



Big Little Leap: Challenges and Possibilities in the Kindergarten Transition

Today's Talk

- The Importance of the Kindergarten Transition
- Challenges in the Kindergarten Transition
- The Kindergarten Transition Project (KTP)
- Initial Findings from KTP



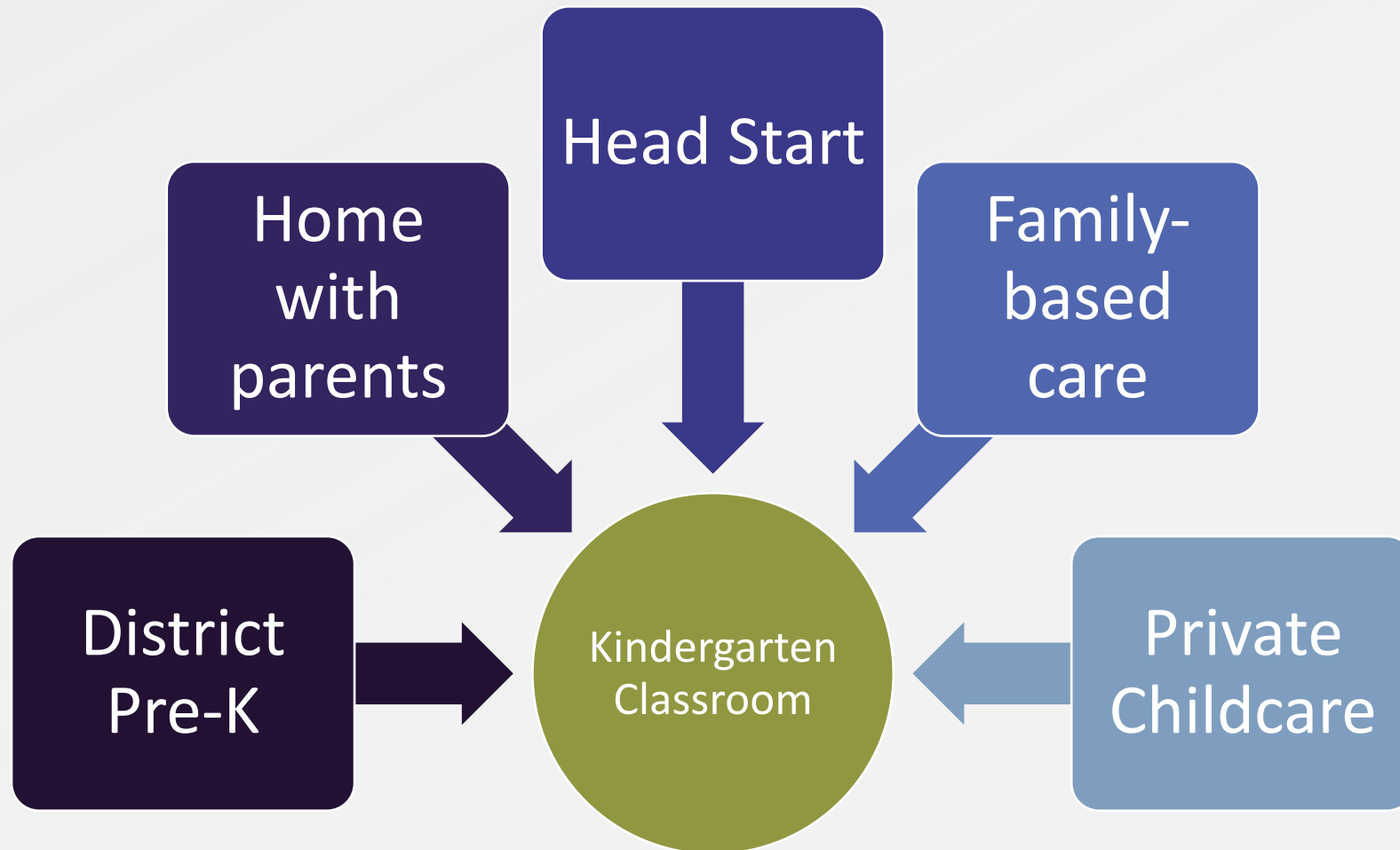
Why is the transition important?



- The transition to kindergarten represents a major shift in children's early-learning setting
 - Classroom size and peers
 - School rules and guidelines
 - Learning standards and goals



Children come from variety of settings



Or some combination of these experiences...

For some length of time...



The Transition to Kindergarten for Children

- **Are kids experiencing challenges at the start of kindergarten?**
 - **Teacher reports of challenges**
 - **688 kindergarten children (45 classrooms)**
 - **51% boys**
 - **70% White; 8% African American; 11% Other Race; 11% Multi-Racial**
 - **48% had family incomes under \$40,000**
 - **89% English as primary home language**

Purtell et al., 2021 CCEC White Paper

Jiang et al., 2021 *Early Childhood Research Quarterly*



THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY
CRANE CENTER FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD
RESEARCH AND POLICY



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Data Sources

- **Early Learning Ohio (ELO)**
 - Interviews with teachers and administrators in over 25 districts across Ohio
 - An in-depth look at 180 PK-G3 classrooms in central Ohio
 - A longitudinal study of over 700 children from K-G3

