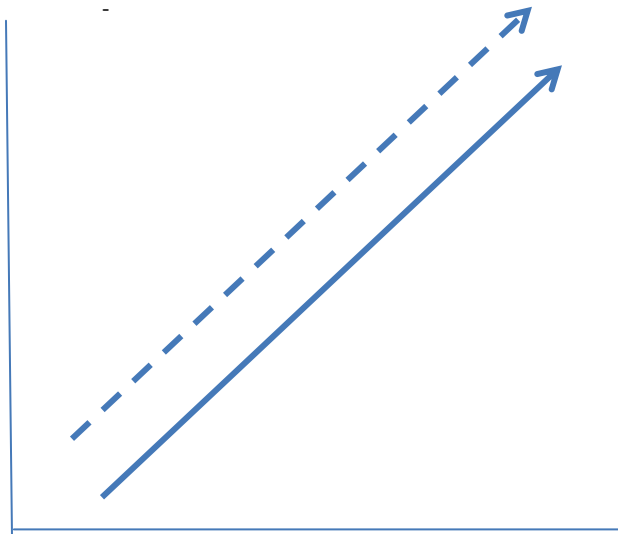


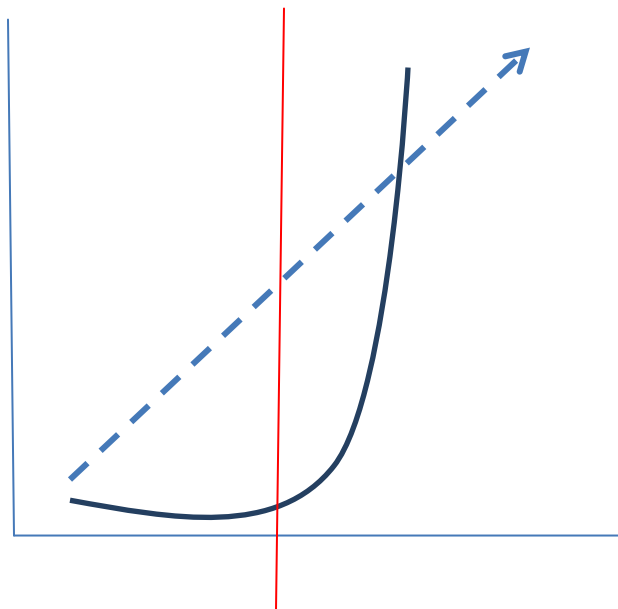
Pre-kindergarten: The value of public school participation

Relationship of Quality to Child Outcomes

Quality defined by instructional support, emotional support, and classroom organization (Pianta, LaParo, and Hamre, 2008).



One might expect child outcomes to increase in direct relation to improved quality. RESEARCH SHOWS THAT THIS IS NOT THE CASE.



IN FACT, OUTCOMES REMAIN FLAT UNTIL QUALITY IMPROVES TO A VERY HIGH LEVEL. Research shows there is a clear demarcation line between quality that impacts child outcomes in a significant way and quality that has minimal impact.

IMPORTANT QUESTION: What aspects of quality matter and where do they readily exist?

--- → = QUALITY

— → = CHILD OUTCOMES

Pre-kindergarten: The value of public school participation

Research is clear on what is needed for effective pre-kindergarten:

- Well-designed program with clear goals (early learning standards connected to state common core standards)
- Strong teachers, adequately trained and paid
- Strong supervision and monitoring
- Connections to the public schools and articulation with K-3

Public school participation has proven effective for pre-kindergarten students:

- A 2011 analysis based on a random sample of More at Four classrooms for three cohorts of children, 2003-04, 2005-06 and 2007-08, found that teachers with a least a **BA coupled with a Birth-Kindergarten license** caused greater student learning gains on assessments of essential literacy skills than teachers without this level of education. Teachers with this combination of education and endorsement exist in significantly greater numbers in the public schools as compared to the private sector.
- An analysis conducted in 2009 showed several differences in language/literacy and cognitive outcomes based on the contract administrator. Children attending More at Four classes in counties/regions **administered by the public schools** made significantly greater gains during pre-k in letter/word knowledge, print knowledge, and applied math scores than children attending More at Four classes with contracts administered by local Smart Start partnerships.

Furthermore, there were some differences in language/literacy outcomes based on the site type. **Children attending More at Four in public school sites** made significantly greater gains during pre-k than children attending More at Four in private child care sites in two areas of language/literacy skills: letter/word knowledge and print knowledge. These results were consistent when classrooms less than 4 years old and classrooms 4 or more years old were examined: gains on letter/word knowledge and print knowledge were **higher for children in public school sites** than those in private child care.

Another significant difference was found in the quality of instructional practices as determined by the Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS). **Public school sites had significantly higher classroom organization scores** than did private sites, fostering well behaved, active and engaged students. These results also held up for classrooms 4 or more years old where **public school sites had higher classroom organization scores than private child care sites**.

- Finally, this analysis showed some additional differences based on the age of classrooms as well. For classrooms less than 4 years old, children **in public-school administered contracts** made significantly greater gains in letter/word knowledge, but also in problem behaviors. For classrooms 4 years or older, children in public-school administered contracts made significantly greater gains on nearly all measures: letter/word knowledge, print knowledge, phonological awareness, applied problems, and social skills than children in sites administered by local partnerships. In contrast to newer sites, children in public school administered contracts showed a significantly greater decrease in problem behaviors than children in local partnership administered contracts.

NOTE: All analyses were conducted by an independent evaluator: UNC- Chapel Hill; Frank Porter Graham Child Development Institute.