Dear friends and families,

We hope you have enjoyed your summer! We are researchers from the Pathways to Literacy Project in the Department of Psychology at The University of Michigan. As you may recall, we collaborated with your child’s school last year on an exciting project aimed at illuminating the factors that contribute to behavioral regulation and success in school. Kindergarten students who participated in the project last year engaged in two individual sessions, and one classroom observation. We are looking forward to continuing the project with these students as first graders in the fall!

In this newsletter, you will find some of the exciting findings from the past year! We are so thankful for your support on our project, and hope you enjoy reading about these results.

What Have We Found?

Participating kindergarten students’ academic and behavioral abilities were measured individually and within group settings. To gauge behavioral skills, students engaged in fun, child-friendly games assessing attention, memory, and ability to control impulses. Additionally, students exhibited their academic skills through reading comprehension, letter and word recognition, and various areas of mathematics. Below are some of our findings from the first year:

- Importantly, all measures of behavior (attention, memory, and impulse control) are highly related to one another.
- Attention control is associated with letter-word recognition and mathematical abilities.
- Memory is also related to academic abilities, though the association is strongest for mathematics, especially when tested in a group setting.
- Impulse control is associated with mathematical and reading comprehension abilities.

As educational researchers, we are interested in the complex interaction between behavior and academics, the role of schooling, and how this relationship changes as children progress through school. We look forward to working with these students again during the upcoming school year to help build upon these exciting findings. Please stay tuned for more results, as we continue to process the data from the brain-based measures, as well as the classroom-level analyses!

In the fall, we will be working with a new group of kindergarten students on this project. Additionally, we will continue working with the same students who participated last year to measure developmental trends. Students whose parents or guardians agree to allow them to participate will engage in a series of fun tasks designed to measure the role of schooling on children’s ability to regulate their behavior, and how this relates to their academic success. We will measure student behavior and academic achievement, neurological activity through fun brain-based games, and classroom routines to determine what teachers are doing to foster these skills.

Questions?

If you would like additional information regarding the nature of this project, are interested in having your child participate, or about our research in general, please do not hesitate to contact us at any time. We may be reached via e-mail at: PathwaystoLiteracy@umich.edu, or by phone at 734.647.9439. Check us out on the Web! https://sites.lsa.umich.edu/pathways-lab