

# Coordination and Collaboration across Early Childhood Education and Elementary Schools: Multiple Perspectives, Multiple Challenges

**CCEEPRC**  
**April 17<sup>th</sup>, 2019**

# **Do High Quality Elementary School Classrooms Mitigate Preschool Fadeout? Examining the *Sustaining Environments* Hypothesis**

Jade Marcus Jenkins

*Coordination and Collaboration across Early Childhood Education and  
Elementary Schools: Multiple Perspectives, Multiple Challenges*

CCEEPRC Annual Meeting 2019

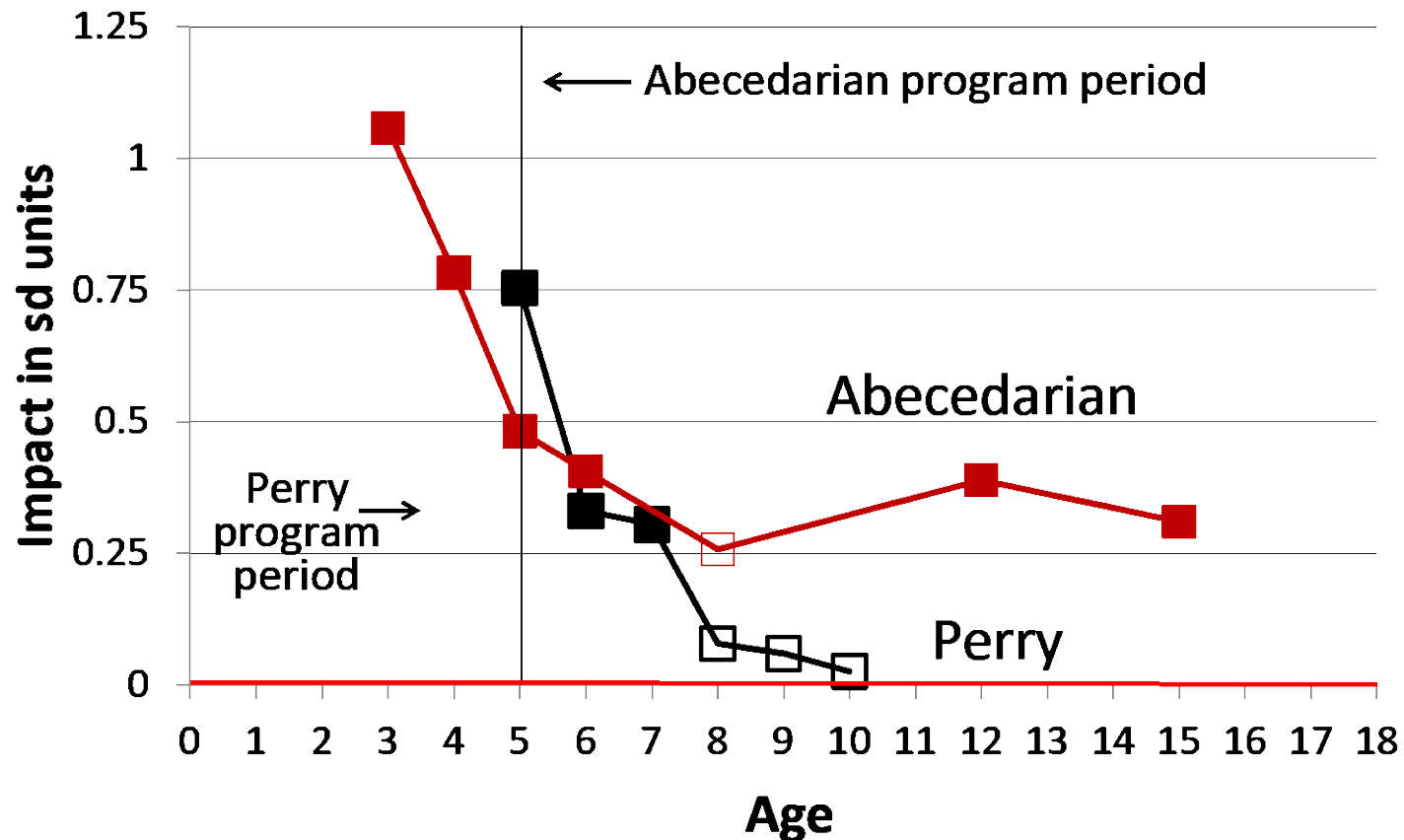
# Early Childhood Education and Fadeout

- Early childhood education (ECE) programs improve school readiness
  - Especially for low income children
- Primary policy tool to address disparities in early achievement

...But often the treatment impacts disappear in early elementary school

- Some benefits reappear in adulthood

# Figure 1: IQ impacts in Perry and Abecedarian



Solid marker denotes  $p < .05$ . IQ impacts are based on national norms

# How can policy help to sustain short-term gains from preschool?

Provide high quality classroom or “sustaining environments” in elementary school

- High-quality instruction
  - Integrated with preschool instruction
- Advanced content instead of basic content
- Small class sizes

# Sustaining Environments

- Ongoing post-program supports to “maintain children's positive attitudes and behavior and to encourage continued learning relevant to the children's lives”  
(Ramey & Ramey, 2006, p. 455)
- Early intervention impacts can be sustained only if they are followed by environments of sufficient quality to sustain normative growth
  - E.g., high-quality schools
    - ABC/Chapel Hill public schools vs. low-quality Ypsilanti schools

# **Today: Evidence of Sustaining Environments from two studies**

1. Secondary data analysis of two preschool RCTs, examining moderation of preschool effects in K and G1

Jenkins, Watts, et al., 2018, *JREE*

2. Meta-analysis of Sustaining Environments studies and the universe of possible factors to include in such studies

Bailey, Jenkins & Alvarez, 2019, *Working Paper- Under Review*

# Study 1

**We use two RCT Preschool interventions to test whether:**

1. The **quality of academic instruction** in K and 1<sup>st</sup> grade sustains preschool intervention effects
2. A **professional development intervention** for K and 1<sup>st</sup> grade teachers sustains preschool intervention effects **through improved classroom quality**

→ Looking for interactions between preschool treatment and sustaining environments measures

- e.g. (Treat\*Advanced instruction)



# 1-year Preschool Interventions at Age 4

## 1. Head Start Impact Study

- End of treatment effects: .1-.3 SD (Puma et al., 2010)
- No treatment effects in K and 1<sup>st</sup> Grade (Puma et al., 2012)
- **Sust. Env. measure:** *Advanced literacy activities*

## 2. Building Blocks TRIAD Study

- Scale-up of preschool mathematics curriculum based on learning trajectories in public pre-k programs
- End of treatment effects: .7 SD (Clements et al., 2011)
- Treatment effects in K and 1<sup>st</sup> Grade: .1-.3 SD (Clements et al., 2012; 2013)
- **Sust. Env. measure:** *Math teaching quality, # math activities*

# Study 1: Head Start Impact Study

## Results - Kindergarten

|  | (1)<br>End of HS | (2)<br>Spring of K;<br>Teacher<br>survey<br>nonmissing | (3)<br>Spring of K;<br>Teacher<br>survey<br>nonmissing | (4)<br>Spring of K;<br>Teacher<br>survey<br>nonmissing | (5)<br>Kindergarten<br>classroom<br>fixed effect |
|--|------------------|--|--|--|--|
| Treatment  | 0.16*<br>(0.07)  | -0.12+<br>(0.06)                                       | -0.12+<br>(0.07)                                       | -0.12+<br>(0.07)                                       | 0.02<br>(0.32)                                   |
| Total advanced literacy<br>activities in K (times per<br>month; std) |                  |  | 0.12*<br>(0.05)  | 0.10<br>(0.07)   |  |
| Total basic literacy activities in<br>K (times per month; std)       |                  |  | -0.12*<br>(0.05)                                       | -0.10<br>(0.08)  |  |
| Treat * Advanced literacy<br>activities                              |                  |  |  | 0.03<br>(0.09)   |  |
| Treat * Basic literacy activities                                    |                  |  |  | -0.03<br>(0.10)  |  |
| Observations   | 1632             | 1077   | 1075   | 1075   | 1075   |

Positive effect  
for everyone

**Additional tests:** Class size, Full-day K, Classroom proportion low-income

# Building Blocks Scale-Up

## Results – Kindergarten

|  | (1)<br>End of<br>BB | (2)<br>Spring of<br>K | (3)<br>Spring of<br>K | (4)<br>Spring of<br>K |
|--|---------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Treatment                                  | 0.66***<br>(0.07)   | 0.33***<br>(0.08)     | 0.32***<br>(0.08)     | 0.33**<br>(0.09)      |
| Math Teaching Quality                      |                     |                       | 0.04<br>(0.04)        | 0.03<br>(0.06)        |
| Number of Math Activities                  |                     |                       | 0.13*<br>(0.05)       | 0.13+<br>(0.07)       |
| Treat * Math Teaching Quality              |                     |                       |                       | 0.05<br>(0.08)        |
| Treat * Number of Math Activities          |                     |                       |                       | -0.02<br>(0.08)       |
| Treatment with Follow-Through              |                     |                       |                       |                       |
| Follow-Through * Math Teaching Quality     |                     |                       |                       |                       |
| Follow-Through * Number of Math Activities |                     |                       |                       |                       |
| Observations                               | 563                 | 563                   | 563                   | 563                   |

