

# Chicago Longitudinal Study

Issue 1

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## THE CHICAGO LONGITUDINAL STUDY

The Chicago Longitudinal Study (CLS) investigates the educational and social development of 1,539 low-income children (93% of whom are African American) who grew up in high-poverty neighborhoods in Chicago. Born in 1980, they graduated from kindergarten programs in the Chicago Public Schools in 1986.

The original sample included all 1,150 children who attended or received services from 20 Child-Parent Centers in preschool in 1983-85 and/or kindergarten in 1985-1986. The remaining 389 children of the same age participated in an alternative full-day kindergarten program in 5 Chicago public schools in similar neighborhoods.

Followed since kindergarten, most youth completed their senior year of high school in the spring of 1998 or 1999. Currently, study participants are 20 years of age. Extensive tracking is being undertaken to determine how many went on to higher education, how many are employed, how many returned to get their GED, as



well as other areas of well-being. Future data collection in this on-going 15-year study is planned when these young adults are age 22.

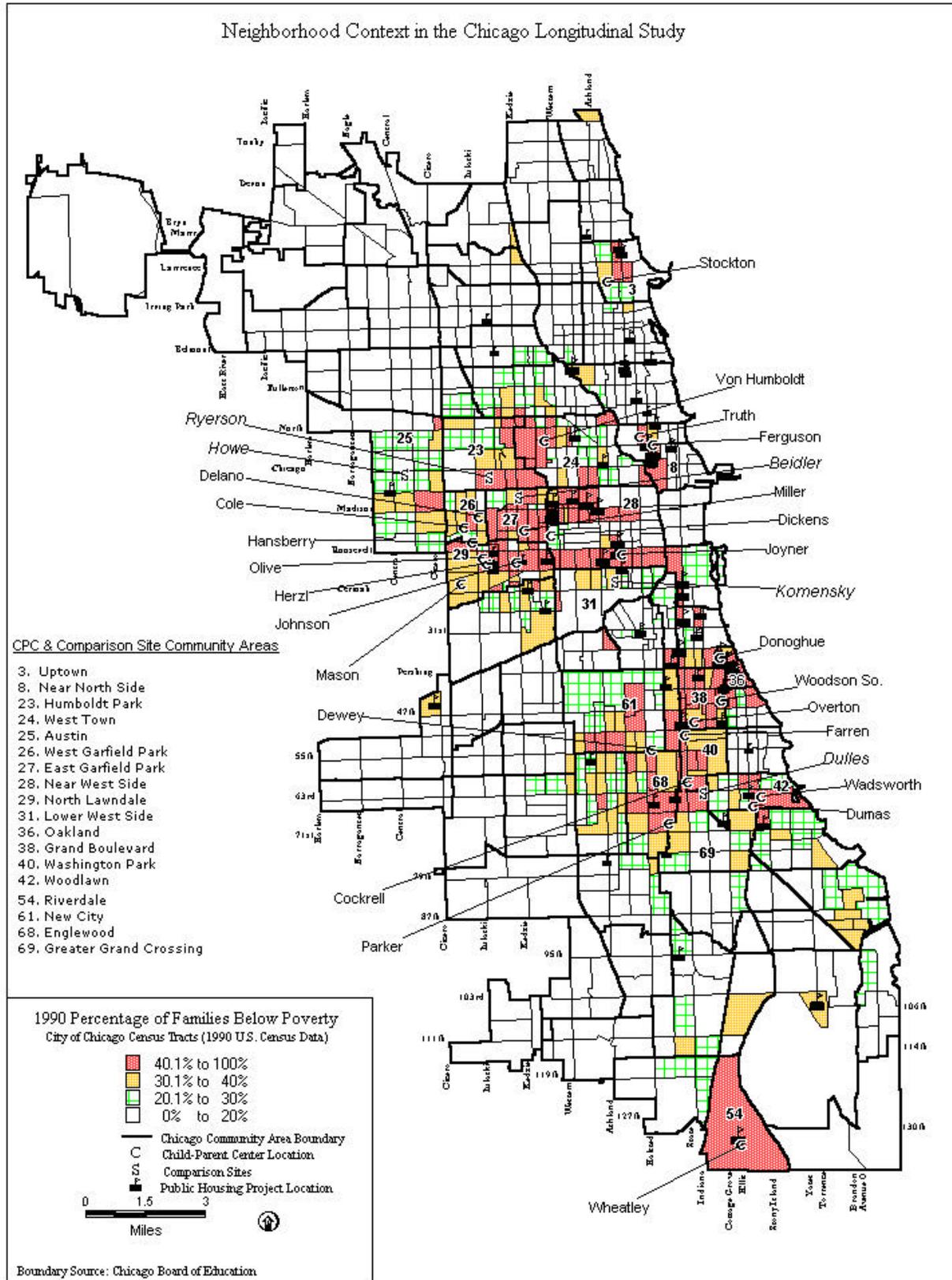
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The CLS is guided by four major goals:

1. To document patterns of school and social competence over time.
2. To evaluate the effects of the Child-Parent Center Program on child, youth, and family development.
3. To better understand how early childhood experiences affect later school performance, social behavior, and career plans.
4. To investigate the contributions to children's success of personal, family, school, and community factors, especially those that are alterable.

Figure 1



## CHILD-PARENT CENTER PROGRAM

The Child-Parent Center (CPC) Program is a center-based early intervention that provides comprehensive educational and family-support services to low-income children and their parents from preschool to early elementary school (from ages 3 to 9). The program was founded by Dr. Lorraine Sullivan, the Superintendent of District 8 in the Chicago Public Schools, in response to the educational needs of families in the district. Funding came from the landmark Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965.

The CPC program opened in May 1967 in four sites on Chicago's west side. They were named Cole, Dickens, Hansberry, and Olive Child-Parent Education Centers. The residential population in the East Garfield Park, West Garfield Park, and North Lawndale community areas surrounding the centers was nearly 100% African American; 30% of the residents had incomes below the federal poverty level. The program is the second oldest (after Head Start) federally-funded preschool program in the U. S. and the oldest extended early childhood program.

