

CARING FOR THE YOUNG: VARIATION IN THE CAPACITY OF COMMUNITIES TO SUPPORT FAMILIES

John W. Sipple, Cornell University

Hope G. Casto, Skidmore College

Lisa M. McCabe, Cornell University

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Why?

Access to childcare is essential to families and communities.

- Well-being of children
- Community vitality (2015 *Urban Institute* report)
- (Re)entry to workforce for parents
- Attraction for in-migration.

Our prior research,

- “Colliding Worlds” (Ed Policy, 2011)
- Qualitative data from five communities suggests there may be variation across NY State (Casto, Sipple, & McCabe, 2014).
- Pre- and post- recession investment variability across locales (Sipple & Yao, 2015)
- “Community-Aware” public policy (EPAA, 2016)

Research Questions

- In what ways does the capacity to care for young children vary across the communities of New York State?
- What are the effects of community- and school-level characteristics on the capacity of a community to serve children ages birth to five?
- If variation exists, given the relevant community and school-level policies, how do we explain the variability?
- "Capacity" - % of age-eligible infants/toddlers/preschool children for which there is a registered slot available.

Rural Early Care & Education

- Supply in rural areas is diminished (Beach, 1995; Choi, Johnson, Lake, & Robinson, 2009; Maher, Frestedt, & Grace, 2008)
 - Lower demand? More informal care
 - Sparse population
- Parents choose non-center based settings for their children (Colker & Dewees, 2000; Maher, Frestedt, & Grace, 2008)
 - Unknown quality of child care centers
 - Frequency of non-standard work schedules
 - Transportation challenges

Non-center based care is associated with lower measures of school readiness. It is essential to understand the capacity of communities to care for young children and potential geographic variation.

Policy Landscape

Community-level: *Child Care Subsidies*

- \$\$ *from* federal and state governments
- \$\$ *to* eligible families based on income
- \$\$ *for* child care expenses for children age 0-13

School-level: *Universal Pre-Kindergarten*

- \$\$ *from* state and local community
- \$\$ *to* school districts and partnering CBOs
- \$\$ *for* pre-kindergarten education for children age 3 or 4

Data & Methods

Office of Child and Family Services

- Registered Day Care Facilities
- Available slots for infants, toddlers and pre-school age children & Calculated cohort size.

New York State Education Department

- Enrollment and District Demographics (FRPL, % minority)
- Needs/Resource Categories and Community Wealth
- Per Pupil Expenditures

Methods

- Geocoded registered facilities to place in school districts
- Analyzed slot capacity by school and community variables

Findings

Base Descriptives

Table 1 - Descriptive Statistics for study variables, Year = 2013/14

Variable	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
Infant Slots	22.06	43.45	0.00	477.00
Toddler Slots	43.83	79.03	0.00	779.00
Preschool Slots	150.26	250.57	0.00	2924.00
Infant Capacity	0.06	0.08	0.00	0.90
Toddler Capacity	0.11	0.14	0.00	1.00
Preschool Capacity	0.63	0.65	0.00	5.57
City	0.03	0.18	0.00	1.00
Suburb	0.38	0.48	0.00	1.00
Town	0.17	0.37	0.00	1.00
Rural	0.42	0.49	0.00	1.00
% Poor Students	0.34	0.18	0.00	0.83
% Minority Students	0.20	0.22	0.00	1.00
Tax Rate#	17.63	5.18	1.69	44.61
Expenditures Per Pupil	21519.24	5543.27	11461.00	81287.00
Community Wealth	0.86	1.20	0.16	24.00
K12 District Enrollment	2736.55	3510.30	58.00	37561.00
N = 634				

Correlations

Table 6 - Correlation Martix for study variables.

		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
		1.00											
2	Toddler Capacity Preschool	0.85	1.00										
3	Capacity	0.61	0.72	1.00									
4	City	0.14	0.13	0.13	1.00								
5	Suburb	0.21	0.32	0.22	-0.15	1.00							
6	Town	0.03	-0.02	0.04	-0.08	-0.35	1.00						
7	Rural	-0.28	-0.35	0.30	-0.16	-0.66	-0.38	1.00					
8	% Poor Students^	-0.18	-0.29	0.15	0.28	-0.45	0.12	0.25	1.00				
9	% Minority Students	0.13	0.23	0.23	0.28	0.40	-0.10	-0.42	0.19	1.00			
10	Tax Rate#	0.15	0.14	0.10	0.08	0.26	0.01	-0.29	0.03	0.24	1.00		
11	Expenditures Per Pupil	0.01	0.09	0.14	-0.09	0.17	-0.17	0.00	-0.16	0.22	-0.08	1.00	
12	Community Wealth	0.02	0.10	0.15	-0.06	0.13	-0.09	-0.04	-0.23	0.17	-0.32	0.64	1.00

Tables 7-9 Stepwise Random-effects GLS Regression Tables for Capacities

	Infants	Toddlers	PreK
	Coef.	Coef.	Coef.
Year (centered at 2011)	0.092***	0.12***	0.095***
City~	0.836	0.7	1.4*
Town~	-0.067	-0.118	0.397
Rural~	-2.088***	-2.024***	-1.199***
% Poor Students^	-0.075***	-0.089**	0.009
% Minority Students^	0.088***	0.137***	0.137***
Tax Rate	0.054***	0.059***	0.048
Expenditures Per Pupil (100s)	-0.069***	-0.071***	-0.026***
Community Wealth^	0.103***	0.197***	0.156
K12 District Enrollment (1000s)	0.016***	0.015***	0.008*
constant	5.167***	5.178***	4.744
sigma_u	2.618	2.389	2.442
sigma_e	1.466	1.335	1.301
rho	76%	76.20%	0.779
R ² overall	0.27	0.35	0.20
1,912 Observations in 657 School Districts (groups), *** p≤ .001, ** p≤ .01, * p≤ .05, ^ decile units			
~Locale comparison group is Suburban Districts			

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Key Takeaways!

- Over the 7 years of this study, we see growth in capacity of each modality. But it would take over 20 years for rural capacity to increase to where suburbs are today.
- Location matters! Really bad for rural and typically positive for city – even after controlling for key indep variables.
- Poverty & Wealth matters (infant/toddler) except for where public policy has successfully worked to eliminate the effect (preschool)
- Enrollment matters and is linked to greater capacity.
- Tax effort matters for infant and toddlers but not for preschool.
- Public policy mechanisms discussed for infant and toddler capacities and how different from PreK mechanism.

Areas for further research

Above and beyond community wealth, increased school district spending is associated with greater capacity.

- With UPK policy comes partnering that may enhance the whole early care sector.
- With UPK policy comes increased spending, which is associated with greater capacity.
- With UPK policy comes a local commitment to early education that may suggest a culture of financially supporting the early care sector.

Thank you!

Hope G. Casto, Skidmore College

hcasto@skidmore.edu

John W. Sipple, Cornell University

jws28@cornell.edu

Lisa McCabe, Cornell University

Lisa.mccabe@cornell.edu