

# Improving the Transition to Kindergarten for Students and Families through Home Visits

## RATIONALE

Productive family engagement is seen by many as critical to a successful 5K transition and to supporting child development throughout the educational career. This view is extended in the Dual Capacity-Building Framework for Family-School Partnerships, which highlights home visiting as a powerful way teachers can nurture “relationships of trust and respect between home and schools” (Mapp & Kuttner, 2013, p. 14). On this basis, the Madison Education Partnership (MEP) has partnered with CRECE to investigate and strengthen the transition to Kindergarten through a Home Visit Project. This 2 year project has engaged with MMSD teachers and administrators to design and facilitate home visit training, schedule home visits, and support teacher reflection.

## METHODOLOGY

Schools, teachers and families were recruited to participate in this study. Recruited teachers engaged in a professional development that framed home visits within a Funds of Knowledge approach, which recognizes the assets, rather than the deficits, of communities, families and children. 11 participating Kindergarten teachers visited 8 families each before the school year began and then again in September. We are currently gearing up for the next phase of the study which will include teacher, parent and child focus groups and interviews.

This is a mixed methods study, utilizing qualitative and quantitative tools for collection and analysis.



## HOPES

- We hope to add to research literature that identifies how home visits can be a tool for fostering relationships between schools and communities.
- We hope to identify the benefits of Home Visits on families' and children's transition to Kindergarten.
- We hope to learn how to strengthen teacher's understanding of the Funds of Knowledge approach to home visits.
- We hope to be able to identify best practices for district wide home visit programming in MMSD.

## WHO IS INVOLVED?

Madison Education Partnership  
Madison Metropolitan School District  
Center for Research on Early Childhood Education

Funded by a grant from the Spencer Foundation to Eric Grodsky, Beth Vaade and Culleen Witthuhn

Other Investigators include: Beth Graue, Katherine Magnuson, Caroline Racine Gilles, Lauren Lauter, Amanda Jeppson, Phoebe Jordan, Moonjoo Woo

## REFERENCE

Mapp, K. L., & Kuttner, P. J. (2013). Partners in education: A dual capacity-building framework for family-school partnerships. Washington, D. C.: U.S. Department of Education.



# Enhancing the Quality of Instruction in 4K

## RATIONALE

One of the best ways to reduce inequalities in school success among children from a diversity of racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic backgrounds is to resolve those inequalities before Kindergarten. This IES grant-funded research-practice partnership brings together the Wisconsin Center for Education Research (WCER) and the Madison Metropolitan School District (MMSD), through the Madison Education Partnership (MEP) and the Center for Research on Early Childhood Education (CRECE).

This project is designed to enhance the instructional quality in local four-year-old Kindergarten classrooms through a data- and teacher-driven process to co-design and implement 4K teacher professional development.

## METHODOLOGY

The partnership will work to:

Identify opportunities for instructional improvements by implementing the following:

- Conducting CLASS and semi-structured observations of a sample of 4K classrooms serving children and families from a range of socioeconomic backgrounds.
- Conducting 4K teacher focus groups on their professional development needs.
- Co-design professional development with district teachers and leaders to capitalize on these opportunities for instructional improvement Pilot the professional development program in the district.



## HOPES

By bringing nationally recognized early childhood scholars into conversation with teachers and district administrators responsible for 4K, we will hope to:

1. Enrich our understanding of classroom and instructional quality in 4K classrooms.
2. Develop data- and teacher-driven approaches that directly address opportunities for improving 4K instructional practice
3. Enhance the educational opportunity of children in 4K.

## WHO IS INVOLVED?

Madison Education Partnership  
Madison Metropolitan School District  
Center for Research on Early Childhood Education

Funded by the Institute of Education Sciences to Eric Grodsky, Katie Eklund and Beth Vaade

Other Investigators include: Beth Graue, Culleen Witthuhn, Kathryn Boonstra, Amanda Jeppson, Erica Ramberg

