Learning Frontiers
PreK to Grade 3

Preschool Profile in Urban/Rural Nebraska: Preliminary Findings from Network Research

CYFS Summit on Research in

Early Childhood

April 25, 2018

Presenting Authors

Susan Sheridan

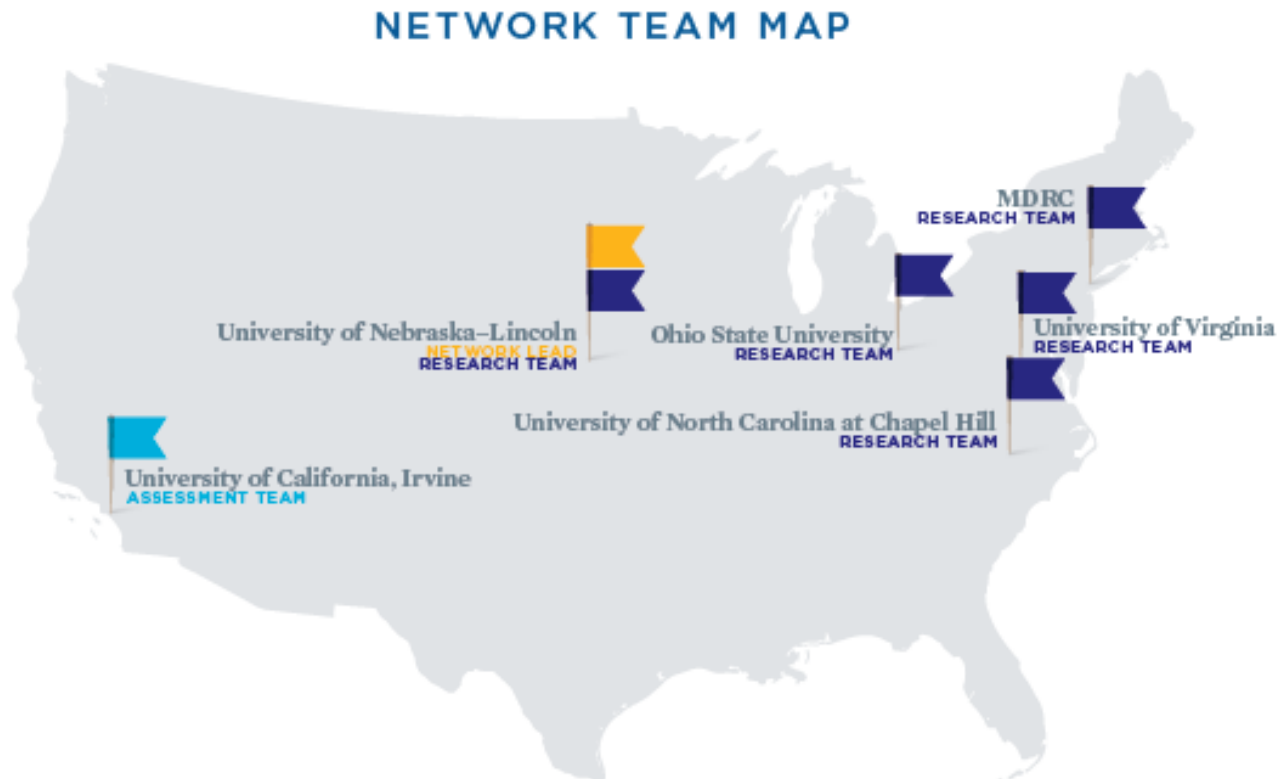Lisa Knoche

Natalie Koziol

Amanda Witte

Bonnie Mackintosh

With Iheoma Iruka

Jim Bovaird, Mark DeKraai, Janell Walther

Learning Frontiers
PreK to Grade 3

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

NETWORK TEAM MAP

University of Nebraska–Lincoln
NETWORK LEAD
RESEARCH TEAM

Ohio State University
RESEARCH TEAM

MDRC
RESEARCH TEAM

University of Virginia
RESEARCH TEAM

University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
RESEARCH TEAM

University of California, Irvine
ASSESSMENT TEAM

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

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Early Learning Contexts in Rural and Urban Nebraska

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.

