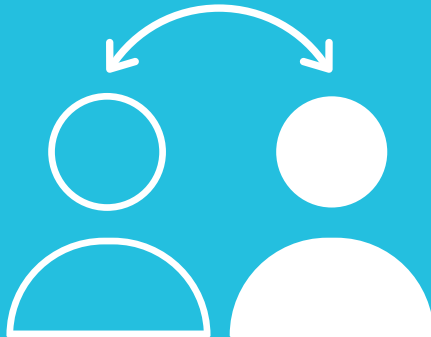




FORUM



Relationships

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Why Do Relationships Matter?

- Relationships during the early school years are important for learning and development.
- Family engagement in children's education provides opportunities to extend learning beyond school.
- Relationships between parents and teachers, and between teachers and students, are foundational for promoting children's academic, language, and social-emotional skills, and have particular salience for children from marginalized groups.



Relationships matter.



ELN's Contribution

- ELN researchers explored relationship patterns over time, in both rural and urban settings, and their associations with social-behavioral, academic, and executive function outcomes.
- Teams identified relationships that are open to change or improvement through early learning practice and policy decisions:
 - Teacher-Child Relationships
 - Parent Engagement and Parent-Teacher Relationships



What We Learned

- Positive relationships between parents and their children's teachers over time, and between teachers and children, may promote social skills, reduce skill gaps among students from marginalized groups, and address problem behaviors.
- Efforts to engage families, promote positive relationships between teachers and students, and form relationships between parents and teachers are necessary across grade levels and in both urban and rural schools.



Supporting Findings

Teacher-Child Relationships

- *Positive teacher-child relationships* are associated with improvements in social-behavioral skills, academic outcomes, executive function, and peer support, and they operate similarly for children from English- and Spanish-speaking families.
- *Poor interaction quality/cumulative conflict from pre-K to first grade* is associated with:
 - Low social competence, learning behaviors, inhibition
 - Problem behaviors, perceptions of peer victimization
- Changes from pre-K to kindergarten include:
 - Less closeness, fewer positive interactions
 - Greater levels of difficulty for boys than girls



Supporting Findings Cont.

Parent Engagement and Parent-Teacher Relationships

- Parents' *home-based learning support*:
 - Increases from pre-K through kindergarten.
 - Is less evident in rural versus urban communities.
- *Support of language and math at home* predicts gains in these areas, especially for families with lower education.
- *Communication between parents and teachers* is:
 - Positively associated with social-behavioral skills for children from English- and Spanish-speaking families.
 - Stable during pre-K but decreases through end of kindergarten.
 - Less frequent for rural, and for Spanish-speaking families
- *Sustained relationships* from pre-K to first grade are associated with fewer behavior problems over time.
- *Home-school connection* is associated with reducing Black-Latine problem behavior skill gap.



Additional Considerations

- Relationships in early childhood settings are at the **core** of children's experiences; curriculum and other classroom content is delivered in the **context of relationships**.
- Relationships *over time* are important for children.
 - **Positive relationships** associated with fewer behavior problems
 - **Negative relationships** associated with lower social competence, learning behaviors, inhibition



Teacher-Child Relationships



Parent-Teacher Relationships



Additional Considerations Cont.

- Relationships matter for students across racial and ethnic groups, including minoritized children.
- For children from English- and Spanish-speaking families:
 - Improved parent-teacher communication associated positively with social-behavioral skills,
 - Improved quality in student-teacher relationship associated with student outcomes and skills
- Home-School connections reduce the gap between Black and Latine students' problem behaviors.
- Culturally Responsive Practices that acknowledge diversity and connect learning to culture strengthen the connection between students-teachers and parent-teachers and promote student outcomes.



Conclusion

- High-quality educational experiences should include teachers' use of practices to engage parents, create and maintain positive interpersonal connections with their students, and form relationships with families.
- Systems must support efforts to promote sustained positive teacher-child and parent-teacher engagement and relationships in both urban and rural schools.
- The cumulative effect of relationship quality predicts long-term outcomes, necessitating attention to relationships over time and grade.





Thank You

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