Positive effect  
for everyone

# Building Blocks Scale-Up

## Results - 1<sup>st</sup> Grade

|   | (1)<br>End of<br>BB | (2)<br>Spring of<br>1st Grade | (3)<br>Spring of<br>1st Grade | (4)<br>Spring of<br>1st Grade | (5)<br>Spring of<br>1st<br>Grade | (6)<br>Spring of<br>1st Grade | (7)<br>Spring of<br>1st Grade |
|---|---------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|----------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Treatment                                     | 0.67***<br>(0.07)   | 0.16*<br>(0.08)               | 0.15*<br>(0.06)               | 0.17*<br>(0.08)               | 0.18*<br>(0.08)                  | 0.17*<br>(0.06)               | 0.17*<br>(0.08)               |
| Mathematics Teaching<br>Quality               |                     |                               | 0.02<br>(0.04)                | -0.02<br>(0.06)               |                                  | -0.00<br>(0.03)               | 0.03<br>(0.05)                |
| Number of Math Activities                     |                     |                               | 0.14**<br>(0.04)              | 0.20*<br>(0.08)               |                                  | 0.15***<br>(0.04)             | 0.13***<br>(0.04)             |
| Treat * Mathematics<br>Teaching Quality       |                     |                               |                               | 0.09<br>(0.09)                |                                  |                               |                               |
| Treat * Number of Math<br>Activities          |                     |                               |                               | -0.09<br>(0.09)               |                                  |                               |                               |
| Treatment with Follow-<br>Through             |                     |                               |                               |                               | 0.32***<br>(0.09)                | 0.32***<br>(0.07)             | 0.33***<br>(0.07)             |
| Follow-Through *                              |                     |                               |                               |                               |                                  |                               |                               |
| Mathematics Teaching                          |                     |                               |                               |                               |                                  |                               |                               |
| Follow-Through * Number of<br>Math Activities |                     |                               |                               |                               |                                  |                               |                               |
| Observations                                  | 563                 | 563                           | 563                           | 563                           |                                  |                               |                               |

More fadeout  
in G1...  
but less for FT  
condition

# Study 1:

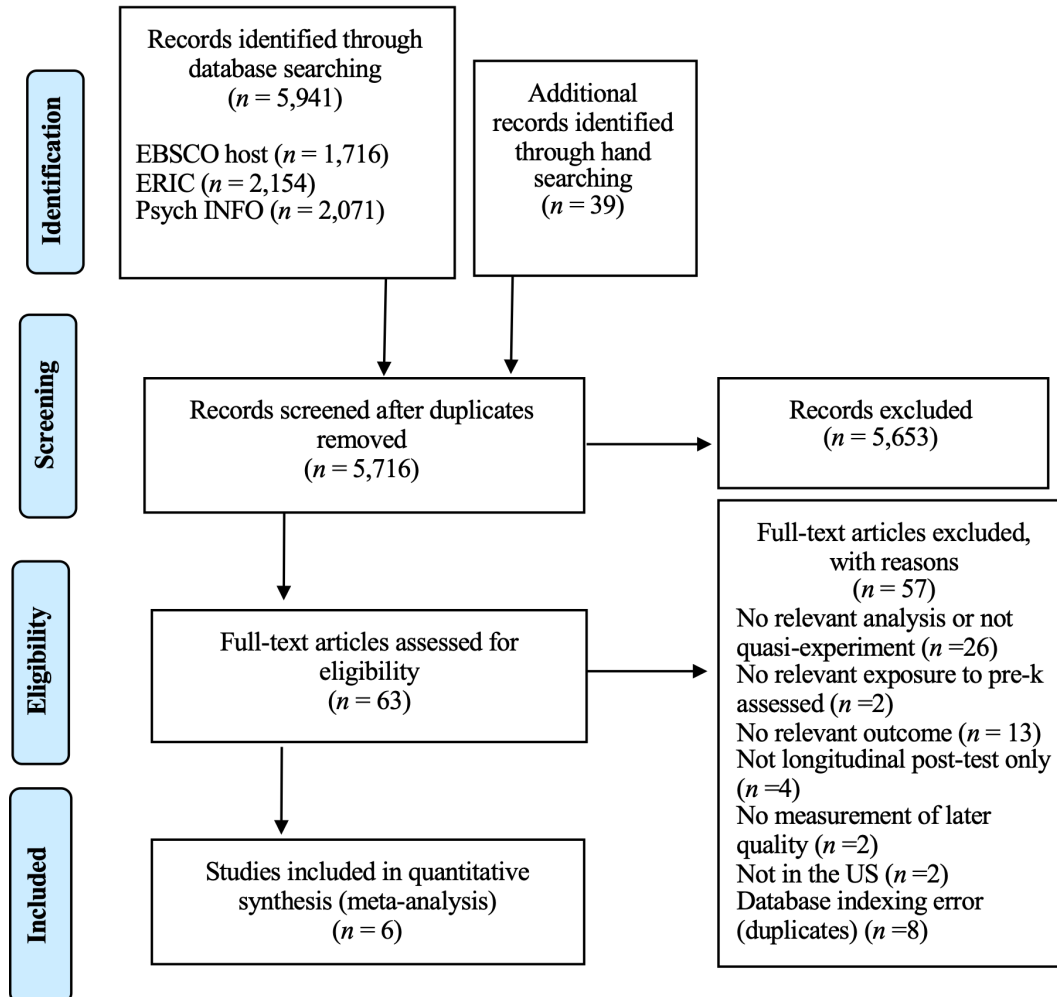
## Summary and Implications

Both preschool interventions worked in short-term...

- Under what conditions do the effects persist in the intermediate-term?
  - BB had initial strong impact, HS modest impact
  - Full fadeout in HSIS
  - Sustained effects in BB when teacher PD provided, but PD did not operate through our measures of classroom quality

# Study 2:

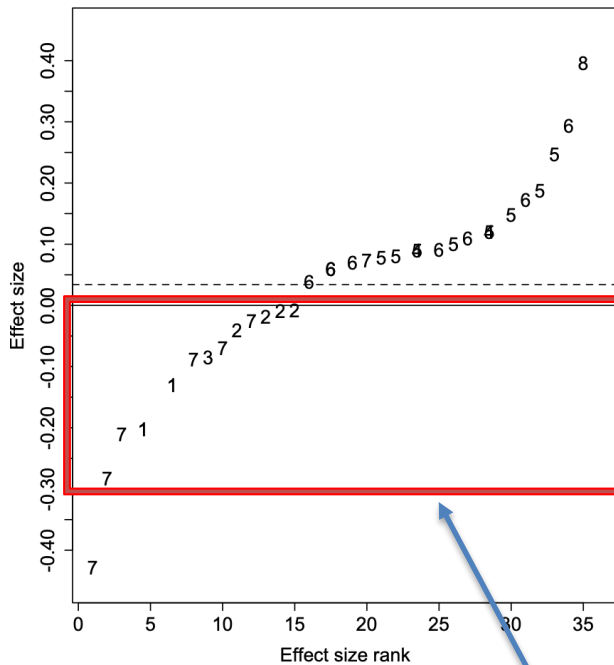
## Sustaining Environments Meta-Analysis



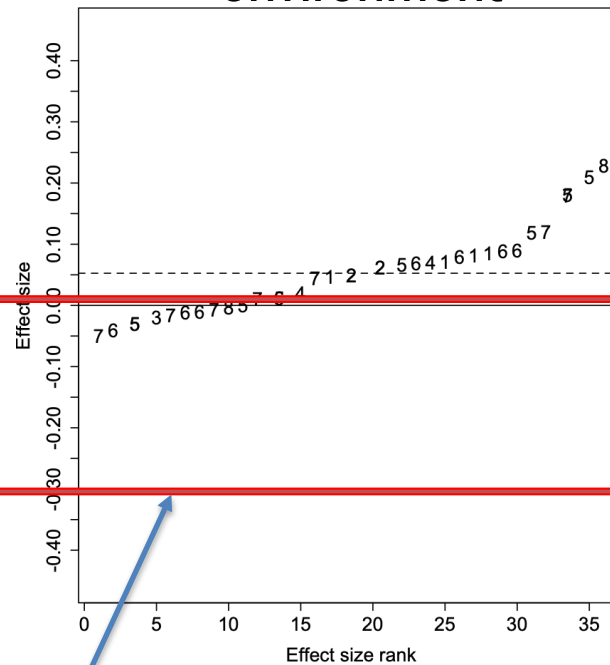
Meta-analysis of studies that report an interaction between early childhood intervention and measure of later educational quality