Currently, the CPC program operates in 24 centers throughout the Chicago Public Schools (see Figure 1 on page 2). Twenty centers have offered services in preschool and kindergarten plus first to second or



Table 1

### Characteristics of the CLS Sample

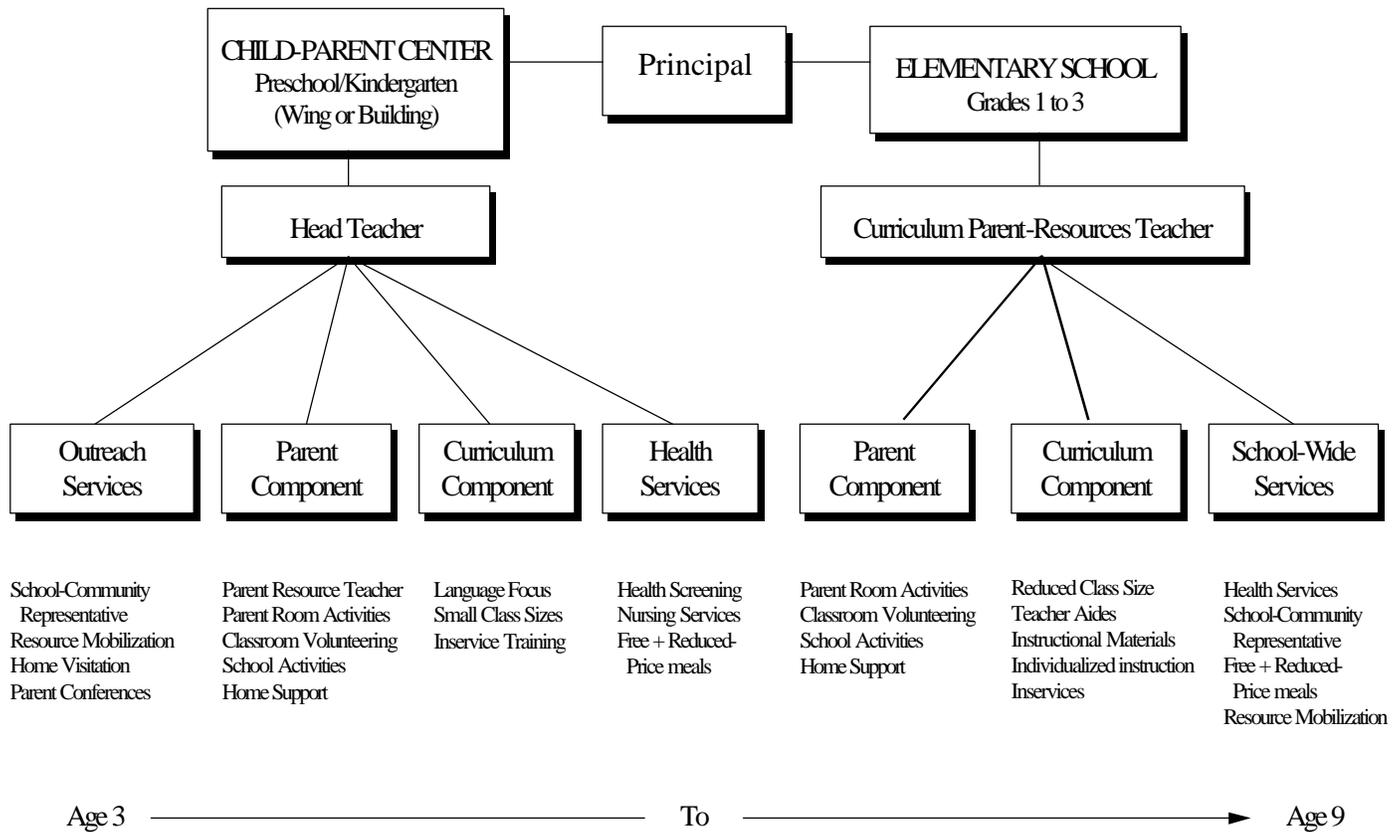
#### Sample Characteristics

Number of children	1,539
CPC preschool and kindergarten participation	989
No CPC preschool but full-day kindergarten	550
Percent in CPC preschool	64.3
Percent in CPC primary-grade component	55.2
Percent African American	92.9
Percent girls	50.0
Percent eligible for federal lunch program	92.4
Percent of parents who completed high school	64.0
Mean age at kindergarten entry in months (fall 1985)	63.1
Percent from high-poverty neighborhoods (60% or more in low-income families)	76.1
Percent in Chicago 6 years or more by age 14	82.5

first to third grades; and four centers have provided services in preschool and in first and second grades. Since 1977, the primary-grade portion of the program (also called the Expansion program) has been funded by Chapter I through the State of Illinois Department of Education. Eighteen centers are in separate buildings proximate to the elementary school and 6 are in wings of the parent elementary school.

The major rationale of the program is that the foundation for school success is facilitated by the presence of a stable and enriched learning environment during the entire early childhood period

Figure 2  
Child-Parent Center Program



(ages 3 to 9) and when parents are active participants in their children's education.

The centers provide comprehensive services, require parents to participate, and implement child-centered approaches to literacy, social, and cognitive development. Children participate for a half-day in preschool, full-day or half-day in kindergarten, and full-day in first and second grade or first to third grade in the elementary school. There is no uniform curriculum but classroom activities are designed to promote basic language and reading skills as well as social and psychological development. An instructional guide called the Chicago EARLY has suggested learning activities. Field trips are common.

Ratios of children to teachers and aides are 17 to 2 in preschool and 25 to 2 in kindergarten and the primary grades. In the primary grades, at least 50% of the children in each classroom are from the CPCs. The CPCs typically require at least a half-

day a week of parent involvement, including a variety of activities from classroom involvement to enrollment in adult education classes. A separate parent resource room is staffed by a parent resource teacher and each CPC has a school-community representative.

Figure 2 shows the organization of the Child-Parent Center program. Each center is directed by a head teacher who is responsible for all aspects of program delivery. The program is implemented in a separate building in close proximity to the feeder elementary school or in a wing of the elementary school. The head teacher coordinates the program in the center and reports directly to the principal of the feeder elementary school.

In addition to the parent resource teacher, the school-community representative conducts outreach activities in the neighborhood, helps to enroll children most in need, and makes home visits.

