

FOURTH ANNUAL



Ohio Family Engagement

— LEADERSHIP SUMMIT —

Setting the Table Together:

JOY and
POWER in
PARTNERSHIPS

SEPTEMBER 22,
2023

Hosted by the Ohio Statewide
Family Engagement Center



THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY

CENTER ON EDUCATION AND
TRAINING FOR EMPLOYMENT

A photograph of a classroom. The wall is purple with wood paneling at the bottom. There are several red plastic chairs around a white table with blue legs. A window is visible in the background with a butterfly sticker. The floor is covered with a patterned rug.

Attendance Matters: Addressing Early School Absenteeism For Success

Dr. Arya Ansari
The Ohio State University

Agenda

Why focus on the early years?

Why focus on preschool absenteeism?

Why are children absent?

What are the outcomes of absenteeism?

What are some strategies for addressing absenteeism?

Conclusion and Q&A

Learning Objectives

Explore Factors Contributing to
Absenteeism

Understand Consequences of Absenteeism

Learn Strategies for Addressing
Absenteeism

Join at menti.com use code 6757 45

How Many Days is Acceptable?

0 Days (Never)

How many days do you think it is acceptable for a child to be absent from school in a year?

180 Days (Every Day)



Account



Content



Design



Settings



Help & Feedback

Join at menti.com use code 6757 45

**Does your answer change when we are talking about preschool versus high school?
Are there different standards or considerations?**



Account



Content



Design



Settings



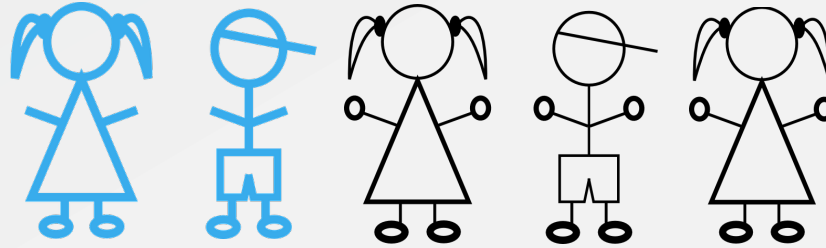
Help &
Feedback

The Problem

Too many children are struggling as they enter school

3 in 5

Are not ready for kindergarten



60%

unprepared in critical areas



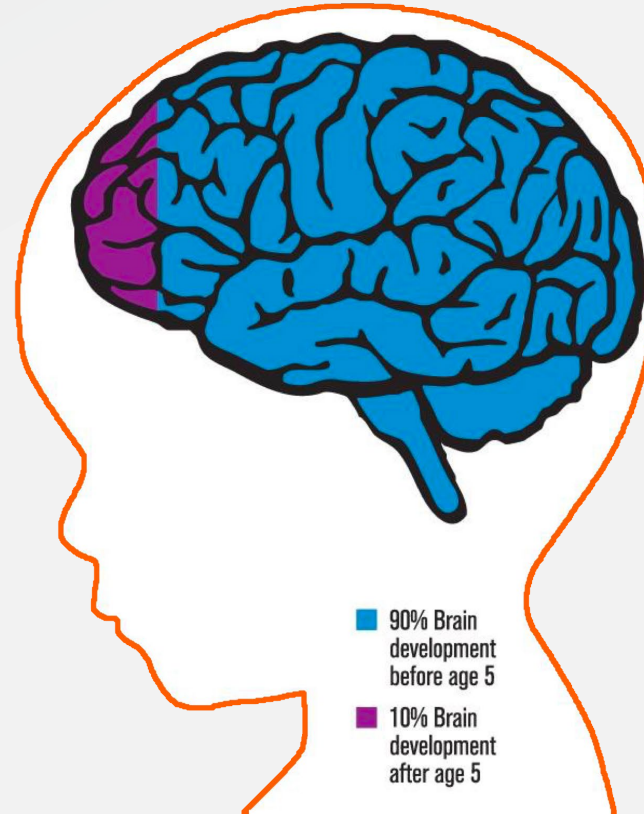
22 month gap

Source: Future Ready Columbus and Waldfogel and Washbrook (2010)

What We Know

90%

of a child's brain development happens before age 5



Source: Harvard Center for the Developing Child

The Premise of Preschool

Every child has access to a highly effective preschool program before they enter kindergarten

- Lack a uniform definition
- Essential elements: Effective curriculum; high-quality teacher-child interactions; and trained workforce
- Sufficient intensity to close gaps

The Promise of Preschool

Academic
skills



Cognitive
skills



Social
skills



Under the right conditions, enrollment in preschool can help minimize achievement gap at kindergarten entry