# Part I: Plots of effect sizes for included studies

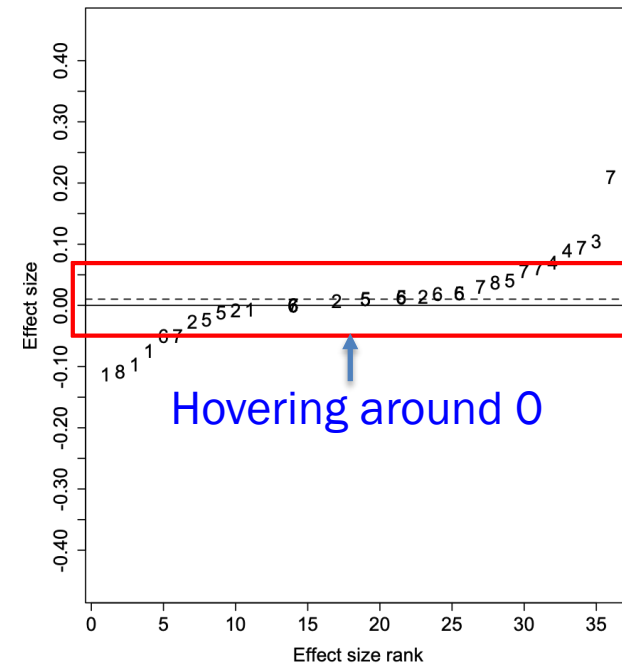
Main effects of  
preschool



Main effects of  
elementary sustaining  
environment



Preschool\*SE  
interaction terms



Negative main effects of  
preschool and SE

Hovering around 0

# Part II: Specification Curve Analysis

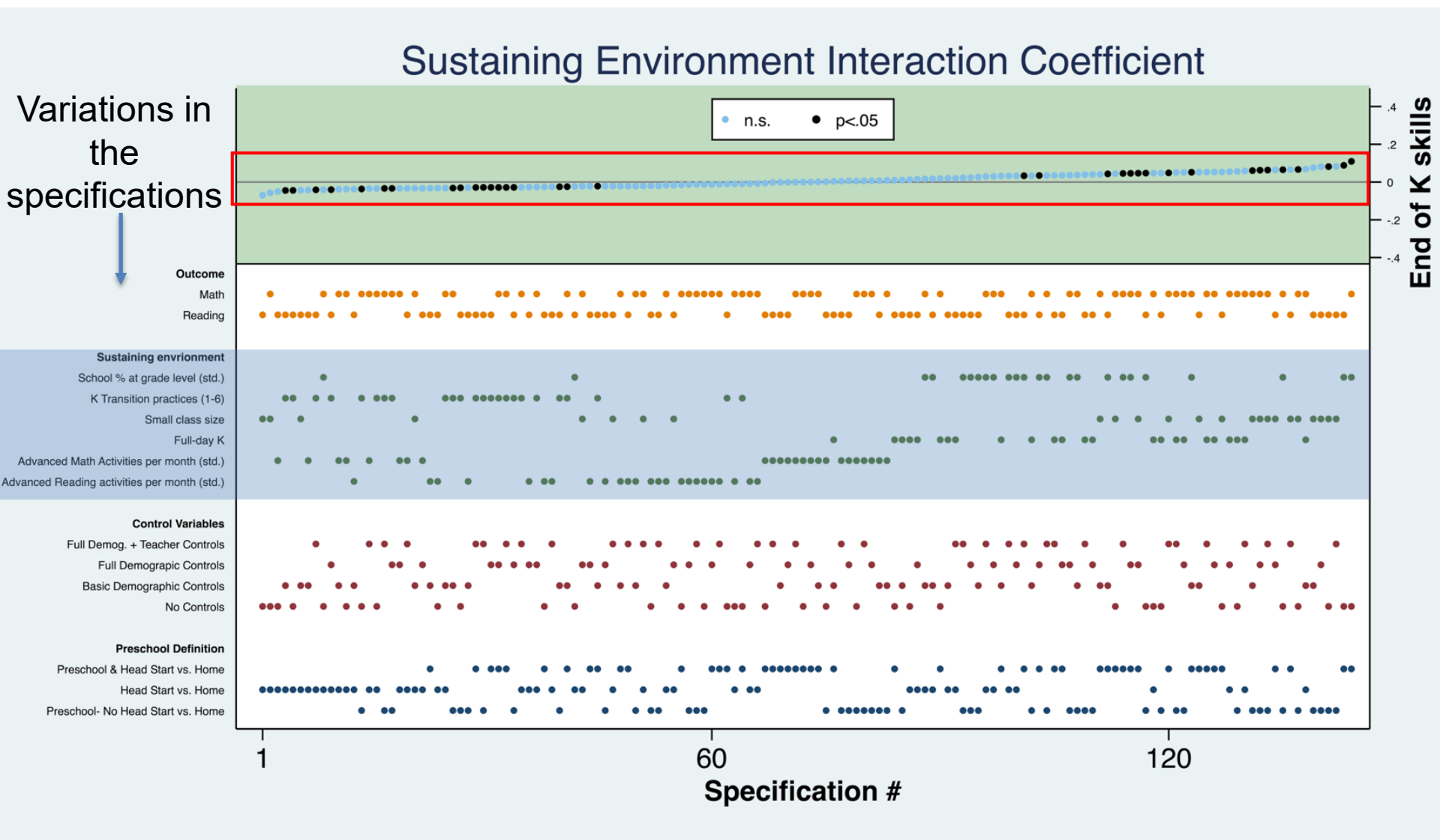
ECLS-K 1998 (used in the majority of prior studies)

**Idea:** explore all *plausible specifications* for estimating sustaining environment interactions with preschool

1. Various levels of statistical controls (covariates)
2. Differing preschool inclusion criteria:
  - Head Start incl./excl., combined w. other age-4 ECE
3. Various sustaining environments measures:
  - K Class size
  - Full-day K
  - K transition practices,
  - School % at grade level in reading/math
  - Advanced reading and math activities in K class



# Results: All Specifications and Effect Sizes



# Overall Summary of Findings

- Quality, quantity, and level of classroom instruction did not moderate treatment effect persistence
  - Strongest persistence with follow-through PD in K and 1<sup>st</sup> Grade
  - Advanced content helps, Basic hurts
- No strong evidence that different types of specifications yield positive findings of sustaining K environments

# Tentative Explanations

- 1) The null hypothesis
- 2) Lack of power: small main effect estimates  $< .2$
- 3) Theoretical ambiguity:
  - What are the specific mechanisms?
  - What to do when main effects of “education quality” measures are negative?
- 4) Heterogeneity
  - We know this is true for ECE, but need big sample and big effects to test SE hypothesis

# Implications

- Keep intervening in PK-3
  - Sustained effects from BB study FT condition not simply from increasing classroom quality, as captured by observational measures
  - FT condition was not fully integrated curriculum or intervention; ITT
- Future research on what PK-3 would look like
  - Integrated curriculum
  - Peer composition

# Limitations

- Associational; Sustaining environments not randomly assigned
  - Checks for selection into school and classroom environments
  - Strong selection into preschool and SE in ECLS-K
- Teacher & parent survey response bias, attrition
- Empirically supported curriculum in BB but not HS
- ECLS-K may be underpowered

# Acknowledgements

## Co-authors

**Study 1:** Tyler Watts, Elizabeth Gershoff, Katherine Magnuson, Douglas Clements, Julie Sarama, Greg Duncan,

**Study 2:** Drew Bailey, Daniela Alvarez-Vargas

## Research supported by:

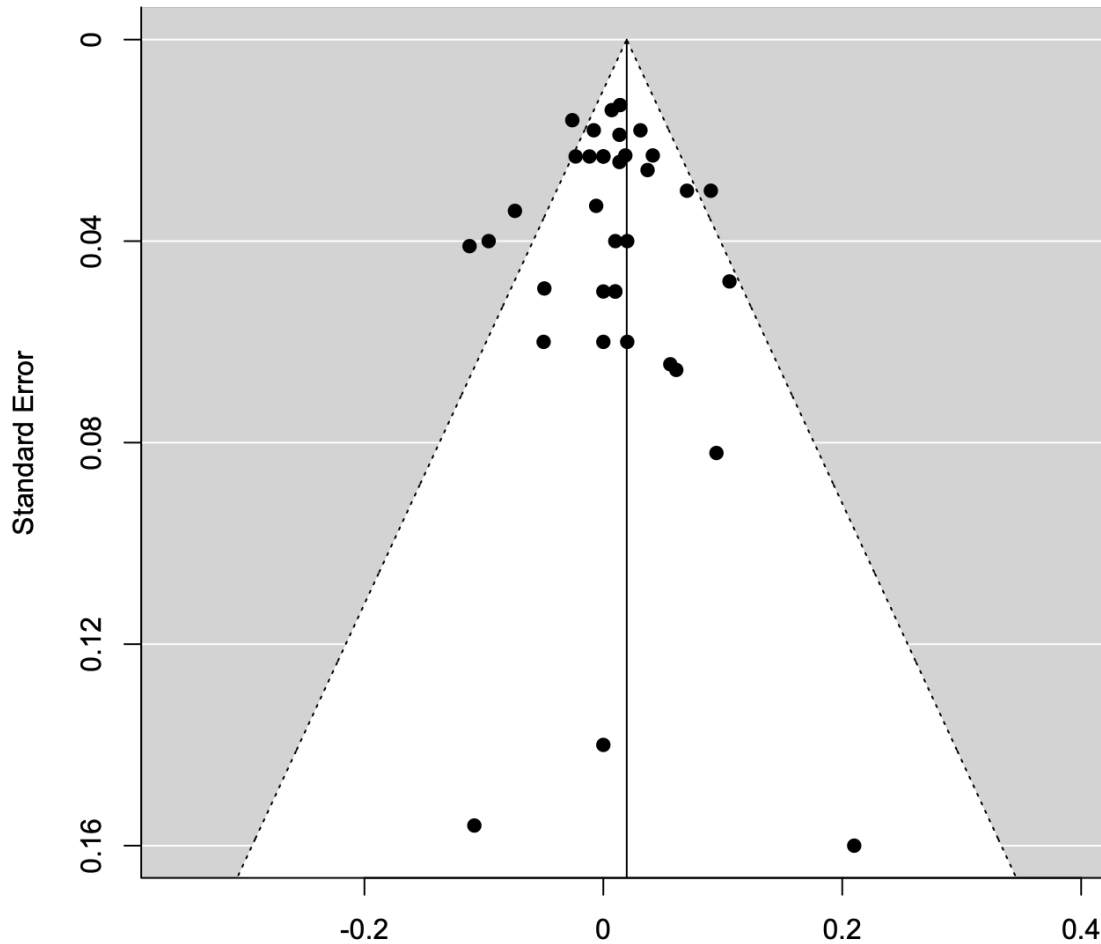
- NIH NICHD
  - Award # P01HD065704 (Duncan, Farkas)
  - Award # R01HD06956 (Gershoff)
- IES
  - Award # R305B120013 (Duncan)
  - Award # R305K05157 (Clements)
  - Award # R305A120813 (Clements)

The content is solely the responsibility of the authors and does not necessarily represent the official views of NIH, IES, or NSF.

