

When Parent Involvement Really Does Matter: The Impact of Parent Involvement on Student Achievement

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Background

- Recent media coverage has questioned the impact of parent involvement on student achievement (e.g. Robinson & Harris, 2014).
- Although some researchers have found significant associations, particularly among high-risk families (e.g. Hayakawa et al., 2013), others have found contradictory results (e.g. Mattingly et al., 2002).
- The PreK-3rd Child-Parent Center program (Reynolds, 2000) is a comprehensive school-based intervention for at-risk families.
 - Parent school involvement is a critical element of the CPC program
- This study examines the influence of parent involvement on achievement:
 - among CPC and demographically matched comparison schools
 - within an ecological framework of school, family, and child-level risk contexts.

Research Questions

- Do the number of events parents attend throughout the year differ by intervention vs. comparison?
- Is parent involvement associated with academic growth from fall to spring?
- When accounting for ecological risk factors, does parent involvement predict academic gains differentially in intervention vs. comparison groups?

Sample & Methodology

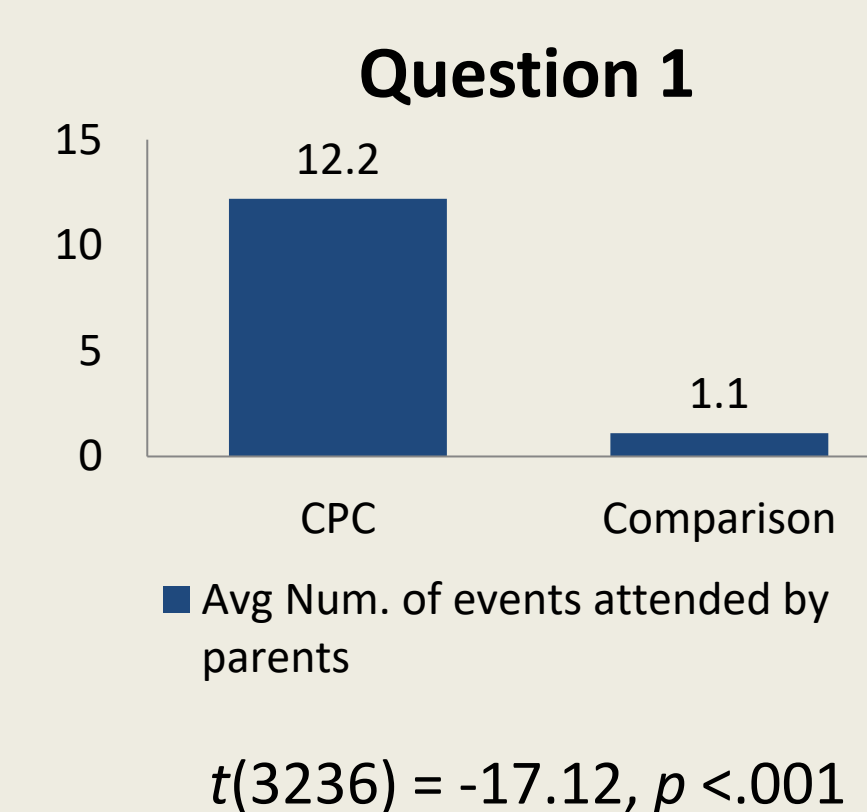
Sample

- Intervention Group:
 - Chicago participants of the Midwest Child-Parent Center Expansion.
 - 1,092 families from economically disadvantaged neighborhoods
- Comparison Group:
 - Demographically matched (using propensity score matching) participants from similar neighborhoods in Chicago, IL.
 - 544 families

Measures

- Parent Involvement**
 - Monthly parent involvement logs—teacher completed
 - Continuous variable measuring the “number of school events attended throughout the year”
- School Readiness**
 - End of PreK Teaching Strategies GOLD assessment scores (i.e. literacy, language, math, cognitive, socio-emotional).
 - Attendance
- Demographic Data**
 - Gender, Special Education, Free-Reduced Lunch

Results



CPC parents participated in **12 times** more school events than comparison families!