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Timeline

	Year 1		Year 2		Year 3		Year 4		Year 5	
	Fall 2016	Spring 2017	Fall 2017	Spring 2018	Fall 2018	Spring 2019	Fall 2019	Spring 2020	Fall 2020	Spring 2021
Study 1	▮	▮	▮	▮			▮	▮	▮	▮
Study 2				▮	▮	▮	▮			
Study 3	PreK	PreK		K		1		2		3

Data Collection **Data Analysis**

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PreK to Grade 3

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

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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*

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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

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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

Study 3					
				PreK Children[1]	
	Districts	**Schools**[3]	**Classrooms**	**Attenders**	**Non-attenders**[2]	**Total**
Rural	12	15	26	117	15	**130**
Urban	2	22	39	135	91	**226**
Total	**14**	**37**	**65**	**252**	**106**	**358**

[1] At Wave 2, Average age = 5.3 years; 50.3% male
[2] At home or in home-based child care settings
[3] Title 1 schools chosen when possible

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Research Question #1

What is the school readiness status of children upon entry into Kindergarten, for preschool *attenders vs. non-attenders?*

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Child Race/Ethnicity of Our Sample

12%   12.5%

28%

47.5%

■ Black/Af Amer   ■ Hispanic   ■ White/Cauc   ■ Other

Learning Frontiers
PreK to Grade 3
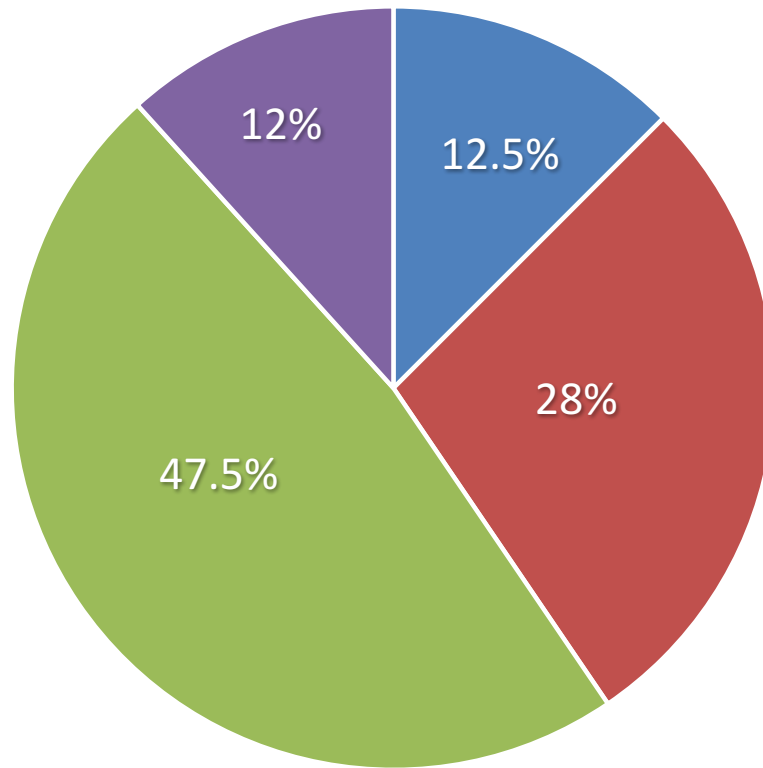
Child Race/Ethnicity

PreK Attenders

- 12.0% Other
- 15.3% Black/Af Amer
- 28.1% Hispanic
- 44.6% White/Cauc
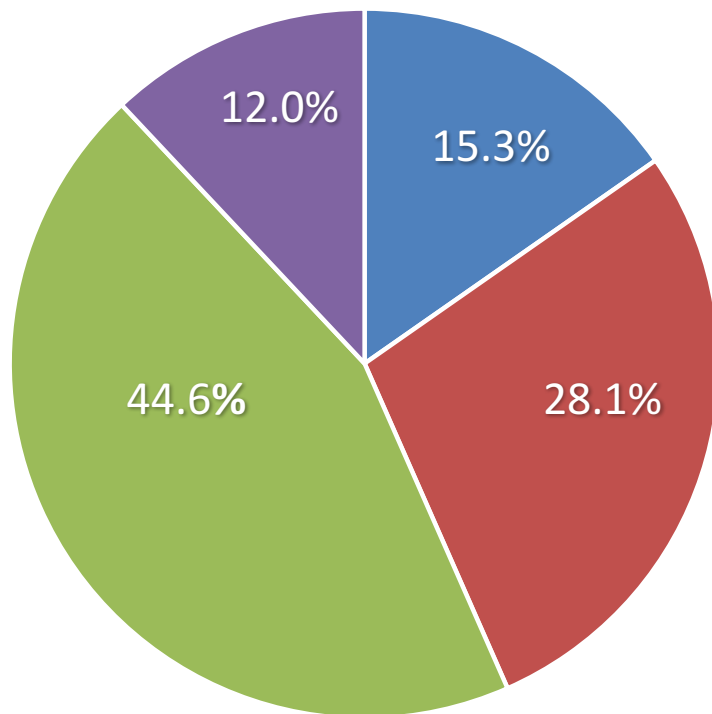
Legend: ■ Black/Af Amer ■ Hispanic ■ White/Cauc ■ Other ■