# Thank you!

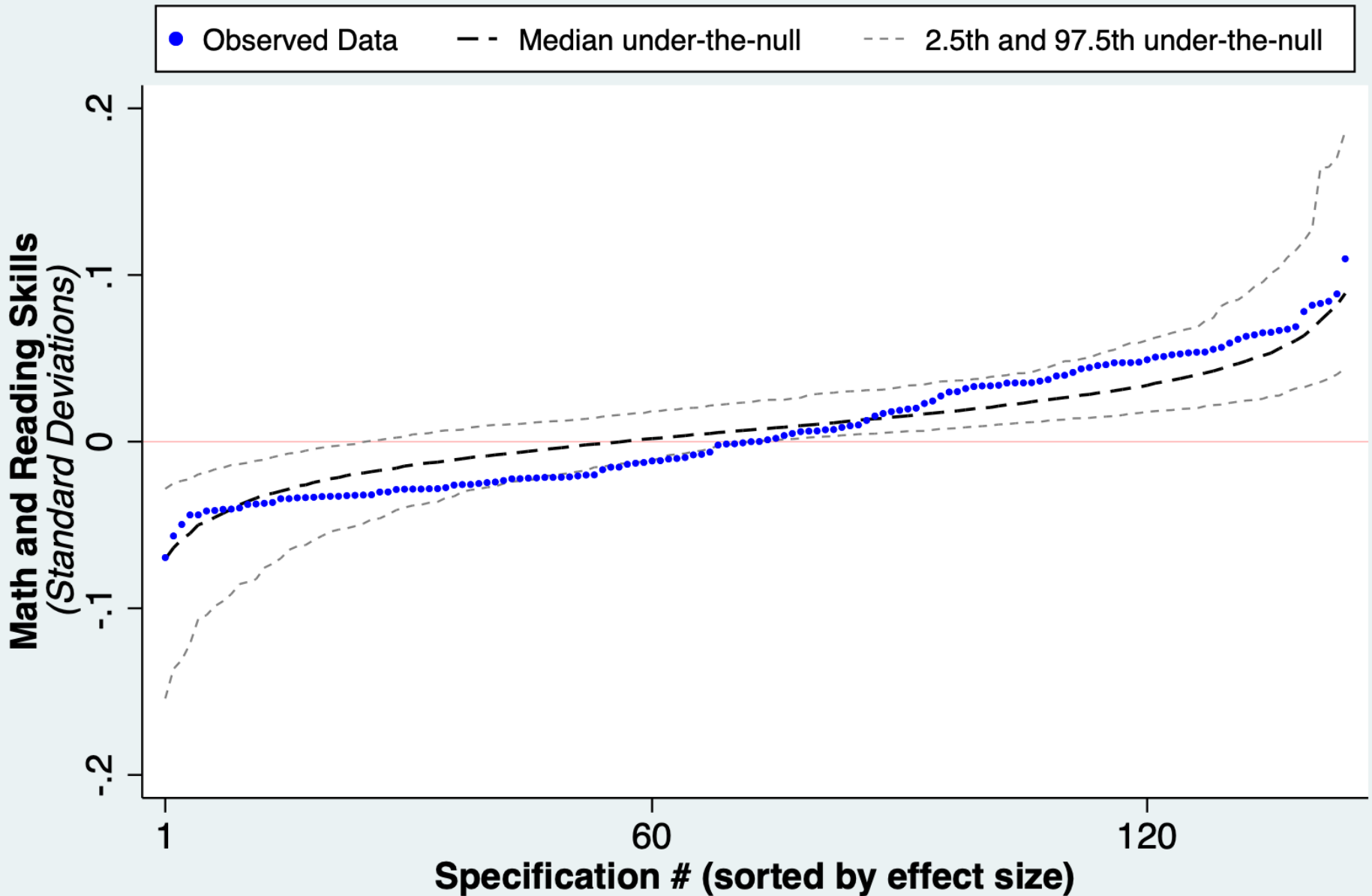
[jvjenkin@uci.edu](mailto:jvjenkin@uci.edu)

# Meta-analysis of studies that report an interaction between early childhood intervention and measure of later educational quality





# Sustaining Environment Interaction Coefficient



# Analysis

- OLS with clustered SEs, R.A. unit fixed effects
  - Incl. Treatment x Environment terms
  - Environment NOT randomly assigned; associational estimates
- Controls
  - Baseline skill composite score
  - Race
  - Gender
  - Mother's education
  - English proficiency
  - Special needs
- IPT weights in HSIS to account for differential attrition (Bitler et al., 2014)
- Kindergarten Classroom Fixed Effect for HSIS only

# Study 1: Head Start Impact Study

## Data

- Congressionally mandated evaluation of HS programs, 2002-2006
- Randomly assigned children to receive HS based on center of application
  - First-time participants; Age-4 cohort with K and 1<sup>st</sup> grade outcomes (n≈1500) & teacher responses (n≈1100)
  - Nationally representative of HS programs & children
- Counterfactual conditions varied
- Treatment curricula varied

# Study 1: Head Start Impact Study

## Measures

- Literacy and Language Skills
  - Composite of standardized scores from:
    - PPVT
    - WJ Letter-Word ID
    - WJ Spelling
- Classroom Environment
  - Teacher report on literacy activities (times per mo.) in K and 1<sup>st</sup> grade
    - Basic activities, Advanced activities

# Selection into Kindergarten Classrooms: HSIS

|           | (1)<br>Total<br>advanced<br>literacy<br>activities<br>(times per<br>month; std) | (2)<br>Total basic<br>literacy<br>activities<br>(times per<br>month;<br>std) | (3)<br>Yrs.<br>teaching<br>exp. | (4)<br>HS or<br>below<br>(Teacher) | (5)<br>Some<br>college<br>(Teacher) | (6)<br>Associates<br>(Teacher) | (7)<br>College<br>(Teacher) | (8)<br>College+<br>(Teacher) | (9)<br>Pre-k<br>teaching<br>license | (10)<br>Elementary<br>teaching<br>license | (11)<br>Full-day<br>K |
|-----------|---|--|---------------------------------|------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------|-----------------------------|------------------------------|-------------------------------------|---|-----------------------|
| Treatment | -0.029<br>(0.07)  | -0.100<br>(0.07)   | -0.803<br>(0.74)                | 0.002<br>(0.00)                    | 0.010<br>(0.01)                     | 0.001<br>(0.01)                | -0.012<br>(0.03)            | -0.000<br>(0.03)             | -0.025<br>(0.04)                    | 0.001<br>(0.01)                           | -0.052**<br>(0.02)    |
| Obs       | 1075  | 1075   | 1062                            | 1071                               | 1071                                | 1071                           | 1071                        | 1071                         | 1003                                | 1003                                      | 1008                  |

|           | (12)<br>Classroom<br>num LEP<br>students | (13)<br>Classroom<br>num FRPL<br>eligible | (14)<br>Class<br>size | (15)<br>Teaching<br>assistant | (16)<br>Percent of<br>school<br>children<br>black | (17)<br>Percent of<br>school<br>children<br>eligible for<br>free/reduc<br>ed lunch | (18)<br>Percent of<br>school<br>children<br>Hispanic | (19)<br>Percent of<br>school<br>children<br>white | (20)<br>School<br>proficiency<br>level in<br>math | (21)<br>School<br>proficiency<br>level in<br>reading |
|-----------|--|---|-----------------------|-------------------------------|---|--|--|---|---|--|
| Treatment | 0.041<br>(0.50)                          | -0.188<br>(0.45)                          | -0.325<br>(0.34)      | -0.010<br>(0.03)              | 0.005<br>(0.02)                                   | 0.018<br>(0.02)  | 0.032<br>(0.02)                                      | -0.033<br>(0.02)                                  | -1.608<br>(1.55)                                  | -1.309<br>(1.85)                                     |
| Obs       | 1006                                     | 821                                       | 971                   | 992                           | 925   | 898  | 925  | 925   | 928   | 927  |

# Study 2: Building Blocks Scale-Up Data

- TRIAD- Building Blocks Scale Up Evaluation  
(Clements et al., 2011; 2012; 2013)
- Randomly assigned 42 low-income schools in NY and MA to one of three conditions:
  - Building Blocks Curriculum
  - Control (Pre-k business as usual)
  - Building Blocks Curriculum w/ Follow-Through
- Randomly sampled 1375 students entering preschool from these schools

# Study 2: Building Blocks Scale-Up Measures

- Math Skills
  - Research-based Early Math Assessment (REMA)
    - Designed for children ages 3-8
    - Counting, patterning, operations, geometry, measurement etc.
    - Rasch-IRT
- Classroom Environment
  - Classroom Observation of Early Mathematics-Environment and Teaching (COEMET)
    - Assessed at least once during K and 1<sup>st</sup> Grade
    - Observers (blind to treat) recorded # of math activities, coded for teaching practices known to facilitate math learning
  - Number of math activities

# Selection into Kindergarten Classrooms: Building Blocks

|                               | (1)<br>Total math<br>activities<br>observed | (2)<br>Math<br>instructional<br>quality |
|-------------------------------|---|---|
| Treatment                     | 0.01<br>(0.20)                              | -0.06<br>(0.29)                         |
| Treatment with follow-through | 0.38+<br>(0.21)                             | -0.04<br>(0.17)                         |
| Observations                  | 876   | 876                                     |



## Appendix A. Coding scheme for instructional quality of literacy activities in the Head Start Impact Study

| Kindergarten literacy activities            |          | First grade literacy activities                 |          |
|---|----------|---|----------|
| Listen to stories with no print             | basic    | Activity related to book                        | basic    |
| Show child how to read a book               | basic    | Write letters of alphabet                       | basic    |
| Write own name                              | basic    | Learn names of letters                          | basic    |
| Teach directional words like over and under | basic    | Have children tell you a story                  | basic    |
| Write letters of the alphabet               | basic    | Practice sounds letters make                    | basic    |
| Learn the names of letters                  | basic    | Listen to stories w. print                      | basic    |
|   |          | Read books chosen by child                      | basic    |
|   |          | Read text w controlled vocab                    | basic    |
|   |          | Read text w strong phonemic pattern             | basic    |
|   |          | Read patterned or predictable text              | basic    |
|   |          | Hear storytellers                               | basic    |
| Discuss new words                           | advanced | Language activities in mixed achievement groups | advanced |
| Have children tell you a story              | advanced | Discuss new words                               | advanced |
| Practice the sounds that letters make       | advanced | Read aloud                                      | advanced |
| Listen to stories with print                | advanced | Read silently                                   | advanced |
| Rhyming words and families                  | advanced | Work in reading workbook                        | advanced |
|   |          | Write words from dictation                      | advanced |
|   |          | Use invented spellings                          | advanced |
|   |          | Read thematic text                              | advanced |
|   |          | Compose stories or reports                      | advanced |
|   |          | Publish child's writing                         | advanced |
|   |          | Perform plays/skits                             | advanced |
|   |          | Write stories in journal                        | advanced |

# Home Environment Moderation

- **HSIS:** Parent survey report on literacy activities (1-4) and general home learning activities (0/1) at end of treatment
  - Parent's Education

