Improving Labor Market Prospects for Young Men

Evidence From Career Academies

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Career Academies
Program Characteristics, Goals, and Track Record

- **Key Features**
  - *Small Learning Communities* in high schools to promote interpersonal supports and program coherence
  - *Career theme* to combine academic curriculum with career-related course sequence
  - *Employer partnerships* to support career awareness and development activities and work-based learning

- **Goals**
  - *Dropout prevention*
  - *Career development and academic achievement*
  - *Pathways to the labor market and post-secondary education*

- **Track Record**
  - *34-year history of implementation, planned expansion, and efforts at continuous improvement*
  - *Intervention with goals and core features aligned with important problems in high schools and youth employment*
Features of the Evaluation

- 9 sites reflecting typical Career Academy implementation and urban contexts
- Random assignment field experiment involving over 1,700 students who applied to Career Academies in 1993, 1994, 1995
- Qualitative information on program implementation and context
- Baseline and outcome data:
  - Surveys administered during high school (4 waves)
  - School records data
  - 4-year post-high school follow-up survey
  - 8-year post-high school follow-up survey
Key Findings
(8 Years Post-High School)

- Positive and sustained impact on employment and earnings through 8 years following scheduled high school graduation.
  - Impact for full sample: $2,088 per year (11 percent increase)
  - Impact for young men: $3,724 per year (17 percent increase)
  - Impact for young women: $1,026 per year (not statistically significant)

- High levels of educational attainment, but no impact (positive or negative) from Career Academies.

- Positive impact on family formation and independent living.
Impacts on Monthly Earnings
Young Men
8 Years Post-High School

Months after scheduled high school graduation date

Monthly Earnings (2006 Dollars)
Impacts on Employment and Earnings
Young Men
8 Years Post-High School

Average Monthly Earnings

Year 1-4 | Year 5-8
---|---
$1,386 | $2,197
$1,647 | $2,558

Average Weekly Hours

Year 1-4 | Year 5-8
---|---
30 | 34
34 | 38

Average Hourly Wage

Year 1-4 | Year 5-8
---|---
$10.75 | $15.95
$11.71 | $16.54

**Note:**
- **Academy** vs. **Non-Academy**
- Significance levels: $p < 0.05$, $**p < 0.01$, $***p < 0.001$
## Impacts on Adult Transition Indicators

### Young Men

#### 8 Years Post-High School

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outcome (%)</th>
<th>Academy Group</th>
<th>Non-Academy Group</th>
<th>Impact</th>
<th>P-Value</th>
<th>Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Young men</strong> (N = 586)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Marital status</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Married and living together</td>
<td>36.0</td>
<td>27.0</td>
<td>9.0 **</td>
<td>0.020</td>
<td>33.4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Single</td>
<td>59.3</td>
<td>65.6</td>
<td>-6.3</td>
<td>0.114</td>
<td>-9.6</td>
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<tr>
<td>Divorced, separated, or widowed</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>7.4</td>
<td>-2.7</td>
<td>0.157</td>
<td>-36.8</td>
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<td>Parental status</td>
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<tr>
<td>Custodial parent</td>
<td>36.6</td>
<td>25.2</td>
<td>11.5 ***</td>
<td>0.003</td>
<td>45.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Noncustodial parent</td>
<td>11.5</td>
<td>17.9</td>
<td>-6.4 **</td>
<td>0.023</td>
<td>-35.9</td>
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<tr>
<td>Not a parent</td>
<td>51.9</td>
<td>56.6</td>
<td>-4.7</td>
<td>0.242</td>
<td>-8.3</td>
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<td>Living situation</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Lives independently with</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>child/children and partner</td>
<td>30.2</td>
<td>23.2</td>
<td>7.0 *</td>
<td>0.058</td>
<td>30.4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lives independently with no children</td>
<td>35.8</td>
<td>45.7</td>
<td>-9.9 **</td>
<td>0.015</td>
<td>-21.6</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lives independently with</td>
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<tr>
<td>child/children but not partner</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>0.476</td>
<td>44.6</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lives with parent(s) or guardian(s), with or without children</td>
<td>31.2</td>
<td>29.2</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>0.609</td>
<td>6.7</td>
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</table>
Implications

- Increased investments in career-related experiences during high school can have substantial payoff in the labor market, at least for young men.
- Feasibility of accomplishing goals of school-to-career and career technical education without compromising on academic goals.
- Empirical support for potential link between impacts on labor market prospects and impacts other adult transition behaviors for young men.