trauma-informed care that are known to be helpful for young children's social-emotional development.

**What are the possible risks or discomforts involved from being in this study?**
It is possible that some participants may find being text prompted to complete brief surveys during the school day to be distracting to their work. You can tell us what times of day are best for you and we will send you the surveys at that time, and you will have a period of time to respond. We also understand if you cannot complete any survey on any specific day for any reason.

There are no known risks to completing the types of surveys and feedback sessions in this study. However, there may be uncommon or previously unknown risks. You should report any problems to the researcher.

**What if we learn about new findings or information during the study?**
You will be given any new information gained during the course of the study that might affect your willingness to continue your participation.

**How will information about you be protected?**
To protect your privacy, we will use a code number instead of your name to identify you. Only research team members will know what name goes with what code number. The list that matches names and code numbers will be kept on a secure network in a password protected electronic file. Any physical copies of data will be stored in locked filing cabinets or in locked offices. No one outside the research team will have access to individually identifiable data gathered by the researchers about you.

All of the surveys you complete as well as focus group recordings and transcripts will be stored on secure servers that meet UNC-CH's data security requirements. Audio-recordings will be destroyed following final analyses. Any data summaries, reports, or publications will remove all information about you that could potentially be identifiable (e.g., race, ethnicity, years of service, grade level). We will not report on any groups of individuals that are small enough that someone's identity could be determined. We may use de-identified data from this study in future research without additional consent.

Although every effort will be made to keep research records private, there may be times when federal or state law requires the disclosure of such records, including personal information. This is very unlikely, but if disclosure is ever required, UNC-Chapel Hill will take steps allowable by law to protect the privacy of personal information. In some cases, your information in this research study could be reviewed by representatives of the University, research sponsors, or the funders for purposes such as quality control or safety.

Even though we will emphasize to all participants that comments made during the focus group session should be kept private, it is possible that participants may repeat comments outside of the group at some time in the future. Therefore, we encourage you to be as honest and open as you can, but remain aware of our limits in protecting your privacy. You may choose not to use a fictitious name during the focus group if you would like.

The study team would like to communicate with you by e-mail and text prompts to your cell phone to share information about the study, coordinate participation logistics, and send surveys. However, it is important that you know that unencrypted messages may contain personal information about you and may be sent or received by the study team's personal electronic devices or in a method that is not able to be encrypted (protected) and there is the risk your information could be shared beyond you and the study team.

If you have lost access to your device, please notify the study team using the study contact information on the first page of this consent form. If you wish to stop receiving unprotected communication from the study team, we will be unable to send you surveys and you will be withdrawn from the study. After the study is complete and all research activities finished, or you withdraw from the study, you will no longer receive un-encrypted (un-protected) messages specific to this study.

_____ Yes, I consent to the study team utilizing the following to communicate with me:

Cell phone number: _____
Email: _____

_____ No, I do not consent to receive un-protected communication from the study team. Please note that this means you will not be able to participate in this study.

**What will happen if you are injured by this research?**

All research involves a chance that something bad might happen to you. If you are hurt, become sick, or develop a reaction from participating in this study, the researcher will help you get any needed care, but the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill has not set aside funds to pay you for any such care. You may be responsible for the costs of needed care.

If you think you have been harmed from taking part in this study, call the Principal Investigator at the phone number provided on this consent form. They will let you know what you should do.

By signing this form, you do not give up your right to seek payment or other rights if you are harmed as a result of being in this study.

**What if you want to stop before your part in the study is complete?**
You can withdraw from this study at any time, without penalty. The investigators also have the right to stop your participation at any time. This could be because you have had an unexpected reaction, or have failed to follow instructions, or because the entire study has been stopped.

If you decide to withdraw, please contact the investigator. If you withdraw or are withdrawn from this study, all data collected up until the point of withdrawal will be kept. However no additional information will be collected unless you provide additional written permission for further data collection at the time of your withdrawal.

**Will you receive anything for being in this study?**
You will not receive anything for taking part in this study.

**Will it cost you anything to be in this study?**
It will not cost you anything to be in this study.

**Who is sponsoring this study?**
This research is funded by the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) at the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), through a subcontract from the Education Development Center, Inc. (EDC). This means that the UNC research team is being paid by EDC, who is paid by HHS, for doing the study. The researchers do not, however, have a direct financial interest with the sponsor or in the final results of the study.

**What if you have questions about this study?**
You have the right to ask, and have answered, any questions you may have about this research. If you have questions about the study, complaints, concerns, or if a research-related injury occurs, you should contact the researchers listed on the first page of this form.

**What if you have questions about your rights as a research participant?**
All research on human volunteers is reviewed by a committee that works to protect your rights and welfare. If you have questions or concerns about your rights as a research subject, or if you would like to obtain information or offer input, you may contact the Institutional Review Board at 919-966-3113 or by email to IRB_subjects@unc.edu.

**Participant's Agreement**:

I have read the information provided above. I have asked all the questions I have at this time. I voluntarily agree to participate in this research study.

_____
Signature of Research Participant

_____
Date

_____
Printed Name of Research Participant

_____
Signature of Research Team Member Obtaining Consent

_____
Date

_____
Printed Name of Research Team Member Obtaining Consent