# Study 1: Head Start Impact Study

## Results

### *Sustaining Home- Kindergarten*

|                                  | (1)<br>End of HS | (2)<br>Spring of K | (3)<br>Spring of K:<br>Mom ed. &<br>home literacy<br>activities | (4)<br>Spring of K:<br>Mom ed. &<br>home literacy<br>activities | (5)<br>Spring of K:<br>Mom ed. &<br>home learning<br>activities |
|----------------------------------|------------------|--------------------|---|---|---|
| Treatment                        | 0.16*            | -0.06              | -0.10   | -0.06   | -0.11   |
|                                  | (0.07)           | (0.06)             | (0.07)  | (0.09)  | (0.33)  |
| > High School deg.               |                  |                    | 0.43**  | 0.52**  | 0.50**  |
|                                  |                  |                    | (0.07)  | (0.11)  | (0.13)  |
| Home literacy activities         |                  |                    | 0.15**  | 0.20**  |   |
|                                  |                  |                    | (0.04)  | (0.06)  |   |
| Home learning activities         |                  |                    |   |   | 0.02  |
|                                  |                  |                    |   |   | (0.02)  |
| Treat * > High School deg.       |                  |                    |   | -0.15   | -0.16   |
|                                  |                  |                    |   | (0.15)  | (0.16)  |
| Treat * Home literacy activities |                  |                    |   | -0.09   |   |
|                                  |                  |                    |   | (0.07)  |   |
| Treat * Home learning activities |                  |                    |   |   | 0.01  |
|                                  |                  |                    |   |   | (0.02)  |
| Observations                     | 1632             | 1449               | 1449  | 1449  | 1449  |

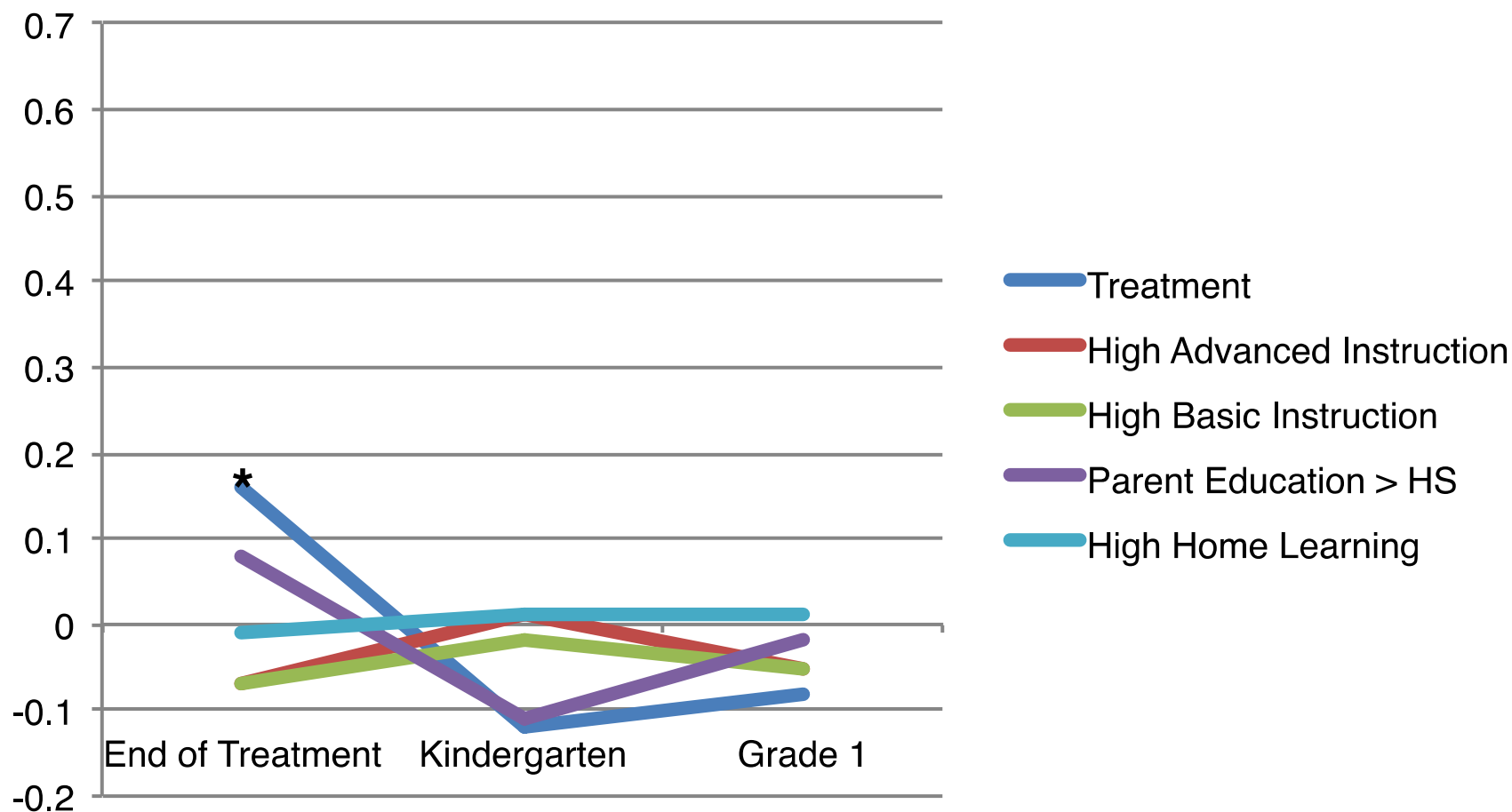
# Study 2: Building Blocks Scale-Up

## Results

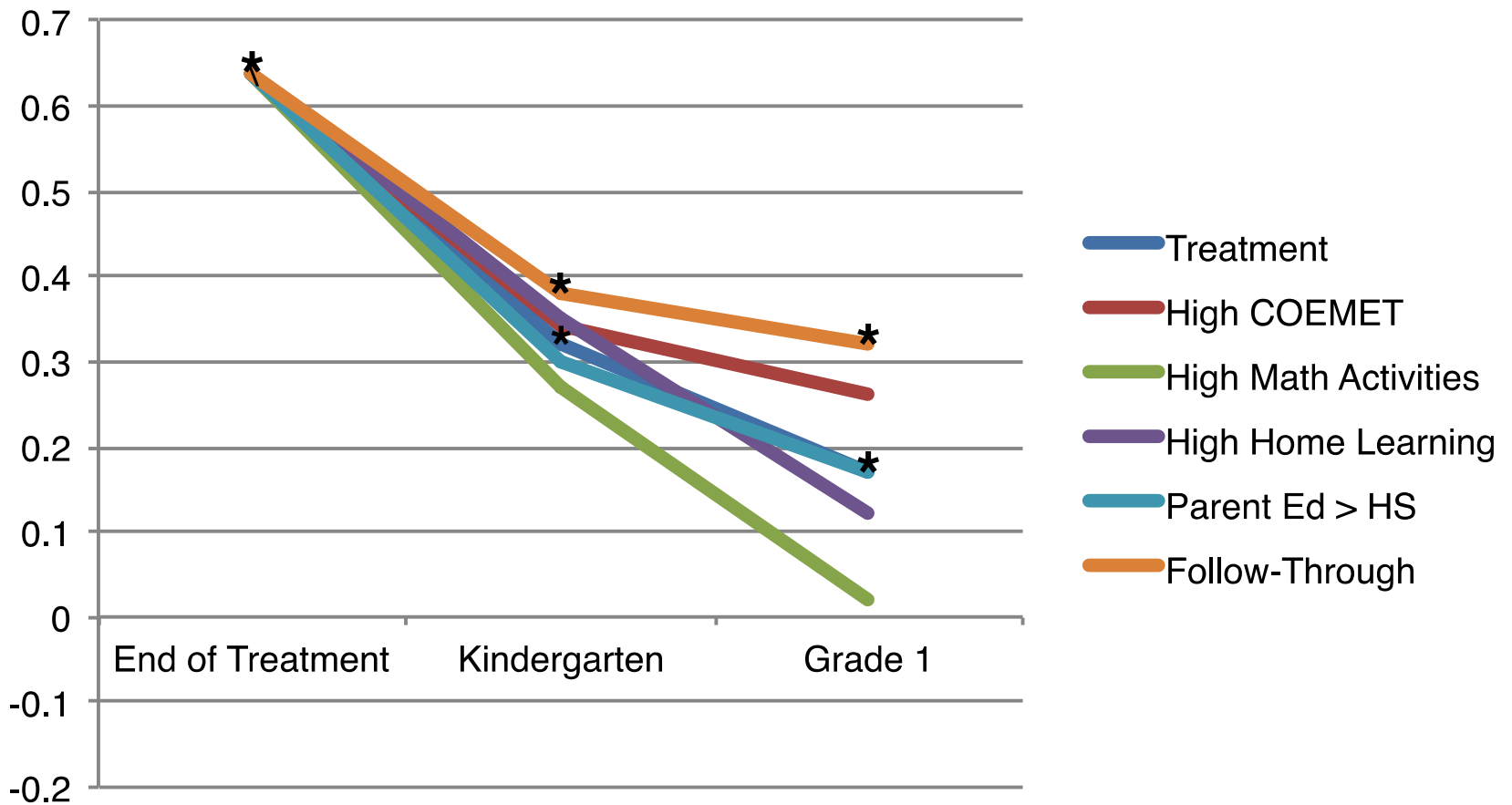
### *Kindergarten – Sustaining Home*

|                                  | (1)       | (2)         | (3)         | (4)         |
|----------------------------------|-----------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
|                                  | End of BB | Spring of K | Spring of K | Spring of K |
| Treatment                        | 0.64***   | 0.32***     | 0.32***     | 0.34***     |
|                                  | (0.08)    | (0.08)      | (0.08)      | (0.09)      |
| > High School deg.               |           |             | 0.12+       | 0.14        |
|                                  |           |             | (0.06)      | (0.12)      |
| Home learning activities         |           |             | 0.04        | 0.01        |
|                                  |           |             | (0.05)      | (0.08)      |
| Treat * > High School deg.       |           |             |             | -0.03       |
|                                  |           |             |             | (0.13)      |
| Treat * Home learning activities |           |             |             | 0.04        |
|                                  |           |             |             | (0.05)      |
| Observations                     | 555       | 555         | 555         | 555         |

## Head Start effects through 1st Grade: Interactions with Sustaining Environments



## Building Blocks effects through 1st Grade: Interactions with Sustaining Environments



# **Examining the benefits of Head Start efforts to coordinate with elementary schools around the transition to kindergarten**

---

**CCEEPRC**  
**April 17-18, 2019**

**Kyle DeMeo Cook, Ph.D.**  
**Education Development Center**

# Funding



**BOSTON COLLEGE**



This project was generously supported by the Head Start Graduate Research Scholars Program, Grant Number 90YR0100 to Boston College, from the Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation, Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. The contents are solely the responsibility of the author and do not necessarily represent the official views of the Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation, the Administration for Children and Families, or the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.