PreK Non-Attenders

- 10.6% Other
- 5.3% Black/Af Amer
- 27.7% Hispanic
- 56.4% White/Cauc

Legend: ■ Black/Af Amer ■ Hispanic ■ White/Cauc ■ Other ■

Learning Frontiers
PreK to Grade 3
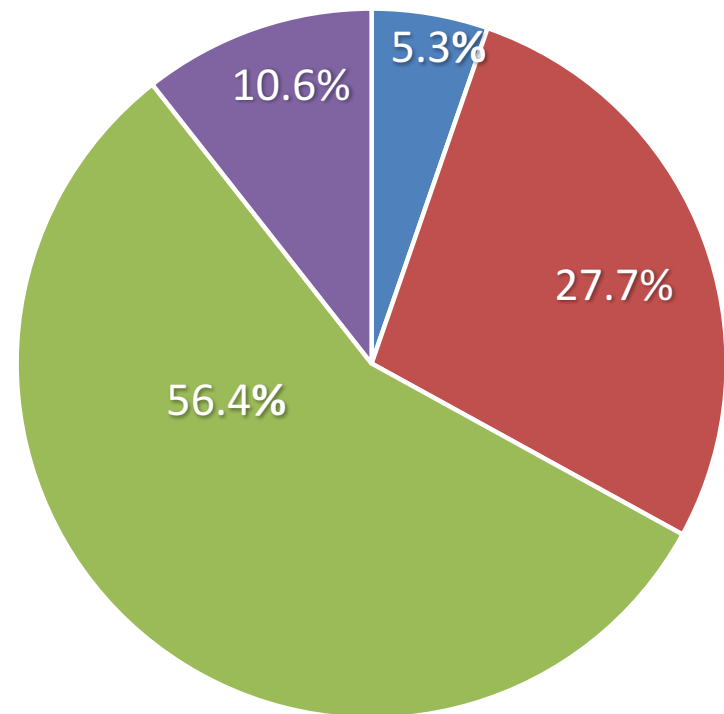
Language Spoken at Home in Our Sample
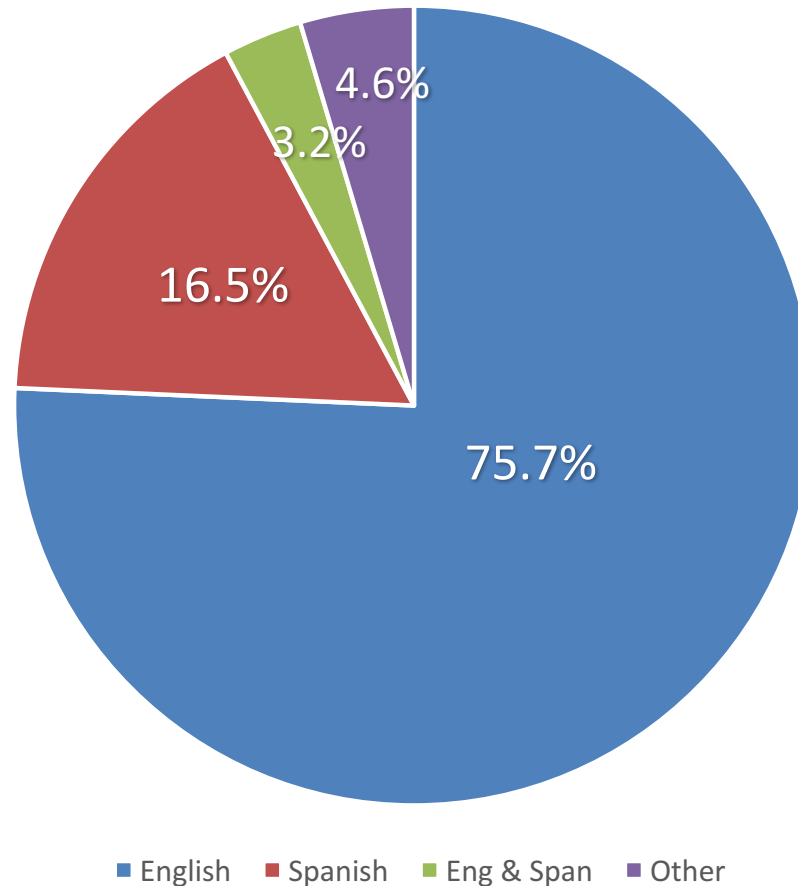
Parent Education of Our Sample

