

# Chronic Early Absence, Achievement, and Social-Emotional Development

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**Driven to Discover**<sup>SM</sup>

# Presentation Outline

- Purpose of the study
- Sample
- Measures
- Data Analysis
- Results
- Implications



# Purpose of the Study

- Extend the literature on chronic early absence.
- Bring a focus to attendance in the early years-early attendance is often overlooked because school leaders focus on the attendance of older children.
- Look for heterogeneous impacts of chronic early absence to inform the development of attendance interventions.



# Research Questions

- Is chronic early absence associated with achievement, social-emotional development, grade retention, and special education placement in elementary school?
- Do these associations vary by gender or mother's high school attainment status?



# Sample

- Original sample - 1,539 children who attended Chicago Public Schools in the 1980s and 1990s.
- Mostly African-American (93%)
- Urban, low-income



# Measures

- Teacher-rated chronic absence in kindergarten
- Outcomes:
  - Teacher-rated social-emotional learning
  - Iowa Test of Basic Skills achievement scores for reading and math in kindergarten through third grades
  - Administrative records for special education placement and grade retention in first through third grades.



# Data Analysis

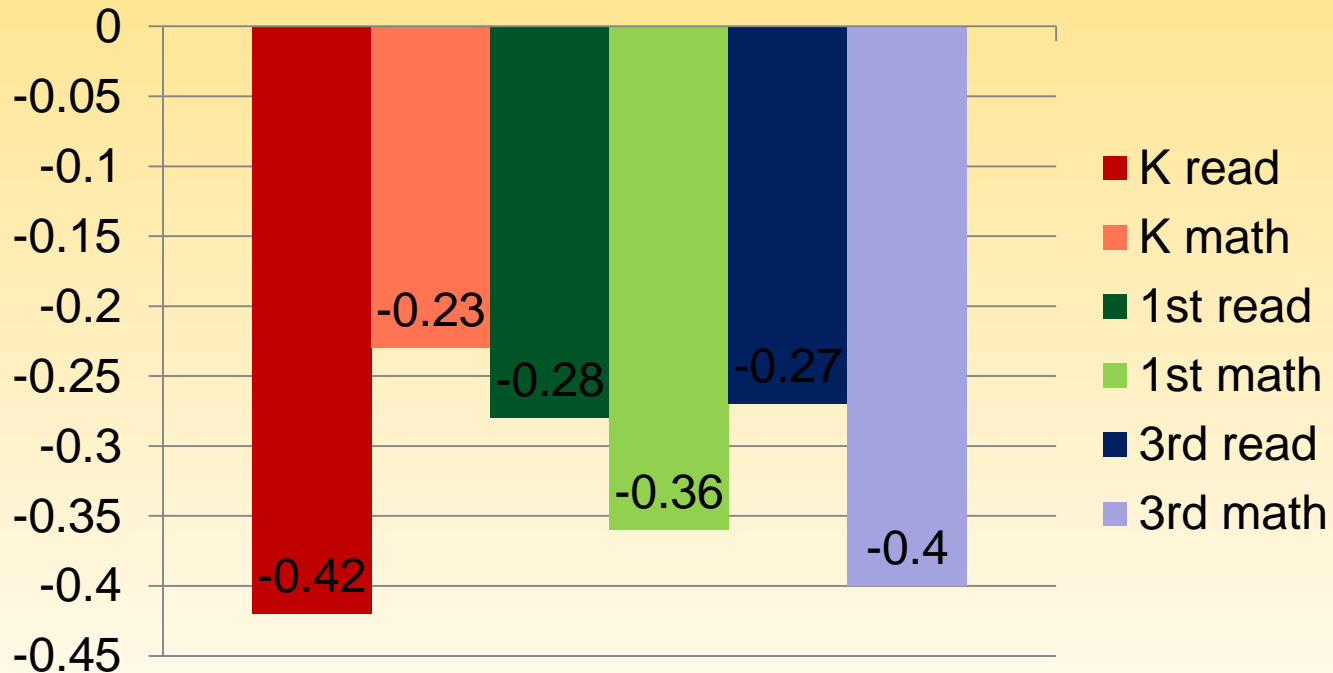
- Type of analyses: OLS and probit regression with marginal effects
- Models included:
  - Indicator of CPC participation
  - Background factors- race, gender, low birth weight
  - CLS risk factors
  - Kindergarten readiness score
  - Special education placement in kindergarten
  - Kindergarten reading or math achievement



# Results

Children who were chronically absent in kindergarten scored lower than their higher-attendance peers in math and reading in kindergarten through third grade.

