Presenting Authors

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The Early Learning Network aims to advance the understanding of policies and practices that narrow the achievement gap and maintain early learning success as children transition from preschool to elementary school and beyond.
♦ Five Research Teams
♦ One Assessment Team
♦ Network Lead
Complementary Studies Across Research Teams

• **Descriptive study (with Public Policy Center):**
  Identify systems-level policies and practices that support early learning

• **Classroom observation study:**
  Identify teaching practices and other classroom-level malleable factors associated with children’s school readiness and achievement in preschool and early elementary school

• **Longitudinal study:**
  Identify malleable factors associated with early learning and school achievement over time from preschool through the early elementary school grades
Objectives:

- determine the influence of ecological systems on children’s learning over time
  - classroom/teacher, family-school, community, and educational policies
- identify malleable factors at various ecological levels that promote children’s academic and social-emotional learning and achievement through Grade 3.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year 1</th>
<th>Year 2</th>
<th>Year 3</th>
<th>Year 4</th>
<th>Year 5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2016</td>
<td>Spring 2017</td>
<td>Fall 2018</td>
<td>Spring 2019</td>
<td>Fall 2020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Study 1</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Study 2</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Study 3</td>
<td>PreK</td>
<td>PreK</td>
<td>K</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Data Collection**

**Data Analysis**
Participating Communities

- Central Nebraska Community Action Partnership
- Columbus Public Schools
- Chadron Public Schools
- Cozad Public Schools
- Creighton Community Schools
- Fairbury Public Schools
- Gering Public Schools
- Gordon-Rushville Public Schools
- Kearney Public Schools
- Lincoln Public Schools
- McCook Public Schools
- Northwest Community Action Partnership
- Omaha Public Schools
- O'Neill Public Schools
Study 3 Purpose

• Determine the role of ecological malleable factors on children’s academic and social-emotional outcomes, for different groups of children, including:
  — *Preschool attenders vs. non-attenders*
  — *Rural vs. urban children*
Malleable Factors

Ecological approach to identifying and assessing malleable factors that may influence children’s learning and development

Within-systems (microsystem):
- **Responsiveness** – approaches or personal expressions that attend to child need
- **Organization and Structure** – capacity of schools and classrooms to function effectively
- **Instructional Support** – instructional experiences that support student learning
- **Use of Data** – data use for guiding instruction and providing feedback

Between-systems (mesosystem):
- **Family-School Partnerships** – a student-focused approach wherein families and professionals coordinate, cooperate, and collaborate to enhance children’s opportunities and experiences across social-emotional, behavioral, and academic domains
  - e.g., what parents do at home to engage with their child around learning; parent-teacher relationship; home-school communication
Attenders & Non-Attenders

- **Attenders:**
  - Eligible to enter Kindergarten the following year and
  - Attending a center-based pre-Kindergarten program for at least 10 hours per week

- **Non-Attenders:**
  - Eligible to enter Kindergarten the following year and
  - Not attending a center-based pre-Kindergarten program
## Study 3 Sample

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Study 3</th>
<th>PreK Children&lt;sup&gt;1&lt;/sup&gt;</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Attenders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>117</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>135</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>252</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<sup>1</sup> At Wave 2, Average age = 5.3 years; 50.3% male
<sup>2</sup> At home or in home-based child care settings
<sup>3</sup> Title 1 schools chosen when possible
Research Question #1

What is the school readiness status of children upon entry into Kindergarten, for preschool attenders vs. non-attenders?
Child Race/Ethnicity of Our Sample

- Black/Af Amer: 12%
- Hispanic: 12.5%
- White/Cauc: 28%
- Other: 47.5%
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race/Ethnicity</th>
<th>PreK Attenders</th>
<th>PreK Non-Attenders</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Black/Af Amer</td>
<td>12.0%</td>
<td>10.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>15.3%</td>
<td>5.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White/Cauc</td>
<td>44.6%</td>
<td>56.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>28.1%</td>
<td>27.7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Language Spoken at Home in Our Sample

- English: 75.7%
- Spanish: 3.2%
- Eng & Span: 4.6%
- Other: 16.5%
Parent Education of Our Sample

- < High school: 20.3%
- High school: 18.3%
- Training/Associate's: 23%
- 4 year degree: 38.4%

*Learning Frontiers PreK to Grade 3*
Parent Education of Our Sample

PreK Attenders
- < High school: 40.4%
- High school: 27.6%
- Training/Associate's: 15.6%
- 4 year degree: 16.4%

PreK Non-Attenders
- < High school: 33.0%
- High school: 25.5%
- Training/Associate's: 10.6%
- 4 year degree: 30.9%

*p = .002*
Children’s Readiness Skills

Social Skills

Problem Behaviors

Expressive Vocabulary

Attenders

Non-Attenders

p = .003; d = .37

p = .06; d = -.27

p < .001; d = .49

Controlling for setting (rural/urban), gender, age, home language, race/ethnicity, parent education
Research Question #2

How do family-school partnerships change across the preschool year in rural vs. urban settings?
## Study 3 Sample

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Districts</th>
<th>Schools</th>
<th>Classrooms</th>
<th>PreK Children</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Attenders</td>
<td>Non-attenders¹</td>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>117</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>130</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>135</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>226</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>14</strong></td>
<td><strong>37</strong></td>
<td><strong>65</strong></td>
<td><strong>252</strong></td>
<td><strong>106</strong></td>
<td><strong>356</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

¹ At home or in home-based child care settings

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*Learning Frontiers*  
*PreK to Grade 3*
Parent Education of Our Sample

Urban:
- < high school: 44%
- High School: 28.8%
- Training/Associates: 22%
- 4 year degree: 5.3%

Rural:
- < high school: 36.7%
- High School: 26.5%
- Training/Associates: 7.7%
- 4 year degree: 29.1%

Statistical significance:
- Urban: \( p = .043 \)
- Rural: \( p < .001 \)
Parent Ethnicity of Our Sample

Urban

- Black/Af Amer: 33.3%
- Hispanic: 28%
- White/Cauc: 8.3%
- Other: 30.3%

Rural

- Black/Af Amer: 76.1%
- Hispanic: 20.5%
- White/Cauc: 3.4%
- Other: 3.4%

$p < .001$
Family Involvement

Controlling for home language, parental race/ethnicity, parent education

- Home-based Involvement: $p < .00; d = .51$
- Home-school Conferencing: $p < .001; d = .62$
Family Involvement

School-based Involvement

Time 1  Time 2

School-based Involvement

\[ p < .001; \ d = .17 \]

Controlling for home language, parental race/ethnicity, parent education
Parent-Teacher Relationship

![Graph showing the relationship between time of survey and parent-teacher communication for urban and rural areas. The graph indicates a statistically significant increase in communication from January 2017 to May 2017 for rural areas (p < .05) and no significant change for urban areas (n.s.).]
Questions to Consider

• What are the key *take-away points* of the Learning Frontiers findings, to date?
• How can the Learning Frontiers study *inform or advance early childhood practice and/or policy*?
• What *additional information* is needed for Learning Frontiers to provide useful information to practitioners/policy makers?
• How can lessons from *practice or policy inform the Learning Frontiers research* going forward?