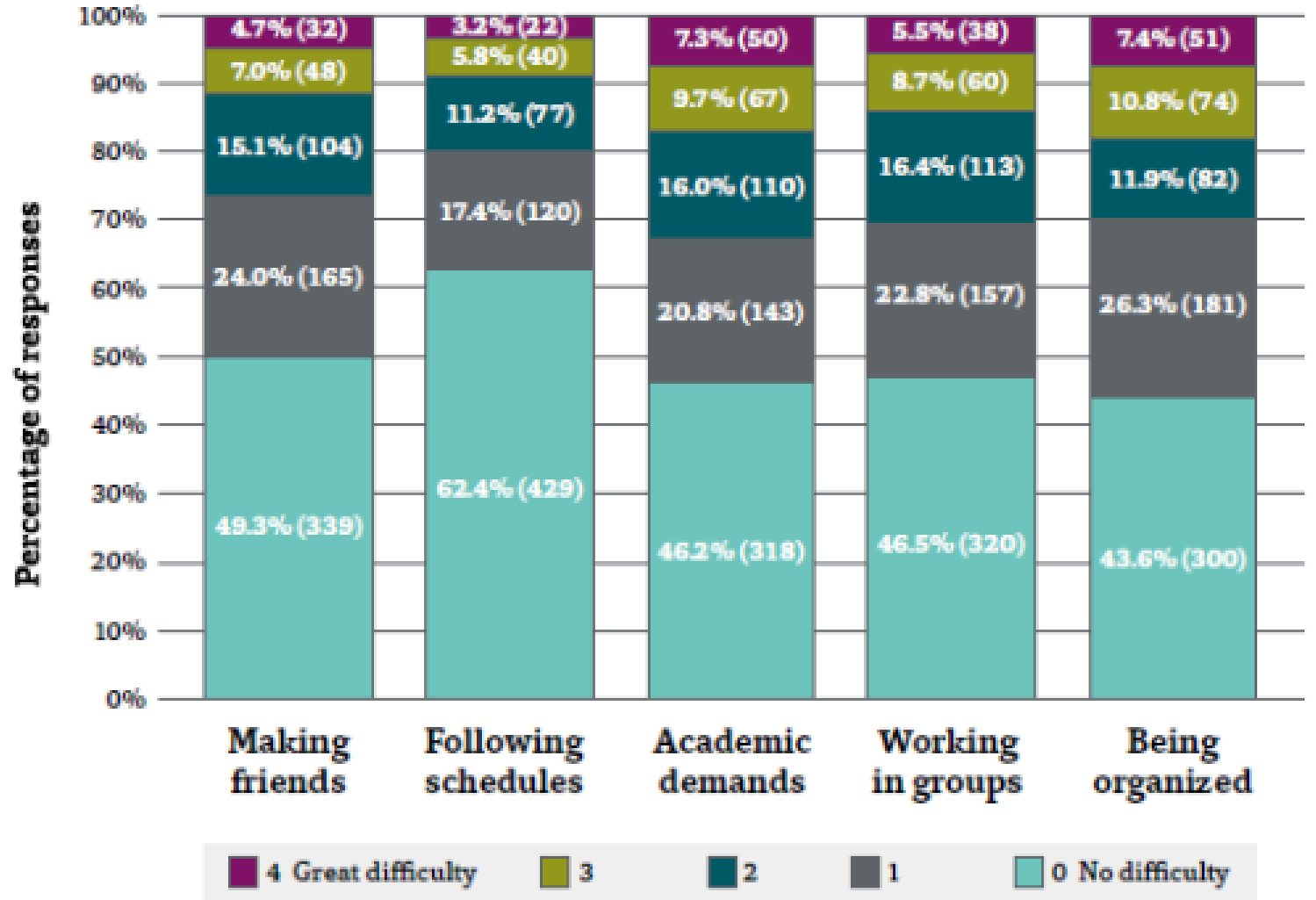


The Transition to Kindergarten

Teachers reported on children's difficulties as they transitioned into kindergarten.

Difficulties were likely to co-occur with over 30% of children have at least some difficulty in all five categories.

Boys were much more likely to be reported as having difficulties than girls.



Purtell et al., 2021 CCEC White Paper

Jiang et al., 2021 *Early Childhood Research Quarterly*



Consequences of Transition Challenges

- Children with more transition challenges made smaller gains in literacy and math skills across kindergarten.
- They also experienced less ideal social-behavioral development.
- Why?
 - Lack of alignment between preK and K settings