## Standardized Effects-Achievement

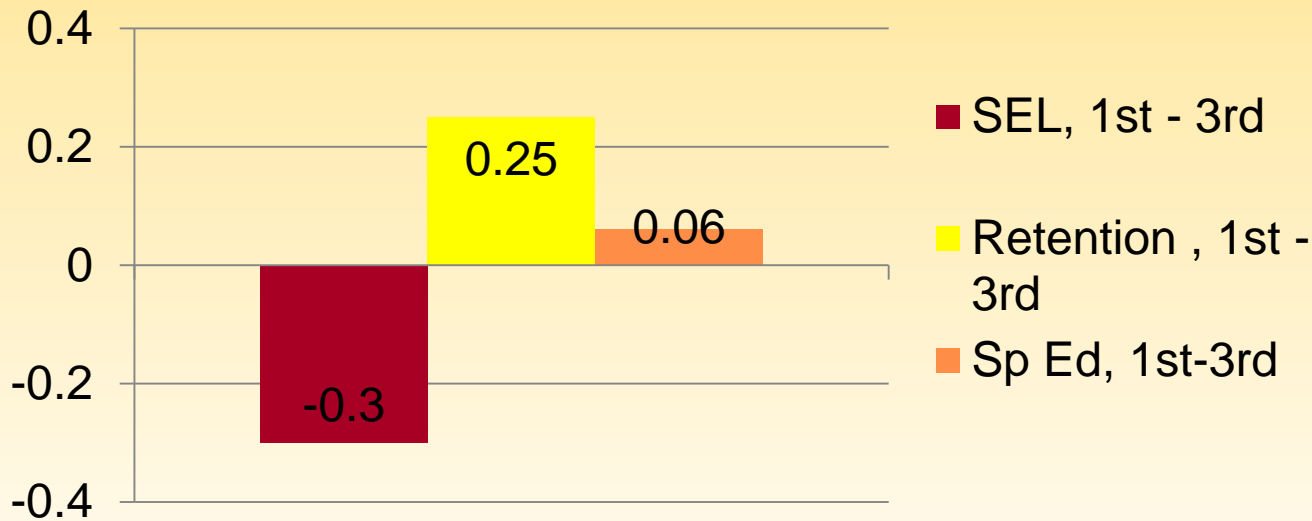




# Results

Chronically absent kindergarten children scored lower on measures of social-emotional development and were more likely to be retained. There was no significant association with special education placement.

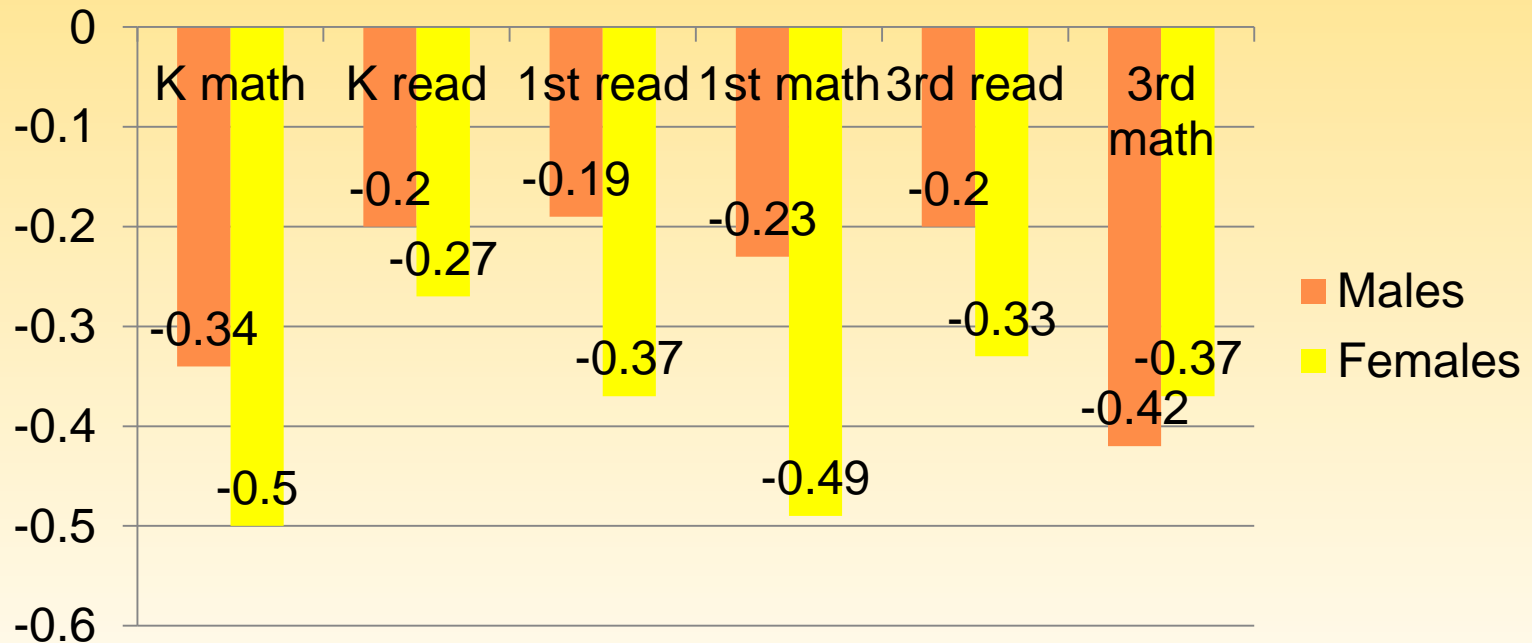
**Standardized Effects-SEL (Classroom Adjustment), Special Ed, Grade Retention**



# Results

Girls who were chronically absent in kindergarten experienced larger impacts on achievement than boys with similar attendance.