Question 2

Correlations of Parent Involvement and Fall to Spring Change in School Readiness Skills at the End of PreK: CPC vs. Comparison

	Language	Cognitive	Literacy	Math	SEM
CPC parent involvement	.05*	.07**	.10***	.10***	.07**
Comparison parent involvement	-.21***	-.15***	.01	-.02	-.11***

Note: * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$. Parent involvement is the average number of school events that parents participated in from during 2012-2013 school year.

CPC parent involvement is associated with **increased achievement** from fall to spring!

Question 3

Regression Analyses of Parent Involvement Predicting School Readiness Skills By End of PreK - CPC vs. Comparisons

		CPC Participants			Comparison Participants		
		B	S.E.	β	B	S.E.	β
Language	Parent Involvement	.02**	.01	.05	-.20***	.05	-.10
	Female	.47	.27	.03	.13	.33	.01
	Fall language TSGOLD	.76***	0.02	.84	.81***	.02	.86
	Special ed. Status	-.63	.58	-.02	-1.50*	.66	-.05
	Free lunch	.14	.46	.01	-1.22*	.50	-.06
Literacy	Parent Involvement	.05***	.01	.07	-.01	.11	-.01
	Female	.70	.66	.02	-.78	.81	-.03
	Fall literacy TSGOLD	.82***	.02	.80	.85***	.03	.82
	Special ed. Status	-4.33**	1.40	-.06	-2.89	1.67	-.05
	Free lunch	4.08***	1.10	.07	-3.01*	1.22	-.07
Cognitive	Parent Involvement	.03**	.01	.06	-.25**	.09	-.08
	Female	.13	.45	.01	.08	.64	.01
	Fall cognitive TSGOLD	.74***	.02	.81	.79***	.03	.78
	Special ed. Status	-.70	.96	-.01	-2.82*	1.29	-.07
	Free lunch	1.71*	.75	.04	-1.98*	.99	-.06
Math	Parent Involvement	.03***	.01	.07	-.03	.08	-.01
	Female	.12	.33	.01	-.51	.53	-.03
	Fall math TSGOLD	.81***	.02	.82	.71***	.03	.71
	Special ed. Status	-2.87***	.69	-.07	-2.99**	1.06	-.09
	Free lunch	1.00	.53	.03	-.82	.82	-.03
Socio-emotional	Parent Involvement	.04***	.01	.08	-.11	.07	-.04
	Female	.75	.43	.03	.17	.54	.1
	Fall socio-emotional TSGOLD	.68***	.02	.82	.83***	.03	.86
	Special ed. Status	-2.03*	.94	-.04	-2.51*	1.07	-.06
	Free lunch	1.13	.73	.03	-1.67*	.83	-.05
Chronic absence	-1.37**	.45	-.05	-.75	.54	-.04	

Note: * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$; CPC (n=1092), Comparison (n=534)



Conclusion

- CPC program parents attended **12 times** more school events than comparison families.
- Increases in parent involvement are associated with:
 - increased achievement** from fall to spring among CPC children
 - decreased achievement or no association** from fall to spring among comparison children
- Higher parent participation predicted *higher* levels of spring achievement for intervention children, but predicted *lower* levels of spring achievement or no association, depending on the TSGOLD domain, for comparison children.
- Also, Post-hoc analysis examining spring scores for children with no parent involvement indicated no difference in the mean spring score between intervention and comparison groups (e.g. $M_{comparison} = 54.06$, $M_{intervention} = 54.08$; $t(539) = -.015, p < .99$).
- In the context of a school-wide intervention designed to increase parent involvement in schools, PI positively impacts academic achievement. In contexts where few opportunities are offered, attendance at those few events are not enough to raise student achievement on their own.

Policy Implications

- Results suggest a nuanced effect of parent involvement in our high poverty sample.
 - Parent involvement in a context of a concerted school-wide effort to increase parent participation **increases** students' gains in achievement from fall to spring among all at-risk families.
 - Parent involvement does not seem to have the same impact on children's educational development in a school culture where frequent parent involvement is not the norm.

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