Pie chart showing: < High school 18.3%, High school 23%, Training/Associate's 38.4%, 4 year degree 20.3%
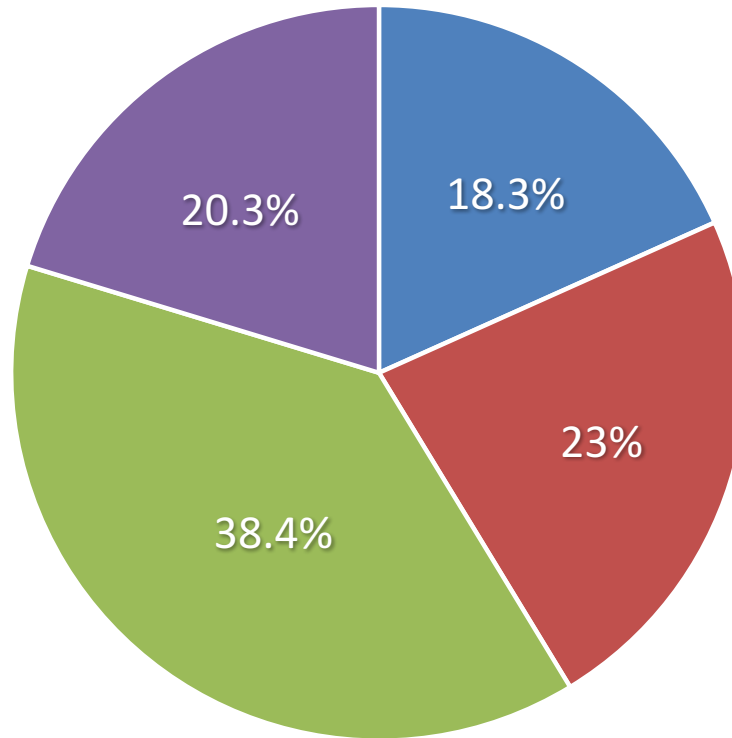
Legend: ■ < High school ■ High school ■ Training/Associate's ■ 4 year degree

Parent Education of Our Sample

PreK Attenders

- 15.6% — < High school
- 27.6% (*p* = .002) — High school
- 40.4% — Training/Associate's
- 16.4% — 4 year degree
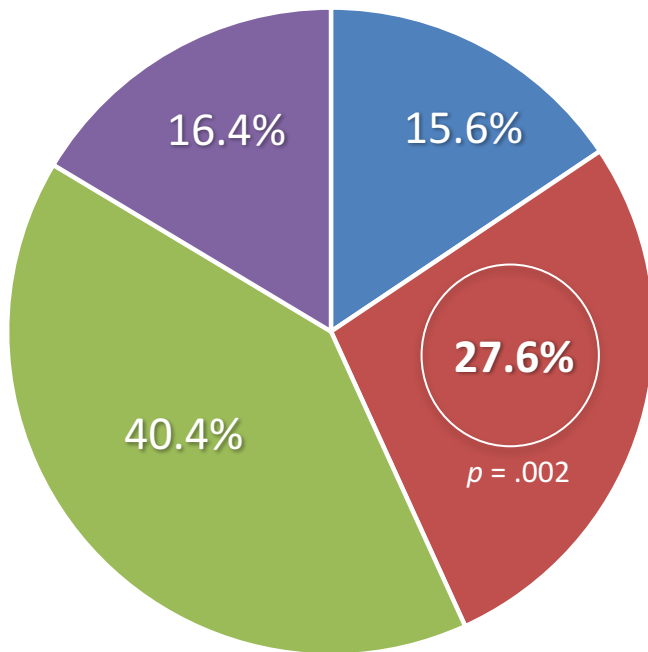
Legend:
- ■ < High school
- ■ High school
- ■ Training/Associate's
- ■ 4 year degree

PreK Non-Attenders

- 25.5% — < High school
- 10.6% — High school
- 33.0% — Training/Associate's
- 30.9% — 4 year degree

Legend:
- ■ < High school
- ■ High school
- ■ Training/Associate's
- ■ 4 year degree

