



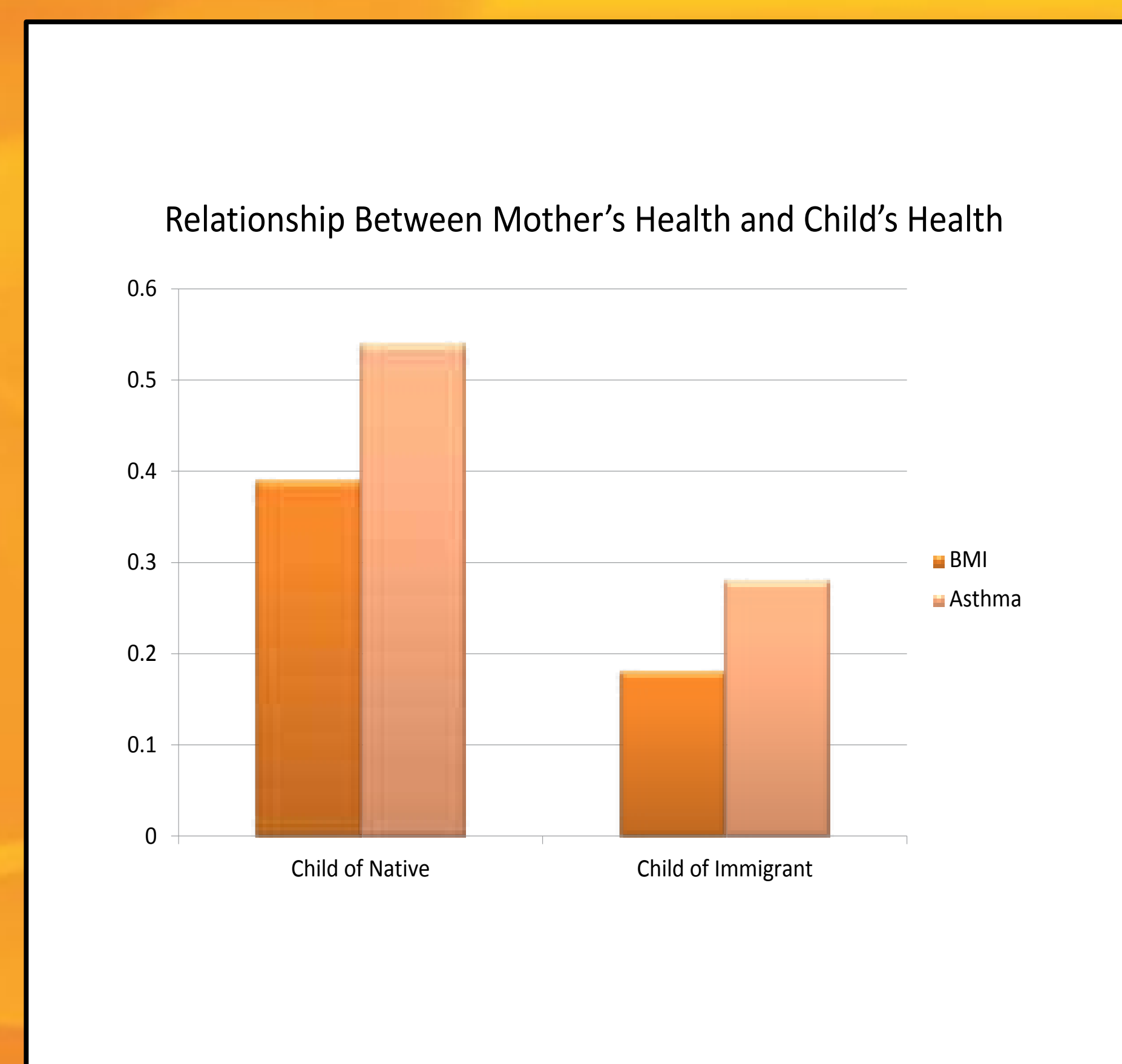
The Economics of Child Health: Evidence from the National Longitudinal Surveys

