

Early Childhood Education Laboratory Preschool

The Impact of Mindfulness Practices on Classroom Climate and Perceived Teacher Stress

Teaching has been identified as the most stressful profession in the human service industry (Greenberg, Brown, & Abenavoli, 2016). Elevated teacher stress can affect teacher well-being and burnout, as well as, classroom climate and student outcomes. The purpose of this research study was to assess whether mindfulness practices can increase positive classroom climate and decrease perceived stress in early childhood teachers. Participating teachers were selected based on results of the *Perceived Stress Scale* (PSS; Cohen, Kamarck, & Mermelstein, 1983). Data were collected on the positive and negative climate objectives from the Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS; Pianta, La Paro, & Hamre, 2008), which were operationally defined. It was hypothesized that the use of mindfulness practices would result in increased observable behaviors associated with positive climate and decreased teacher perceived stress. Data were collected from video recordings of each of the participating teachers using partial interval recording to measure positive and negative climate behaviors. The Mindfulness Practices Intervention included yoga poses, intentional breathing, and guided meditation (Harris, Jennings, Katz, Abenavoli, & Greenberg, 2015), which were implemented within the school day during arrival, mid-morning, lunch, mid-afternoon, and after work in the evening. All three participants exhibited increased positive climate and decreased negative climate at intervention. Perceived Stress Scale scores decreased for two participants and increased for one participant. Mindfulness practices positively impact classroom climate; however it is not clear whether they impact teacher perceived stress.