

SMART INVESTMENTS FROM THE EARLY YEARS TO THE EARLY GRADES (EY2EG)

Kimber Bogard, PhD

Director, Board on Children, Youth, and Families

Institute of Medicine/National Research Council

National Academy of Sciences

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EY2EG INVESTMENTS

- ▶ Who receives services?
 - ▶ infants, toddlers, 3-4 year olds—mixed delivery system
 - ▶ K-3 grade children—majority in public schools
- ▶ Where are EY2EG investments?
 - ▶ EY co-located within schools vs. independent structures
- ▶ Who pays?
 - ▶ Families, states, federal government

WHY FOCUS INVESTMENTS ON EY2EG?

- ▶ Research indicates this can be an ideal time for investment in human capital
 - ▶ James Heckman's work
- ▶ Studies on EY investments promising
- ▶ Some contemporary studies show EY investments alone may not maximize early investments

SOME STATISTICS ON EARLY YEARS

- ❖ Significant investments in ECE programs over the past 20 years (NIEER)
- ❖ Almost 60% of 4-year-olds attend center-based care & education programs today—public/private (ECLS-B)
- ❖ There is tremendous variation in quality (Pianta)
- ❖ In 2011, 73% of 4-year-olds attended a universal pre-kindergarten program in Oklahoma that is deemed high quality;
 - ❖ 76% of Florida 4-year-olds attend preK, but the state meets only 3:10 quality benchmarks

SOME STATISTICS ON THE EARLY GRADES

- ❖ Achievement gaps are found at the Kindergarten door (ECLS-K)
 - ❖ Poor children and second language learners are already behind
- ❖ By Fourth Grade, 1/3 of children read at or above grade level (NAEP)
 - ❖ Great disparities exist by race/ethnicity
- ❖ Less than 1:5 Black and Hispanic children read at grade level (NAEP)

SOME SEMINAL STUDIES TARGETING THE EARLY YEARS

- ❖ Perry Preschool (1960s)
 - ❖ 123 high-risk African American 3-year-olds
 - ❖ LT school achievement, HS graduation, income
- ❖ Carolina Abecedarian Project (1970s)
 - ❖ 111 high-risk African American infants
 - ❖ LT school achievement; teen pregnancy
- ❖ Chicago Child Parent Centers (1980s)
 - ❖ 1,262 low-income Afr. Amer. preschoolers in Chicago
 - ❖ LT school achievement; delinquency

CONTEMPORARY STUDIES LINKING EY2EG

- ❖ Head Start Impact Study (2000)
 - ❖ 5,000 low income children from 43 sites
 - ❖ Language/literacy into K; no impact by 1st or 2nd grade
- ❖ ECLS-K (2000)
 - ❖ Nationally representative sample of kindergarteners
 - ❖ Preschoolers stronger academic outcomes in K; by 1st grade non-preschoolers “catch up”
- ❖ Tulsa, OK UPK study (2000)
 - ❖ Sample of mixed income 4-year-olds attending a UPK program
 - ❖ Significant cognitive skills by Kindergarten; boys showed higher math scores.

WHY DO SOME ECE PROGRAMS HAVE LASTING EFFECTS AND OTHERS NOT?

- ▶ Some hypotheses:
 - ▶ Research limitations such as attrition—55-60% of children move and are not tracked from K-3
 - ▶ Different samples of children—changing demographics today; also, more children today are experiencing some form of out of home care than in the 60's and 70's
 - ▶ Effect size of small, randomly controlled studies were larger than large scale programs such as Head Start
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WHAT CAN WE DRAW FROM THE RESEARCH?

- ▶ Quality matters—
- ▶ Mobility/absenteeism matters—
- ▶ Discontinuities matter—

WHAT ABOUT COGNITIVE, AFFECTIVE, AND BEHAVIORAL CHARACTERISTICS?

- ▶ In the early years, executive functioning skills, responsible for paying attention, taking turns and listening to others, show strong associations with academic performance in the early grades
- ▶ Affective or self regulation shows strong associations with pre-academic literacy and math skills

A LOCAL EXAMPLE—SPARK OHIO

- ❖ The WKKF \$57 million investment in systems change projects
 - ❖ 7 states and the District of Columbia: Ohio, Hawaii, Georgia, Florida, New Mexico, Mississippi, North Carolina
- ❖ Aims included quality ECE, parent engagement, transition plans into elementary school
- ❖ 15,700 children involved in SPARK programs
- ❖ 8,000 children participated in research from age 3 to G3
- ❖ Most sites accelerated early learning; only some sustained gains into elementary school

RESEARCH LESSONS LEARNED FROM SPARK FOR EY2EG INVESTMENTS

- ❖ Control group children in the SPARK studies attended some form of out-of-home care
 - ❖ Elementary schools reluctant to provide access to data
 - ❖ Relatively low mobility in Ohio and Miami
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SMART INVESTMENTS IN THE EY2EG

- ▶ Invest in quality early childhood education
 - ▶ Invest in programming that addresses multiple domains of child development including cognitive, affective, and behavioral skill development
 - ▶ Don't stop investing at the Kindergarten door—ensure continuity in quality across the K-3 years
 - ▶ Incentivize attendance and reduce absenteeism from the EY2EG
 - ▶ Partner to create data systems that span the EY2EG to inform practice
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THANK YOU!

Kimber Bogard
kbogard@nas.edu