



The Kempe Center



LONG-TERM IMPLICATIONS OF EARLY CHILD CARE SYSTEMS ON CHILDREN'S EDUCATIONAL FUNCTIONING THROUGH MOTHER- AND CHILD-LEVEL MECHANISMS

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CHILD CARE PREVALENCE IN THE UNITED STATES

- Child care settings serve as common contexts for early development in the United States
- > 60% of the 20 million children under the age of five are in at least one regular child care arrangement
- On average, children spend 36 hours a week in child care settings



ORGANIZED GROUP CARE AND DEVELOPMENT

Model Early Childhood Programs



Language and cognitive abilities

Reading and math achievement

School achievement

Stronger relationships

School completion & employment



Grade retention

Special education placement

Criminal activity

Teenage pregnancies

Community-Based Child Care



Cognitive abilities and **school readiness**

Literacy and mathematical abilities

Positive behavioral development

School achievement

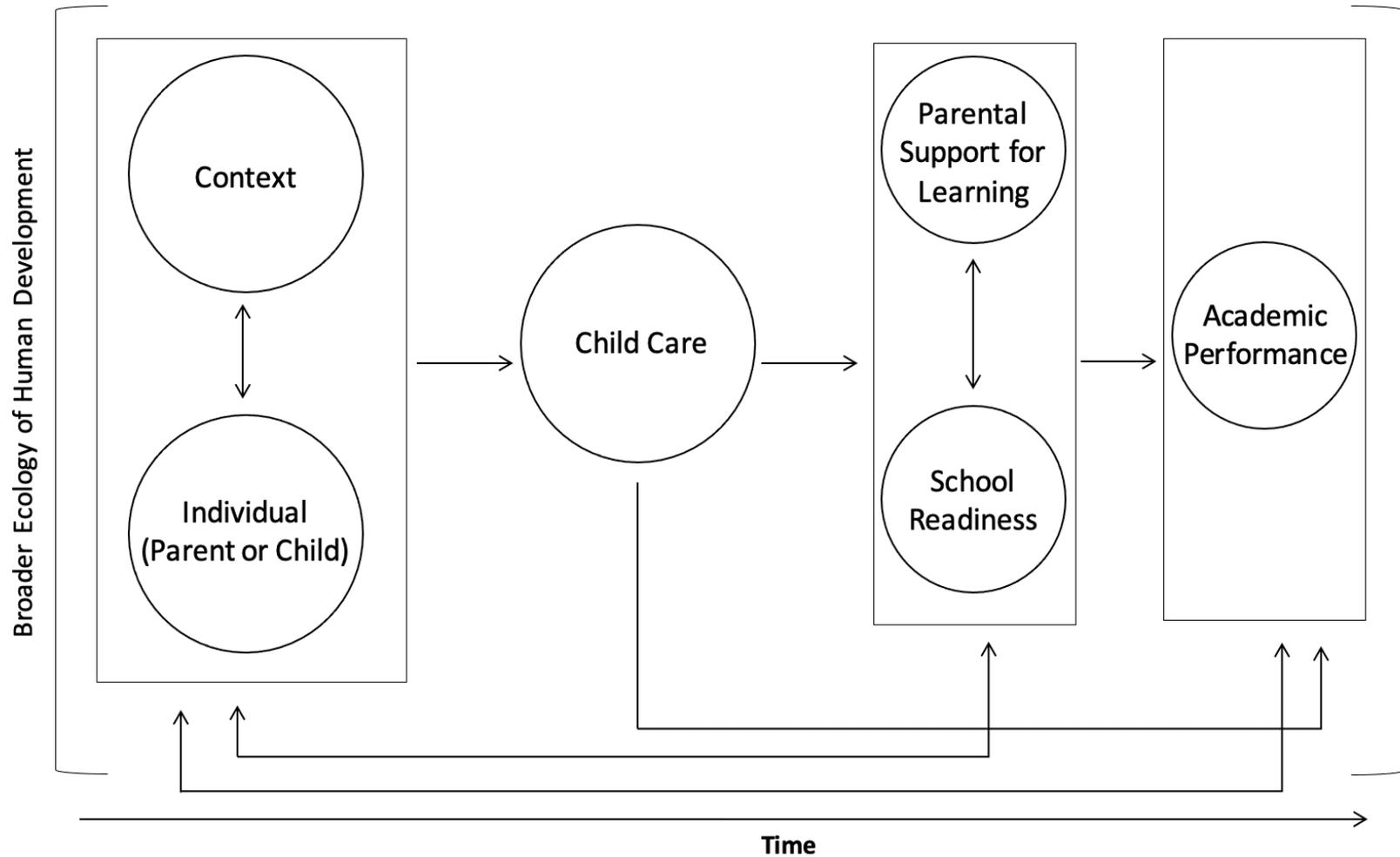


Social and behavioral problems

MECHANISMS UNDERLYING THE ASSOCIATION BETWEEN CHILD CARE AND DEVELOPMENT

- **Consideration of both direct and indirect benefits of child care**
 - Child's direct experiences in the child care environment
 - Interrelations between individual and multiple contexts in which they are embedded
- **Limited research investigating multiple pathways through which child care may promote positive development**
