

# High Quality Early Care and Education Improves Adult Child-Parent Relationships (The Abecedarian Project)

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## The Abecedarian Project: 1971 – 2017

The Abecedarian Project is a prospective, randomized controlled trial (RCT) testing the primary hypothesis that 5 yrs (birth to kindergarten) of high quality care and education would significantly improve school readiness and later school achievement of children born into extreme poverty and multi-risk families<sup>1-4</sup>.

### Treatment Groups

Random assignment to treatment at birth

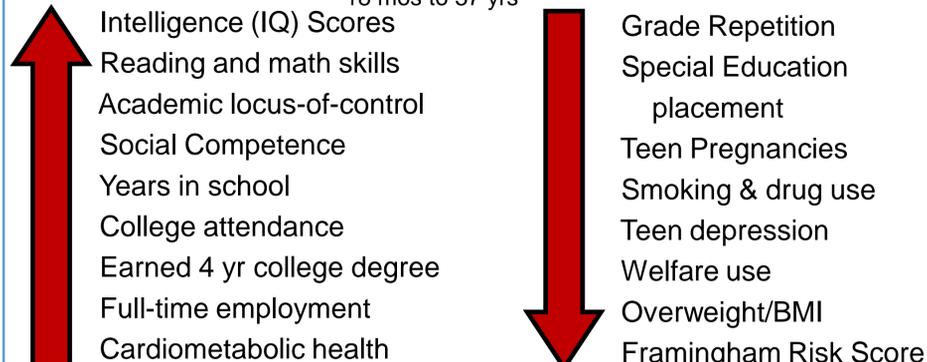
Comparison Group	Educational Group
Nutritional supplements	Nutritional supplements
Supportive social services	Supportive social services
Free or low cost medical care	Free medical care
	Educational intervention: Full day, 5 days/week, 50 wks/yr X 5 yrs
	Learninggames Curriculum

### Demographics of Educational & Comparison Groups at Entry<sup>1</sup>

	Comparison	Educational
	N=54	N=57
Mean Maternal IQ	84.5 pts	85.4 pts
Mean Maternal Age at Birth	20.3 yrs	19.6 yrs
Mean Maternal Education	10.2 yrs	10.5 yrs
% Below Poverty	100%	100%
% Black/African American	100%	94%
% Female-headed Families	75%	83%

### Previously published findings about Education and Health Benefits<sup>1-4</sup>

18 mos to 37 yrs



Plus benefits to mothers of these children (education, employment)

## The 5<sup>th</sup> Decade Abecedarian Study

**Purpose:** Investigate middle-age outcomes (39 – 44 yrs) as related to early care and education from birth to school entry.

**Enrollment:** To date, 78 of 96 (81%) study participants have volunteered, completed assessments, and been included in this data analysis. Only 1 participant declined to participate. Ages range from 39 – 44 yrs; 37 males and 41 females. Participation rates and demographics are comparable for Comparison and Educational groups.

### PRIMARY MEASURES IN THE 5<sup>th</sup> DECADE:

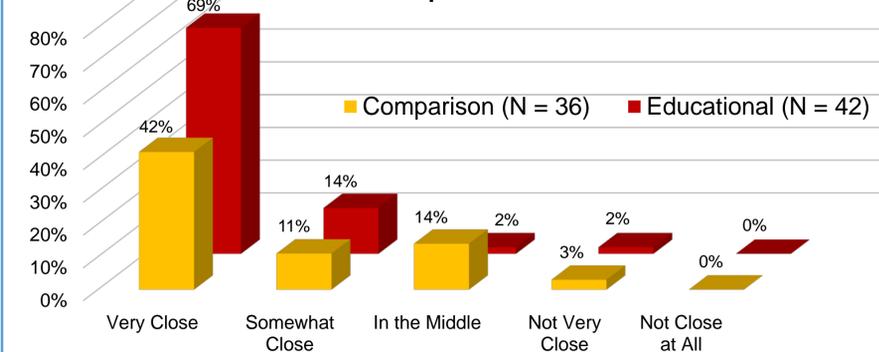
**Structured interview** regarding current social, work/economic, and health status + standardized financial and health locus of control assessments (blinded interviews). **Highlights of findings reported here.**

**Neuroimaging** of brain structure and function + performance on well delineated neuroeconomic decision-making games (blinded assessments)

