

WINNING THE LOTTERY:

HOW FAMILY BACKGROUND SHAPES WHERE KIDS GO TO SCHOOL

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BACKGROUND

- Children from low socioeconomic status (SES) families are less likely to have experiences that encourage educational development
- Children's initial reading competency is correlated with the home literacy environment, number of books owned, and parent distress
- Poor households have less access to learning materials and experiences, including books, computers, stimulating toys, skill-building lessons, or tutors to create a positive literacy environment



EMERGING THEMES

Public, Private, Neighborhood, and Lottery

- "The fact that she got accepted right off the bat in the lottery system. If she didn't, I would have sent her to private school and kept trying the lottery. They can be in the sibling lottery, the gifted and talented lottery, and the normal lottery all at the same time."
- "We also have a Montessori school nearby, so I'll look at that."
- "I don't know if CFI 70 is considered a magnet school, but I do know you have to enter into the lottery."

RESEARCH QUESTION

What factors shape how parents decide where their children go to school?

- Socioeconomic status
- Parent background
- Private vs. Public Schools
- Magnet vs. Neighborhood Schools
- Race, Culture, or Religion
- School Offerings, Clubs, or Extracurriculars

METHODS

- Qualitative Interviews with Parents of children aged preschool to first grade, attending Indianapolis schools
- Interviews focused on the process of deciding where their child goes to school and contributing factors
- I transcribed the interviews and then performed open and axial coding
- Three themes emerged from my analysis:
 - Categories of schools (public, private, magnet)
 - Parent beliefs
 - Socioeconomic factors (SES)

Parent Beliefs

- "Several [schools] did not have elements we agreed with"
- "I want my kids to be good Catholic children."
- "I want my kids to go to a school where they feel like they can say what they want in a respectful way and not be criticized for it."
- "I liked school, and I want her to like school."

SES

- "I knew that Catholic school would cost a lot of money."
- "I don't know if I want to spend \$20,000 a year on schooling for first grade."
- "Sending one kid to Catholic school is doable, but sending three kids to catholic schools is just not affordable."

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