- **Relational theoretical framework can help to illuminate the processes by which child care promotes positive development**

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK



PRESENT STUDY

- A stronger understanding of child care as a potential contextual asset is essential in order to optimize development and better understand the short- and long-term outcomes associated with child care use, particularly among children of adolescent mothers.

Research Questions:

- Is participation in organized child care (prior to K) associated with children's academic performance in elementary school in a sample of children of young mothers?
- Do school readiness and maternal involvement in literacy related activities mediate the association between early child care use and academic performance?

METHOD

- Randomized Control Trial (RCT) evaluation of Healthy Families Massachusetts
- Time 1 = study enrollment
- Time 2 = 12 months after enrollment
- Time 3 = 24 months after enrollment
- Time 4 = 5 years of age
- Time 5 = 6 years of age
- Time 6 = 8 years of age



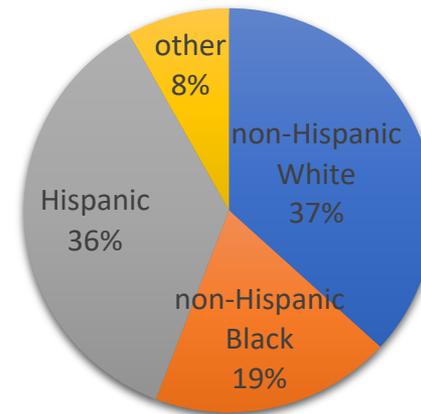
healthy
familiestm

a children's trust program

Participants and Procedure

- 704 Mother-Child Dyads
- Mothers were 19 years old at child's birth
- 53% of children were boys
- 74% spoke English in the home
- 54% had at least a GED or HS diploma when children entered Kindergarten
- Majority eligible for free and reduced lunch
- Majority economically disadvantaged