**SHORT-TERM EFFECTS OF THE CPC PROGRAM :  
FINDINGS FROM AGE 5—13**

In analyses that compared children who participated in the CPC preschool program (either 1 or 2 years) with a comparison group of children who did not, we found that children who attended preschool significantly outperformed those in the comparison group. Specifically, preschool had the largest effect on cognitive readiness at school entry, with children gaining approximately 3 months performance. In addition, preschool participants were retained less often and had lower rates of special education placement through age 13.

By the end of grade 3, only 7.1% of the preschool group received special education services compared to 11.5% of the no preschool group.

When examining later effects, meaningful differences were found in reading and math achievement in grades 4 - 6, with the children attending preschool scoring significantly better. Parents of the preschool group also remained more involved in their children’s schooling through the 6th grade. Again, the largest effects were in reduced grade retention and special education placement through grade 6 for

Table 2				
Extensive Participation in the CPC Program and School Achievement				
	Extended 4-6 Years		Not Extended	
	Grade Equivalent	National Percentile	Grade Equivalent	National Percentile
Age 9 - Reading Achievement	3.4	38	2.9	24
Age 9 - Math Total	3.6	43	3.2	26
Age 13 - Reading Achievement	6.9	34	6.5	24
Age 13 - Math Total	7.0	32	6.4	19

children who attended preschool.

When examining the effects of extended participation (4-6 years of intervention) versus less extended intervention (2-3 years or preschool plus kindergarten only), our results indicate that 15.3% of children who had extended intervention were retained in grade compared to 30.1% in the less extended group.

For special education placement, 10.0% of children who received extended intervention compared to 15.7% of children in the less extended intervention group received special services. These results are based on the children at the end of 6th grade.

Table 3				
Preschool Participation in the CPC Program and School Achievement				
School Performance	CPC Preschool Participation		Comparison Group (Full-day kindergarten)	
	Grade Equivalent	National Percentile	Grade Equivalent	National Percentile
Age 5 Kindergarten Readiness ITBS Basic Composite	K.2	47	P.9	28
End of Kindergarten ITBS Word Analysis	1.1	63	K.8	48
End of Kindergarten ITBS Math Achievement	K.8	50	K.5	35

ITBS = Iowa Test of Basic Skills; All values take into account sex of child, risk status, and program sites

**LONG-TERM EFFECTS OF THE CPC PROGRAM:  
FINDINGS FROM AGE 14—20**

These findings examined whether the CPC program from preschool to the early grades continued to have an impact on academic achievement and development at ages 14 to 20.

**Q:** *Did youth who participated in the CPC program do better academically than those who did not participate in the program?*

Yes. Youth who participated in the CPC program (regardless of the amount of time) had higher reading and math scores at age 15 than the comparison group. Specifically, youth who participated in the preschool program had approximately a 4-month gain in performance in both reading and math achievement at age 15. Former graduates of the CPC program also passed the life-skills competency test (Minimum Proficiency Skills Test) at a higher rate than non-participants (62% to 50%). This test is administered in 8th grade and students need to pass it before graduating from high school (no longer required).

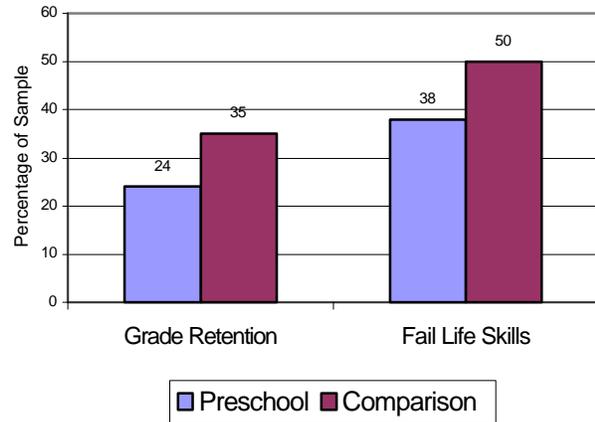
**Q:** *Were youth who participated in the CPC program less likely to get retained?*

Yes. By age 15 (grade 9), both CPC preschool participants and CPC primary-grade participants were less likely than the comparison

group to be retained during the elementary grades. Preschool participants had a 31% lower rate of grade retention (24% vs. 35%; see Figure 4 below).

Figure 4

Percent Ever Retained/Failed Skills Test



**Q:** *Were adolescents who participated in the CPC program less likely to be placed in special education?*

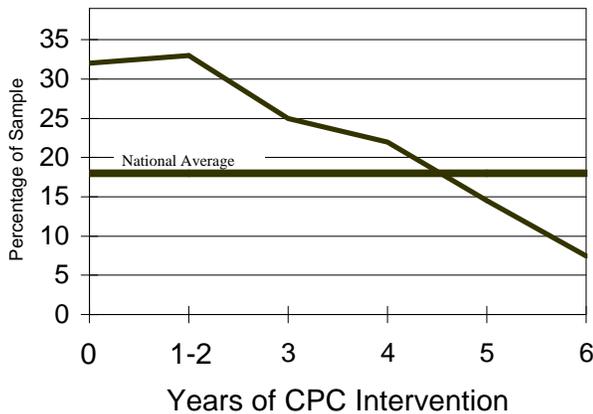
Yes. By age 15, 16% of preschool participants received special education services compared with 21.3% of the comparison group. Only 12% of children with extended program participation received special education services. These differences increased over time. By age 18, program participants spent, on average, .5 to 1.0 fewer years in special education than the comparison group.

**Q:** *Was the duration of participation associated with educational success?*

Yes. Years of program participation was significantly associated with all outcome measures at ages 14 and 15 in the expected direction. School performance increased noticeably after 4 years of intervention. Five or six years of participation yielded the best performance, and the six-year group was above the Chicago public school average in reading achievement. Most impressively, the cumulative

Figure 3

Grade Retention by Age 14



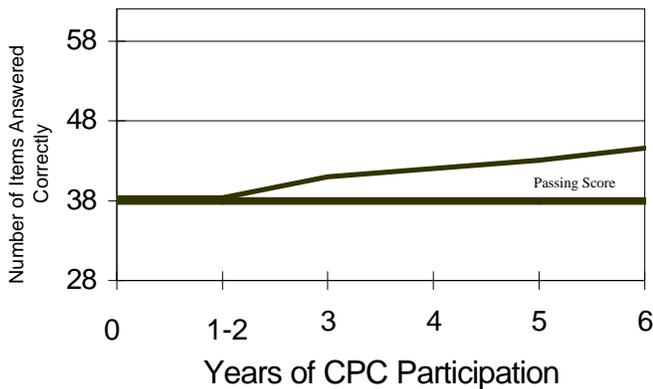
rate of grade retention for the five-year and six-year groups was below the national average of 18% (See Figure 3 on page 6). Participation for 4, 5, or 6 years yielded significantly higher math achievement, life skills competence, and lower rates of grade retention and special education placement than less extensive participation and no participation.