# Transitioning Across Systems

- How do preschool programs and elementary schools work together to support children as they transition across them?
- What are the benefits to children when preschools and elementary schools coordinate with one another?

# Transition to School Matters

- Transition to school as a major life event
- To understand preschool “fade out” must consider the child’s next developmental context
- Policy context of PK-3<sup>rd</sup> Movement, Head Start requirements and ESSA
- More research needed to guide policy and practice



# What does existing research say about coordination?

- Two studies in the US show that more transition practices done by kindergarten teachers are related to positive academic and prosocial skills, particularly practices focused on parents.  
(Cook & Coley, 2017; Schulting, Malone & Dodge, 2005).
- One study in the US found that more transition practices done by preschools was related to better outcomes in kindergarten, with sharing information as a key practice.  
(LoCasale-Crouch, et al. 2008)
- Two international studies show that sharing information about children and general programming is related to better adjustment at the start of school.  
(Cook, Dearing & Zachrisson, 2017; Ahtola et al, 2011)

# Project Objectives

- Describe coordination practices that Head Start programs are engaging in with elementary schools.
- Examine the relationship between Head Start-elementary school coordination practices and child outcomes.
- Explore the benefits and challenges to coordination efforts.



# Two Connected Studies

## National Head Start Data

- Head Start FACES Data
- Data collected and funded by ACF
- About 2,000 children
- Nationally representative of children in Head Start in 2009

## Local Head Start Interviews

- Primary data collection
- Interviews with 16 Head Start leaders
- Recruited through one state Head Start Association in northeast

How does Head Start coordinate with elementary schools?

National Data Findings

# Head Start FACES Data 2009

## SAMPLE

- Analytic Sample N=2,019 children
- Data Used:
  - First Preschool Year (3 & 4 year olds)
  - Spring of Kindergarten



## Which coordination practices are Head Start centers using to support the transition to school?

| <b>Coordination Practices: Head Start to Elementary Schools<br/>(reported by Head Start director)</b> |           |
|---|-----------|
| Participate in development of individualized education plans (IEPs)                                   | 91%       |
| Provide Head Start records for children   | 86%       |
| Help schools identify kindergarten students   | 85%       |
| Meet with kindergarten teacher at school  | 76%       |
| Share curriculum information  | 74%       |
| Share expectations  | 73%       |
| Share program policy information  | 69%       |
| Joint trainings   | 65%       |
| Coordination sum index  | Mean=6.12 |



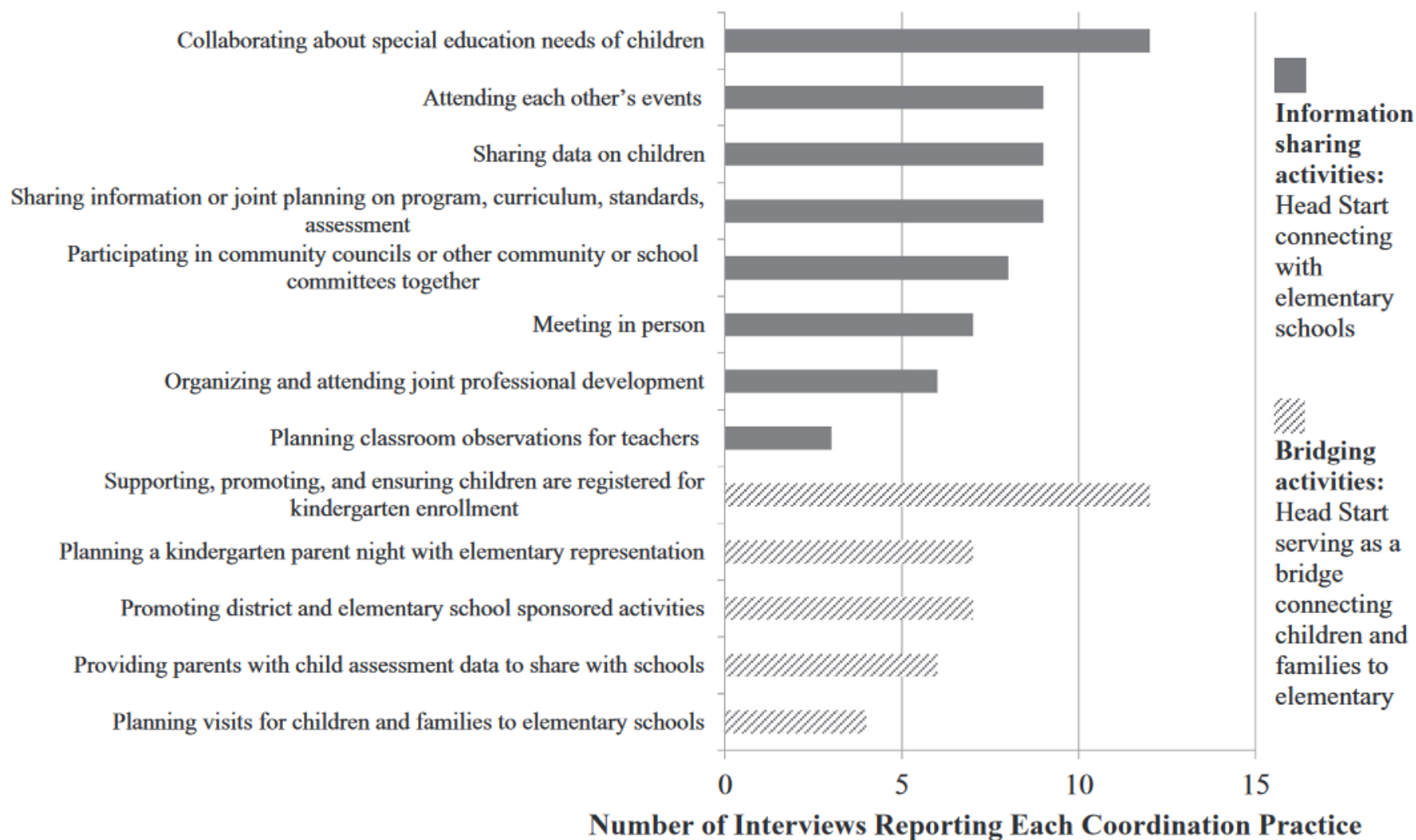
## Is Head Start engagement in coordination practices associated with children's increased academic and social skills in kindergarten?

- Meeting with kindergarten teachers at school was related to higher language scores in kindergarten.
- More Head Start coordination practices was related to higher math and language skills for children who attended kindergarten classrooms with lower reports of general transition practices.
- Children in Head Start programs with an education coordinator responsible for the transition to kindergarten had higher social skills.

How does Head Start coordinate with elementary schools?

Local Interview Findings

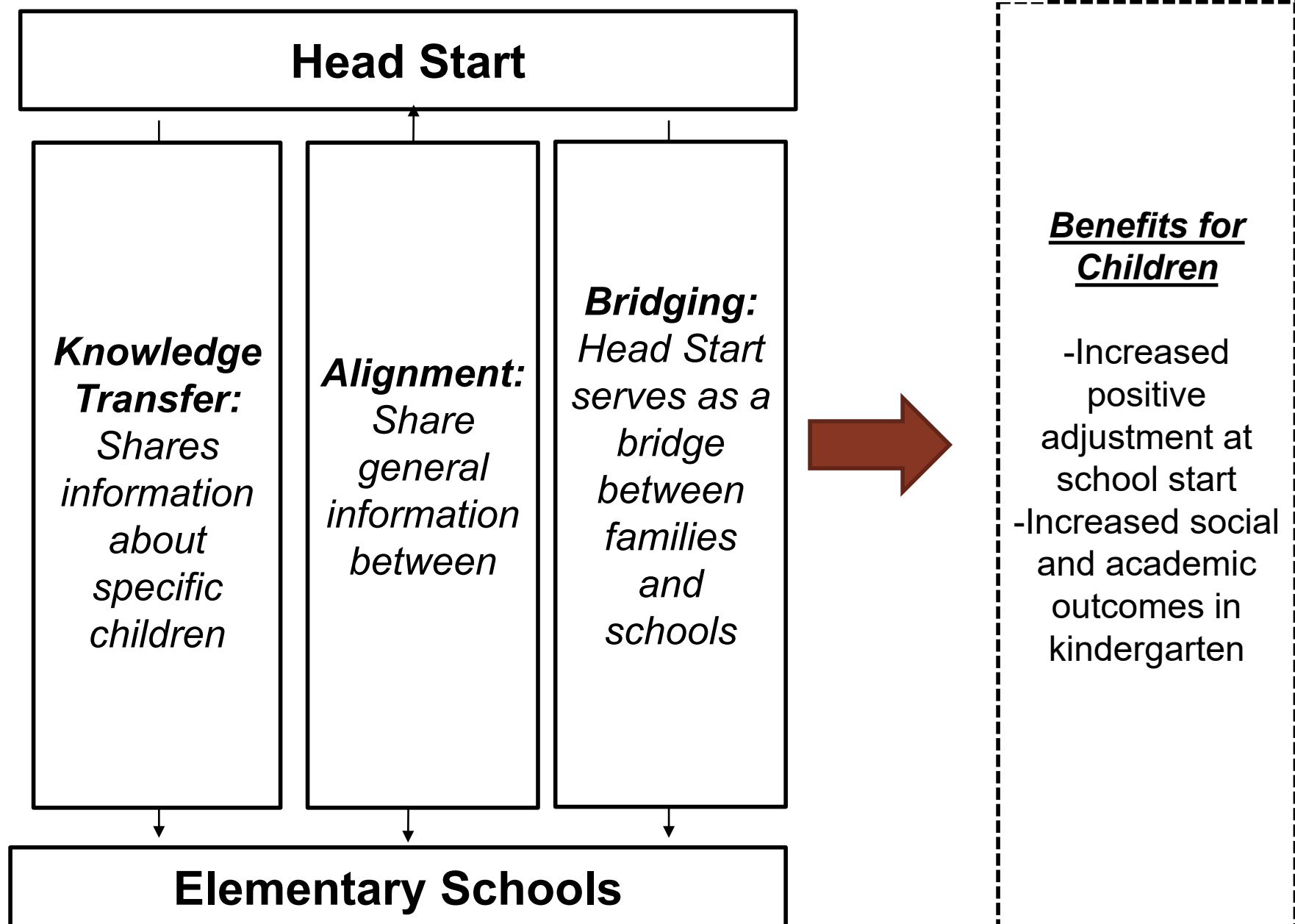
# Reported Coordination Practices



**Fig. 1.** Frequency of interviews citing information sharing and bridging coordination practices.

What are the benefits of coordination?