Janet Currie

The NLSY, NLS97, and NLSCM are unique resources for studying child health

OBESITY

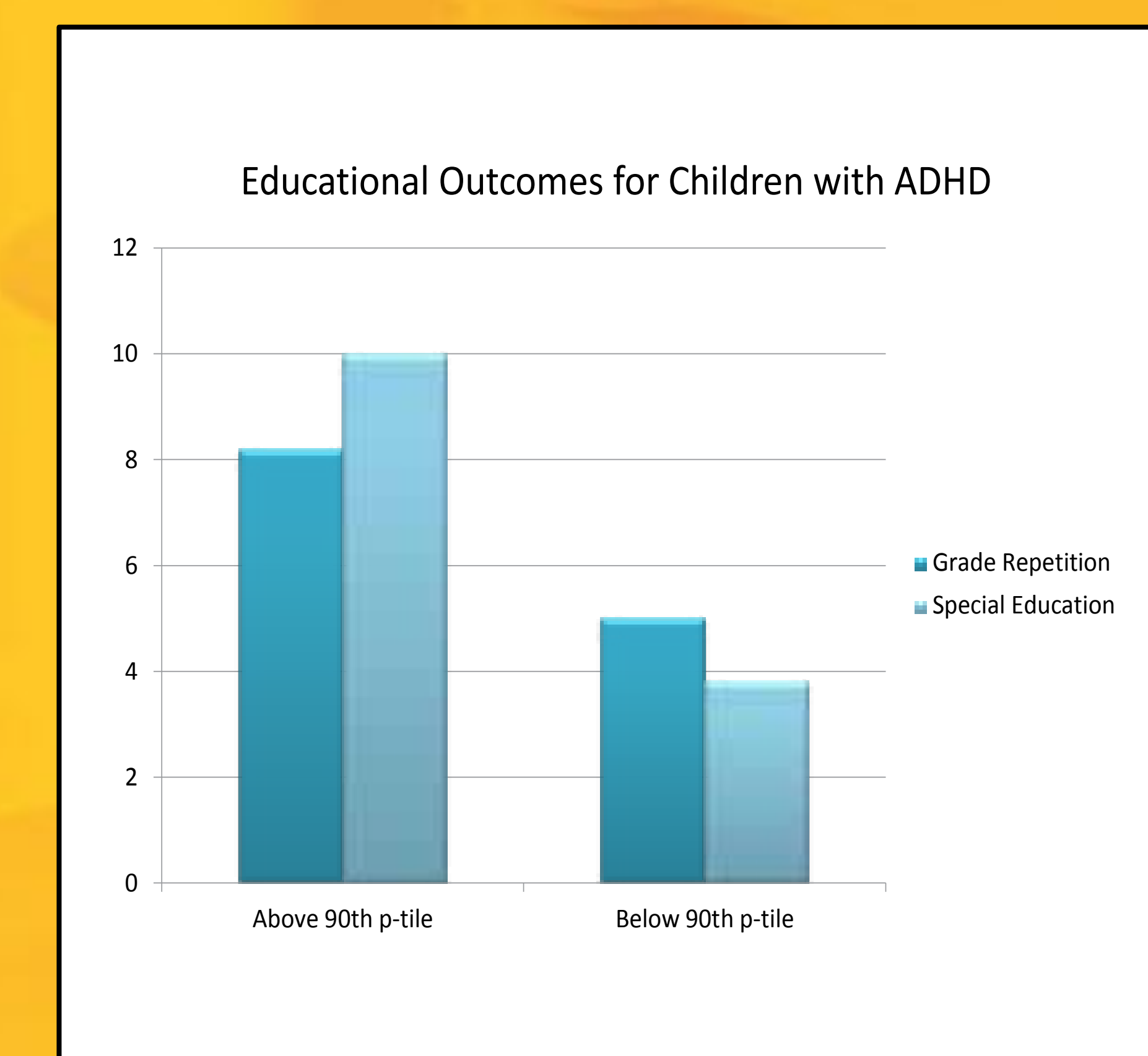
Mother's Weight Status	Category	Daughter's Weight Status				Mother's distribution
		<18.5	18.5-25	25-30	>30	
<18.5	Underweight	17.1%	67.9%	11.4%	3.6%	6.0%
18.5-25	Recommended	6.4%	63.8%	19.5%	10.3%	68.4%
25-30	Overweight	2.2%	41.4%	31.4%	25.0%	19.4%
>30	Obese	2.8%	28.2%	25.5%	43.5%	6.2%
Daughter's distribution		6.0%	57.5%	21.7%	14.8%	