**Q: Who benefits most from participation?**

Overall, the effects of the CPC program appeared to benefit boys in early school achievement and in educational attainment. Girls appeared to benefit more than boys from participation in the follow-on program

Figure 5

Consumer Skills by Years of CPC Participation

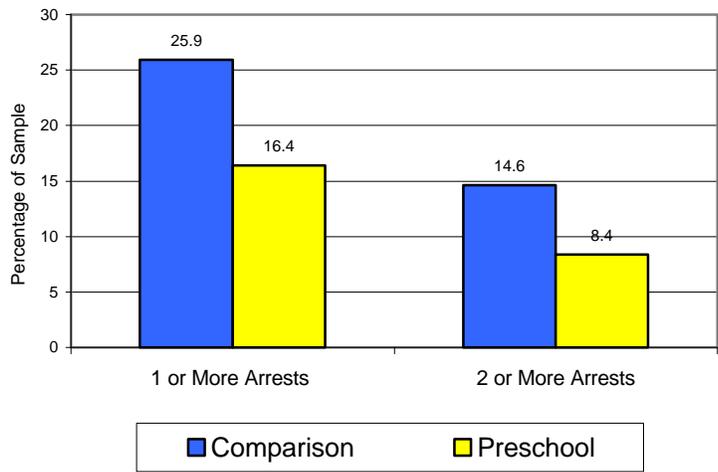


in reading and math achievement.

Children who attended programs in the highest poverty neighborhoods (> 60% low-income) benefited more on school achievement and educational attainment than children who attended programs in lower poverty neighborhoods. In addition, children who attended CPC's with a relatively greater focus on teacher-directed activities had higher school achievement and a lower rate of grade retention than children who attended centers that provided less structured activities. The effects of the program did not differ by level of parent education or family income.

Figure 6

Juvenile Arrests for Preschool Groups by Age 18



**Q: Did the early intervention program reduce delinquency?**

Yes. CPC preschool participation was associated with lower rates of official juvenile arrests as measured by petitions to the juvenile court (see Figure 6 above). Specifically, preschool participants had a 37% lower rate (16.4% vs. 25.9%) of juvenile arrest by age 18 than the comparison group. Furthermore, this pattern of lower delinquency continued to favor the preschool group when examined over the number of arrests, for example, 2 or more arrests, 3 or more arrests, etc.



**WHAT FACTORS PROMOTE RESILIENCE?**

With barriers to successful adolescent adjustment mounting, it is important to understand how children overcome adversities and what resources they may use to help them remain optimistic about their future.

Previous research has shown that there are certain factors that help kids cope with the risks and stressful life events they face. These are called protective factors. Some of these include individual factors such as good problem solving skills, intellectual skills, social competence, a sense of humor and the belief that you have some control over your life.

Family factors have also been shown to be protective. In fact, social relationships are one of the best indicators of children’s behavior. Having a good relationship that consists of someone who is warm and caring and not overly critical has been shown to have a substantial protective effect and contributes to resiliency among children.

The school environment can also be a protective factor. Favorite teachers were among the most frequently cited positive role models in the lives of children. Successful school environments include an academic focus, clear expectations and regulations, a high level of student participation, caring personnel and an array of resources for students to choose from. Finally, community, friends, and

“The movie about my life would be about how a family that has little but a lot of love and would do anything to make the other succeed. The theme of the movie would be “I don’t want you to end up like me but better than me.” Franklin D. Roosevelt said “There’s nothing to fear but fear itself.” I live by those words. I don’t let anything get me down...My movie would show that every family has problems and eventually it would work out. Maybe it’s not what you wanted but if you try hard, it would be O.K.”

neighborhoods can be protective factors. Communities with resources, friends who are dependable and trustworthy and neighborhoods that have strong networks of support can help serve as protective factors.

The Chicago Longitudinal Study interviewed a subsample of 95 students when they were in the 10th grade about their social and academic experiences. Adolescents were asked what success meant to them and who had influenced them most in their life. They also wrote an essay that asked them to picture themselves in a movie about their life. They were asked to write about what this movie would look like: what were some of the important events and persons they would include, what was important to them, how they got to where they are today, and where their life is heading in the future. The quotes that follow come from these interviews and essays.

Approximately half of the respondents detailed struggles that they had to overcome. Having the ability to overcome adversity was a common theme in the students’ essays.

“I would want to show all the good things and bad things that happened in my life. I want people to see the tragedy that accrued so they would know my life wasn’t just fun and games. I want them to see all the stumbling blocks I hurdled over and all the temptations I was almost tempted to do. To show that the things that you go through in life are just obstacles and they can’t hold you back.”

**Individual Factors** - Approximately 48% of the respondents reported having an optimistic outlook on life. About 56% had either vague or explicit aspirations for the future and 33% were motivated to achieve these aspirations. Family members, especially mothers, school teachers, and personal outlook or attitude were important influences that shaped the self perceptions, optimism and future expectations of youth. Many of the essays emphasized the need for endurance, perseverance and determination. When youth face a lot of risk, the role of personal optimism is valuable.

“Life is a wonderful gift and you should make the best out of life. Always finish what you start and never leave anything unfinished. If you really want to you will receive. All you have to do is just try hard. Never let any one tell you what you can’t do. If you don’t believe in yourself who will? Basically just go out and give it all you got.”

**Family Factors** - 87% of youth described positive relationships to their families. Youth reporting close ties to their families tended to mention fewer environmental risks such as gangs, drugs, and dropping out of high school in their surroundings. This decrease in risk combined with close relationships with family demonstrates the importance of family as a protective factor.

In 10th grade, students were asked:  
Q: If you attended a Child-Parent Center, what do you remember most about it?