Race/Ethnicity



■ non-Hispanic White ■ non-Hispanic Black ■ Hispanic ■ other

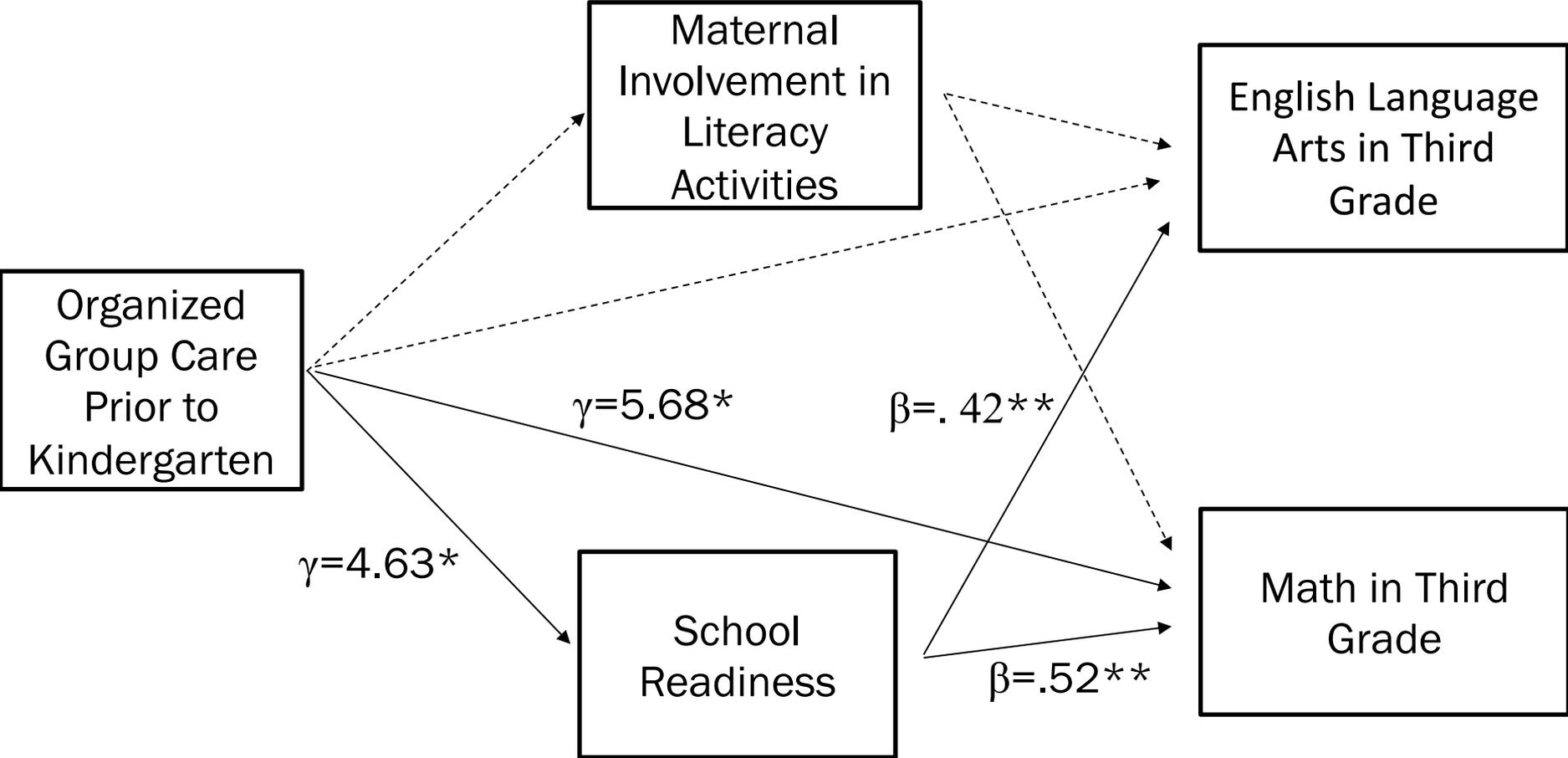
MEASURES

Construct	Source	Time of Data Collection
Organized Group Care (enrolled for at least 10 hours/week)	Maternal self-report	T1-T4 (before kindergarten)
Standardized School Performance in Math & ELA	MA Department of Elementary and Secondary Education	Spring of Third grade
School Readiness	Bracken School Readiness Assessment, 3rd Edition (BRSA-3; Bracken, 2007)	T4
Maternal Involvement in Literacy-Related Activities	Home Literacy Environment Questionnaire (HLEQ; Lonigan & Farver, 2002)	T4

ANALYTIC APPROACH

- Assessed whether children's school readiness and maternal involvement in literacy related activities at age 5 mediated the association between children's participation in organized group care and standardized school performance measures in third grade
- Maternal age at childbirth, race/ethnicity, language, education, child sex, whether child qualified for free and reduced lunch, and program participation were included as covariates in the model
- Path Analysis using R version 3.6.2

RESULTS



CONCLUSIONS AND KEY POINTS

- Children who participated in organized child care (part- or full-time) prior to kindergarten entry demonstrated higher school readiness and performed better on assessments of mathematics and English language arts in 3rd grade
 - Both direct (child care to 3rd grade math) and indirect (child care to math and English language arts via school readiness) pathways of influence
- Results support previous research linking model early childhood programs and community-based organized child care participation to short- and long-term outcomes
- Extends work to a population that typically is at risk for educational challenges and school dropout
- Maternal involvement in literacy activities did not mediate the association between early child care participation and later academic performance



IMPLICATIONS & NEXT STEPS

- Organized child care is an important resource for fostering readiness to benefit from formal schooling, and for enhancing competence as assessed by standardized formal assessments of learning
- An important next step will be to examine potential 2-generation effects. Child care allows parents, especially those with low economic or social resources, to enhance their educational and economic trajectories
- Providing access (geographic, economic) to organized child care early in life, whether part- or full-time, may show social and economic return on investment
 - Fostering children's school readiness and performance
 - Potential long-term effects on high school graduation and post-secondary education
 - Reductions in family stress and challenges associated with economic pressure
 - Closing opportunity gap



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