

EMOTIONAL LABOR IN EARLY INTERVENTION

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to examine the scope and impact of emotional labor in early intervention. Focus groups and individual interviews were analyzed to determine the presence of emotional labor in the work, and the impact of emotional labor on participants' personal and professional activities.

Findings from this study show emotional labor to be present in the work of Early Head Start home visitors. Participants experienced physical and emotional effects from managing their emotions in order to maintain an appropriate presence with families. Primary factors contributing to emotional labor include a relationship-based approach, the intimacy of the work, and the scope of work with families in poverty.

Study participants identified strategies to balance the effects of emotional labor. Implications of this study suggest the need for additional investigation into emotional labor in early intervention, and the implementation of policies that will ameliorate this aspect of early intervention work.