**Top 10 Responses**

- 1 Fun
- 2 Teacher
- 3 Friends / kids
- 4 Playing
- 5 Trips
- 6 ABC’s
- 7 Learning / educational
- 8 Work / taking tests
- 9 Arts & Crafts
- 10 Coloring / Painting

“In this movie about my life I would first have my parents. If it wasn’t for their overprotectiveness I might not be where I am. They love me and have always taught me to do right. I know a lot of kids who don’t have that and are now in gangs and always in the streets. I would also include my siblings, close relatives and friends for all their support.”

Another student wrote:

“My uncles and my mother are the people who influenced my life the most. They are the ones who were on me everyday to make something of myself and to be the best at it.”

Youth who reported having a positive relationship with their mother also reported positive experiences in school and noted the importance of school to their later success. The importance of the parenting role is clearly an important factor in fostering the students’ academic awareness and drive for achievement.

“My mother got me where I am today...and to get where



“I think that my life story would be a success story. About how children can make it out of poverty and make something of themselves in the real world. It would inspire other children to work hard and be all they can be. And it would help adults recognize how much guidance their children need from them even though we don’t act like it. The movie would have a lot of the bad things I’ve gone through but it would also have my family and friends and what they helped me go through it all. Then it would also have my accomplishments despite all the tragedies in my life. The movie would have me go back to my neighborhood and school and try to help the people and children there by giving them a good influence and someone to look up to (Like when I was young my only influence was my mom but you need more than just your disappointments to make you make something of yourself).

I think that the movie should have me going through my tragedies, disappointments and heart breaks. But through it all, it would have my family and friends help me to keep on my steady track and see that getting an education is important for the future and to decide what you are going to be.”

**Friends and Neighborhood** - The role of friends was mixed in this sample. For some, friends were very supportive and stayed with you through “thick and thin.” For others, friends often weren’t there when you needed them and, even worse, could lead you “off track” into dangerous areas of risk that adolescents were working hard to avoid.

“My friends, they are my friends through thick and thin. They stuck by me when I was down and out, so they are like a part of my family.”

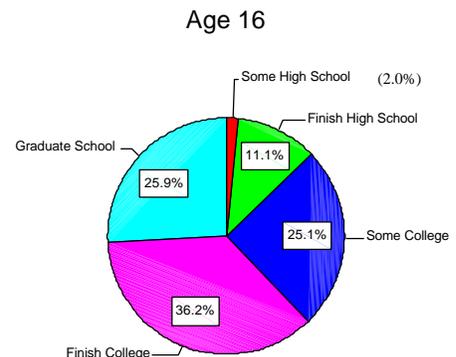
“I really don’t have a lot to say about my friends. Because friends are not always friends, they are your friends only when they need you, but when you need them, they are never there. It’s hard to know who is a real friend these days.”

These findings highlight the critical role family members, teachers, schools, friends, neighborhoods and community support structures play in fostering youth development.

I’m going, I will need my mother’s help to keep telling me what’s good and bad about life and don’t let my friends talk me into doing things I don’t want to do, and don’t have any kids while I’m in school.”

**School Factors** - The majority of future goals or expectations entailed continued education. Many adolescents anticipated graduating from high school, going to college, graduate or even medical or law school. Education was clearly seen as a major route out of impoverished environments. Two consistent themes emerged concerning school environment: 1. the power of teachers in providing mentoring, role modeling and overall social support, and 2. certain school events or experiences that provided students with a feeling of accomplishment. “I also owe a lot to my teachers. Without them probably I wouldn’t be here. Especially...my freshman Algebra teacher. Even though I don’t have him for a teacher this year he still helps me. He is always letting me know how important it is to go to college now-days. Because without a degree my hands I can’t go anywhere in life.”

Figure 7  
How Far in School Do You Think You Will Get?



## FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

Graduating from high school is one of the most important milestones of adolescence because a diploma or its equivalent is required for almost all career endeavors. Failure to complete high school has significant costs to both society and youth. For example, it is estimated that the annual cost to society of school dropout is \$250 billion dollars on lost earnings and forgone tax revenues. Youth who fail to complete high school are more likely to be unemployed, experience health difficulties, and be involved in the criminal justice system.

Given that the highest rates of school dropout are in large urban districts, exploring the factors that predict high school completion, educational attainment and school success in urban settings is important. This is especially the case since substantial investments in education today are at all levels of society. Moreover, many of the predictors of educational attainment can be significantly influenced by program and policy intervention, and by families and the children themselves. What follows are four alterable predictors of educational attainment based on findings from the Chicago Longitudinal Study.

### ◆ Participation in the Chicago Child-Parent Centers

Preschool participation in the CPC program was associated with higher rates of high school completion by

age 20. Relative to the comparison group, preschool participants had a 26% higher rate of high school completion. Boys benefited more than girls. As shown in Figure 8, boys in the preschool program had a 41% higher rate of high school completion than boys in the comparison group.

Participation in the extended intervention to second or third grade was associated with higher school achievement and competence. Finally, those children who attended the CPCs for 5 or 6 years showed the highest levels of educational attainment.

### ◆ Grade Retention (Repetition)

No matter when it occurred, grade retention was associated with higher rates of school dropout and with lower rates of school completion. After matching on prior school performance, students who were retained in the elementary grades (K to grade 8) had a 30% higher rate of school dropout than promoted students (59.6% vs. 45.8%) and a 33% lower rate of high school completion than their promoted age peers (33.6% vs. 50.4%). (See Figure 9 on page 11).