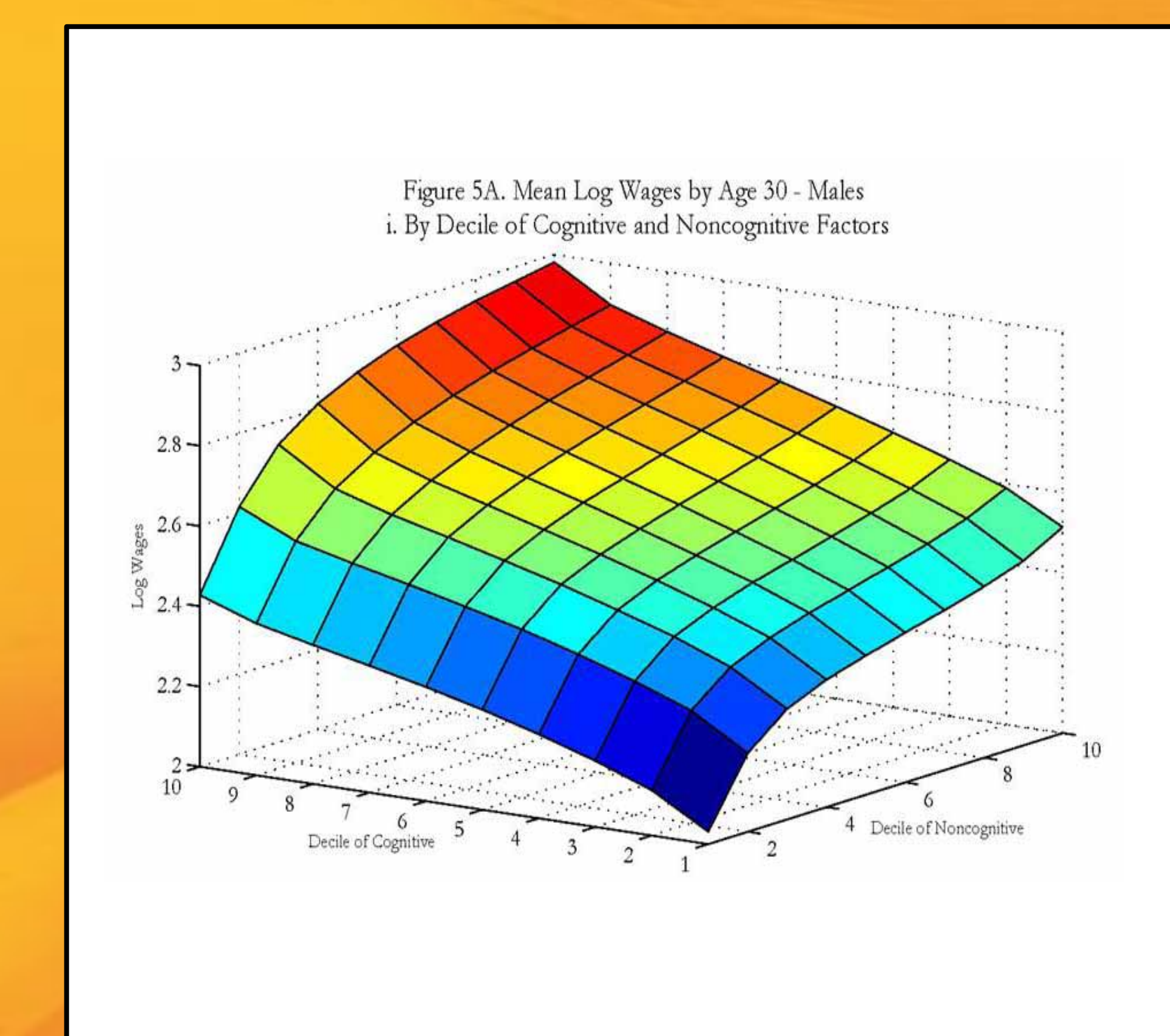
Source: Classen, "Measures of the intergenerational transmission of body mass index between mothers and their children in the United States, 1981-2004." Using the intergenerational linkage in the NLSY, the study shows that children's Body Mass Index is closely related to that of their mothers.

Source: Akbulut and Kugler, "The Inter-generational Transmission of Health Status." The NLS links mothers and children which enables researchers to probe the strong correlation between mother's health and child's health.

MENTAL HEALTH



Source: Currie and Stabile, "Child Mental Health and Human Capital Accumulation: The Case of ADHD." The NLS screens all participants for mental health and allows these comparisons between siblings with high and low levels of ADHD symptoms.