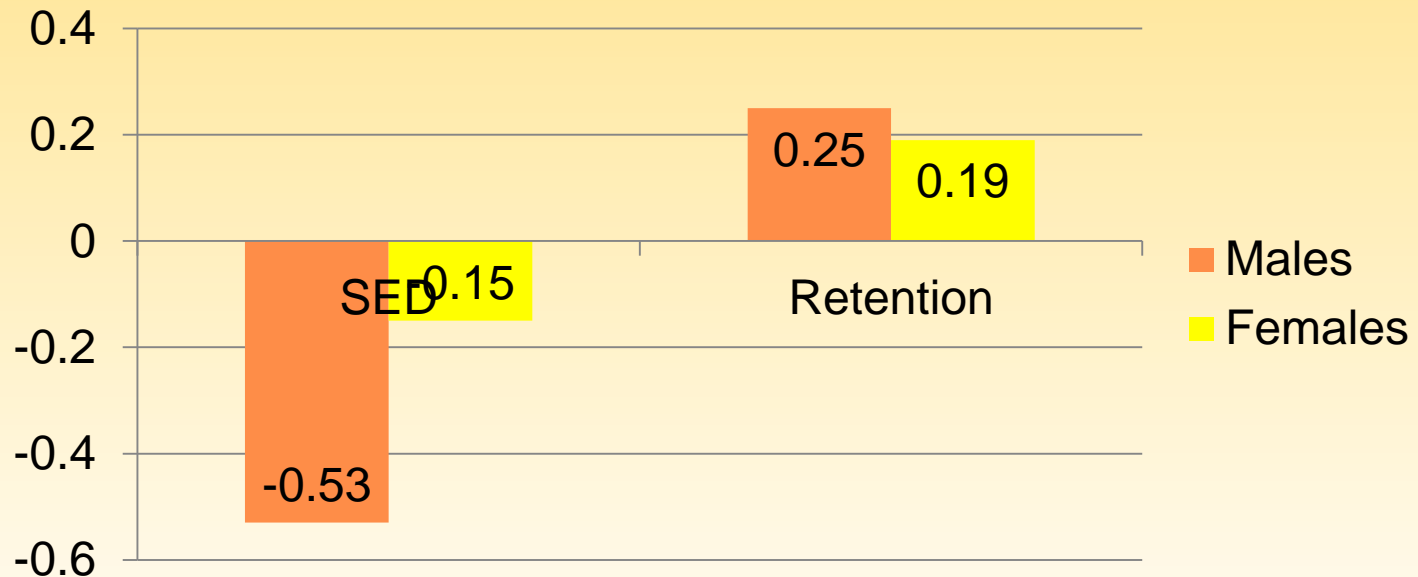
## Subgroup Effects- Males vs. Females



# Results

Boys who were chronically absent in kindergarten experienced larger negative impacts on social-emotional development in elementary school and were more likely to be retained in first through third grades than girls who were chronically absent.

## Subgroup Effects- Males vs. Females



# Results

Chronically absent children of moms who did not complete high school were more likely to be retained in first through third grade.

## Subgroup Effects- Mother's High School Completion Status



# Implications

- Children who miss many days in kindergarten experience many fewer hours of instructional time.
- Time for learning recognized as essential to academic success (Carroll, 1963; 1989)-less time to learn=less learning.
- The fact that kindergarten math achievement had the smallest association with chronic absence was not surprising-likely highlights that there is a greater focus on literacy in kindergarten. Missing significant amounts of instructional time in k means reduced amount of literacy instruction, but not as much math instruction.



# Implications

- New focus of this study-impact on social-emotional development- children who are chronically absent in kindergarten experience not only less instructional time, but fewer opportunities to learn how to:
  - work together with other children
  - to learn to adhere to classroom norms
  - to learn how to be successful students
- Time in school in the early grades is time for children to hone the key educational skills which will support them as they progress through school. This study provides evidence that chronic absence may cause potential harm, not only to academic achievement, but also to children's abilities to adjust to student life and norms.



# Implications

- Subgroup analyses
  - Both males and females should be targeted for early attendance interventions because they both may experience negative associations with outcomes, although different outcomes may be affected. The achievement of females may be at greater risk from chronic early absence, while the social development of boys could be in jeopardy.
  - Children of non-completers who are chronically absent are at much greater risk of grade retention. If parent education status is known, intervention efforts can be focused on keeping students whose moms did not complete high school on track with their peers so that they will not fall behind and risk grade retention. Interventions which focus on getting these parents involved in school be positive and relationship building for both parents and children.



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