



Whitney Foundation Longitudinal Study

An analysis of early childhood education, conducted 2016-18

Holy Cross Ministries received funding from the Whitney Foundation to conduct a longitudinal study of the preschool graduates of Holy Cross Ministries' School Readiness Program. The study, which Holy Cross conducted in partnership with The University of Utah's Department of Family and Consumer Studies, and research specialist Mark Innocenti, incorporated both quantitative and qualitative data on children in Park City and the impact of HCM's programs on their current academic success.

RESEARCH QUESTION Did Holy Cross Ministries' School Readiness Program have a **positive academic impact** on children?



PROCESS

1

Conduct Interviews



HCM facilitated 123 semi structured interviews with parents of 133 low-income, Hispanic children. The participants were separated into 3 cohorts:

- **Cohort 1:** Children who participated in HCM's School Readiness Program between 2010 and 2013
- **Cohort 2:** Children who participated in other other preschool programs between 2010 and 2013
- **Cohort 3:** Children who did not participate in any preschool programs between 2010 and 2013

Interviews were conducted with the support of university student interns under the supervision of HCM and Dr. Cheryl Wright at The University of Utah's Department of Family and Consumer Studies.

Request Data

2



The study included a submission of signed Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) releases to the Park City School District from 112 parents to request summary academic performance data for students in each of the three cohorts, including: Kindergarten Entrance Exams, DIBELS Scores, SAGE scores, English Language placement exams.

3

Code and analyze results



The study included coding and transcription of all interviews and an analysis of 112 records of student academic data with the support of research specialist Mark Innocenti.



FINDINGS

Short-Term academic impact

Children who participated in HCM's School Readiness Program scored significantly higher on the Kindergarten entrance screening exams compared to the children in the remaining two cohorts (those who attended a different preschool program or attended no preschool program). HCM also analyzed the Dynamic Indicators of Early Literacy (DIBELS) scores, a set of short instruments for assessing the acquisition of early literacy skills. Overall, students who attended any preschool had higher Kindergarten DIBELS scores than students from the same demographic who did not attend a preschool program.



English Language designation

When looking at English language acquisition we found that children who attended HCM's School Readiness Program were more likely to be designated as English Language Learners (ELL) (86%) compared to children who attend other preschool programs (63%). In fact, they were designated as ELL at a higher rate than children who attended no preschool programs (80%). We see this as a great opportunity for program improvement.



Long-Term academic impact

Based on the end of year 3rd grade DIBELS score results, we found that the majority of children who participated in HCM's School Readiness Program scored at or above benchmark levels whereas the majority of children who attended no preschool scored below benchmark. Additionally, students who participated in any preschool program had higher SAGE math scores in 4th grade than students who did not attend a preschool program.



Parental involvement

Greater parent participation has the potential to help children sustain gains acquired in preschool and improve long term academic outcomes. Regardless of whether students attended preschool or not, there was a strong correlation between parent involvement and their elementary school students' short term and long term academic success. High parent participation was connected to positive academic outcomes and low parent participate was connected to poor academic outcomes.



NEXT STEPS

Utilize findings to **address identified unmet needs** by enhancing and expanding Holy Cross Ministries' programs for students and their families.

1

Continue providing the School Readiness Program

HCM will continue providing the School Readiness Program to support long-term academic achievements of minority 3-year-old students.

2

Improve classroom language immersion

HCM aims to make changes in support of additional language immersion and English learning opportunities for students in the School Readiness Program.

3

Expand the Parents as Teachers home-visiting component

HCM aims to increase the number of parents served by expanding the number of staff providing evidence-based home-visiting services for parents with 0-5 year olds.

4

Develop an avenue to support parental involvement

HCM aims to develop an effective and evidence-based parenting strategies toolkit and model for future implementation with parents of elementary-aged students.