

Relations between Parental Marital Status, Residential Mobility, and Children's Academic Achievement and Self-Regulation in Kindergarten

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Abstract

- ❖ Children's self-regulation and academic achievement are important factors in predicting school readiness and later academic outcomes.
- ❖ This study examined relationships between parental marital status and residential mobility on children's academic achievement and self-regulation in kindergarten.
- ❖ Using a diverse sample of 131 kindergarten children, results indicated that the number of family moves was related to lower literacy skills at the beginning of kindergarten
- ❖ In addition, being a single parent was significantly related to lower self-regulation in children.

Introduction

- ❖ Self-regulation includes the ability to pay attention, remember instructions and demonstrate self-control (Baumeister & Vohs, 2004; Blair, 2002; McClelland, Cameron, Wanless, & Murray, 2007)
- ❖ Residential mobility is an important determinant of the quality of the home environment for young children, as it often causes chaos and disruptions to daily routines and social networks related to family stress and instability (Evans & Wachs, 2010)
- ❖ As a result, children who experience residential mobility early in life are more likely to struggle with self-regulation (Schmitt, Finders, McClelland, 2014) and academic achievement (Cutuli et al., 2013; Herbers et al., 2012; Masten et al., 1997; Obradovic et al., 2009; Pribesh & Downey, 1999; Voight et al., 2012)
- ❖ In addition, children living in single-parent families are more likely to have lower self-regulation than children living in married parent families

Study Design/Methods Used

- ❖ My URAP project was part of Dr. McClelland's *Touch Your Toes! Kindergarten Readiness Study*. Dr. McClelland's study examines the reliability and validity of the HTKS assessment as a tool for determining self-regulation and Kindergarten readiness in young children.
- ❖ For this project, we analyzed the data collected on 131 children in the fall of the kindergarten year.

Goals of the Study

The present study examined the following research question:

- ❖ Does parental marital status and residential mobility significantly relate to children's academic achievement and self-regulation in the fall of kindergarten?
- ❖ I predicted that children who had moved more than three times or who lived in a single-parent household would have more difficulty regulating their behavior and have lower academic achievement

Table 1. Correlations

	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.
1. Single	--					
2. Moves	0.09	--				
3. Letter Word	-0.02	-0.17*	--			
4. Applied Problems	-0.03	0.04	0.47*	--		
5. Day/Night Stroop	-0.17*	-0.01	0.24*	0.34*	--	
6. HTKS	-0.01	-0.05	0.32*	0.60*	0.30*	--

Results

Results of regressions indicated that when controlling for child age, parent education, English language learner status and income:

- ❖ *Children who had moved three or more times* had significantly related to lower literacy at the fall of Kindergarten. Having a single parent was not significantly related to lower literacy skills.
- ❖ Neither the number of family moves nor being a single parent were significantly related to a child's math score at the fall of Kindergarten.
- ❖ *Being a single parent* was significantly and negatively related to a child's self-regulation (on the Day Night measure) in the fall of kindergarten.
- ❖ Although not a primary focus of the study, *stronger self-regulation on the HTKS and Day Night measures* were significantly related to stronger math skills.

Table 2. Results of Regressions

	Early Math	Early Literacy	Day Night SR	HTKS SR
	β (SE)	β (SE)	β (SE)	β (SE)
Single	2.91 (4.12)	3.10 (6.70)	-2.64 (1.37) [†]	1.12 (3.93)
Mobility	4.50 (3.43)	-13.0 (5.50)*	.576 (1.16)	-3.40 (3.28)
Parent Education	.42 (.43)	.79 (.70)	-.06 (.15)	.37 (.41)
Income	-2.20 (3.74)	-.86 (6.08)	-.68 (1.30)	-.31 (3.60)
Child Age	1.30 (.41)**	-.52 (.70)	.080 (.14)	-.53 (.41)
ELL	-16.0 (5.26)**	-3.27 (8.86)	2.71 (1.81)	-1.25 (5.20)

Summary/Conclusion

- Results indicated that relationships between parental marital status and residential mobility, and children's academic achievement and self-regulation in the fall of kindergarten were significant.
- ❖ Using a diverse sample of 131 kindergarten children, results indicated that the *moving three or more times* was related to lower literacy skills at the beginning of kindergarten.
 - ❖ In addition, *being a single parent* was significantly related to lower self-regulation in children.
 - ❖ Neither family moves nor being a single parent was related to a child's math score at the fall of kindergarten, although *stronger self-regulation* was related to stronger math skills

References

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