

48th International Conference on Education



Workshop 3

Early Childhood Programmes: A Critical Pathway to Inclusion

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and

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Three Interlocking Pieces of ECCE to Ensure Inclusion

Children “ready” for school

Schools “ready” for young children

Families’ active involvement

ECCE includes children 0-8 years of age

“Children Ready to Learn”

Includes:

- Physical development (fine and gross motor skills)
- Emotional well-being (ability to adapt to new experiences)
- Social skills
- Cognition
- Language skills



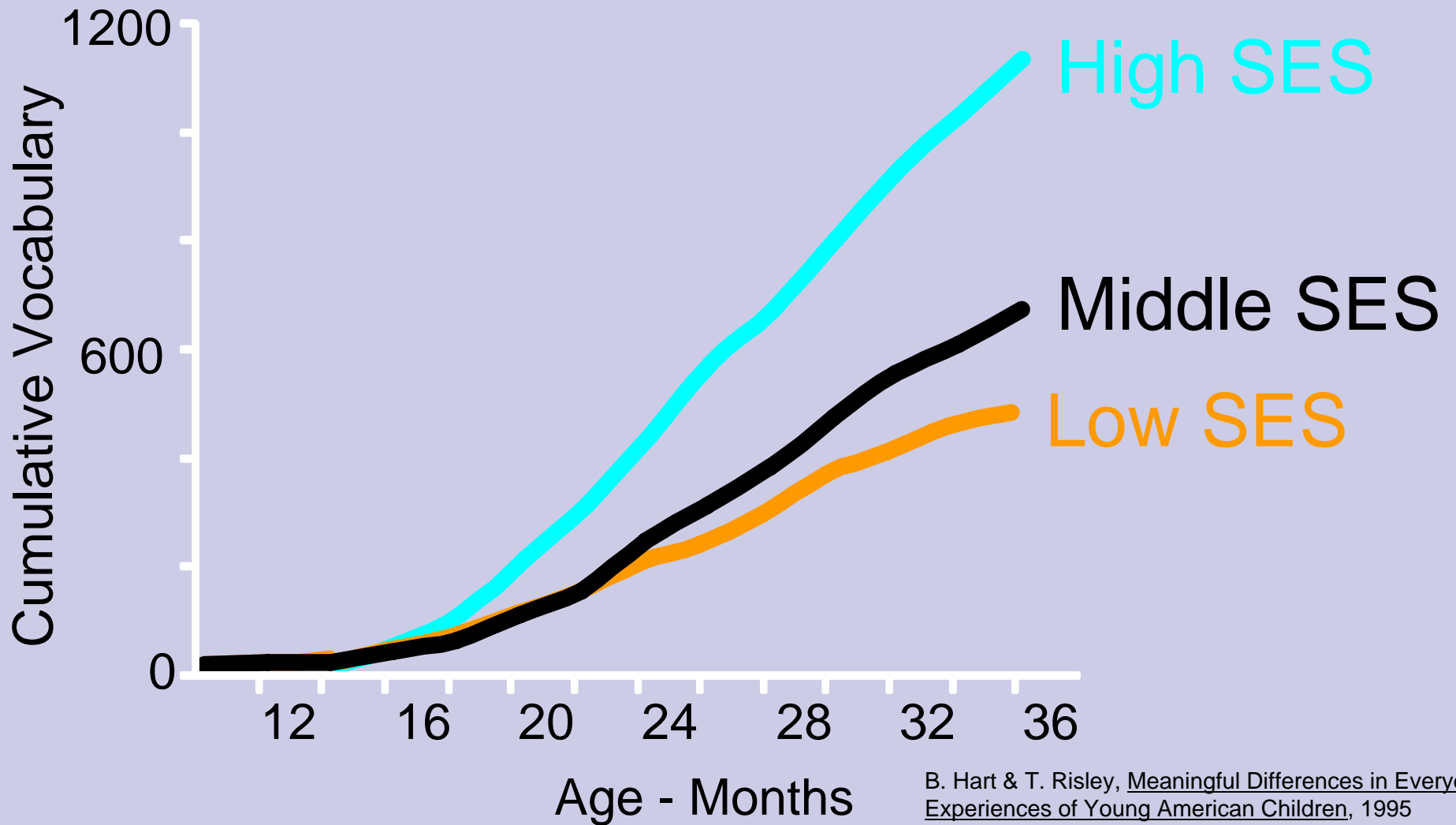
What is required?

