

Social and Contextual Influences on Children's Development: Insights from Secondary Data Analysis

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Background:

- Children's psychological adjustment and educational outcomes are heavily influenced by their social contexts.
- The well-being of school aged children, in particular, is significantly influenced by multiple factors including their *neighborhoods, schools, families, parents and peer relationships*.
- In attempting to better understand the role of these multiple contextual influences on children's development, one of the challenges that researchers face is unpacking and disentangling how they operate in conjunction with one another over time (e.g., interaction processes, transactional or bidirectional effects, cascade processes).

Project Aims:

- The long-term aims of this project are to examine the associations among these multiple social-contextual influences (i.e., neighborhoods, schools, families, parents and peer relationships) on children's psychological and educational outcomes spanning from early childhood through adolescence.
- Outcomes of interest include children's externalizing and internalizing problems, self-regulation, and academic performance.
- To achieve these aims, this study will utilize secondary data analysis of large-scale nationally representative datasets conducted with children and adolescents across the United States.

Project Description:

- The Early Childhood Longitudinal Study, Kindergarten Class of 2010-11 (ECLS-K:2011) is sponsored by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) within the Institute of Education Sciences (IES) of the U.S. Department of Education.
- The ECLS-K is a longitudinal study of a nationally representative sample of over 18000 children from more than 1300 schools, who were followed from kindergarten (during the school year 2010-11) through fifth grade (during school year 2015-16).
- The study is broad in its scope and coverage of child development, early learning, and school progress with data collected from children, and their families, teachers, schools, and before- and after-school care providers, across diverse socioeconomic and racial/ethnic groups in the United States.



One-Year Progress Report:

- Funding support from the T3 grant was primarily used to provide graduate research assistantships to two doctoral students (Anjali Chadhary and Haoran Li), and was instrumental in providing these students opportunities for professional development and enhancing their research skills.
- These doctoral students were extensively involved in completing the following project-related tasks:
 - Identified and procured data from the ECLS-K-2011 and prepared data for analysis.
 - Completed detailed review of existing ECLS-K-2011 manuals, codebooks, and supporting documentation.
 - Created internal codebooks and spreadsheets to identify specific variables and data relevant for the aims of this project.
 - Performed extensive literature searches to identify existing publications using the ECLS-K-2011 as well as other studies examining social-contextual influences on child development (created summary tables and annotated bibliographies).
 - Completed extensive data analyses including growth mixture modeling, structural equation modeling, latent growth modeling as well as an examination of nested data, missing data, sampling weights and psychometrics (e.g., confirmatory factor analysis and measurement invariance).

Work in Progress and Future Goals:

- In October 2020, we will be submitting a proposal to present our current findings at the Society for Research on Child Development (SRCD) conference.
- We have been making progress towards completing our first manuscript from this project (with a submission goal of December 2020).
 - This study examines the impact of bullying and peer victimization on children's externalizing and internalizing problems and self-regulation. The findings provide novel insights into how children's experiences of chronic versus desisting victimization in elementary school have differential effects on their psychological adjustment.
- A second publication will be initiated in 2021.
- Upon completion of these two publications, efforts will be taken to procure additional external funding support to continue, and expand on, the broader aims of this project.
 - More specifically, several external funding agencies have been identified, including the Institute of Education Sciences (IES) and American Educational Research Association (AERA), which support the use of secondary data analysis to examine topics pertaining to social-contextual influences on children's psychological adjustment and educational outcomes.

Impact Statement:

- This project will have the potential to advance our theoretical understanding of how risk and resilience processes collectively function throughout childhood to influence children's developmental trajectories.
- Findings from this project will have implications for better understanding the timing and focus of childhood intervention efforts, and more specifically, family and community-based interventions that aim to strengthen family functioning in order to improve children's psychological and educational outcomes.

Keywords:

Children, Adolescents, Parenting, Neighborhoods, Peer Relationships, Development, Education, Risk, Resilience, Longitudinal Analysis, Secondary Data Analysis