

# Tulsa SEED Study

STUDY OF SCHOOL EXPERIENCES AND EARLY DEVELOPMENT  
GEORGETOWN UNIVERSITY & UNIVERSITY OF OKLAHOMA-TULSA

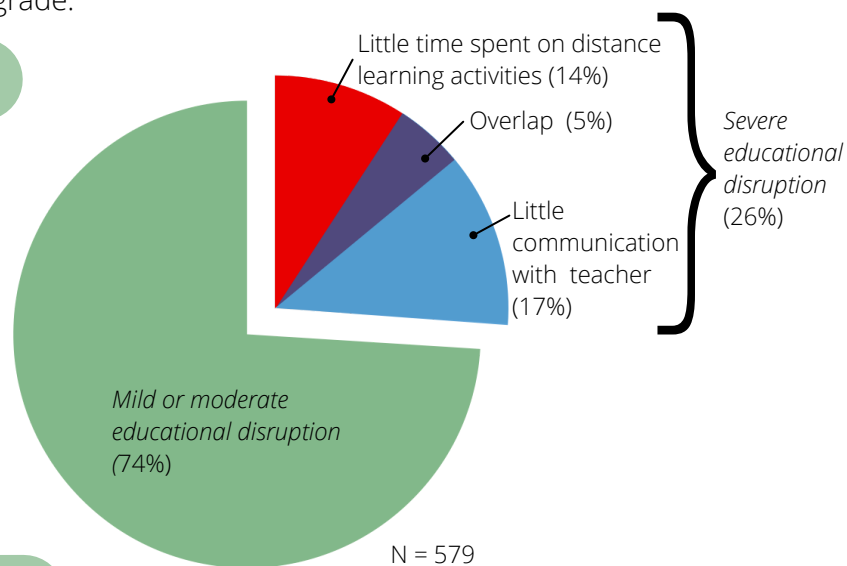
The Tulsa SEED Study is led by Principal Investigators Dr. Anna Johnson and Dr. Deborah Phillips at Georgetown University; Dr. Diane Horn at University of Oklahoma - Tulsa; and Dr. Gigi Luk at McGill University.

## THE DIFFERENT FACES OF COVID-19 DISRUPTION: FINDINGS FROM THE TULSA SEED STUDY

This brief reports on the Tulsa SEED Study, which is following a diverse group of children from low-income families from age 3 through 4th grade. The group of children in this report were in 1st grade in 2020 at the onset of the COVID-19 outbreak and the start of distance learning in Tulsa-area schools. After a year of distance learning, children's parents were surveyed about their experiences right before (winter 2021; n = 770) and after (summer 2021; n = 579) the return to in-person school in 2nd grade.

### Educational Disruption

- During virtual learning in the 2020-2021 school year, 26% of children experienced severe educational disruption, defined as **spending just an hour a day or less on distance learning activities (14%)** and/or **communicating with their teacher only once a week or less (17%)**.
- Children experiencing these severe educational disruptions were dispersed across TPS schools, and even within schools, across classrooms, indicating a district-wide challenge.



### Hardships at Home

- Most children in our sample (83%) experienced a COVID-related hardship at home, but the nature and number of these hardships varied from child to child.
  - **Health:** 1 in 4 lived with a household member who tested positive for COVID, and 12% had a family member or loved one who was hospitalized or died.
  - **Material:** About one-third experienced food insecurity (38%) or financial insecurity (29%), having lost at least 10% of household income.
  - **Emotional:** About 1 in 5 parents reported depression.
- Of those children who experienced a COVID-related hardship at home, 62% experienced hardship in just one domain (health, material, or emotional); 31% had hardships in two domains; and 8% had hardships in all three domains.
- This evidence implies that a family-specific, not a one-size-fits-all, response to pandemic-related hardships at home is strongly warranted.

### A Double Dose of Disruption

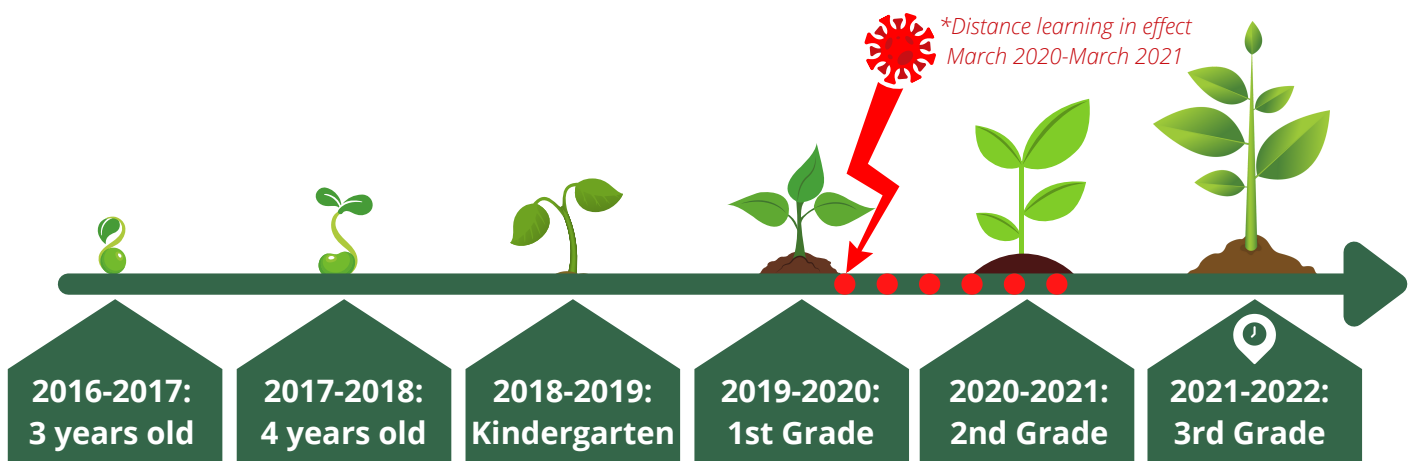
- The vast majority of children who experienced severe educational disruption also experienced one or more COVID-related hardships at home (85%). These "double dose" children were more likely than their peers who experienced less severe educational disruption to have a parent who was depressed and to live in a more chaotic household (see also Castle et al., under review).
- Supporting this particularly high-risk group of students must involve attention not only to their loss of instruction during COVID-19, but also to risk factors in their home environments that affect learning and well-being.

## References

Castle, S., Partika, A., Martin, A., & Johnson, A.D. (2021). The Invisible Distance of Distance Learning: School Participation of Young Students during COVID-19 [Manuscript submitted for publication]. Early Childhood Education Institute, University of Oklahoma.

## More About Tulsa SEED

The Tulsa SEED Study aims to understand the effects of pre-K on self-regulatory, education, and health outcomes and the role of classroom supports and context in explaining those effects. When the COVID-19 pandemic began in early 2020, Tulsa Public Schools switched to distance learning, which lasted for approximately one year. Since then, the SEED Study Team has also begun to investigate questions about how the pandemic has impacted families and educators, including the effect of distance learning on children, parents, and teachers. In September and October 2021, the team released research briefs on our recent findings. As of December 2021, the children in our study sample are currently in the 3rd grade.



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