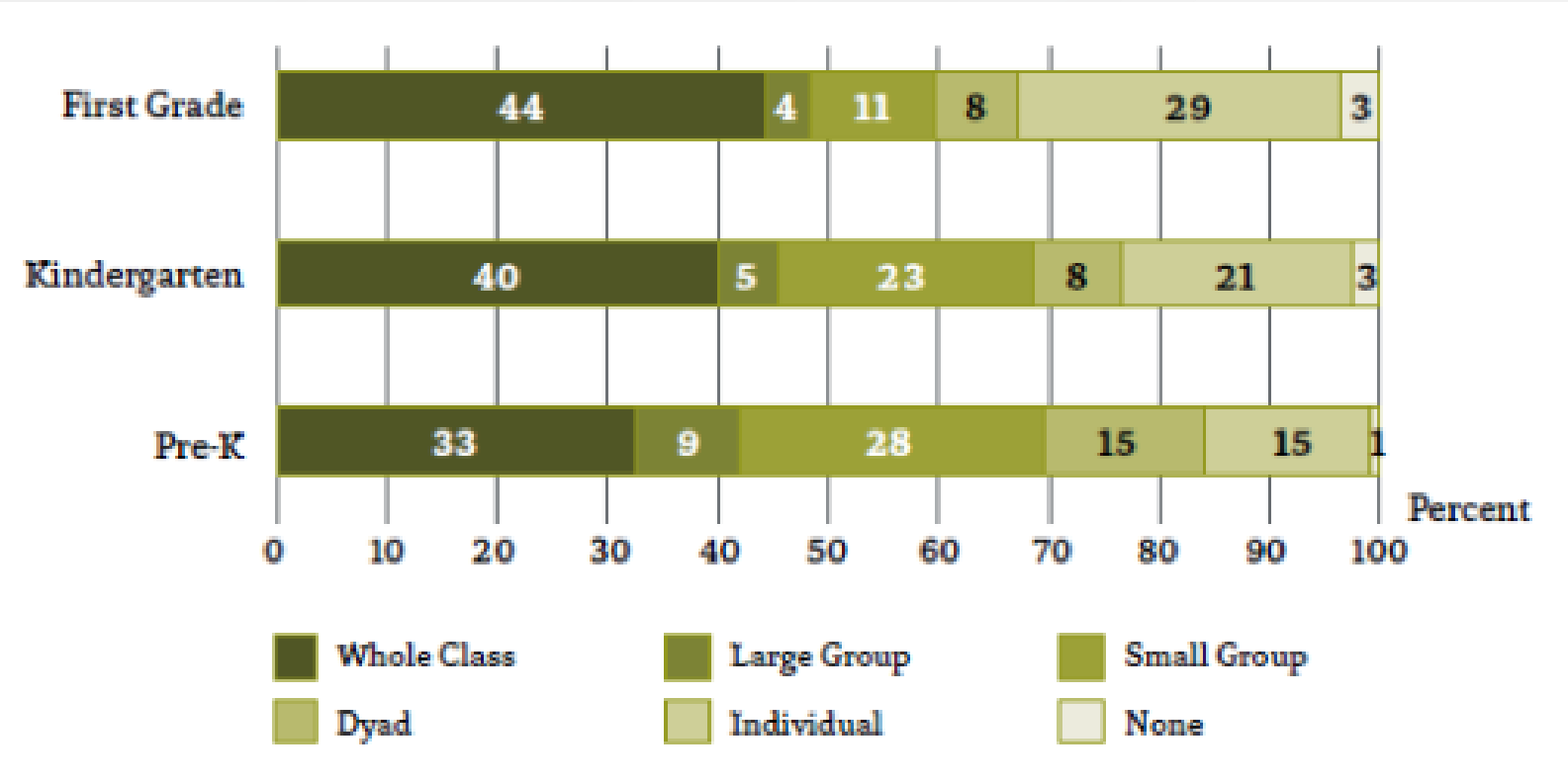
PreK to K Alignment

- **Data from observations in 120 pre-k, kindergarten, and 1st grade classrooms in central Ohio**
 - **Grouping Practices**
 - **Type of Instruction**
 - **Time in Academic Content**

