

Using Local Data to Evaluate Educational Outcomes

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System of Care in Fort Worth, Texas "Community Solutions"

- Inter-agency effort led by city's Public Health department
- Phase IV community
- School-based program
 - Fort Worth Independent School District (FWISD)
 - Approximately 150 schools
 - 4 Family Resource Centers – primary referral source

Academic Outcomes

- School district had a strong interest in academic outcomes
- Although the national longitudinal study includes caregiver-report data such as the *Education Questionnaire*, the school district wanted richer data from students' actual academic records.
- In principle, academic data was available in the district's centralized student database.
 - However, gaining access to such information is not always straightforward.

Barriers to Obtaining Academic Records

- Cooperation of district or individual schools
- Privacy / confidentiality issues
- Bureaucracy / institutional inertia
- Logistical procedures / workflow / individual relationships

Barriers to Obtaining Academic Records

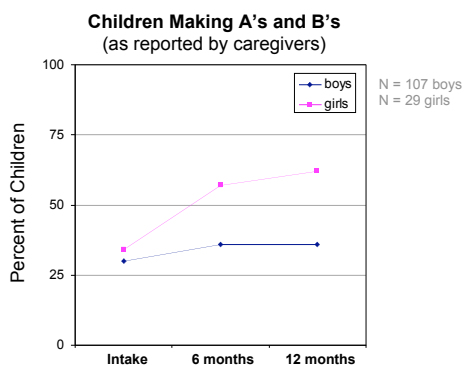
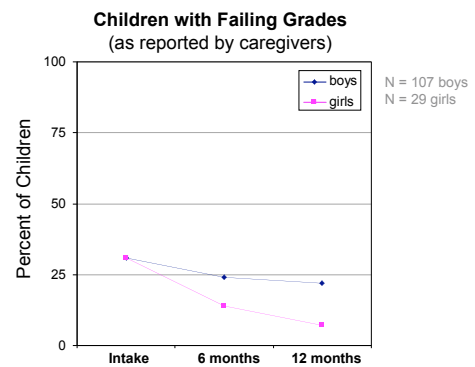
- Cooperation of district or individual schools ✓
- Privacy / confidentiality issues ✓
- Bureaucracy / institutional inertia
- Logistical procedures / workflow / individual relationships

Confidentiality – Release of Information

- A signed **release of information** form gives caregiver's permission (and youth if 11 or older) for school to share academic data with researchers.
- Incorporated into consent form for participation in the longitudinal study.
 - Last 2 pages of consent form includes list of local agencies (including school district) from which evaluators might like to obtain records
 - Caregivers/youths may give permission for individual agencies or may give blanket approval for all agencies

Case Study of Fort Worth's Efforts to Obtain Academic Records

- The first 2 years of the program, evaluators were unsuccessful at navigating the bureaucracy and actually obtaining academic records.
- In the meantime, we relied on caregiver-report data of their children's academic outcomes.
 - Indicated robust improvement in grades after involvement with system of care.
 - Strong gender interaction, with girls showing more improvement than boys.



Case Study of Fort Worth's Efforts to Obtain Academic Records

- Next, we tried to obtain copies of children's report cards from families.
- Not very successful approach.
 - Parents often did not have report cards or had misplaced them.
 - Resulted in sporadic data with problematic gaps.

Case Study of Fort Worth's Efforts to Obtain Academic Records

- Finally, after 2 ½ years, succeeded in obtaining data from school district's central database.
- Key factors leading to success:
 - Patience and persistence.
 - Finding the right individuals to work with.
 - Cultivating personal relationships.

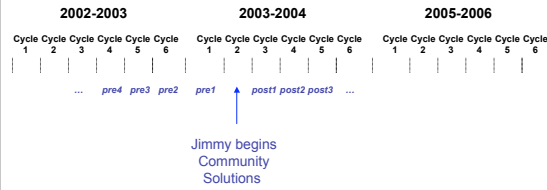
Process for Obtaining Records

- Delivered a box full of signed releases to school district along with a password-protected database of children's identifying information to match with school records.
- School district staff manually pulled electronic records for each child and extracted requested data fields.