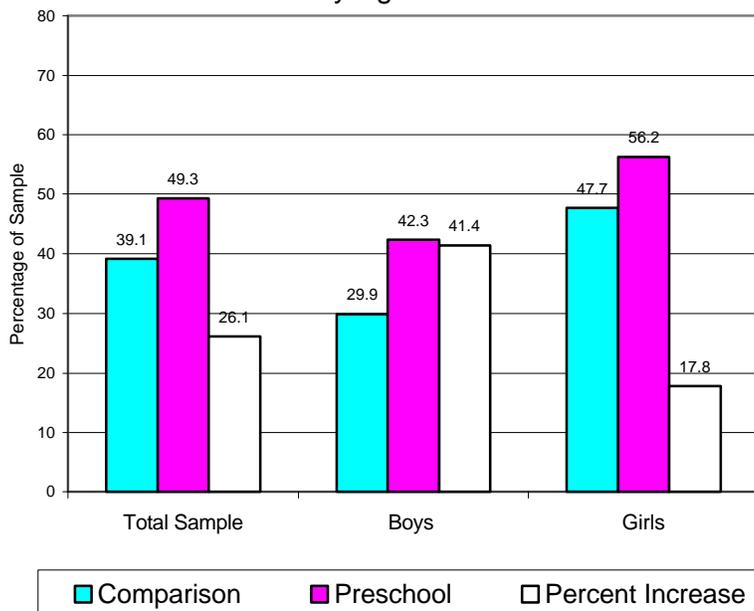
Children who were retained in first grade and who then participated for two years in the CPC follow-on program that included reduced class sizes, extra instructional services and parent involvement activities, did not show better achievement than retained children who did not participate in the program after being retained. Thus, retention plus remediation did not enhance children's educational success.

### ◆ School and Neighborhood Characteristics

Both school characteristics and neighborhood attributes contribute significant information to children's

Figure 8

Proportion of Youth Completing High School by Age 20

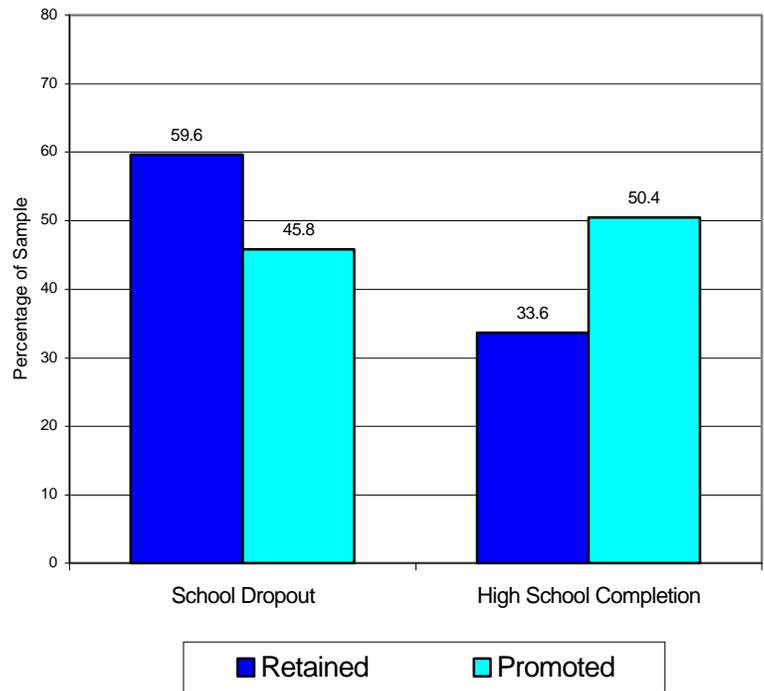


educational attainment. For example, children who attended magnet elementary schools had higher educational attainment, even after school achievement prior to enrollment in magnet schools was taken into account. Also related to educational attainment were rates of school-level mobility in elementary and high school, neighborhood family income and the presence of middle income families in the neighborhood in high school. Attending schools with greater levels of race/ethnic diversity was associated with higher levels of school completion. Finally, high school type (i.e. technical, career academy, magnet) also predicted higher rates of high school completion.

◆ Parent Involvement in School and Children’s Education

Parental school involvement in the elementary grades is a significant predictor of educational attainment. Specifically, the number of years in which teachers rated parent school involvement as average or better was associated with

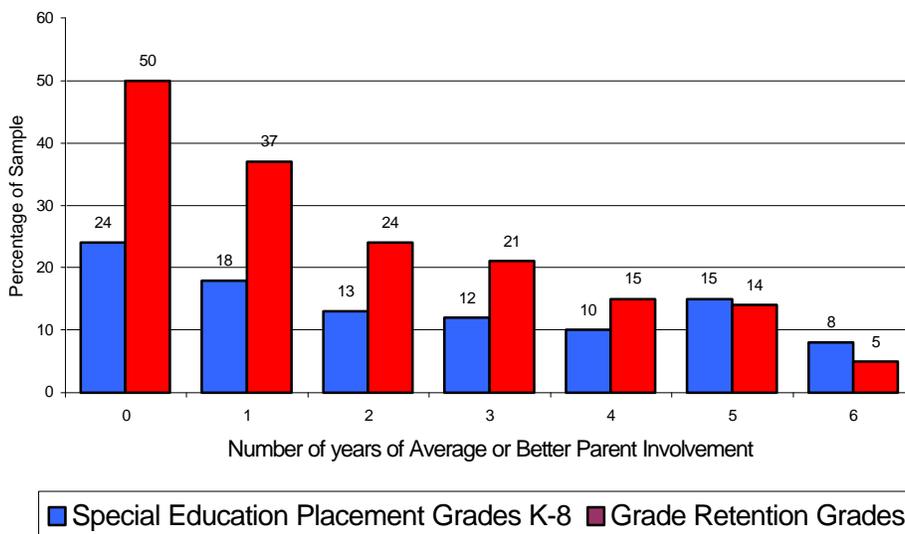
Figure 9  
Educational Attainment by Age 20 for Students Retained or Promoted in Elementary School



higher rates of high school completion and with lower rates of school dropout. In addition, teachers ratings of parent involvement also influenced retention and special education placement (see Figure 10).

Figure 10

Special Education Placement and Grade Retention in Elementary School by Number of Years of Average or Better Parent Involvement



Educational Attainment by Age 20 (n = 1261)	
Attend College or Vocational School	23%
High School Completion	28%
Some High School (Grades 9-11)	33.5%
Middle School (Grades 7-8)	15.5%

## FAMILY INFLUENCES

Parents had very positive attitudes toward school and their child's education. When their children were age 12, over 95% reported that school was important to get a good job, that they liked helping their children with homework, and that they expected their child to go far in school. Ninety-two percent said that they liked going to their child's school.

Parents also reported several types of interactions with their children. For example, 85% of parents helped their children with homework and 79% discussed school progress more than once a week, or often (see Table 4). Less common were parents helping in the classroom.

