Associations of Parent Ratings of Children’s Behavior with Child Development in an Ethnically and Linguistically Diverse Sample of Preschool Children

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BACKGROUND AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- Parents’ views of and goals for their children’s achievement are important for children’s early development and later school success.
- Few studies consider how parents’ perceptions of their children’s behavior are associated with direct assessments and teacher ratings of development of preschool children from ethnically and linguistically diverse families.
- To address these gaps, we investigate the following:
  - Differences in parent ratings of children’s behavior across child characteristics, type of program, and geographic areas.
  - Associations between parent ratings of their children’s behavior and cognitive and social-emotional development.

SAMPLE

- We examined a sample of 1,586 children in 98 preschools in a large metropolitan area.
- 31% speak English only, 13% speak Spanish only, and 56% speak some English and another language.
- 28% attend study centers full-day and 57% are in Areas of Greatest Need (AGN)—Defined by need for preschool slots in 34 zip codes.
- 38% of the families live below the poverty line.
- 46% of mothers and 61% of fathers have a high school diploma.

MEASURES

Direct Assessments (Baseline)
- Woodcock-Johnson III Spelling Standard Score (WJ-III)
- Executive Functioning (Pencil Tapping) Score

Teacher Ratings of Child Behavior and Development
- Social-emotional: Social Skills Rating System Problem Behavior Score (SSRS)
- ECLS-K Approaches to Learning Scale Score

Parent Ratings of Child Behavior and Development
- Adaptation of the Preschool Kindergarten Behavior Scales (Merrell, 2002) using Rasch Analysis to construct four scales of parent ratings (range: 1-4):
  - Social Cooperation/Approaches to Learning (alpha = .80)
  - Social Interaction/Independence (alpha = .80)
  - Externalizing Problem Behaviors (alpha = .80)
  - Internalizing Problem Behaviors: (alpha = .58)

RESULTS

- Differences in Means of Parent Ratings of Child Behavior across Subgroups
- Figure 1: Differences in Means of Parent Ratings of Child Behavior across Subgroups

- Associations between Parent Ratings of Child Behavior and Child Development
- Figure 4: Parent Ratings of Behavior and Language/Literacy Development
- Figure 5: Parent Ratings of Behavior and Problem Behavior

- Differences in Means of Parent Ratings (unadjusted for child and family characteristics)
- Figure 2: Differences in Means of Parent Ratings (unadjusted for child and family characteristics)

- Path Analysis: Associations of Parent Ratings with Child Development
- Figure 3: Path Analysis: Associations of Parent Ratings with Child Development

- Conclusions
- Figure 6: Conclusions

NOTE: Comparison groups are indicated in bold. These tests of unadjusted means account for clustering of children within preschool programs.

* Statistically different at the .05 level.

NOTE: These models were estimated using Full Information Maximum Likelihood in M-Plus to account for missing data. Figures present unstandardized and standardized (in parentheses) coefficients.

Unanalyzed associations between family and child characteristics, program type, and geographic area are not depicted in this figure but were included in the estimation of the models. These estimates and estimates of associations of family and child characteristics with parent ratings and measures of child development are available from the authors upon request.

* Statistically significant at the .05 level.

POSTER SYMPOSIUM: Evaluation and Measurement Challenges of Research for a New Universal Preschool Initiative in a Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Community

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