Residential Mobility and Well-being Among School-age Children

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STUDY PURPOSE

To assess the association of residential mobility with flourishing among school-age children.

BACKGROUND

Residential moves during childhood are disruptive and can be stressful. Depending on family context, the stress may result in adverse developmental consequences, such as learning and memory impairment and behavior problems, rather than flourishing and engaging in school.

Residential mobility in childhood has been shown to have adverse effects on child health but little is known about the impact of childhood residential mobility on positive childhood development.

RESULTS

45% of children were flourishing:

- 48% of children met all 3 criteria for self-regulation/curiosity
- 80% met criteria for school engagement

Children with 3+ moves were less likely to:

- Flourish
- Meet all three criteria for self-regulation/curiosity
- Meet both criteria for school engagement

ADJUSTED RELATIVE RISKS OF OVERALL FLOURISHING, SELF-REGULATION/CURIOSITY, & SCHOOL ENGAGEMENT

METHODS

Multivariable models, accounting for weighting and the complex survey design, modeled the relative risk of mobility on flourishing and the domains of self-regulation/curiosity and school engagement, controlling for covariates.

Tested interactions of mobility with age, sex, and poverty.

Assessed the association of number of moves with the individual items comprising flourishing.

Stata SE v14 software was used for all analyses.

ADJUSTED RELATIVE RISKS OF SCHOOL ENGAGEMENT STRATIFIED BY POVERTY LEVEL & AGE

DISCUSSION

Having three or more moves in childhood is associated with decreased self-regulation/curiosity and school engagement in US children age 6-17.

There is evidence that the risk of no school engagement associated with moving is strongest for adolescents and those living in poverty.

Overall, residential mobility in childhood is associated with less successful childhood development.

Limitations:

- Assessed number of lifetime moves, but not timing of the moves
- Unable to compare impact of moves in adolescence vs. childhood
- No information on reason for move

Conclusion:

These findings expand previous work to include flourishing and sub-domains of self-regulation/curiosity and school engagement in a recent population-based US sample of school age children.

These findings support place-based policies that reduce residential mobility for low income families and interventions for adolescents with a history of multiple moves that would help them be engaged in school.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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*Reference group is 0 moves
*Adjusted for sex, age, race/ethnicity, parental/caregiver education, family poverty level, and household composition.