University of Nebraska - Lincoln
DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln

Faculty Publications, Department of Child, Youth, and Family Studies | Child, Youth, and Family Studies, Department of

5-1-2004

Long Term Effects of Lincoln's Head Start Programs

Katie Taylor
University of Nebraska-Lincoln

Kendra Woodburn
University of Nebraska-Lincoln

Carolyn P. Edwards
University of Nebraska - Lincoln, cedwards1@unl.edu

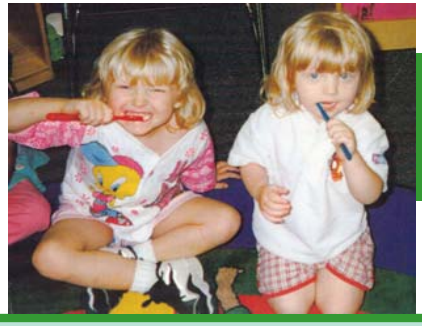
Deila Steiner
Lincoln Public Schools

Follow this and additional works at: http://digitalcommons.unl.edu/famconfacpub

Part of the Family, Life Course, and Society Commons

Taylor, Katie; Woodburn, Kendra; Edwards, Carolyn P.; and Steiner, Deila, "Long Term Effects of Lincoln's Head Start Programs" (2004). *Faculty Publications, Department of Child, Youth, and Family Studies.* Paper 29.
http://digitalcommons.unl.edu/famconfacpub/29

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Child, Youth, and Family Studies, Department of at DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln. It has been accepted for inclusion in Faculty Publications, Department of Child, Youth, and Family Studies by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln.



Long Term Effects of Lincoln's Head Start Programs

Katie Taylor and Kendra Woodburn

Dr. Carolyn Edwards (UNL) and Dr. Deila Steiner (LPS)

With acknowledgments to the LPS District Office Staff

Introduction

The Lincoln Public Schools (LPS) Head Start program is administered federally out of the US Department of Health and Human Services. In 2002, a total of 380 LPS children aged 3-4 received Head Start services in center-based, home-based, and combination program options. Looking backwards in time, some of the long-term outcomes of its system of Head Start classrooms have been calculated, beginning in 1986. The purpose was to examine later correlates of improved school success, including higher attendance rates, lower mobility rates, improved academic achievement, and lower high school dropout rates.

Relevant Background

Reading Recovery is a 1st-grade intervention program that helps low-achieving children make accelerated gains to reach the average range of reading performance in their class.
Head Start began in 1965 as a summer program for low-income children and has since grown into a school-year national preschool program that enrolls more than 800,000 children per year and addresses academic, social, and health issues of children aged 3 to 5. Today, federal and state governments are placing ever more stress on evaluating child intellectual and social outcomes as a basis for making curricular and funding decisions about programs serving young children. Evaluation studies have found Head Start programs to be effective in producing short- and long-term intellectual and social gains for children in poverty, including higher self esteem and social behavior for children at school entry; more positive school achievement and motivation; lower delinquency; and greater parental knowledge of social services and positive attitudes toward public schools.

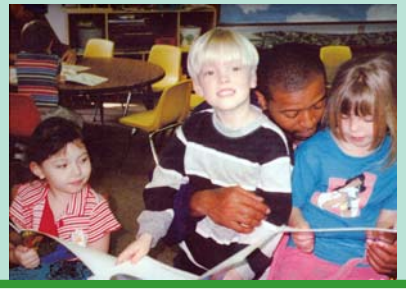
Current Investigation: Questions

•What were the attendance levels of children who attended LPS Head Start, compared to the rest of the LPS school population?

•What about their school mobility rates during the elementary and high school years?

•How likely were the Head Start children to need a special first grade intervention for reading (Reading Recovery), compared to the general first grade population?

•How likely were the former Head Start children to drop out of high school, compared to the rest of the LPS high school population?



Methods: Sample

Secondary data were used in this analysis. The attendance, school mobility, and Reading Recovery records were examined for children who started Head Start in 1992 and 1993. The sample included a total of 462 students.

The LPS graduation data were examined for students who were in Head Start between 1986 and 1992 (with two years of data missing from the LPS records).

Measures

The **attendance** rates were calculated as the percentage of school days that a child attended, out of days the child was enrolled in a given school year.

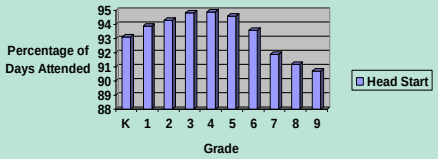
For **mobility**, the number of LPS elementary schools a child attended was calculated, along with the total number of years spent in LPS elementary. The same means were calculated for middle school.

Reading Recovery was scored as 'yes' or 'no,' depending on the student's participation in the program.

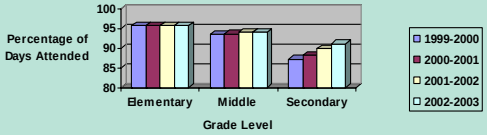
Dropout rates were calculated as the percentage of students who did not complete LPS high school, out of the total who started LPS high school.

Findings: Attendance0

Attendance Rates of 1992 to 1994 Head Start Classes as they Moved Forward



Comparison Attendance Data from LPS 1999-2003



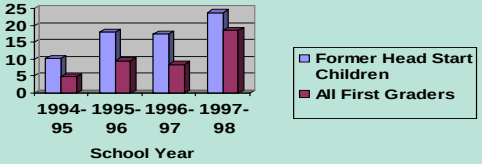
Findings: Mobility

Mobility Data of 1992-94 Head Start Classes as the Children Moved Forward in School

	Mean	Maximum	Number of Records
Number of LPS elementary schools that a child attended	2.3	7	426
Total years spent in LPS elementary schools	5.3	7	427
Number of LPS middle schools that a child attended	1.3	5	326
Total years spent in LPS middle schools	2.2	4	334

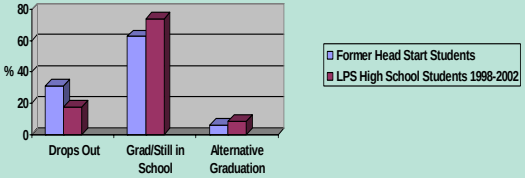
Findings: Reading Recovery

Percentage of Children in Reading Recovery



Findings: Drop Out Rates

Drop Out Rates



Conclusions

•The attendance levels of the Head Start students were very similar to those of the general LPS population (over 90% each year).

•The Head Start students were not highly stable in their subsequent schooling. A majority attended more than one elementary and more than one middle school.

•The Head Start students were more likely than the general population to participate in Reading Recovery in first grade. But Reading Recovery was not offered in all LPS elementary schools during its first few years, and only reached full implementation in 1997-1998. The former Head Start children were more likely to attend the schools where Reading Recovery was first offered, and so had a greater opportunity than many LPS students to get into the program. Notice how in 1997-1998, the figures for Former Head Start and All LPS students come within 5 percentage points. This is encouraging, given the demographics.

•The Head Start students who were still in the LPS system for high school showed higher dropout rates than the general LPS population. However, the majority of them did graduate, compared to the number who dropped out. Future research should examine the graduation rates of more recent former Head Start students.