Residential Mobility and Well-being Among School-age Children

Annie Gjelsvik1,2,3, Michelle L. Rogers1, Ling Song1,4, Alison Field2,3, Patrick Vivier1,3,5

1 Hassenfeld Child Health Innovation Institute, Brown University; 2 Department of Epidemiology, Brown University; 3 Department of Pediatrics, Alpert Medical School, Brown University; 4 School of Public Health, Brown University; 5 Department of Health Services, Policy, and Practice, Brown University

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.

MEASURES
- Residential Mobility
  “How many times has [child] ever moved to a new address?”
  - None, 1-2, 3+ moves
- Flourishing
  Children with all five items endorsed as “usually” or “always” within the two domains were classified as flourishing:
  - Self-regulation/curiosity
  - Interest and curiosity in learning new things
  - Finishes tasks and follows through with plans
  - Stays calm/in control when faced with a challenge
- School Engagement
  - Doing well in school
  - Doing all required homework

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

- ADJUSTED RELATIVE RISK OF SCHOOL ENGAGEMENT STRATIFIED BY POVERTY LEVEL & AGE

- Number of Moves in Child’s Lifetime

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.

DATA
2011/2012 National Survey of Children’s Health (NSCH)
- Nationally representative
- Cross-sectional telephone survey
- Parent-reported

Limited analyses to children age 6-17, among whom information on flourishing and residential mobility was collected (N=63,333).

METHODS
- Multivariable models, accounting for weighting and the complex survey design, model 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 v.14 software was used for all analyses.

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.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS
Data obtained from Child and Adolescent Health Measurement Initiative (CAHMI), Data Resource Center of Child and Adolescent Health. www.childhealthdata.org