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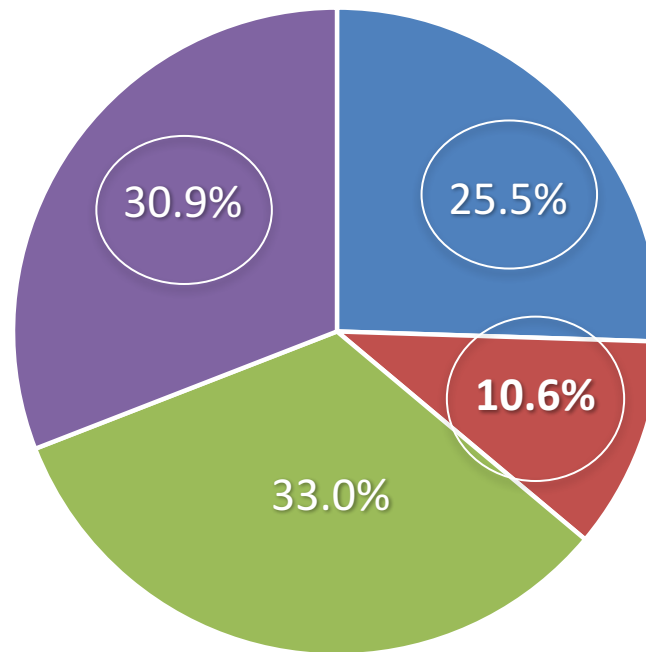
Children's Readiness Skills

Research Question #2

How do *family-school partnerships* change across the preschool year in *rural vs. urban settings?*

Learning Frontiers
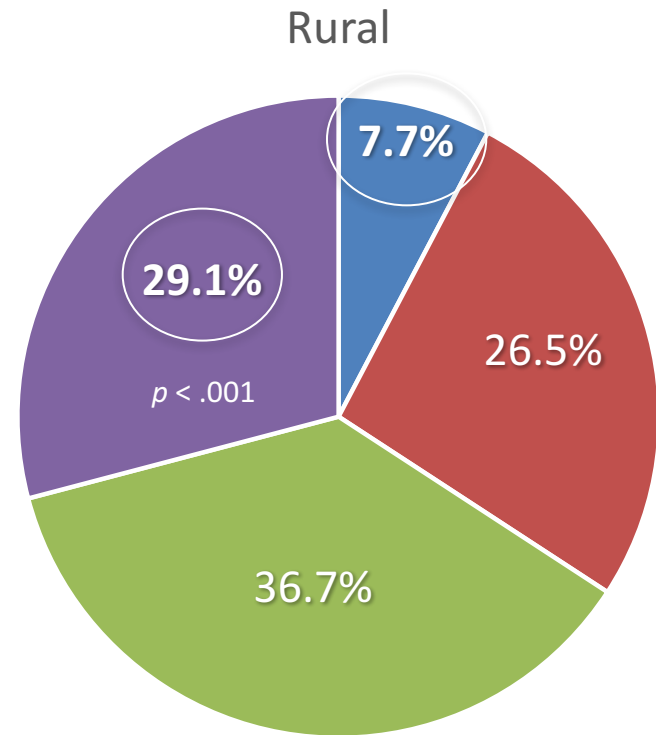PreK to Grade 3

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Parent Education of Our Sample

Parent Ethnicity of Our Sample
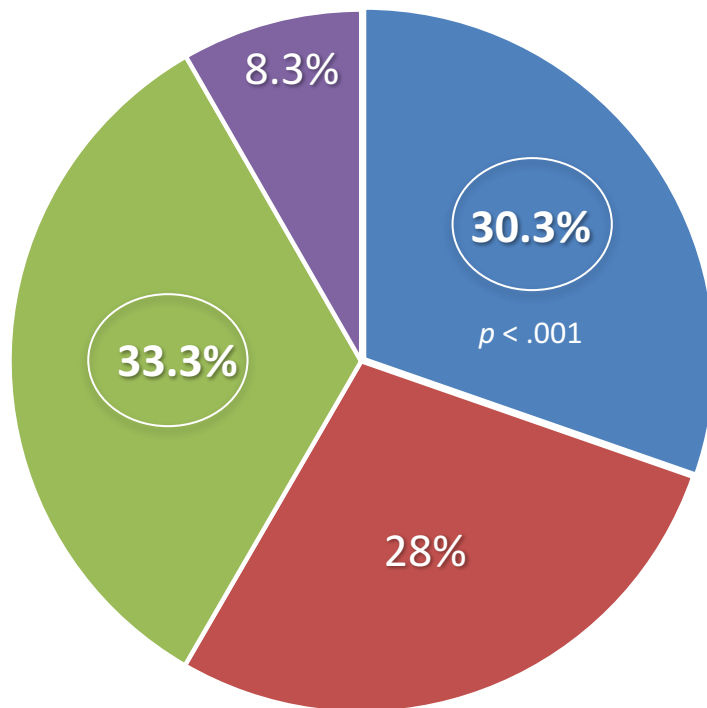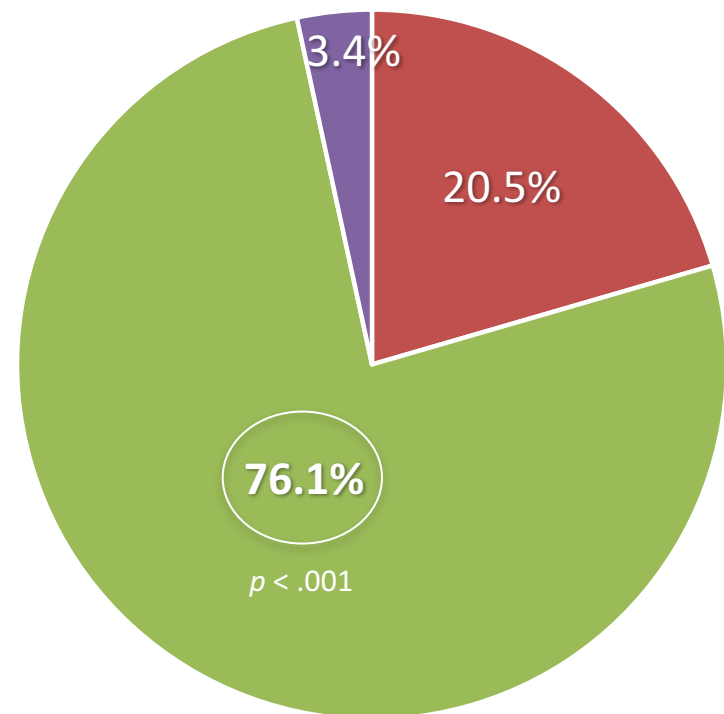
Family Involvement