Parent involvement in and attitudes towards school were more associated with reading and math achievement and competence ratings in 6th grade than parent-child interactions in the home. Specifically, whether parents liked going to their child's school, their satisfaction

Interaction	Percent
Help with homework	85
Discuss school progress	79
Cooking	52
Reading	44
Limit TV time	41
Talk to teacher	40
Participate in school activities	14
Go to museum or zoo	22
Go on trips to other cities	16
Help in classroom	7

with school and whether their child's school did a good job informing them of school events were all positively related to competence.

Surprisingly, parent-child interactions such as whether parents read to their child and help with their homework were not associated with school achievement or competence. Finally, parents' community involvement and the frequency of reading the newspaper were positively associated with their children's achievement. This indicates that parents' time-use reflects on their child's school adjustment and achievement.

Very Satisfied	86.3 %
Somewhat Satisfied	12.0 %
Somewhat Dissatisfied	1.1 %
Very Dissatisfied	.5 %

Most frequently attended colleges and universities	
Top 12 schools:	
1	Harold Washington College
2	Northern Illinois University
2	Southern Illinois University
2	Malcolm X College
5	University of Illinois at Champaign
5	Robert Morris College
5	Olive Harvey College
8	Chicago State University
9	Daley College
10	Kennedy King
11	University of Illinois at Chicago
11	East - West College

Figure 11

Grade Students Gave Their High School (12th Grade)

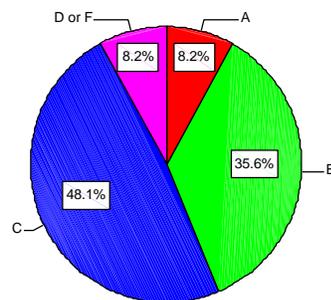
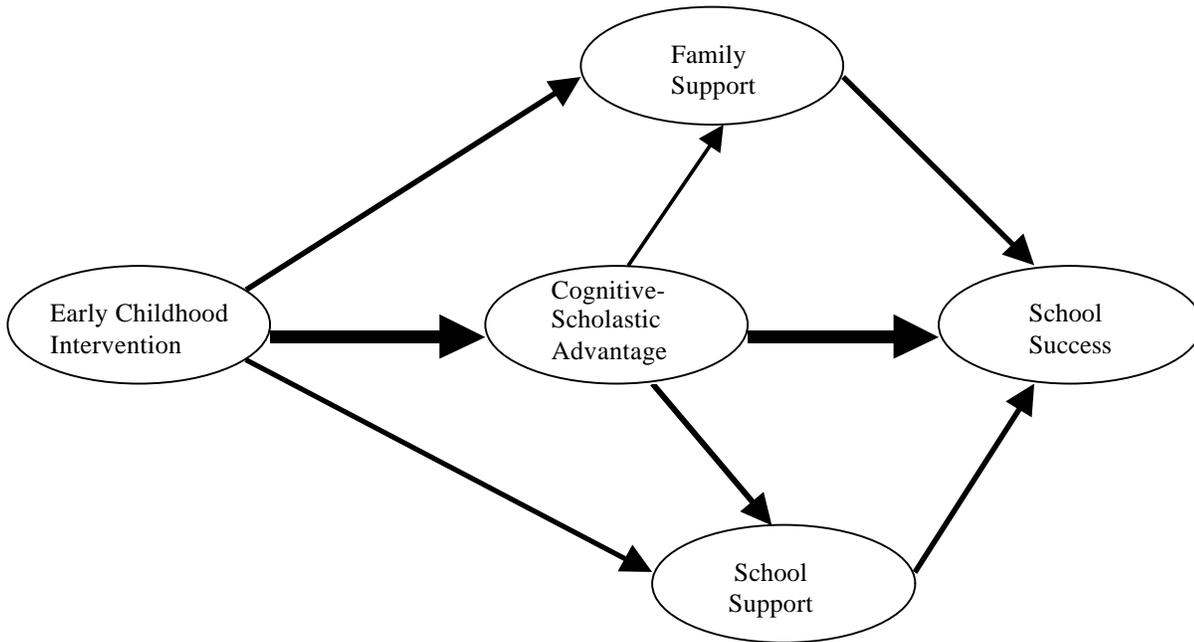


Figure 12  
How Early Intervention Influences Children’s School Success



There are several reasons that explain how the CPC program influenced children’s later school success. Three of these are shown in Figure 11. The thicker the line, the greater the influence of the respective path-

way. The cognitive-scholastic advantage hypothesis indicates that the positive effects of preschool on school success come about because children begin school ready to learn, which leads to a positive cycle of performance and commitment that persists over time. We have strong evidence in the study supporting this early educational advantage.

The family support hypothesis indicates that the effects of early childhood intervention on long-term success is a consequence of improved family functioning. In our study, children’s program participation is associated with greater levels of parent involvement, which leads to greater school and social competence.

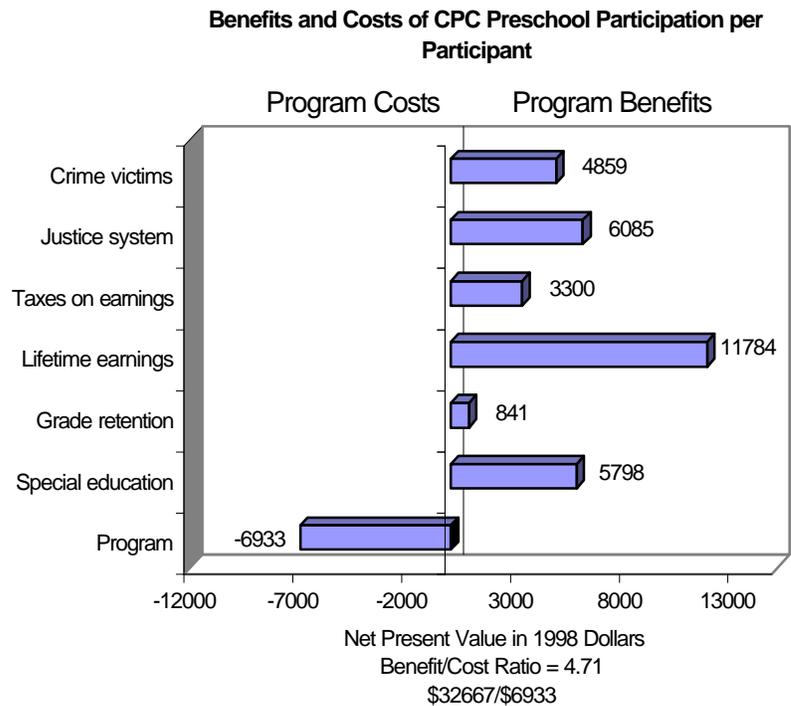
Finally, the school support hypothesis has been confirmed in the study. This hypothesis indicates that the quality of the post-program school environment is crucial to maintaining the longer-term effects of early intervention. Our research has shown that one of the reasons the effects of early childhood intervention persists over time is that children are more likely to attend high quality schools and are less likely to move, thus maintaining the beneficial effects gained in the program.