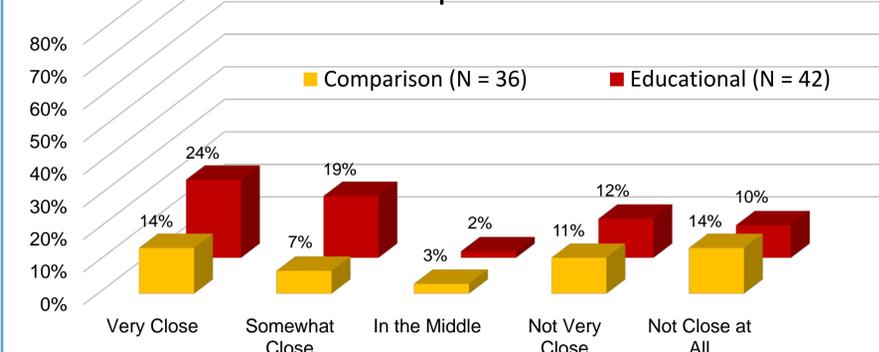
**Self-narrative** of their current life and what being a part of the Abecedarian Study means to them and their family (by Craig Ramey)

### KEY FINDINGS

#### Educational Group has more “very close” relationships with mothers

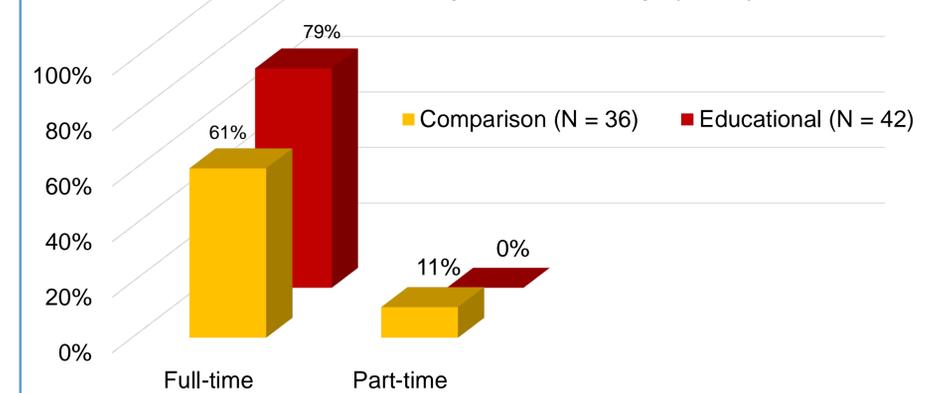


#### Educational Group has more “very close” relationships with fathers

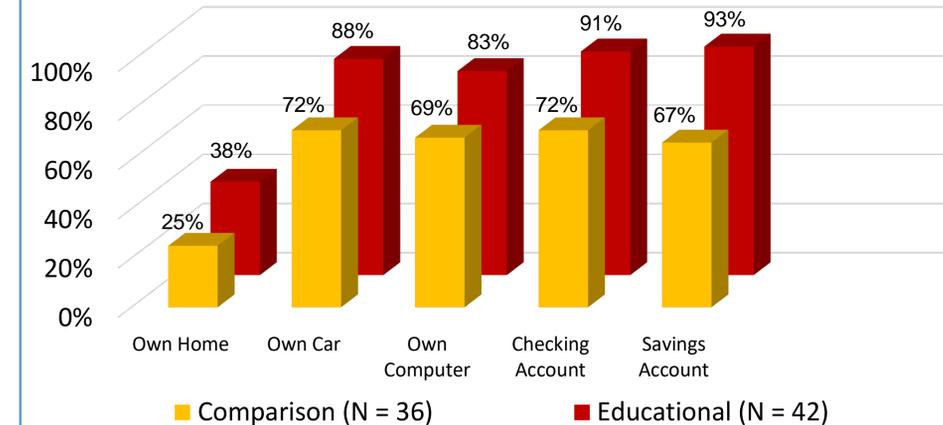


Proportional differences are significant  $\chi^2(1, N = 78) = 4.997, p < 0.05$ .

#### Educational Group employed full-time (79%) more than Comparison Group (61%)



#### Educational vs Comparison Group has more material assets



### CONCLUSIONS

- High quality care and education (birth to school entry) significantly improves close relationships between grown children and their mothers and fathers.
- Individuals in the Educational vs Comparison group were significantly more likely to:
  - be employed full-time
  - have more financial and personal assets

### References

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