Urban   Rural   Urban   Rural

60
58
56
54
52
50
48
46
44
42
40

Home-based Involvement   Home-school Conferencing

p < .00 ; *d* = .51   *p* < .001 ; *d* = .62

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

Family Involvement

Time 1   Time 2

School-based Involvement
p < .001 ; *d* = .17

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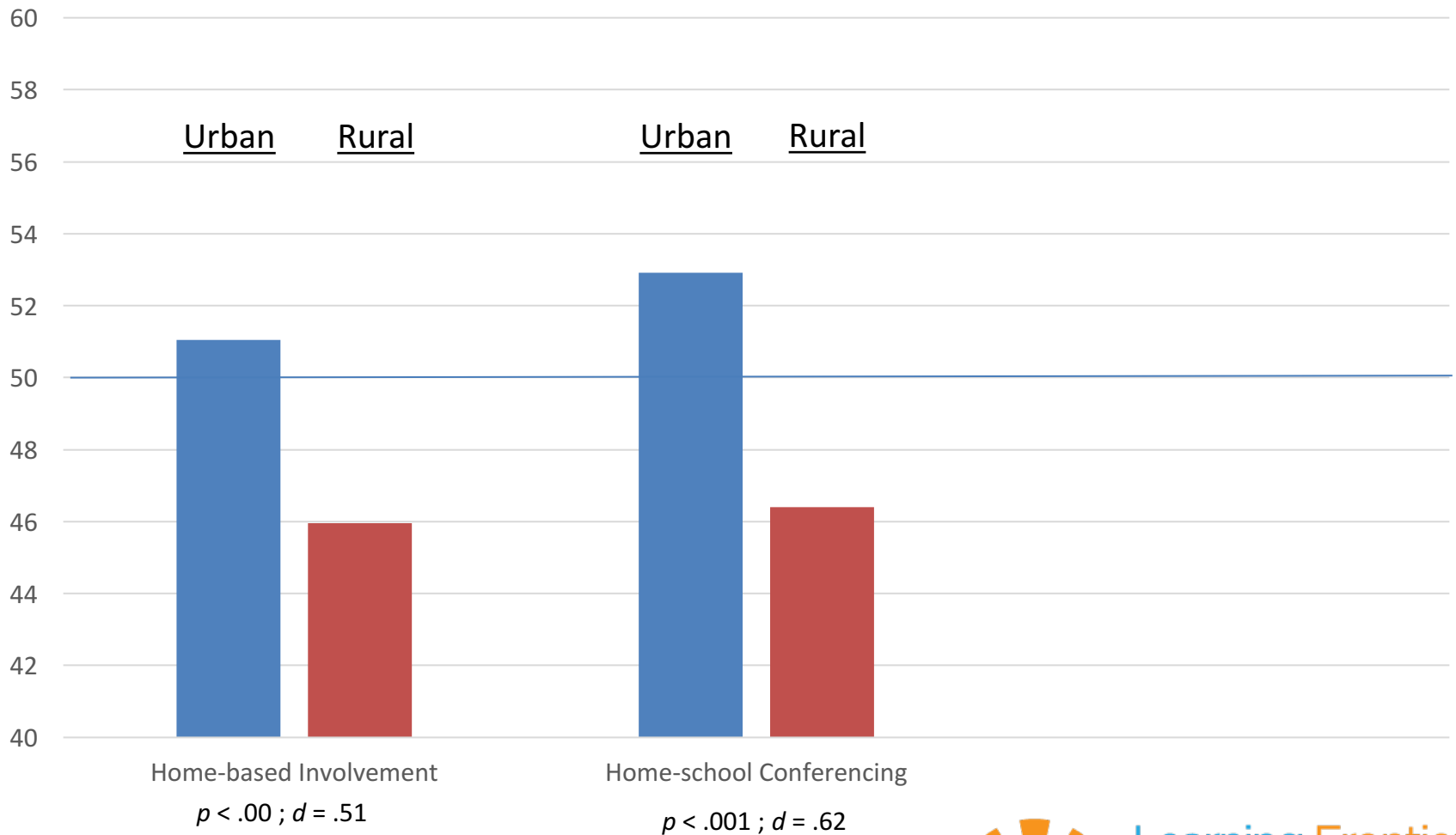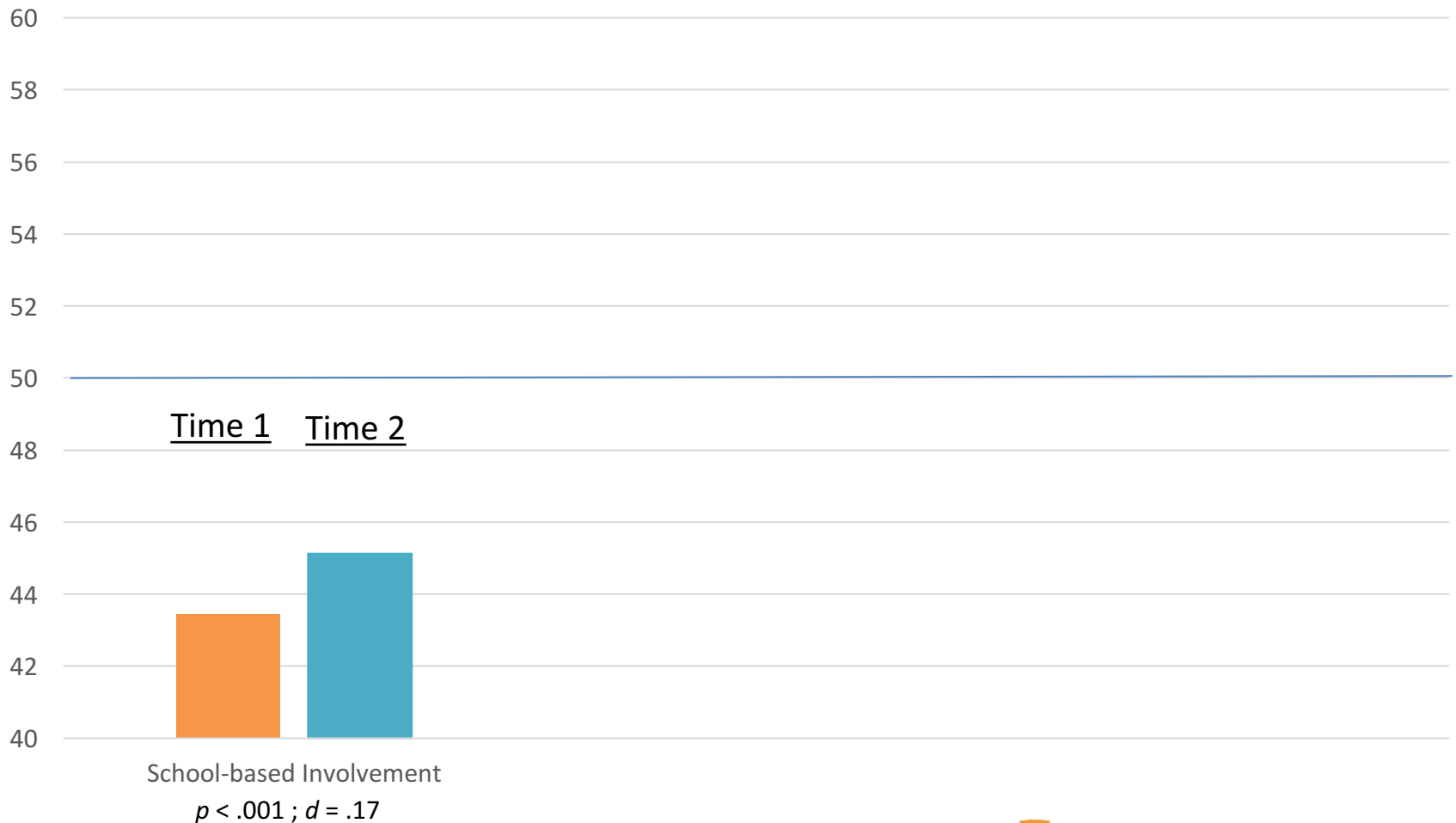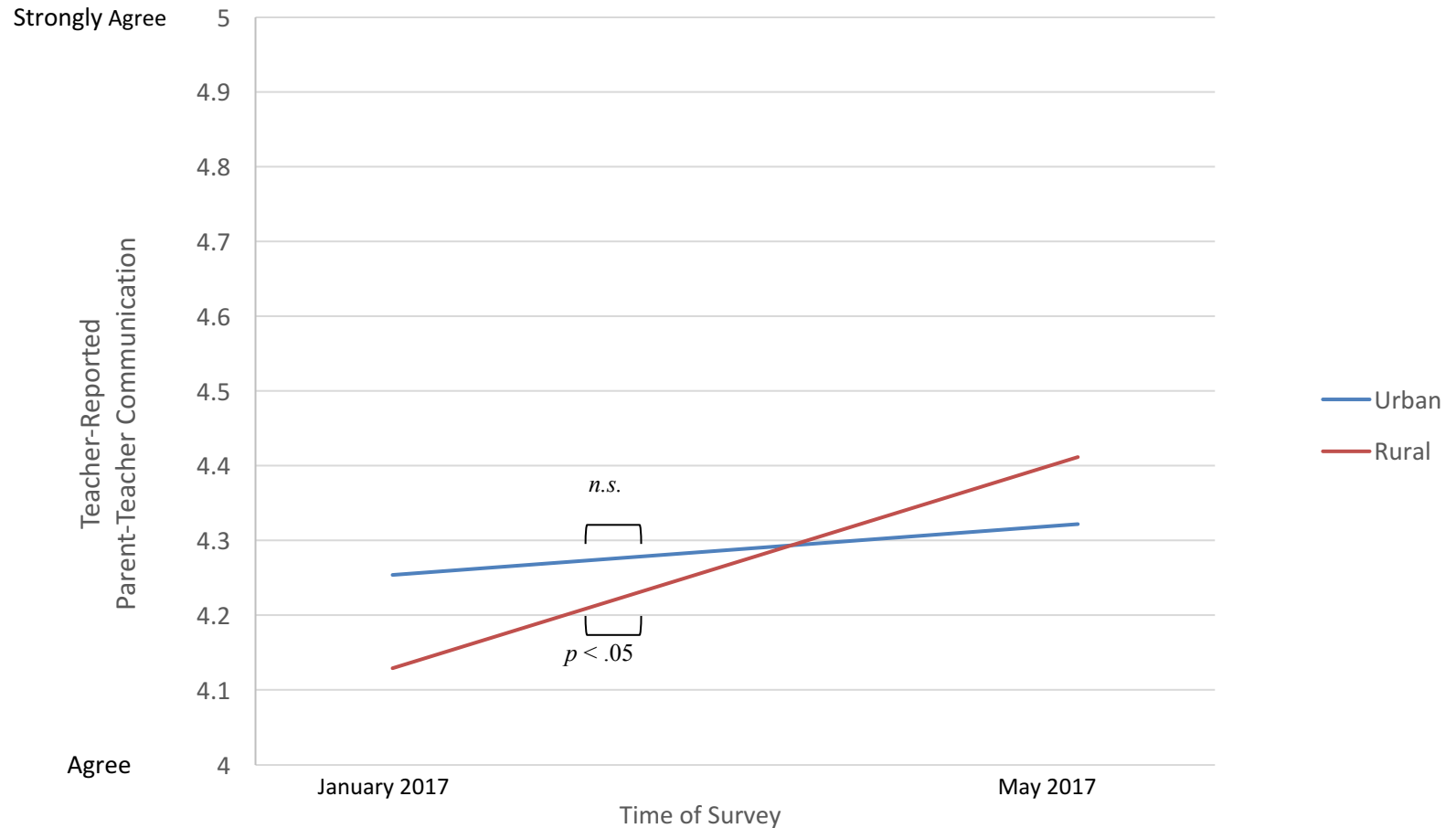
Parent-Teacher Relationship

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?