Preschool and School Readiness
Experiences of Children with Non-English-Speaking Parents

Jill Cannon
Why Study Preschool for this Group?

- 20% of California children
- Most likely to be English learners in kindergarten
- Face school readiness gap concerns
- Little known about these children
  - Use of early care and education
  - Relationship to school readiness skills
We Focus on Four Subgroups

Children categorized by parent nativity-language status

- Native
- Immigrants
- Isolated
- Non-Isolated English-Speaking
We Study Children in California and Nationwide

- RAND California Preschool Study
  - Representative of four-year-olds, 2007
- Early Childhood Longitudinal Study – Birth Cohort (ECLS-B)
  - Nationally representative, children born 2001
  - Follows children into kindergarten
This Study Addresses Four Major Issues

- Demographic characteristics
- Patterns of nonparental care – Are isolated children more or less likely to use center-based care?
- Characteristics of center-based settings
- Associations between center-based care and improvements in early academic skills
Outline

- Portrait of Isolated children
  - Child and family characteristics
  - Early care and education arrangements
- Relationship of preschool use with school entry skills
- Policy implications
Isolated Children Are More Disadvantaged...

Family characteristics of California four-year-olds

- **Mother's education less than HS**
  - Isolated: 16.5%
  - Non-Isolated: 39.0%
  - English-Speaking: 14.2%
  - Native: 14.8%

- **Household income below poverty level**
  - Isolated: 26.5%
  - Non-Isolated: 41.5%
  - English-Speaking: 14.5%
  - Native: 14.8%

- **Mother employed full time**
  - Isolated: 11.3%
  - Non-Isolated: 29.0%
  - English-Speaking: 35.7%
  - Native: 36.5%
...and are predominantly Hispanic.
Outline

- Portrait of linguistically isolated children
  - Child and family characteristics
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Families Have Different Care Choices

- Families use three types of nonparental care
  - Center-based
  - Home-based
    - Relative care
    - Non-relative care
- Complex early care and education system
  - Public and private
  - Child development or parent work focus
  - Subsidies vary
Isolated Children Use Center-Based Care at High Rates

Primary care arrangements of California four-year-olds

- **Isolated**
  - Parental Care: 29.5%
  - Center-based: 64.2%
  - Relative: 2.5%
  - Non-relative: 3.8%

- **Non-Isolated**
  - Parental Care: 23.8%
  - Center-based: 57.0%
  - Relative: 9.6%
  - Non-relative: 9.6%

- **Native**
  - Parental Care: 15.9%
  - Center-based: 62.3%
  - Relative: 10.8%
  - Non-relative: 11.0%

- **English-Speaking**
  - Parental Care: 23.5%
  - Center-based: 57.8%
  - Relative: 7.4%
  - Non-relative: 11.3%
We Also Looked at Isolated Children Nationwide

- Similar child and family characteristics
- Similar rates of nonparental care use
- Less likely to use center-based care
Isolated Children Have Very Different Enrollment Patterns

California four-year-olds in center-based care

- Isolated: 8.6% (Other center 28.6%, Public school pre-kindergarten 11.3%, Head Start 14.6%, English-Speaking 4.9%, State Preschool 0.5%)
- Non-Isolated: 36.6% (Other center 36.8%, Public school pre-kindergarten 12.1%, Head Start 5.7%, English-Speaking 0.2%, State Preschool 10.8%)
- English-Speaking: 94.4%
- Native: 69.8%
In Centers, Teacher Characteristics Vary

California four-year-olds in center-based care

- **Education level:** Associate's degree or higher
  - 99.6% Isolated
  - 66.7% Non-Isolated
  - 38.9% English-Speaking
  - 66.3% Native

- **Primary language with children is English only**
  - 98.3% Isolated
  - 75.6% Non-Isolated
  - 99.6% English-Speaking
  - 97.1% Native

- **Six or more English Language Learner credit hours**
  - 73.1% Isolated
  - 22.2% Non-Isolated
  - 5.8% English-Speaking
  - 24.1% Native
Center Quality Doesn’t Vary Across Groups

- CLASS and ECERS-R measures
- Similar mean scores across subgroups
- Potential concern over low instructional support score
Outline

- Portrait of linguistically isolated children
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- Policy implications
Isolated Children Benefit in Reading...

Kindergarten reading scores for U.S. children

Effect size of center use on test score

- All: 0.16*
- Isolated: 0.26*
- Non-Isolated: 0.18
- English-Speaking: 0.12
- Native: 0.15*

*Denotes effect size within group is statistically significant at the 5 percent level.
...But Not in Math

Kindergarten mathematics scores for U.S. children

Effect size of center use on test score

- All: 0.09*
- Isolated: 0.04
- Non-Isolated: 0.13
- English-Speaking: 0.23*
- Native: 0.09*

*Denotes effect size within group is statistically significant at the 5 percent level
Center Quality Doesn’t Predict School Entry Skills

- No significant associations between higher-quality care and kindergarten scores
- Measure may not capture differences in quality associated with cognitive outcomes
Outline

■ Portrait of linguistically isolated children
  – Child and family characteristics
  – Early care and education arrangements
■ Relationship with school entry skills
■ Policy implications
Policy Implications

- Overall, good progress in California
- But...
  - One-third of children not enrolled in centers
  - Missed opportunity for mathematics
- Quality measurement an issue
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Notes on the use of these slides

These slides were created to accompany a presentation. They do not include full documentation of sources, data samples, methods, and interpretations. To avoid misinterpretations, please contact:

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Thank you for your interest in this work.

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