Source: Phillips and colleagues (2017)

Inequities in Access

 **66% of children**

Above 200% of the federal poverty line attended ECE

 **51% of children**

Below 200% of the federal poverty line attended ECE

Source: National Center for Educational Statistics

Inequities in Access to Quality Programs



Only 4% of children in rural communities have access to high quality teaching across the early years of education

Vernon-Feagans and colleagues, (2018)

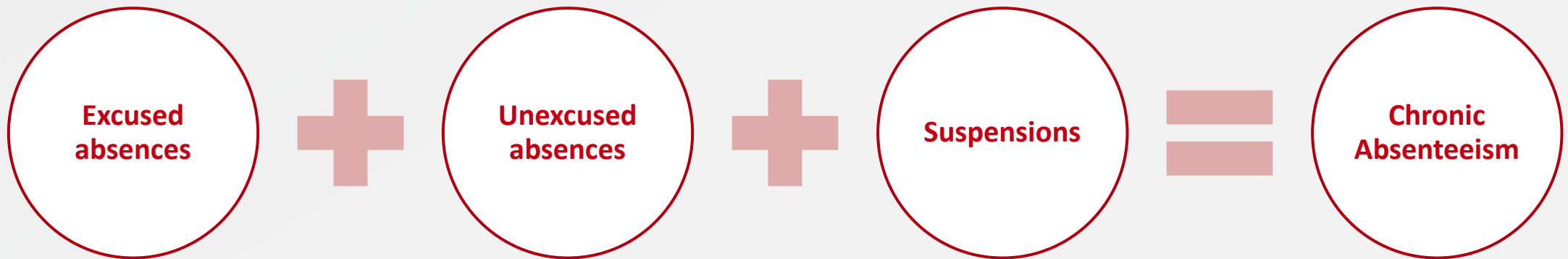


Children living in high poverty communities are over 2X as likely to experience ineffective instruction in ECE

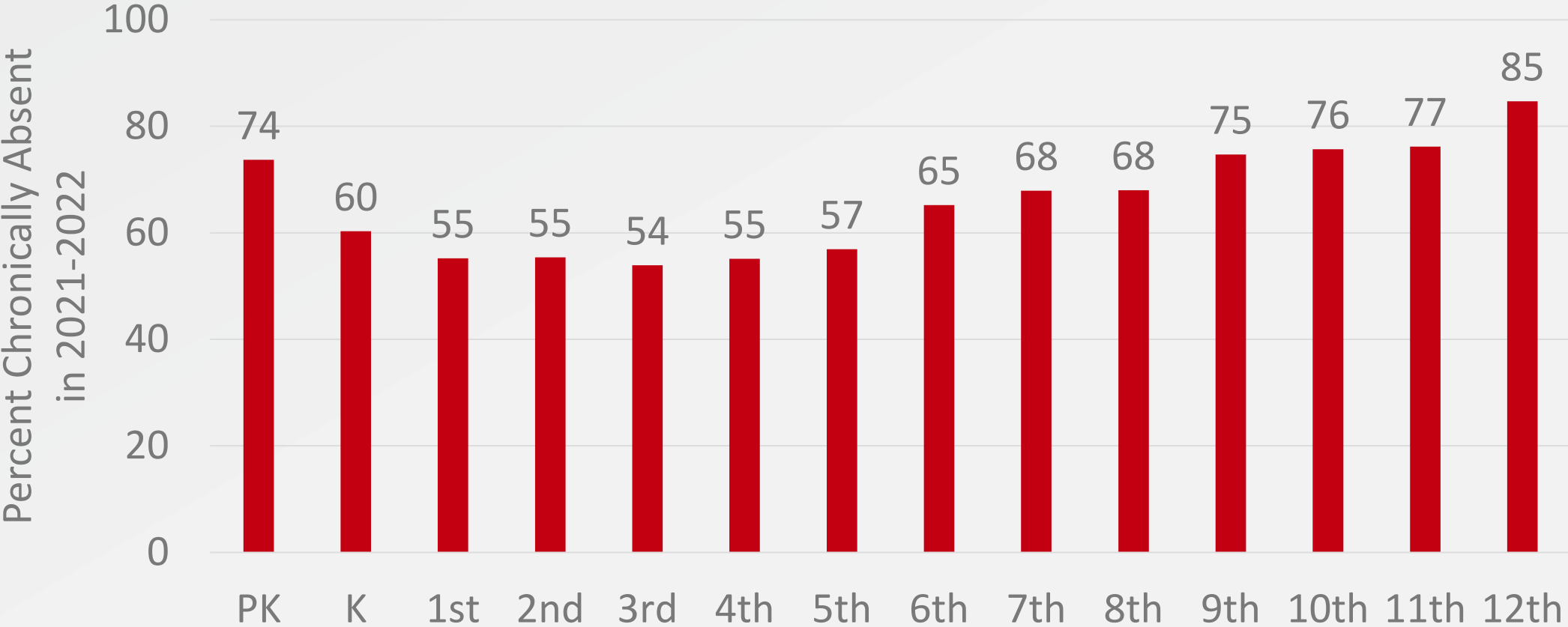
Bassok & Galdo, (2016)

