

Peabody College faculty awarded \$1.6M grant to examine impacts of practitioner coaching at early learning centers

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By Jane Sevier

A team of researchers at Vanderbilt Peabody College of education and human development has been awarded \$1.6 million to examine the effects of practice-based coaching at early childhood learning sites.

The award is one of three early childhood model demonstration grants funded by the U.S. Office of Special Education Programs. The four-year project, titled Practice-Based Coaching: Data Informed Decision Making, will collaborate with at least six demonstration sites across three states.

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Mary Louise Hemmeter
(Vanderbilt University)

The Peabody team, led by Mary Louise Hemmeter, professor of special education, also includes research associate Kiersten Kinder and educational consultant Sarah Basler. They are working with a team of University of

Florida researchers and building on earlier PBC studies that were funded by the Institute of Education Sciences.

"I look forward to working with early childhood programs in and around Nashville to build their capacity to use an effective coaching model," Hemmeter said. "It is an opportunity to be intentional about bridging the gap between research and practice."

Researchers will set up and evaluate the PBC-DIDM model across diverse sites that serve young children with disabilities—early intervention, early care and education, public school pre-K, Early Head Start/Head Start—to help personnel learn and apply practices that effectively support young children's development and learning.

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Hemmeter and University of Florida researcher Patricia Snyder have led projects on practice-based coaching and other methods of instruction and education for young children since 2007. Together, they have worked with program leadership, coaches, practitioners and families to support use of evidence-based professional development and effective practices.

"We are excited to learn alongside each other and in partnership with our sites to understand what's working well and what we might need to adjust," said Snyder, University of Florida distinguished professor and director of the Anita Zucker Center for Excellence in Early Childhood Studies.

Researchers Darbianne Shannon, Maureen Conroy and Jennifer Harrington round out the University of Florida team.

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