

**Joshua Dean**

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presents his work on

**The Effects of Attending Kindergarten on Child Development in Rural India\***

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Joint work with Seema Jayachandran

**Abstract:**

Primary school enrollment is now nearly universal in many developing countries, but children from poor families arrive less prepared than better-off peers who attended pre-kindergarten and kindergarten. We study the effects of expanding access to pre-K and kindergarten on child development in Karnataka, India, through a randomized evaluation. We partnered with a private kindergarten provider to offer two-year scholarships to children from poor families. We find that children who attend pre-K/kindergarten due to the scholarship experience a 0.8 standard deviation gain in cognitive development. This effect size is considerably larger than most estimates for Head Start in the US. The scholarship induced some children to switch from attending no kindergarten to attending our partner's school, and it also induced some to switch from a different kindergarten to our partner's school. To separately identify the treatment effects for these two types of switchers, we use machine learning techniques to predict who the treatment "compliers" are and what each child's counterfactual activity would have been.