What prevented involvement in high school?	
Personal Problems	25.6%
Needed to get a Job	23.1%
Family Problems	15.0%
Feeling Uncomfortable at School	12.5%
Health Problems	11.7%
Taking Care of Own Child, Brother, Sister, or Relative	7.7%
Lack of Transportation	7.3%
Family not Supportive	5.1%
Safety Problems	4.8%

## COST-BENEFIT ANALYSIS

The benefits of CPC preschool participation in reducing later remediation and in increasing earnings capacity exceed program costs by a substantial amount. For every dollar invested in the preschool program, \$4.71 is saved by society at large in reduced costs of remedial education and justice system expenditures, and in increased earning capacity and tax revenues. Benefits to society relative to costs were even larger for one year of preschool (\$7.93) and for boys (\$6.36). Extended program participation for 4 to 6 years (relative to less extensive participation) and follow-on participation (relative to no participation) more than paid for themselves, returning from \$1.25-1.32 for every dollar invested.

Figure 13



### The Findings in the Chicago Longitudinal Study support the following implications for enhancing children's educational success

- 1 Invest greater levels of resources in early childhood programs (e.g., the Child-Parent Centers) beginning in preschool and continuing through the early primary grades. Returns to schools and society of these investments can far exceed costs.
- 2 Support early educational programs that provide comprehensive services to children and families. Such programs have a great chance to impact educational and social outcomes.
- 3 Provide greater opportunities for parental involvement in children's education during the earliest years of school. Parental involvement in school has long-term benefits.
- 4 Reexamine the school practice of grade retention as a major element of school reform to reduce its impact on school dropout.
- 5 Determine through systematic investigations why students who are retained are more likely than other similar students to drop out of school.
- 6 Promote school-community collaborations to encourage greater levels of school stability and greater resource investments in the most economically disadvantaged neighborhoods.

## A conversation with “Grandma Jackie”

Jacqueline Slater is a great-grandmother and the matriarch of three generations of Child Parent Center (CPC) students. She was involved with the Chicago Child Parent Centers at its inception and prior to the opening of the first CPC’s, Jacqueline was involved as a volunteer in the public elementary schools. She began volunteering with other parents in the neighborhood. She involved herself with the schools, the focal point of her community, not only to be close to her children, but to be an active voice for all children. Once she began to get involved with the CPC, she was hooked. She interpreted her role as a volunteer in the school as more than just a job.

“Being a volunteer was more than a job. It was a *community* job. I knew the kids. I knew their parents. I was a lawyer, a doctor, a counselor. Everybody knew me . . . I worked as a volunteer at Cole and then at Miller. I worked there from 1960 to 1988. I liked the Centers and so I decided to put all my children there . . . I had eleven children and nine of them went to the Miller CPC. One child died before he was old enough and one child lived with my Aunt, but all the rest--they went to the CPC. And then my grandchildren enrolled in Miller and now my great grandchildren are there. Three generations.”

The CPC is a family affair in the Slater family. While Jacqueline admits to family challenges, she credits much of her children’s successes on the family centered atmosphere of the CPC. Jacqueline speaks candidly about her family and the many hardships they endured. She speaks of the drugs and the loss of self-determination, which she attributes to one of her daughters, whose involvement with drugs cost her a grandchild, who died in a house fire in 1982. While the painful memories and continuing challenges still haunt the Slater family, Jacqueline does not forget about the successes.

“All my grandchildren were advanced [academically] in school because of the CPC. They got a head start . . . What I like about the CPC is the way that they teach children how to learn.”

Jacqueline states her role as an active parent was fostered by the CPC. She describes many activities that were taught to parents which encouraged reading and communication not only in school, but at home. Jacqueline proudly discusses her skills as a parent and as an educator. She explains fun techniques for cutting out letters of the alphabet and methods of encouraging young children to read.

Jacqueline Slater’s involvement in the Child-Parent-Centers lasted more than two decades. Within those years she volunteered in multiple capacities, picking up new skills and disseminating personal strategies which would be molded together for one purpose, to better the lives of children and their families in the Chicago Public Schools.

### Suggested Readings:

Reynolds, A. J. (2000). Success in early intervention: The Chicago Child-Parent Centers. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press.

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Reynolds, A. J., Miedel, W. T., & Mann, E. A. (2000). Innovation in early intervention for children in families with low incomes—Lessons from the Chicago Child-Parent Centers. Young Children, 55(2), 84-88.

Smokowski, P. R., Reynolds, A. J., & Bezruczko, N. (1999). Resilience and protective factors in adolescence: An autobiographical perspective from disadvantaged youth. Journal of School Psychology, 37, 425-448.

Sullivan, L. S. (1971). Let us not underestimate the children. Glenview, IL: Scott, Foresman and Company.

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### UNITY

I dreamed I stood in a studio  
And watched two sculptors there;  
The clay they used was a young child's mind  
And they fashioned it with care.  
One was a teacher; the tools he used  
Were books, music and art;  
One was a parent, who worked with a guiding hand  
And a gentle loving heart.  
Day after day the teacher toiled,  
With touch that was deft and sure,  
While the parent labored by his side  
And polished and smoothed it o'er.  
And when at last the task was done,  
They were proud of the work they had wrought  
For the things they had moulded into the child  
Could neither be sold nor bought.  
And each agreed they would have failed  
If he had worked alone.  
For behind the teacher stood the school  
And behind the parent, the home.  
(By Cleo Victoria Swarat)

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