



For Immediate Release
March 21, 2016

Contact:

Claudia Coulton, Ph.D.
Distinguished University Professor
Case Western Reserve University
(216) 368-2304
claudia.coulton@case.edu

Rob Fischer, Ph.D.
Research Professor
Case Western Reserve University
(216) 368-2711
fischer@case.edu

New OERC Report Identifies Risk Factors that Affect Kindergarten Readiness and Reading Proficiency

Innovative Methodology Shows Early Childhood Services Can Mitigate Risk Factors and Improve Educational Readiness and Achievement

Columbus, OH – Today the OERC released a new report, *Investigating the Pathway to Proficiency from Birth through 3rd Grade*. This study was conducted by researchers from Case Western Reserve University, Co-Principal Investigators Claudia Coulton, Ph.D. and Robert Fischer, Ph.D.. The researchers examined the relationship between individual, family, and neighborhood characteristics, mobility, early childhood services, kindergarten readiness and 3rd grade reading proficiency.

The report found a number of risk factors that negatively affect a child's kindergarten readiness and early literacy achievement, including: low birth-weight, English as a second language, neighborhood poverty rates, and residential mobility among other factors. Importantly, the report also found that participation in early childhood services (e.g. center-based childcare, Head Start, public preschool, and universal pre-kindergarten) improved a child's kindergarten readiness and likelihood of passing Ohio's 3rd grade reading test.

"The findings affirm the contribution of a number of known factors in children reaching school ready to learn," said Dr. Fischer. "However, the findings also call out the important role of high quality early learning and supportive services provided in early childhood."

This study employed a longitudinal, cohort design that followed children from birth through 3rd grade in the Cleveland Metropolitan School District. This study is unique in that the analysis was conducted using a dataset that linked together three different datasets. This integrated data system approach included data from the neighborhood, county and state level. This approach allowed for a comprehensive and robust analysis.

The data and methodology in this report offered insight into early childhood development that has implications for early childhood policy and practice across the state. "The linkage of data across the early

childhood period for individual children is a powerful method for understanding how the trajectories of children, as they enter school, are impacted by early experiences,” stated Dr. Coulton.

The results of the study highlight the importance of stability and consistency for the development of children’s literacy proficiency. Furthermore, the results make a case for the development of a cohesive bridge between early childhood services and the public school system. Such a system would help ensure consistency in child development and education, help prepare children for kindergarten, and improve the chances that students are proficient in reading by 3rd grade.

###

About OERC

The OERC is a collaboration of seven universities and four research organizations that conduct education and workforce research, provide access to research data, and seek to share research findings with policymakers and practitioners. The OERC provides access to research data through the Ohio Longitudinal Data Archive. The OLDA creates linkages between longitudinal workforce and educational records to measure the experiences of individuals from childhood through the workforce. The OERC is headquartered at The Ohio State University and is coordinated by the John Glenn College of Public Affairs. For more information visit: www.oerc.osu.edu.