Inequities in Attendance

Children for low-income and historically marginalized communities are at greatest risk of being absent from preschool



Chronic Absenteeism in Columbus



**3-4X higher than state and
national averages**

Source: Ohio Department of Education

Why are Children Absent from Preschool?

Family circumstances and necessity

- Adults and children in household
- Parent marital status
- Maternal employment
- Income-to-poverty measure
- Other sources of childcare available to family (e.g., relatives)
- Social support
 - How much support they perceive (loan money, take care of kids)
 - How supportive various sources of support are

Why are Children Absent from Preschool?

Family stress and routines

- Stress and instability may be associated with greater absenteeism
- Financial stress
 - Food insecurity and inadequacy of medical care
- Health stress
 - Maternal depressive symptoms and overall health
 - Child health
- Exposure to neighborhood violence
- Family and child routines
 - Average number of hours child slept and sleep schedules
 - Number of days family ate dinner together

Why are Children Absent from Preschool?

Center and classroom practices

- Parent outreach
 - Frequency of home visits and parent-teacher meetings
- Services provided to families
 - Medical, transportation, education/job training
- Classroom factors
 - Observed quality
 - Classroom behavior and classmate absenteeism
- Parents' feelings of welcomeness at the center
- Parents' perceptions of child's enjoyment of school

Why are Preschoolers Chronically Absent?

To what extent do **family circumstances and necessity, family stress and routines, and center and classroom practices** predict children's absenteeism and likelihood of chronic absenteeism?



Family and Child Experiences Study 2009 ($n = 3,349$)

- Nationally representative sample of first time Head Start children from 486 classrooms in the U.S.
- First national data with preschool absences

Why are Preschoolers Chronically Absent?

Necessity factors do *not* consistently matter

Household structure, income, other care availability, and social support were not associated with absenteeism

 **Except for**

Whether parents received social support from other parents in a child's school and mothers' employment

Source: Purtell and Ansari (2022)

Why are Preschoolers Chronically Absent?

Stress and Routines Matter a Great Deal

Food insecurity, inadequate medical care, child poor health, fewer hours of sleep, irregular sleep schedules, and neighborhood violence were associated with elevated levels of absenteeism

Classroom Context and Experiences Matter

More services provided to families, higher classroom quality, fewer peer absenteeism, and children's enjoyment were associated with lower levels of absenteeism

Source: Purtell and Ansari (2022)

What are the Outcomes of Preschool Absenteeism?

Preschool Attendance is the Best Predictor of Absenteeism in Elementary School



Source: Ansari and colleagues (2021) Ansari & Purtell (2018)

The Consequences of Preschool Absenteeism

Achievement



Mental health



Social behavior



Source: Ansari and colleagues (2021) Ansari & Purtell (2018)

