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Alan de Brauw ... John Hoddinott

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Abstract

A growing body of evidence suggests that conditional cash transfer (CCT) programs can have strong, positive effects on a range of welfare indicators for poor households in developing countries. However, there is little evidence about how important each component of these programs is towards achieving these outcomes. This paper tests the importance of conditionality on one specific outcome related to human capital formation, school enrollment, using data collected during the evaluation of Mexico's *PROGRESA* program. We exploit the fact that some beneficiaries who received transfers did not receive the forms needed to monitor the attendance of their children at

school. We use a variety of techniques, including nearest neighbor matching and household fixed effects regressions, to show that the absence of these forms reduced the likelihood that children attended school with this effect most pronounced when children are transitioning to lower secondary school. We provide substantial evidence that these findings are not driven by unobservable characteristics of households or localities.



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## Keywords

Conditionality; Cash transfers; Matching; *PROGRESA*; School enrollment

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