HOT TOPICS

**Significant Factors Affecting Child Readiness for School**

The most recent report released by the First 5 LA-RAND Research Partnership—Are L.A.’s Children Ready for School?—asks the question “Are some families doing better than others in preparing children for school and why?” This report will help policymakers, communities and families understand the dynamics that impact child readiness for school. Major findings of the research include the following:

- The mother’s educational attainment and neighborhood poverty are the two social characteristics most strongly associated with children’s school readiness.
- There are differences in school readiness among different ethnic groups, but they are largely the result of ethnic differences in mother’s education and neighborhood poverty.
- Math and reading abilities of preschoolers are most closely tied to mother’s level of education.
- Parenting practices differ considerably by mother’s education.
- Neighborhood poverty level has a very strong effect on kids’ behavior and is a more important predictor of behavior problems than ethnicity, mother’s educational level, or parenting behavior.

**Conclusions and recommendations:**

- School readiness policy and programs should focus on the children of poorly educated mothers, particularly on ethnic minorities and immigrant groups that tend to have lower levels of education.
- Early intervention and parenting programs encouraging reading are likely to have an important impact on children’s school readiness.

You may request a hard copy of the report from Wendy Moltrup with the RAND Washington External Affairs Office at wea@rand.org or 703-413-1100 ext. 5938.

**READ REPORT: Are L.A.’s Children Ready for School?**

**Teacher Recruitment and Retention: A Comprehensive Analysis**

In a new RAND Education report, *A Review of the Research Literature on Teacher Recruitment and Retention*, RAND researchers present a comprehensive review and evaluation of research published since 1980 on the topic of teacher recruitment and retention. Studies are divided into six categories based on the focus of the research: (1) characteristics of individuals who enter teaching, (2) characteristics of those who continue teaching, (3) issues within districts or schools affecting recruitment and retention, (4) the impact of compensation policies, (5) the effects of pre-service policies (6) the effects of in-service policies.

In each category there are several significant, consistent findings. The majority of individuals entering the field are Caucasian females. Reentrants are common at certain times; however, science and math teachers leave the profession at a greater rate and are less likely to return than teachers in other fields. Various factors are associated with attrition and retention rates, including gender, characteristics of a school and the student population, and—not surprisingly—salary.

Among the pre-service policies, alternative teacher education programs often attract a more diverse student population. In-service activities, such as mentoring and collegial support programs, appear to reduce rates of turnover. Granting more autonomy and authority to teachers is also beneficial for overall teacher satisfaction.

The review presents a comprehensive synthesis as well as detailed summaries of all the studies reviewed and serves both as a guide to the policy implications of the research and as a convenient reference tool. The conclusions identify some ways to enhance attractiveness of the profession to current and prospective teachers. Especially in critical subjects, policymakers may be able to counter some teacher attrition with policy changes in certain areas.

**READ REPORT: A Review of the Research Literature on Teacher Recruitment and Retention**

**PROJECTS UNDER WAY**

In collaboration with First 5 LA, RAND will release two additional reports concerning child and family issues in the coming months.

The first report examines the facets of childcare use for young children in Los Angeles County. This report presents detailed information on who uses childcare, who provides childcare, and the cost of childcare.

The second report focuses on the health of children under age five in Los Angeles County. Specifically, RAND researchers examine the social disparities in children’s health status, the lack of insurance coverage among young children, and its effect on use of health care.

For more information, go to RAND Washington External Affairs or contact us at wea@rand.org or 703.413.1100 x5632.

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