Justice et al., 2020 CCEC White Paper

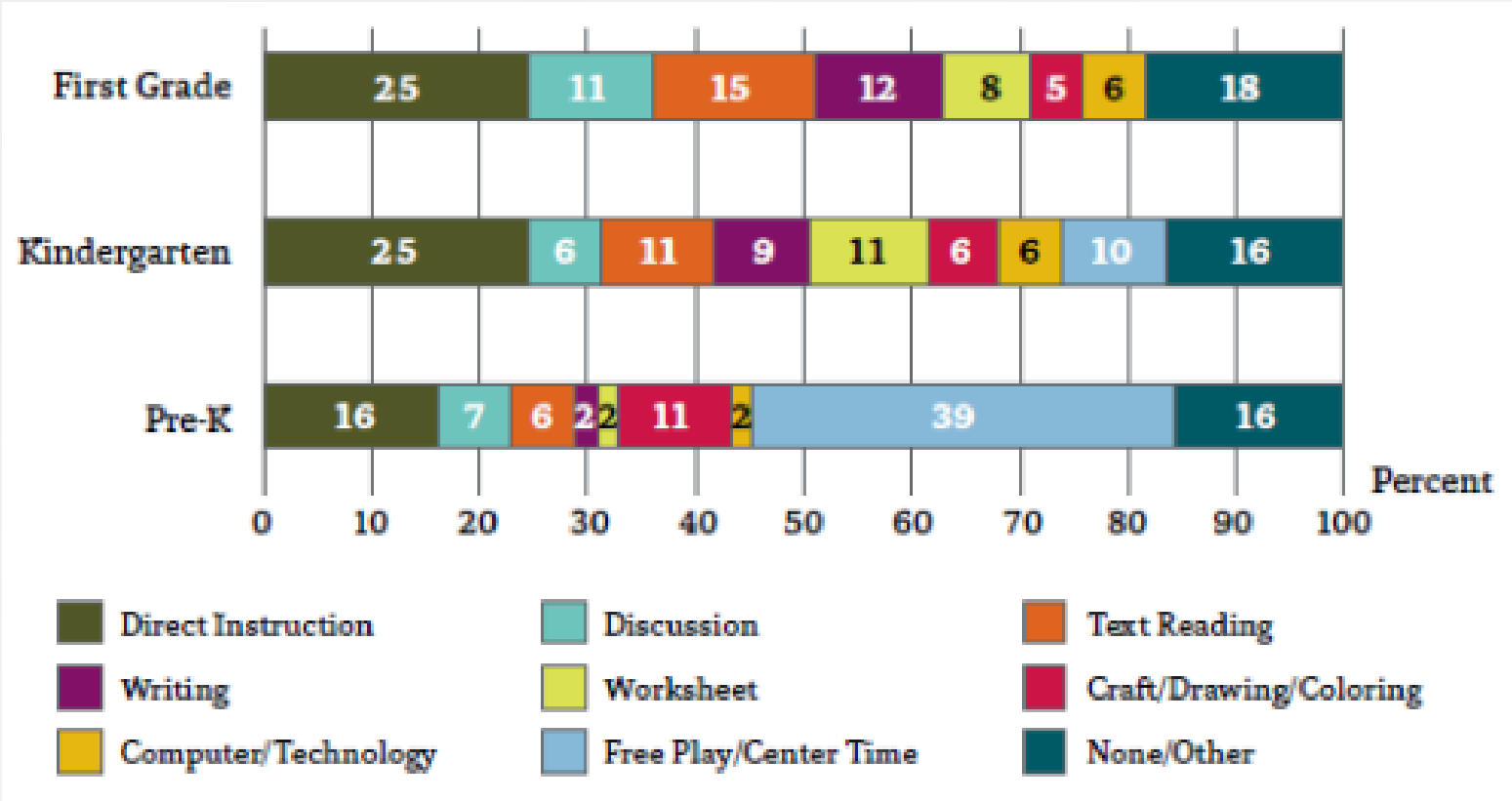


Grouping Practices



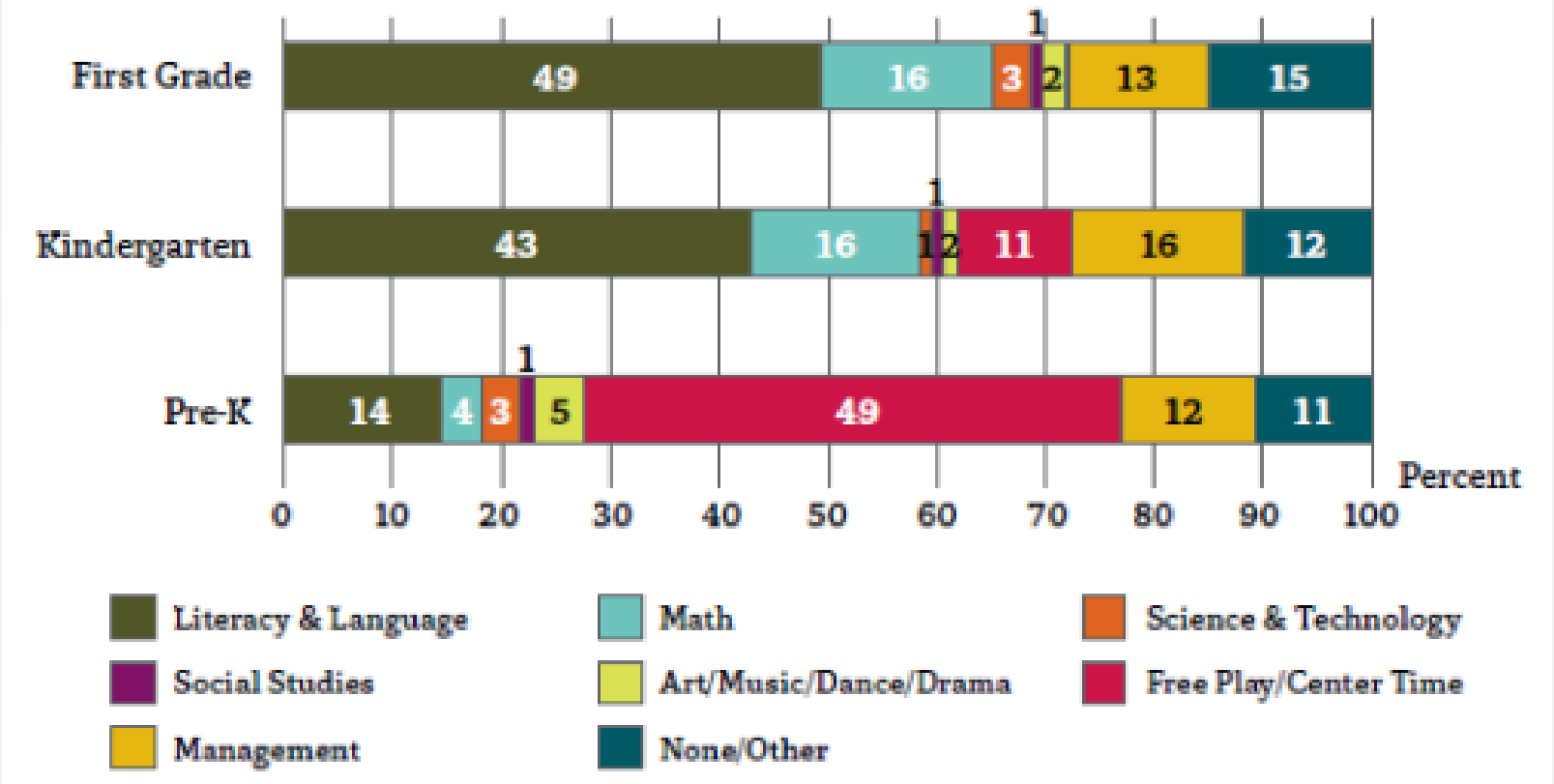
Justice et al., 2020 CCEC White Paper

Type of Instruction



Justice et al., 2020 CCEC White Paper

Time in Academic Content



Justice et al., 2020 CCEC White Paper

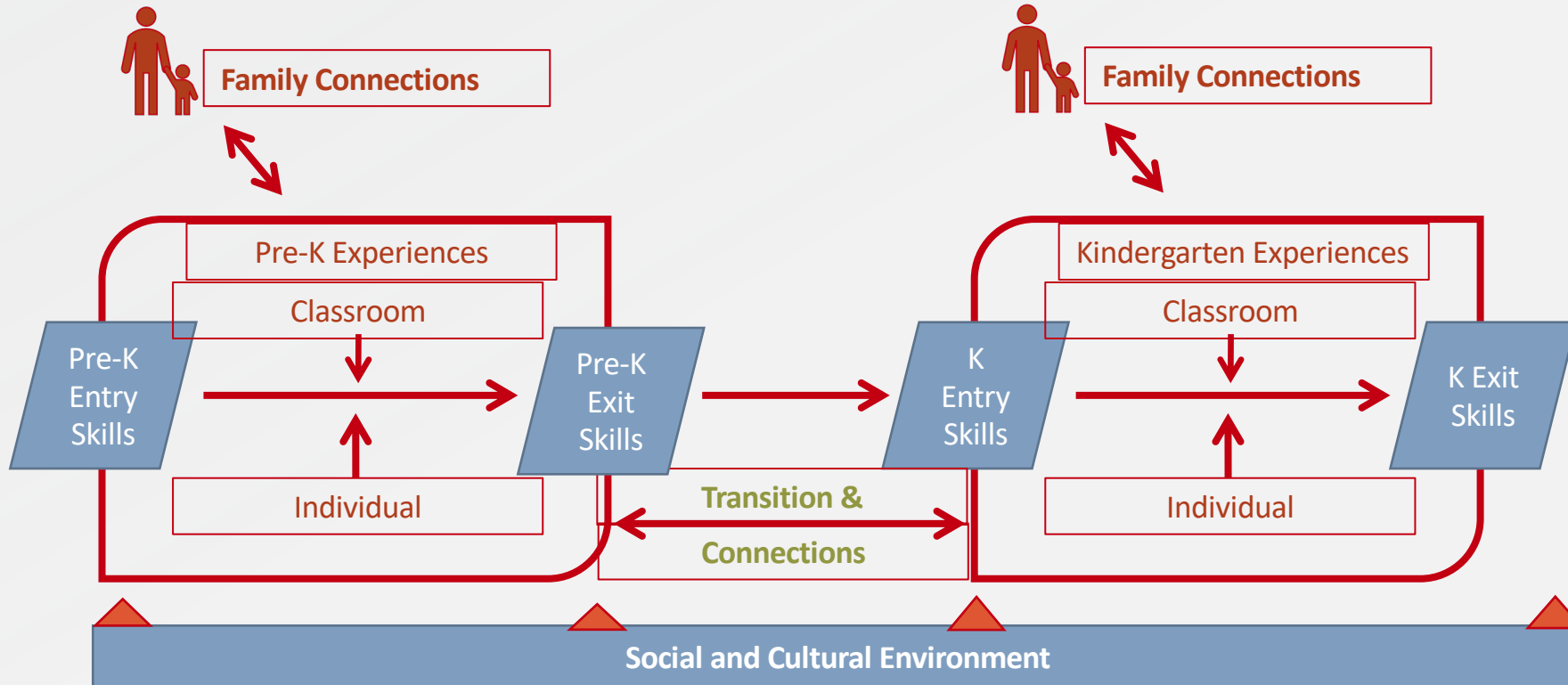
Connection-Focus Approach to the Kindergarten Transition