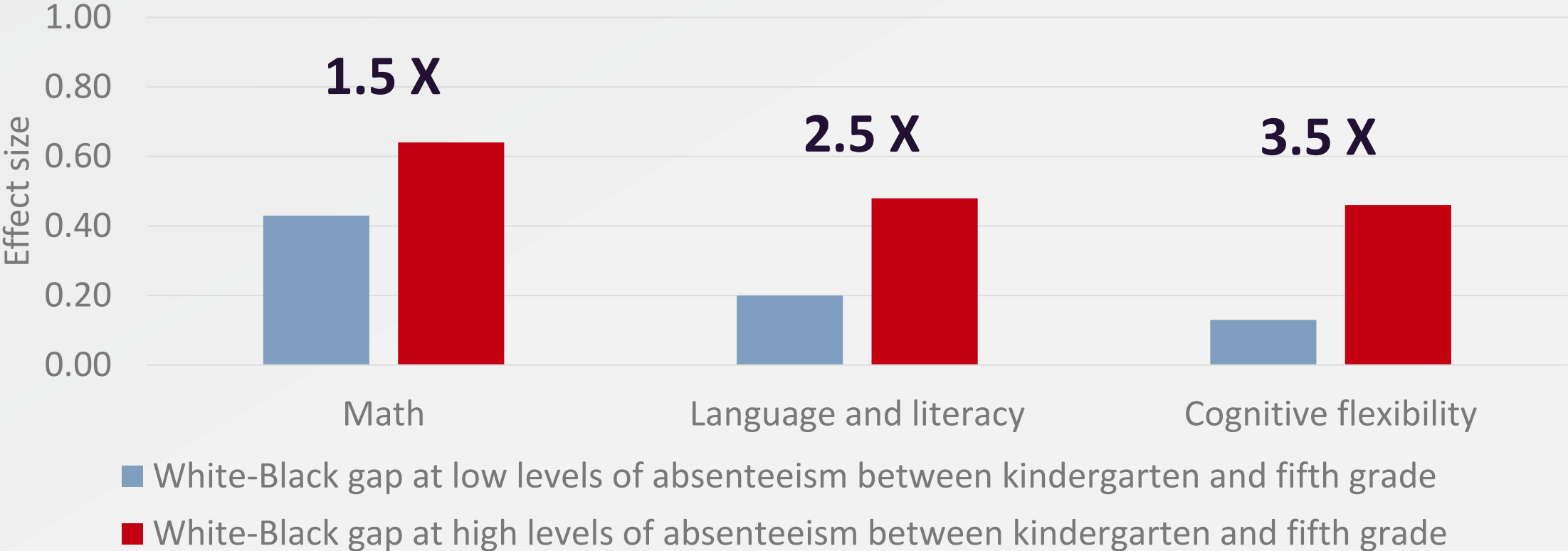
The Consequences of Preschool Absenteeism

Chronic Absentees Fall Behind by Two to Three Months



Source: Ansari & Purtell (2018)

White-Black Gap as a Function of Absenteeism



Source: Ansari & Gottfried (2021)

The Long-term Consequences of Absenteeism



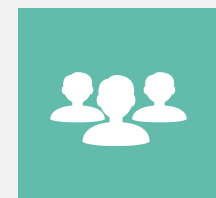
No difference in risky and deviant behavior



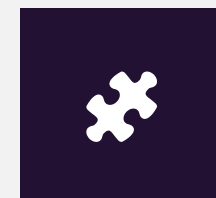
Less likely to be employed



More likely to experience economic hardship



Less likely to have voted in the 2012 election



Lower HS GPA & fewer years of postsecondary education

Source: Ansari et al., (2020)

The Timing of Absenteeism Does not Matter



Source: Ansari and colleagues (2020), Ansari & Gottfried (2021)

Solutions Brainstorm



Steps Taken by Districts Across the Country



Text nudges



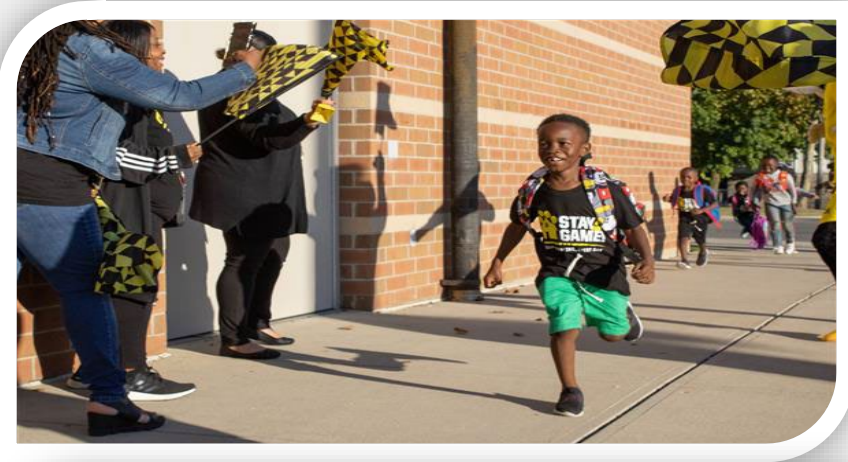
Mailing outreach



Transportation



Free meals



Source: Attendance Playbook

All Hands on Deck



Take Home Messages



Early school absences serve as one of the first and perhaps most important indicators for school success

While there are a myriad of reasons why children are absent, focusing on addressing early school absences is a promising start

Absenteeism during a child's earliest years of school not only undermines the advantages of high-quality education but also has far-reaching consequences

Setting the Table Together:

JOY and
POWER in
PARTNERSHIPS



Ohio Statewide
**Family
Engagement
Center**

—at The Ohio State University—



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