



Kentucky Invests in Developing Success

Early Care & Education Evaluation
Presentation
January 17, 2012



University of Kentucky

Overview

- Purpose: To examine program quality differences in 3/4 STARS rated child care centers, Head Start programs not participating in STARS, and public pre-kindergarten programs, and the relationship of program quality to child outcomes.

Research Questions

1. How prepared for kindergarten are young children based on important academic and social indicators of school readiness?
2. What is the classroom quality, as measured by the *Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS)*, of Head Start, 3/4 STARS centers, and public pre-kindergarten programs in which sample children attend?
3. What is the relationship between program quality and children's preparedness for kindergarten as measured by academic and social measures of school readiness?

Questions (cont).

4. What is the relationship between children's participation in Head Start, 3/4 STARS centers, and public pre-kindergarten, and their preparedness for kindergarten as measured by academic and social measures of school readiness?
5. What is the relationship between family characteristics and family perceptions of school readiness and child outcomes?

Methodology

- Classroom observations using *Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS)*
- Survey data
 - Administrators
 - Teachers
 - Families
- Child assessment data
 - *Bracken Basic Concept Scale-Third Edition: Receptive (BBCS-3:R)*
 - *Preschool Individual Growth and Development Indicators (IGDIs)*
 - *Behavior Assessment System for Children, 2nd Edition (BASC-2)*
 - *BMI*

DEMOGRAPHICS

	Head Start (N=32)	3/4 STARS (N=41)	PreK (N=40)
Gender:			
Male	14	22	18
Female	18	19	22
Ethnicity:			
Caucasian	24	35	28
African American	4	0	2
Asian	0	2	2
Hispanic/Latino	1	0	1
Bi-racial	3	3	6
Subsidy	24	7	23
Disability	3	2	10
Primary language:			
English	32	38	39
Spanish	0	0	1
Other	0	2	0
½ day programming	8	8	24
Full day programming	24	31	16
Spend rest of day:			
Child Care	0	4	5
Head Start	6	0	1
Pre-k	0	0	3
Length of time enrolled in program	1.37 years	2.09 years	12 months
Length of time teacher knows child	1.42 years	2.28 years	11 months
Average age	5.0 years	4.8 years	5.0 years

Results: *How prepared for kindergarten are young children based on important academic and social indicators of school readiness?*

- Bracken School Readiness Composite (SRC) - Majority of children in sample scored in the average range on the SRC
- IDGIS
 - 27%, of the children exceeded the predicted mean score for picture naming,
 - 32% exceeded in alliteration, and
 - 29% exceeded in rhyming.
- BASC
 - Most of the children received teacher-rating scores on the composite measure of adaptive skills that were average or well-above average for children of their age
 - Percentages of children with significant levels of behavior problems were quite low

Results Research Question 2: *What is the classroom quality, as measured by the Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS), of Head Start, 3/4 STARS centers, and public pre-kindergarten programs in which sample children attend?*

- A significant correlation was found between director/principal highest education level and teacher education level.
- Teachers' years of experience *as a teacher* was positively correlated with Instructional Support domain scores.
- Teachers' years of experience *in any position* in early childhood was also positively correlated with Instructional Support domain scores.
- Teacher education level was positively correlated with the ways in which teachers communicated with families of children in their classrooms.
- Teachers' years of experience in early childhood was positively correlated with the overall parental involvement scale.

Results Research Question 3: *What is the relationship between program quality and children's preparedness for kindergarten as measured by academic and social measures of school readiness?*

- Children, with teachers with a Bachelor's degree or higher, scored higher on the Bracken SRC than children whose teachers did not have a Bachelor's degree. The average score for children whose teacher had a Bachelor's degree or higher was 100 while the average score for children whose teachers did not have a Bachelor's degree was 92.

Research Question 4: *What is the relationship between children's participation in Head Start, 3/4 STARS child care, and public pre-kindergarten, and their preparedness for Kindergarten as measured by academic and social measures?*

- Children across center types scored similarly on social-emotional and academic outcome measures.

Mean scores on child outcome measures across center types.

	Head Start	3 or 4 STARS	Public Pre-K
<i>Academics</i>			
Bracken SRC	93.16	101.30	96.20
Picture Naming (IGDIs)	20.09	20.83	20.45
Alliteration (IGDIs)	3.56	4.56	3.55
Rhyming (IGDIs)	3.37	6.02	4.75
<i>Social-Emotional Indicators</i>			
Externalized Problems	48(average)	47 (average)	46(average)
Internalized Problems	47(average)	47(average)	47(average)
Behavior Symptom Index	48(average)	48(average)	48(average)
Adaptive Skills	57 (average)	61(high)	62 (high)

Results Question 5: *What is the relationship between family characteristics and family perceptions of school readiness and child outcomes?*

- Family Income
 - Family income was positively correlated with Bracken SRC scores.
 - Family income was also positively correlated with IGDIs picture naming scores, alliteration scores, and rhyming scores.
- Maternal Education Level
 - Higher maternal education levels were associated with higher scores on the Bracken SRC and higher IGDIs alliteration scores.
- Parents' Perceptions of School Readiness skills
 1. "motivated and curious"
 2. "follows simple rules", and
 3. "sits still and pays attention"

Limitations

- Lack of Pre-test/Post-test data for purposes of calculating growth
- Percentage of families of children in 3 and 4 STARS centers making above state salary average

Conclusions

- Majority of children in the sample have behaviors that would indicate kindergarten preparedness.
- Teacher variables accounted for some differences in CLASS scores and parent involvement scores.
- Teacher education, family income, and maternal education related to child outcomes.
- Program type was not associated with child outcomes.

Recommendations

- Teacher education level has consistently been associated with positive child outcomes in Kentucky's evaluation of early care and education. Administrators should support teachers to gain higher education levels and create work environments that encourage teachers to remain in the field of early care and education. Evaluation results suggest that teachers with more experience engage in teaching behaviors linked to positive child outcomes.
- Instructional strategies need to be implemented to ensure that children with risk factors learn important pre-literacy skills including code-focused interventions, shared-book reading, and language-enhancement interventions (NELP, 2009).

Recommendations (cont.)

- Future research should examine the relationship between parents' and teachers' perceptions of school readiness and any impact those perceptions have on children's outcomes. Care should be given to ensure that parents understand Kentucky's definition of school readiness in an effort to support parents' appropriate expectations of what children need to know and do before entering kindergarten.
- All programs had low- to mid-range scores on the Instructional Support domain of the CLASS. This domain and teachers' behaviors associated with it are shown to be most predictive of future school performance (Pianta et al., 2007). Training and technical assistance should focus on supporting teachers to improve their teaching in the important areas of language modeling, quality feedback, and concept development.