- Kindergarten transitions are not just experienced by children, but by their families, schools, and communities.
- Increasing connections among these individuals can:
 - 1) Create alignment in children's experiences
 - 2) Increase communication
 - 3) Provide support

Rimm-Kaufman & Pianta 2000



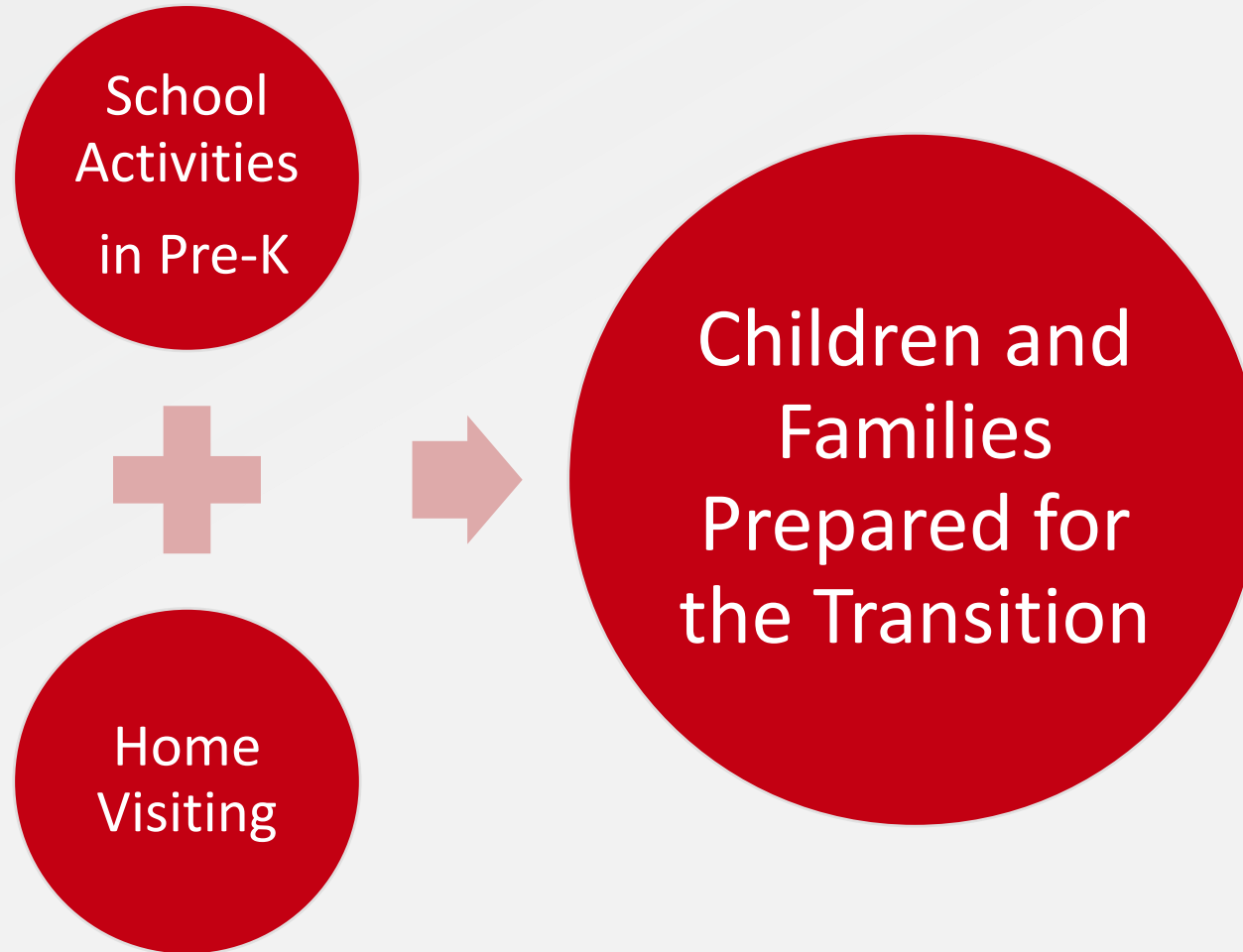
Connection-Focus Approach to the Kindergarten Transition



Modified from Erlich et al., 2021



The Kindergarten Transition Project



The Kindergarten Transition Project

- The role of transition coordinators
- Key individuals in building connections
 - Complete home visits with families
 - Work with preschool teachers to implement school-based activities
 - Troubleshoot any issues families or teachers had



The Kindergarten Transition Project

- Focus on strengthening 6 key connections in the transition
 - Child-Parent
 - Parent-Teacher
 - Child-Peer
 - Parent-Community
 - Teacher-Parent
 - Child-Teacher





Child-Parent Connections

1. **Provide home learning materials (i.e., books and activity kits) for parents to use with their children.**
2. **Support families in their use of home learning materials by discussing barriers and adaptations.**
3. **Encourage family participation in home learning activities.**
4. **Provide families with information on the developmental level of children.**
5. **Establish strong connections within families.**



Parent-Teacher Connections

- 1. Conduct family needs assessment during the first home visit.**
- 2. Ask parents about or encourage involvement in upcoming school and classroom events at each home visit.**
- 3. Help parents develop a packet of information on their child to share with the kindergarten teacher.**
- 4. Conduct an in-home parent orientation after preschool and before kindergarten start to help parents understand kindergarten enrollment and engagement.**
- 5. Discuss transition issues with families during the fall of kindergarten.**



Child-Peer Connections

1. Discuss with parents the importance of peer connections both within and outside of school.
2. Provide learning materials designed to support the discussion of peer relationships and potential issues.
3. Provide parents with resources and information to use if peer relationship issues arise.
4. Establish peer connections within the preschool class.
5. Establish peer connections outside of school.
6. Establish connections with peers who will be in kindergarten.
7. Establish preschool peer connections with kindergarten peers.
8. Coordinate group-based peer connections.