# Hypothesis/Assumption



# Who benefits from coordination?

“I also think transition really when it comes down to it, is more beneficial to the

**families/the parents**

of it's a lot less stressful to send their babies off to kindergarten when they kind of have a clue of what they're going.” –Director #6

“So through those meetings **we** learn an awful lot about what they're doing and we try to input it...through the whole program.”  
- Director #7

“If we can help the

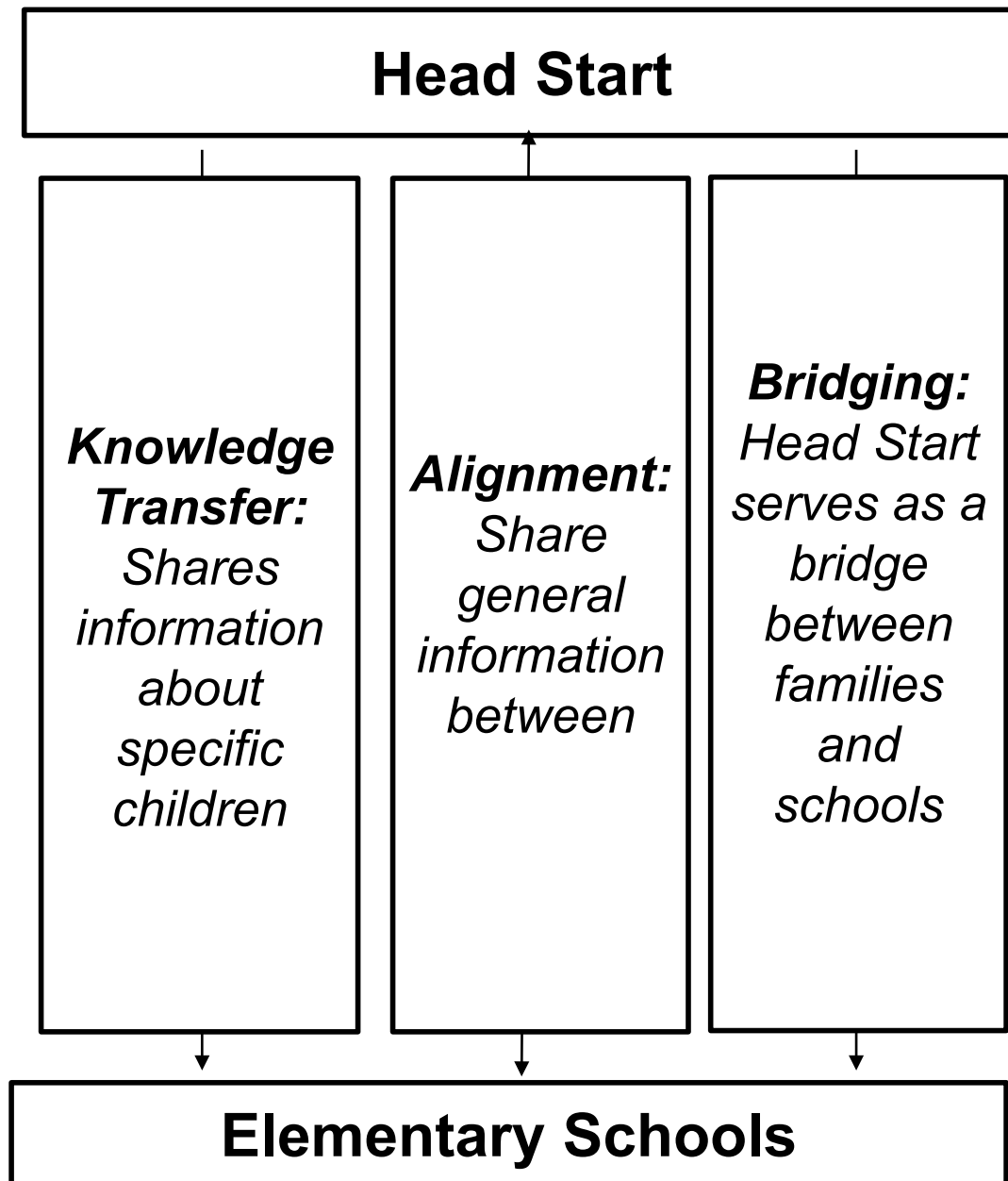
**kindergarten teachers**

just by giving them the information that we have...hopefully they'll be able to tap into that stuff and their teaching can be more effective with that child.”

–Director #6

“I do believe that by sharing curriculum that we are going to see some **higher results** and definitely a smoother connection when kids start kindergarten.”  
–Director #12

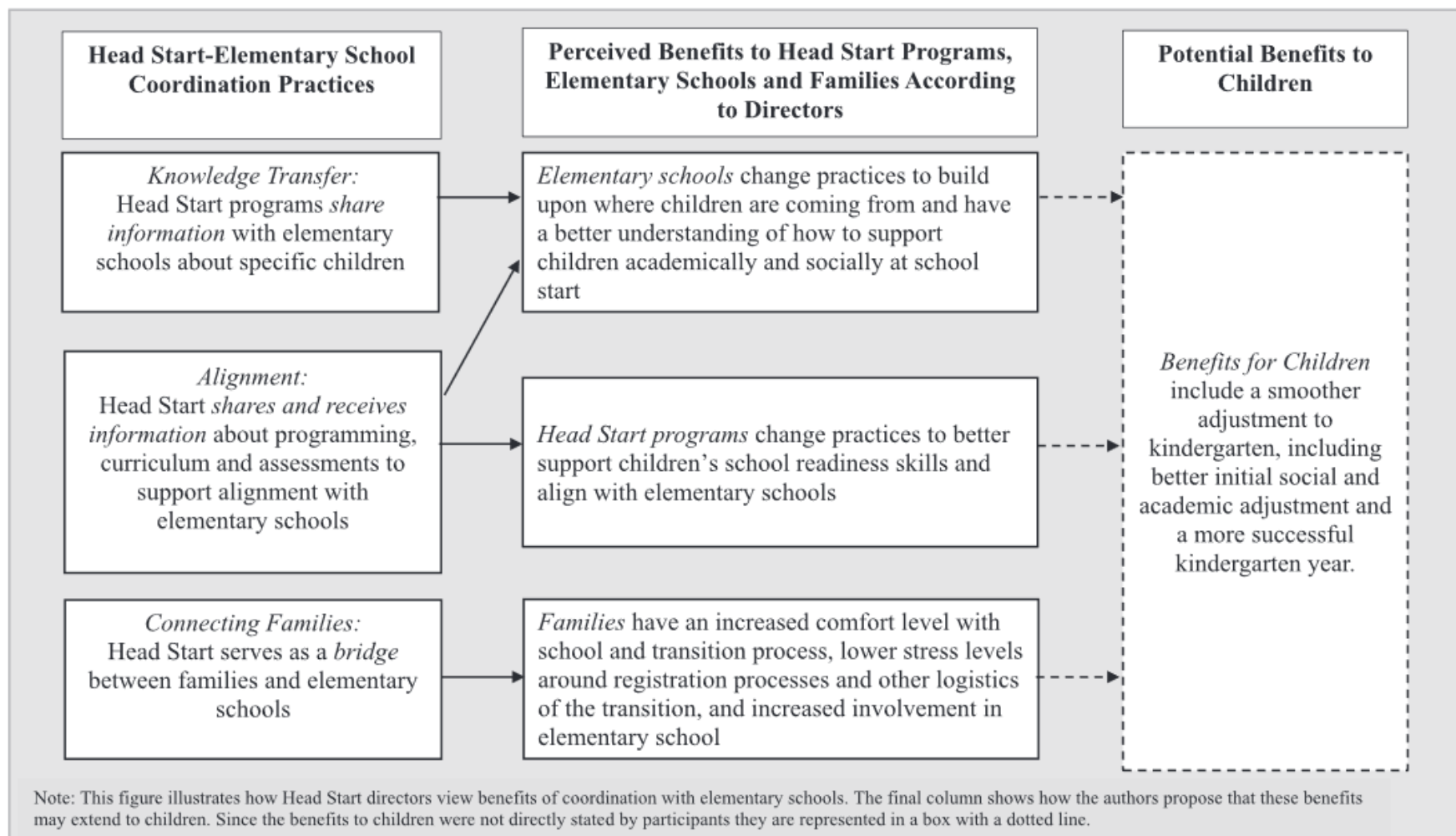
# Hypothesis/Assumption



## Benefits for Children

- Increased positive adjustment at school start
- Increased social and academic outcomes in kindergarten