Grades Data Provided by FWISD

- Grade percentages in core subjects
 - English
 - Social Studies
 - Math
 - Science
- Three school years
 - 2002-2003 (Cycles 1-6)
 - 2003-2004 (Cycles 1-6)
 - 2004-2005 (Cycles 1-6)
- N = 212 children

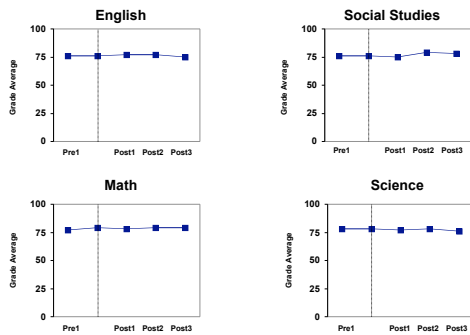
Academic Timeline



- Children were eliminated from this analysis if ...
- they had missing data in any of these cycles (e.g., transfer students)
 - data not yet available (e.g., data from 2006-2007 school year were needed)
 - schools did not give letter grades
 - student had not been in wraparound through 3 grading cycles after their baseline cycle

This left N=76 children in the analysis

Mean Grades (N=76)



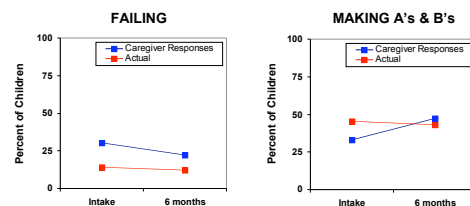
Comparison Between Caregiver Reports and Actual Grades

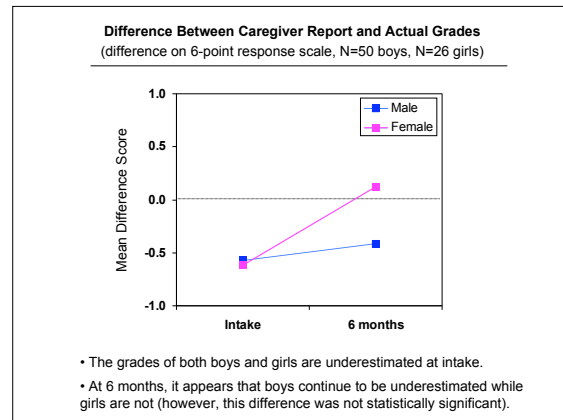
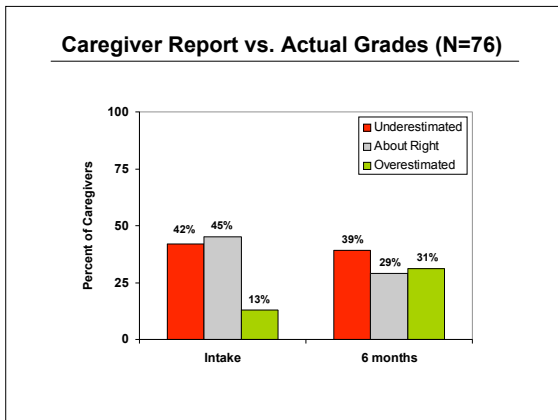
- The lack of change in grades was surprising, given the caregiver reports of robust improvements.
- In order to shed light on the discrepancy between caregiver reports and school records, additional analyses were run to compare directly these two sources.

Comparison of Caregiver Report & Actual Grades

- Estimated each child's overall grade average by averaging grades across the 4 core subjects
 - English
 - Social Studies
 - Math
 - Science
- Converted grade average to 6-point scale in order to compare to grade average as reported by caregivers
 - Intake interview
 - 6-month follow-up interview
- Used most recent report card caregivers would have seen prior to interview

Caregiver Report vs. Actual Grades (N=76)





Conclusions

- Caregivers report that their children's grades are improving, especially for girls.
- In reality, there is no evidence that grades are improving or deteriorating. Instead, grades remained stable for both boys and girls.
- At intake, caregivers tend to underestimate their children's grades. At follow-up, it appears that boys (but not girls) continue to be underestimated.