Parent-Community Connections

- 1. Share the kindergarten curriculum and expectations with parents before the start of the year.**
- 2. Connect families to community resources such as libraries and health centers.**
- 3. Spread awareness of ways to develop community connections.**
- 4. Build useful policies related to transition.**
- 5. Foster inter-school collaboration about programs and classroom practices.**
- 6. Identify and communicate curriculum and community expectations for children.**
- 7. Create inter-school connections about a specific child.**
- 8. Establish policy coordination through inter-agency connections.**
- 9. Establish inter-agency connections.**



Teacher-Parent Connections

- 1. Contact families during the first few days of preschool and kindergarten.**
- 2. Maintain periodic contact with the family.**
- 3. Conduct regular family meetings at schools.**
- 4. Create newsletters and resource materials.**



Child-Teacher Connections

- 1. Talk to parents about the importance of teacher-child connections.**
- 2. Provide parents with learning materials designed to promote children's communication with adults.**
- 3. Establish a connection between the preschool child and kindergarten teacher.**
- 4. Create a connection between the child and the kindergarten using specific school functions.**
- 5. Have children practice kindergarten rituals in preschool.**
- 6. Incorporate preschool activities into the kindergarten year.**
- 7. Encourage preschool teachers to stay in touch with former students.**
- 8. Encourage kindergarten support staff to visit preschool children.**

The Kindergarten Transition Project

- **KTP-Classroom:**
 - Newsletters
 - Events for parents and families
 - Kindergarten ritual lessons
 - Social events for children and families attending same kindergarten
- **KTP+:**
 - 9 home visits conducted by transition coordinator



The Kindergarten Transition Project

- 28 school districts across Ohio
- Public pre-k, Head Start, and private preschools
- Rural, suburban and urban environments

The Kindergarten Transition Project

- **Initial Findings:**
 - Focused only on 1st cohort of project (prior to COVID-19 pandemic)
 - Zoom in on one important connection: Teachers and Parents
 - More results to come!

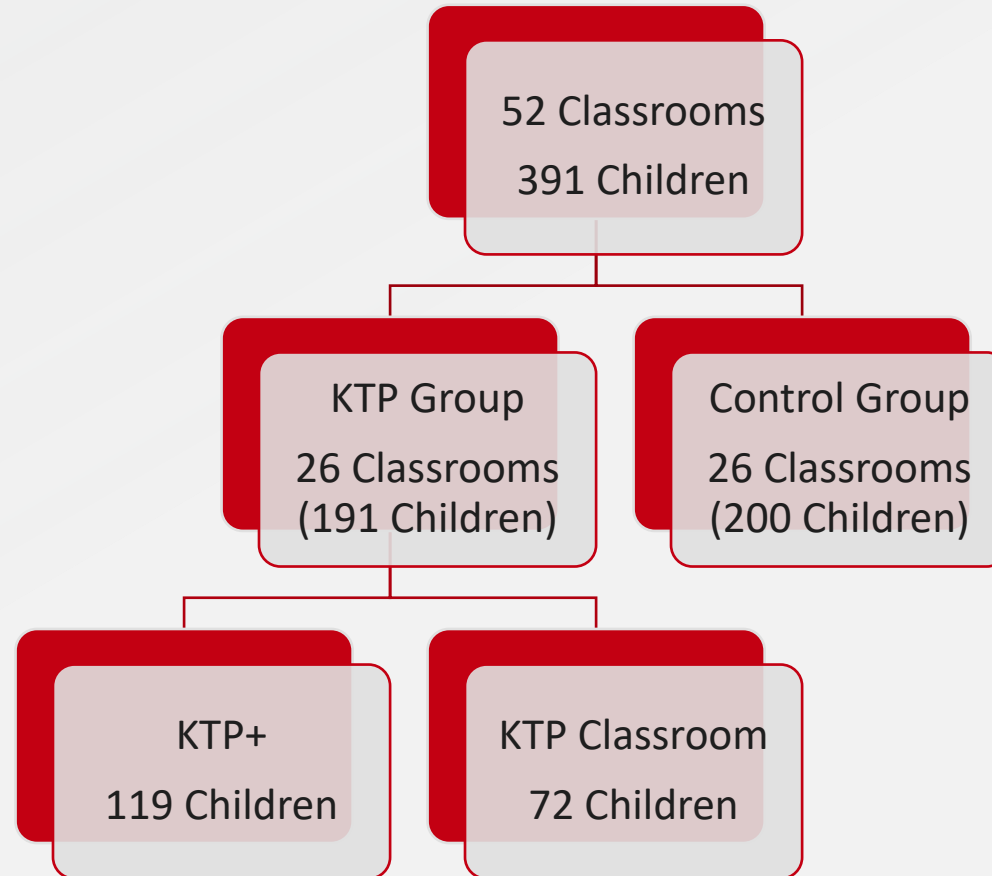


The Kindergarten Transition Project

- 52 classrooms in 29 programs in urban areas
- 391 children enrolled
 - 55% boys
 - Average age: 55 months
 - 44% African American, 30% White, 11% Hispanic/Latine, 15% Multiracial
 - Median household income between \$20k and \$30k



The Kindergarten Transition Project



The Kindergarten Transition Project

Research questions:

- 1) Did KTP impact preschool teachers' perceptions of parent engagement?
- 2) Did these impacts vary by race/ethnicity, maternal education, and children's behavioral control?



The Kindergarten Transition Project

Parent engagement (reported by teachers using the Parent-Teacher Involvement Questionnaire):

- Parent involvement
- Teacher-parent relationship
- Teachers' perceptions of parental values



The Kindergarten Transition Project

Analytic notes:

-Missing data was addressed through multiple imputation.

-Multilevel models were used.

-Race/ethnicity, parental education, family income were controlled for in our models.

-No differences between KTP and control group on child, family, and teacher characteristics.

