

Profiles of Parent-Child and Teacher-Child Relationship Quality Among Toddlers in Early Head Start

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BACKGROUND

Engaging in high-quality relationships with caregivers in early care and education and home contexts in toddlerhood:

- Shapes long-term positive developmental trajectories (Magnuson & Schindler, 2019).
- Is a goal for center-based Early Head Start (EHS) programs (Office of Head Start, 2018)

Yet, caregiving experiences in EHS centers and homes are dynamic and variable (Mortensen & Barnett, 2018).

Identifying systematic variability in interactions across these contexts will inform practices and policies to ensure that all children in EHS participate in multiple supportive relationships.

STUDY AIMS

We apply a person-centered approach to describe the caregiving experiences, defined by closeness and conflict, of toddlers in EHS center and home settings.

Research Question:

What subgroups, or constellations, of parent-child and teacher-child relationship quality characterize children participating in center-based EHS programs?

METHODS

Sample (N = 1625): Toddlers (M = 25.87 months, SD = 6.87; 54% male) enrolled in center-based EHS (M = 4.87 days/week) in the 2018 Family and Child Experiences Survey (Baby FACES). Mothers' race/ethnicity: 37% Hispanic, 33% Black, Non-Hispanic, 24% White, Non-Hispanic. Teachers worked for EHS on average 8.79 years (SD = 7.84). This subsample represents 456 centers and 779 classrooms / teachers.

Measures:

Parent-Child Relationship Quality: Parent reports on *Closeness* (8-items) and *Conflict* (7-items) (Driscoll & Pianta, 2011)

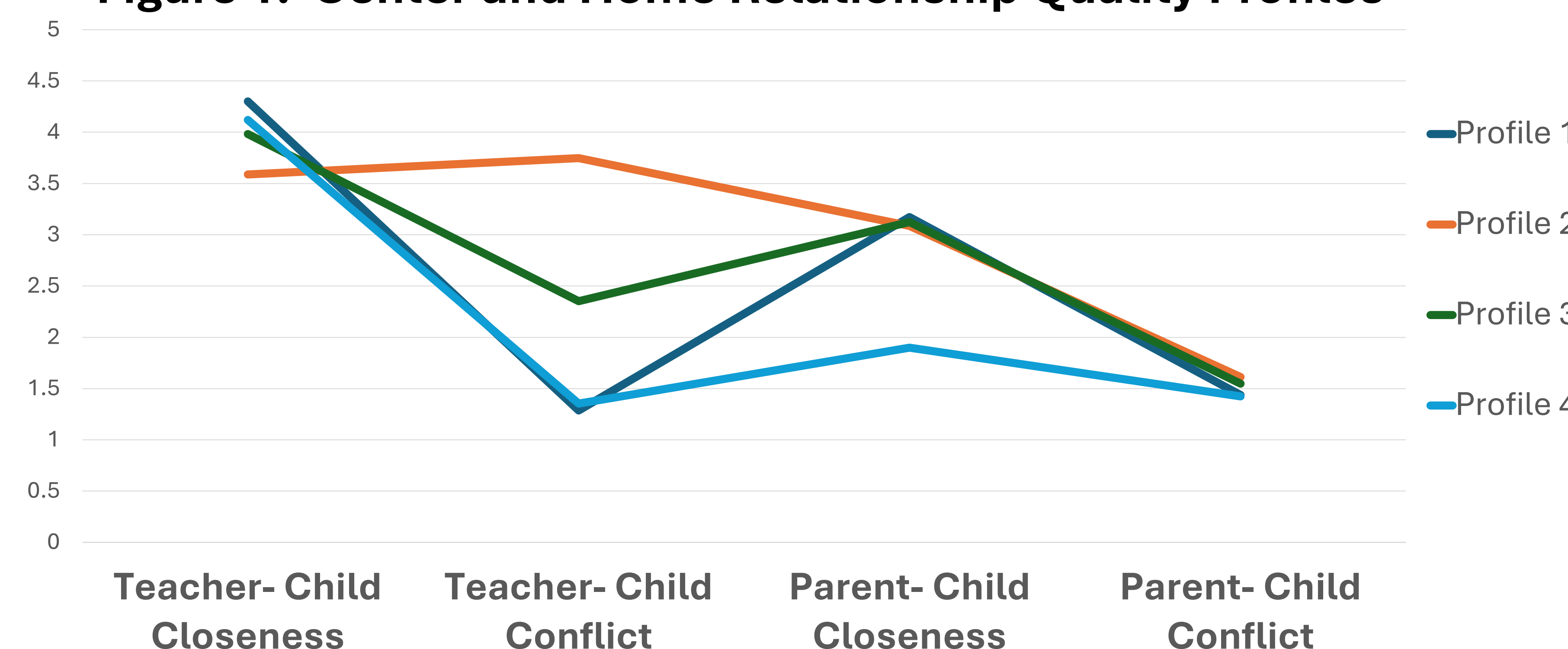
Teacher-Child Relationship Quality: Teacher reports on *Closeness* (8-items) and *Conflict* (7-items) (Pianta, 2001)

Analyses:

Multi-level Latent Profile Analysis with FIML in MPLUS 8.10 that accounts for nesting at the center-level

RESULTS

Figure 1. Center and Home Relationship Quality Profiles



Profile	%	N
Consistent High Closeness, Low Conflict	66%	1065
Consistent Low Closeness, High Conflict	6%	92
Consistent Moderate Closeness and Conflict	26%	427
Inconsistent Closeness, Consistent Low Conflict	3%	41

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

- Most toddlers participated in high-quality relationships (high closeness and low conflict) across contexts.
- Variability in combinations of conflict and closeness underscores the value of a person-centered analytic approach.
- Teacher-child conflict and parent-child closeness were highly variable across profiles relative to other constructs.
- **Next Steps:** Identify center, teacher, child and family characteristics that differentiate profiles.

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