

PRE-KINDERGARTEN TO 3RD GRADE (PK-3) SCHOOL-BASED RESOURCES AND 3RD GRADE OUTCOMES

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Overview

Research indicates that a strong PreK-3 continuum is based on high standards and shared vision and leadership between principals and teachers. The PreK-3 program holds great promise for academic success and this paper examines two important conditions impacting schools' efforts to fight fadeout and close the achievement gap at grade 3. First, elements of school culture that impact children's academic and behavioral performance at grade 3 and second, the degree to which children influenced by risk factors have access to high-quality early elementary schools.

Study Findings

This study's findings are based on data from the Early Childhood Longitudinal Study, a nationally representative longitudinal study of more than 20,000 children and are as follows:

1. Low-income kindergarten children were twice as likely as children living at higher income levels to attend schools where academic standards were reported by teachers to be a problem.
2. Children whose parents lacked a high school diploma were nearly three times as likely to be in a school which teachers consider to have low academic standards.
3. Black children were also more likely than White or Asian children to attend schools where academic standards were reported to be too low.
4. The most educationally at-risk children were the least likely groups of children to access high-resource elementary schools.
5. The majority of children – both those with and without risk factors – were reported to attend elementary schools that reported overall high levels of administrative leadership and a strong emphasis on alignment.
6. The most educationally at-risk children were the least likely to have access to high resource elementary schools.

Conclusion

The study found that strong principal leadership, high academic standards and teachers working collaboratively impacted reading and math scores. Teacher turnover was related to lower rates of student self-control and school engagement. Key elements of the school environment are related to later positive intellectual and behavioral outcomes for children. Reducing the inequality of access to strong school environments would help improve outcomes for children from high-risk backgrounds.

Brown, B. & Bogard, K. (2007). Pre-kindergarten to 3rdgrade (PK-3) school-based resources and third grade outcomes. *Child Trends Data Bank, Cross Currents*, 5, pg. 1-7.