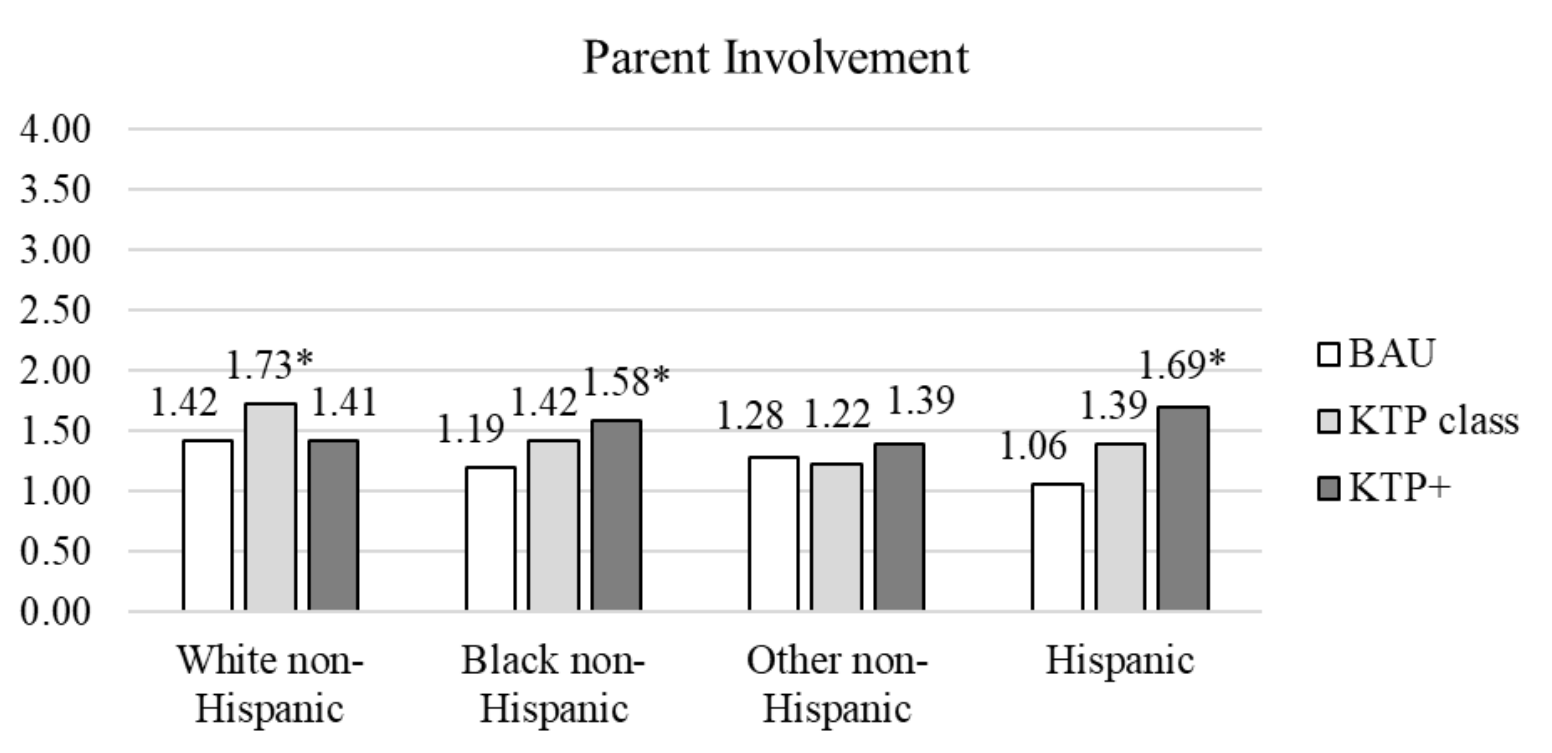
The Kindergarten Transition Project

	<u>Parent Involvement</u>						<u>Parent Teacher Relationship</u>						<u>Parent Values</u>					
	w/o covariates			w/covariates			w/o covariates			w/covariates			w/o covariates			w/covariates		
	Est.	p	d	Est.	p	d	Est.	p	d	Est.	p	d	Est.	p	d	Est.	p	d
KTP (classroom-level)	.24	.005	.38	.23	.004	.37	.00	.896	.00	-.01	.936	-.01	.04	.771	.04	.02	.897	.02
KTP+ (child level)	.03	.708	.05	.03	.695	.05	.23	.164	.24	.22	.192	.23	.19	.301	.18	.16	.352	.15

