



Education and Housing Equity Project Records.

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KIDS MOBILITY PROJECT REPORT EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

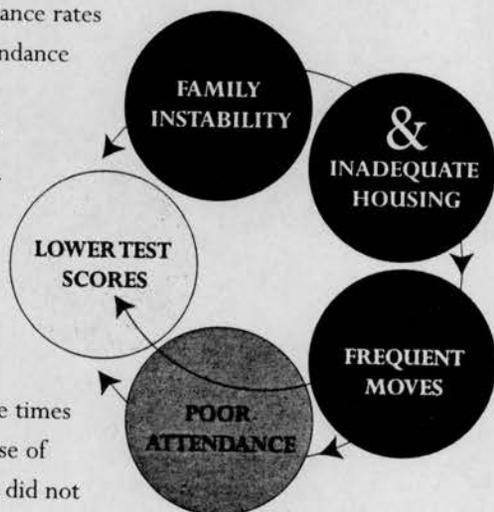
The Kids Mobility Project was initiated by a group of local planners and researchers from a variety of educational and community organizations who wanted to learn more about the effects of changing residence on student achievement and adjustment. Mobility affects one in five Minneapolis students, although 85 percent of elementary students stay in the same school. They asked: Do students who move more often have lower test scores? If so, what factors account for the lower performance of mobile students?

To find the answers, participants in the Project undertook two studies and a review of research on student mobility. The first study analyzed school data related to student achievement and mobility. The second analyzed interviews with 100 mostly low-income families about the impact of moving.

ATTENDANCE LINKED TO MOBILITY AND LOW SCORES

The first study, a quantitative analysis, looked at the relationship between mobility and other factors that may affect student performance for elementary age students. Socioeconomic levels, race, out-of-state birth, family structure and attendance were found to have a strong relationship to reading achievement test scores and to residential moves.

Researchers found that students who moved often had lower attendance rates and that attendance levels were important to achievement. Average reading scores for students who moved three or more times were half those of students who did not



move. Students who, on average, were absent 20 percent of the time scored 20 points lower than students who attended school nearly every day. Similar patterns have been found in local and national research.

FAMILIES COPE WITH POOR HOUSING AND OTHER STRESSORS

In the qualitative study of 100 families, 75 percent were selected because of a history of frequent and recent moves. Many of those interviewed were coping with stressful life events such as loss of income, divorce, abuse, or poor housing.

Families reported relentless and often futile searches for adequate, safe, and affordable housing, especially if they had large families. Families were forced to stay with relatives or friends and sometimes experienced episodes of homelessness. Many said that frequent moves made it difficult for their children to adjust to new schools, friends and neighborhoods, resulting in poor school performance and behavior. Follow-up reports from teachers showed poorer school attendance, school performance, and social and emotional adjustment for children with frequent moves.

IMPLICATIONS FOR COMMUNITY POLICY MAKERS

Low-income families need easier access to safe, affordable, adequate and available housing so that frequent moves do not become a way of life. Children and families need communities that provide opportunities and services that improve their stability. Although they have not been blind to the issues highlighted by the Kids Mobility Project, schools, social service and community agencies, religious and philanthropic organizations must assess the effectiveness of present efforts and refocus efforts in three areas: attendance, housing and strengthening family stability. Organizations, must make school attendance a strong social value in Minneapolis and build welcoming, stable communities with integrated social services and adequate housing.