- Supportive secure families able to provide for their children
- Presence of affection, security and identity, freedom from discrimination
- Opportunities for formal and informal learning and participation at home and in the community;
- Health, Nourishment and Protection from harm

The Evidence Base

- Very early attention and nurturing of child's nutrition and health status **and** emotional and cognitive development
 - Is critical for early brain development
 - Impacts on later health, learning, behaviour
 - Specific to education - ***participation in ECD improves efficiency of later education*** including timely entry, improved retention and success

Literacy – Early Vocabulary Growth



B. Hart & T. Risley, Meaningful Differences in Everyday Experiences of Young American Children, 1995


Family – Community Factors Influencing Exclusion/Marginalisation

- Poverty
- Distance and unsafe journey to school
- Opportunity costs: help at home with care of siblings, collecting water, etc
- Socio-cultural issues
- Trust – familiarity with formal schools



Why is this important for Inclusion Discussions?

- Jomtien 1990: “The preconditions for educational quality, equity and efficiency are set in the early childhood years”
- Dakar 2000: “Expanding and improving comprehensive early childhood care and education, especially for the most vulnerable and disadvantaged children”



There is clear evidence from different contexts and countries indicates that **the strongest gains are seen for marginalised groups who participate in ECD programmes**

Return on investment in ECD is 3:1 based on studies in Egypt, Colombia, Bolivia

Results for children who have participated in ECD programmes

Turkey: higher achievement, more likely to go to university, better jobs

Nepal: Higher achievement, lower drop-out and repetition through primary (especially for dalit children performing at similar levels to other children throughout primary)

East Africa: (MRC study) significantly higher cognitive and 'readiness' levels, lower repetition rates at primary, higher proportion starting at expected age range

Pakistan: increased enrolment and attendance, lower drop-out

Tajikistan: significant advantage for children who went through Grade Zero – designed for communities with mother tongue different to language of instruction

Brazil: poor girls who attended pre-school twice likely to reach Grade 5 and three times as likely to reach Grade 8 compared to those who did not attend pre-school



Early Prevention vs. Later Remediation

Early interventions not only have greatest benefit for children who are from disadvantaged families, but also yield higher returns as a preventive measure early in life, compared with remedial services later in life.–

Nobel Laureate James Heckman (1999)

Primary Schools' Readiness and Inclusion



Schools' Readiness for Children: Crisis in the Early Years of Primary

- **Insufficient time for actual teaching and learning process**
 - Double shifts
 - Teacher absenteeism
 - Over-crowded timetable
- **Language of Instruction**
- **Lack of relevant and inclusive curriculum for different learners**
- **VERY Large Class Sizes**
- **Lower Primary Teachers:**
 - lower status
 - Rarely equipped with the needed skills and resources e.g. to teach young children how to read;
 - Little/no access to relevant learning materials – such as storybooks and manipulatives, etc
 - Do not know or link to ECD providers

Results....

- Very HIGH drop-out and repetition rates early on
 - Grade 1 drop-out are at least double of Grade 2 drop-outs – and much higher for marginalised groups. Drop-out plus repetition rates combined higher still.
 - In South Asia, where around 35% of all out-of-school children live, more than 3 times the number of students drop-out of Grade 1 compared to those dropping out in Grade 4.
 - End of primary drop-out and repetition rates HIDE this serious problem – insufficient tracking of students

Lessons and Ideas

Access and Quality are closely linked for marginalised or excluded children, therefore

- Increase coverage and scope of ECD programmes and target the most disadvantaged
- Encourage parents' involvement e.g. telling/reading of culturally relevant stories in schools and homes
- Create mini-libraries in communities
- Work with local communities and Civil Society Organisations
- Deliberately link ECD and early primary components
 - Madrasa early childhood programme (East Africa)
 - Pakistan early transition programme

Lessons and Ideas continued

- Identify/expand effective alternative programmes that create a bridge for those marginalised into learning
 - Use local language, especially in lower primary (Guatemala)
 - Create lower primary schools for rural remote areas to address distance to school for young children (Kenya, Burkina Faso)
 - Include local females/youth in ECD and lower primary classes (Mother teachers, India)
 - Establish after school activities to extend learning (not the same as tutoring) draw upon community and parent ideas, resources and support
- Structured systematic approaches to the teaching of early reading particularly important for marginalised

Summary of Key elements

- More and better ECD
- More resources for / attention to early primary (in both ECD and School Improvement Programmes)
- Improve teachers' knowledge, skills and status and linkages with ECD (welcoming environment, language and reading, learning materials)
- Systematic reporting on Class 1 'survival rate' in addition to primary completion

Consultative Group on ECCD

A consortium of regional networks, donor agencies, international NGOs and foundations, academic/research institutions working to improve programmes and policies related to young children and their families www.ecdgroup.com

Four Cornerstones

Start at the beginning

Get ready for success

Improve primary school success

Include Early Childhood in policies

Is Everyone Ready?