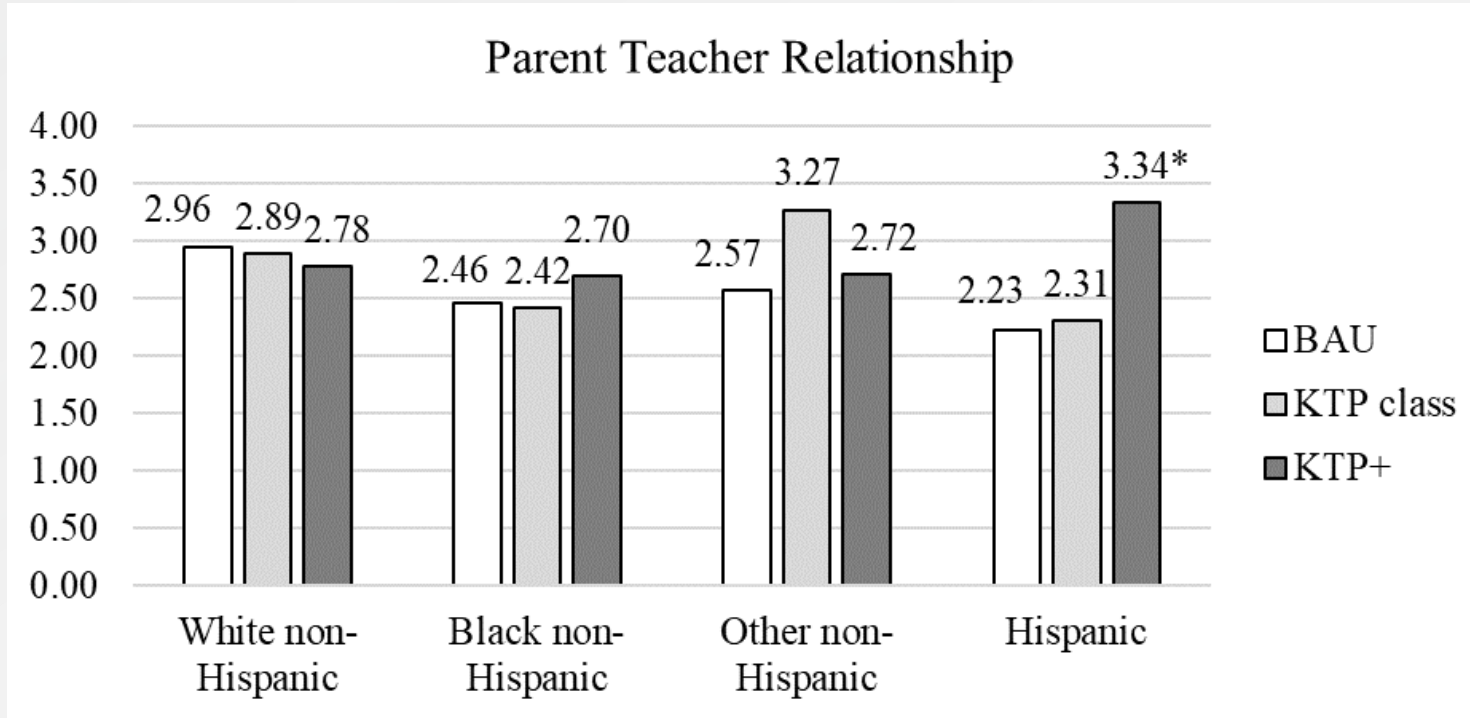
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- Impacts of KTP did not vary by maternal education or children's behavior problems.
- However, the impacts did vary by race/ethnicity, with additional impacts for specific subgroups.

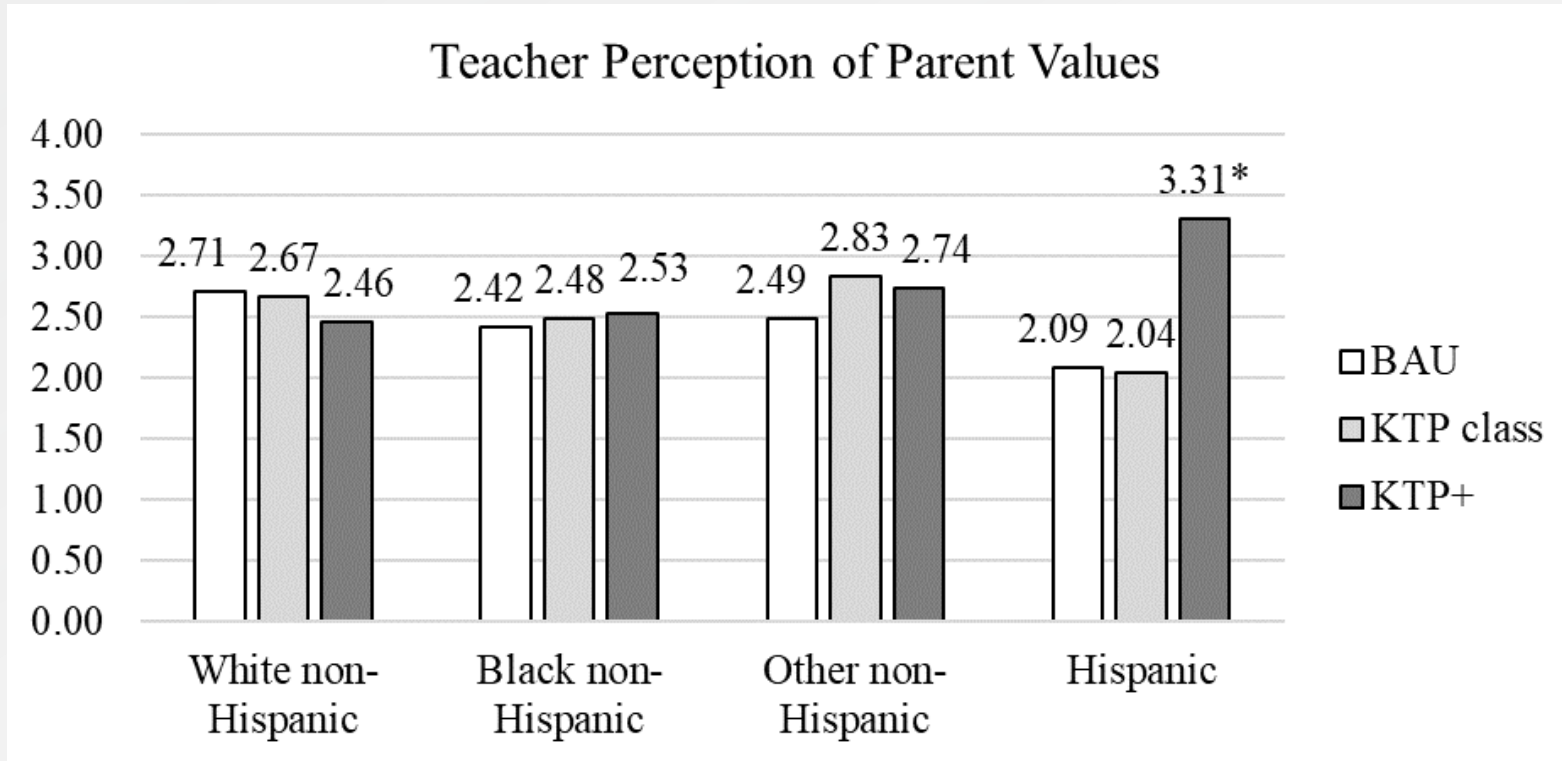
The Kindergarten Transition Project



The Kindergarten Transition Project



The Kindergarten Transition Project



Conclusions (Stay Tuned!)

- **KTP did improve connections, namely parental involvement in preschool.**
- **Additionally, KTP+ conferred additional benefits to Hispanic/Latine families.**
- **More work is needed to see how these translate to children's development and success in the actual transition to kindergarten.**

Our Teams

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Questions

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Thank you!