Source: Heckman, Stixrud, Urzua, "The Effects of Cognitive and Noncognitive Abilities on Labor Market Outcomes and Social Behavior," uses the fact that the NLS data measures both types of skills to compare their effects on wages and other outcomes. Workers with high cognitive skills but poor mental health do worse than those with lower test scores but better mental health.

IMPORTANCE OF EARLY LIFE HEALTH

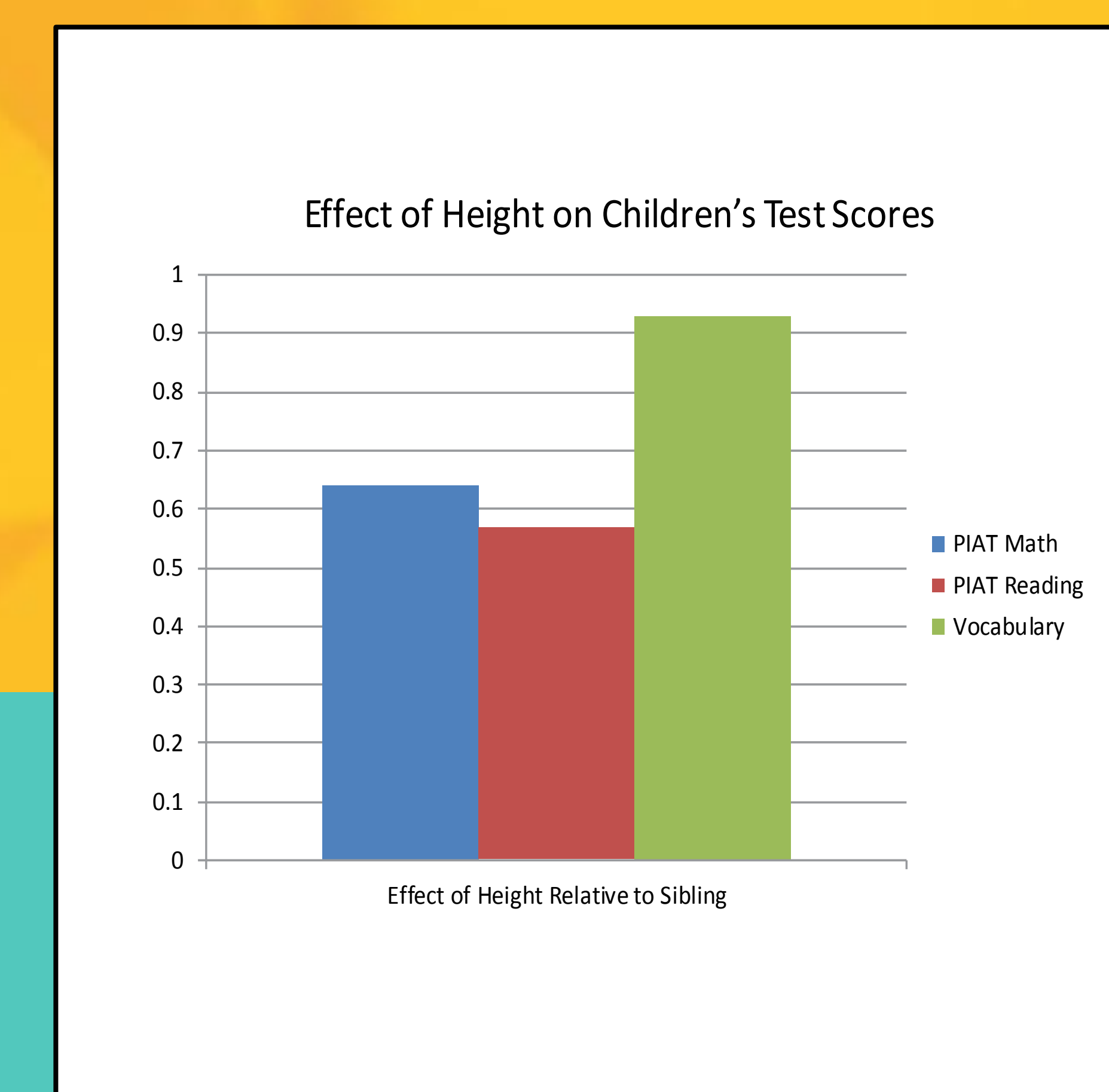
- The NLSY began in 1979 with ~12,000 youths aged 14-21 who have been followed since. The sample includes siblings and detailed background information.
- Beginning in 1986, all of the children of the NLSY women have been followed making it possible to link mothers and children.
- A new cohort of youth began in 1997, making it possible to compare changes across cohorts.
- Because of the utility of the data and the fact that it is available, over 6000 studies have been conducted using these data.