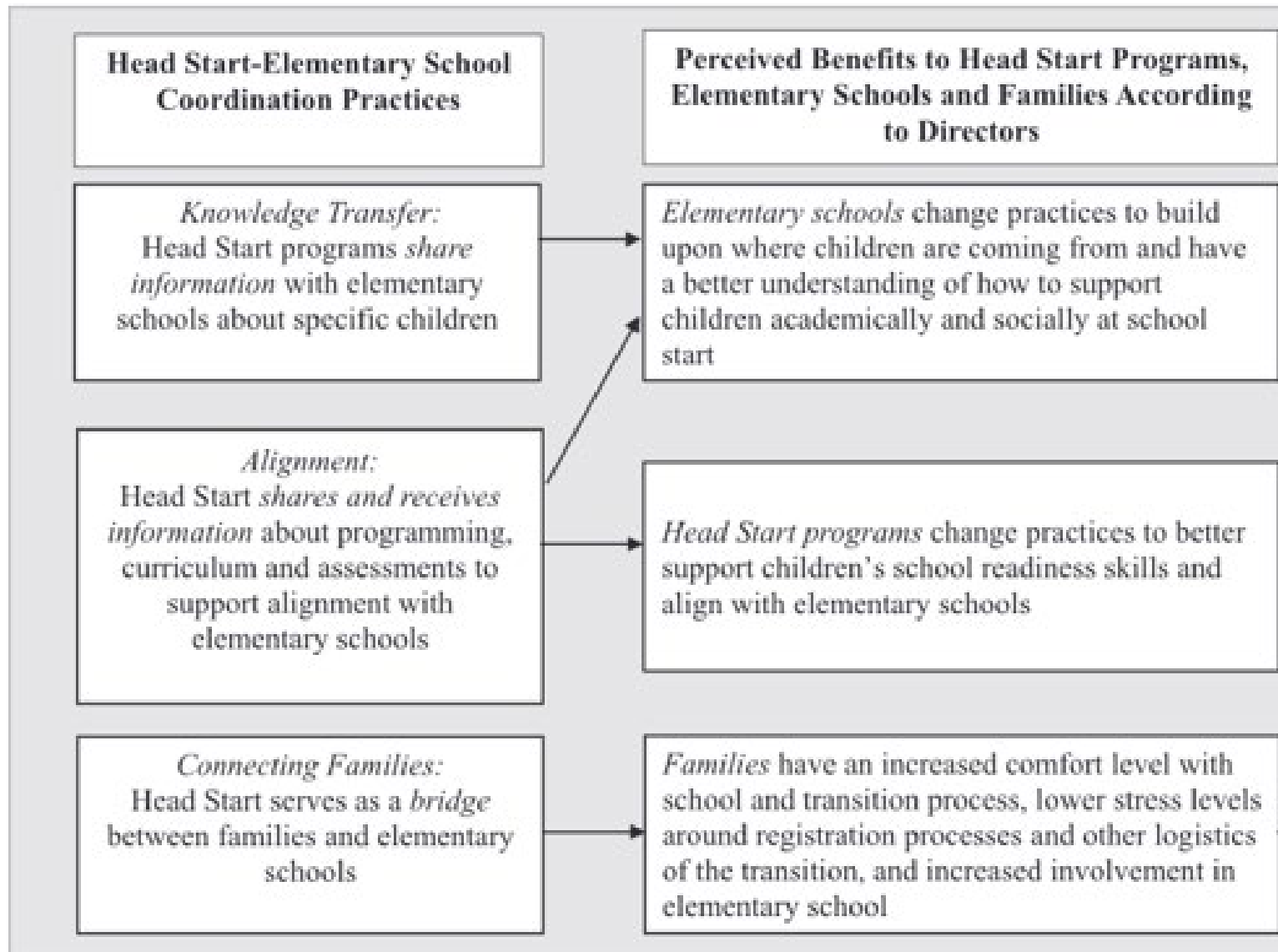
# Proposed Conceptual Model



**Fig. 2.** Conceptual model linking Head Start-elementary school coordination practices and benefits.



# Proposed Indirect Pathways



## Keys to Success

- Relationships are key
- Co-location helps
- Meeting in person builds positive connections

## Room for Improvement

- More in-person connections
- Include teachers
- Logistics

# Big Takeaways

- Head Start is initiating a lot of coordination activities
- Meeting in person may indicate more intensive coordination and strong relationships
- Benefits and direct relationships to child outcomes are unclear
- More research is needed



[Photo Source](#)

# Future Research

- Both quantitative and qualitative research is needed.
- Quantitatively test indirect pathways in conceptual model.
- Qualitative research on what supports, information and coordination activities elementary schools need.
- Conduct research that includes the full mixed delivery system.

# For More Information

- Email: [kdemeo@edc.org](mailto:kdemeo@edc.org)
- Cook, K.D., Coley, R.L., & Zimmermann, K. (2019). Who Benefits? Head Start Directors' views of coordination with elementary schools to support the transition to kindergarten. *Children & Youth Services Review*. 100, 393-404. [doi.org/10.1016/j.childyouth.2019.03.021](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.childyouth.2019.03.021)
- Free Download:  
<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0190740918309654?dgcid=author>



# Selected References

- Ahtola, A, Silinskas, G., Poikonen, P-L, Kontoniemi, M., Niemi, P., & Nurmi, J-E. (2011). Transition to formal schooling: Do transition practices matter for academic performance? *Early Childhood Research Quarterly*, 26, 295-302.
- Cook, K.D., Coley, R.L., & Zimmermann, K. (2019). Who Benefits? Head Start Directors' views of coordination with elementary schools to support the transition to kindergarten. *Children & Youth Services Review*. 100, 393-404. [doi.org/10.1016/j.childyouth.2019.03.021](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.childyouth.2019.03.021)
- Cook, K. D., Dearing, E., & Zachrisson, H. D. (2017). Information sharing between teachers and early education programs during school entry in Norway: associations with children's school adjustment and success in the first year. *International Journal of Child Care and Education Policy*, 11(1), 14. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s40723-017-0039-5>
- Schulting, A. B., Malone, P. S., & Dodge, K. A. (2005). The effect of school-based kindergarten transition policies and practices on child academic outcomes. *Developmental Psychology*, 41(6).
- LoCasale-Crouch, J., Mashburn, A.J. Downer, J.T., Pianta, R.C. (2008). Pre-kindergarten teachers' use of transition practices and children's adjustment to kindergarten. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly* 23, 124–139.

# Understanding Policies and Practices that Support Successful Transitions to Kindergarten: Opportunities for Connection and Collaboration

Kelly Purtell  
*The Ohio State University*





# Early Learning Team

## Investigators:

Dr. Laura Justice

Dr. Tzu-Jung Lin

Dr. Jessica Logan

Dr. Kelly Purtell

## Key Project Staff & Students:

Jennifer Bostic

Allie Hamilton

Janelle Williamson

Katie Filibeck

Lauren Barnes

Anna Rhoad-Drogalis

Hui Jiang

Jing Chen

Anne Valauri

# Lasting Importance of Early Childhood Education

- ▷ Access to preschool/ECE has increased in recent years.
  - State and city initiatives
  - Federal early learning grants
- ▷ However, there is an ever growing body of evidence suggesting that preschool impacts 'fadeout' early in elementary school.

# The Early Learning Network Project

- ▷ Goal: To document the classroom ecology experienced by children in preschool and early elementary school

| <b>Classroom Ecology:<br/>Theorized Dimensions</b> |                                 |
|--|---------------------------------|
| Classroom<br>Composition                           | Classroom<br>Network &<br>Norms |
| Teacher<br>Practices                               | Student<br>Experiences          |

# The Early Learning Network Project

- ▷ Study 1: A longitudinal study focused on preschool attenders and non-attenders from age 4 through grade 3
- ▷ Study 2: A cross-sectional, observation study of classrooms focused on preschool to grade 3
- ▷ Study 3: A qualitative policy study focused on state-, district-, school- and classroom-level policies and practices linked to classroom ecology

# The Challenges of the Kindergarten Transition

▷ New Environment

▷ New Expectations

▷ New Systems

# How can Systems Support the Transition to Kindergarten?

- ▷ P3 Alignment Movement
  - Classroom academic content
- ▷ Kindergarten Transition Practices
  - Connection focused
- ▷ Both of these require systems-level coordination to implement

# Research Questions

- ▷ How much do kindergarten teachers and school administrators know about their students' preschool experiences?
- ▷ What practices do they implement to ease the transition to kindergarten?
- ▷ What barriers do they face to implementation? What role do policy-level factors play in this?

# Study Methodology

- ▷ Designed to provide a comprehensive overview of Early Learning practice and policy across Ohio
- ▷ Interviews across the state with district personnel and stakeholders
  - District personnel: Superintendent's office, school board member, elementary school principal, elementary school teachers, preschool directors and teachers (11 districts)
  - Stakeholders: ODE, Educational Service centers, Community groups (10+ interviews)
- ▷ Record and transcribe all interviews
  - Thematic coding



# What do Elementary Schools Know about their Students' Preschool Experiences?

- ▷ Who attended preschool?
- ▷ Mixed feelings about what is preschool
- ▷ Importance of preschool
  - Helpful for kindergarteners
  - Implications for 3<sup>rd</sup> grade reading guarantee

# What Efforts do Different Sectors make to Ease the Transition to Kindergarten for Children and Families?

- ▷ In community preschool programs:
  - Varied– provided info to elementary schools
- ▷ In district preschool programs:
  - Visits with kindergarteners
  - IEP transitions are well-supported
- ▷ In kindergarten:
  - Some formal practices
  - Extensive outreach to parents (informal)

# What Barriers do Systems Face when Trying to Provide Support during the Kindergarten Transition?

- ▷ Lack of connection to different preschool sectors
  - Even when preschool is part of district
    - Is preschool 'school'?
  - Community preschools
    - Very little connections to elementary schools (with some exceptions)
- ▷ Additional policy-related challenges
  - Late enrollment & School choice
  - QRIS requirements

# Conclusions

- ▷ Despite increases in preschool availability, connections between ECE providers and school districts is limited.
- ▷ In order to improve children's school success, barriers to communication and collaboration need to be removed.
- ▷ Policies and events unrelated to the transition still shape schools' ability to help children build connections.