Health domains covered include: Fertility, substance use, utilization of medical care, mental health, accidents, chronic conditions, and infant health.

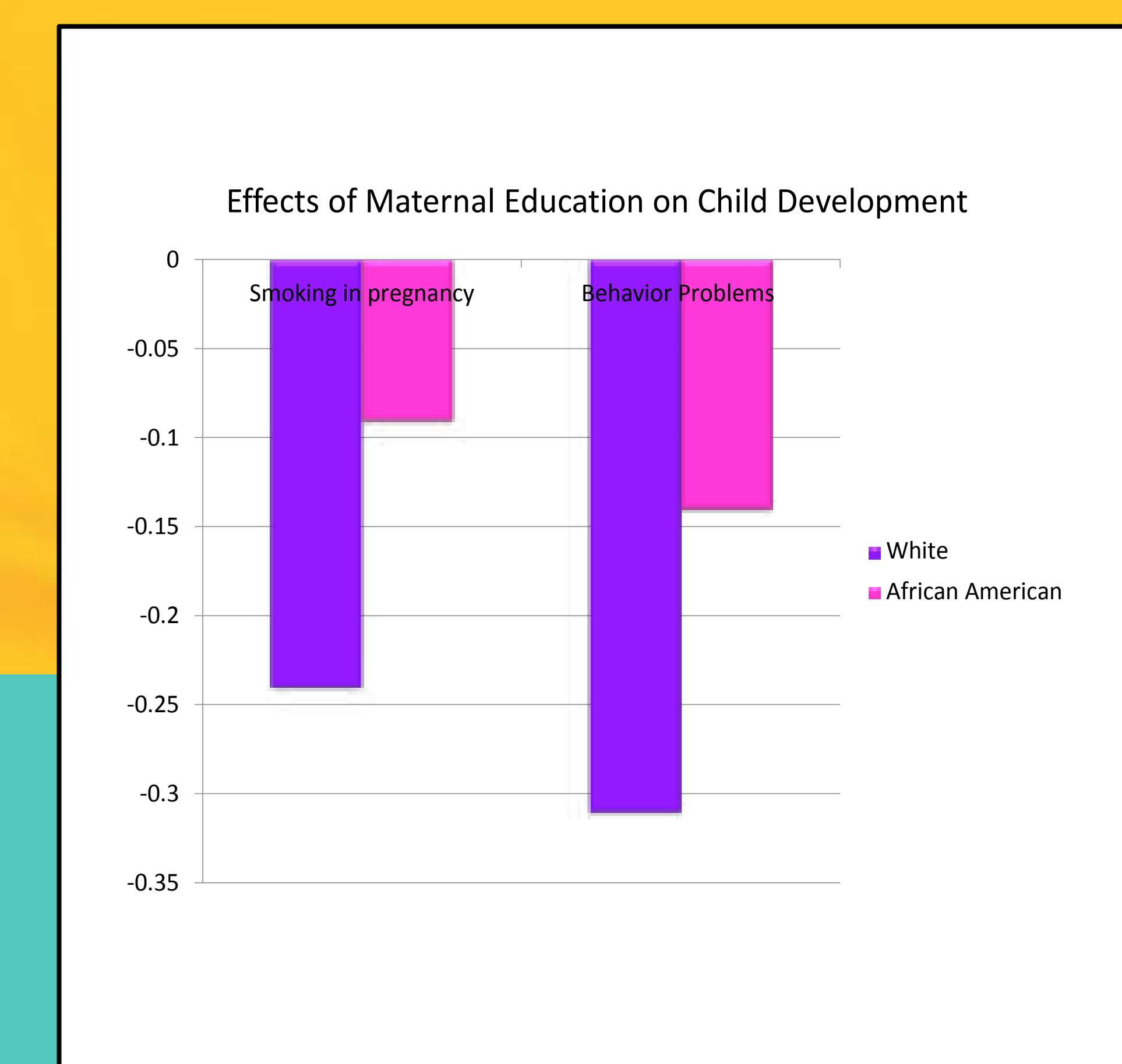
Ideal for making connections between physical and mental health and socioeconomic status.

This is one of the few data sets available in the US that track children and families over time.

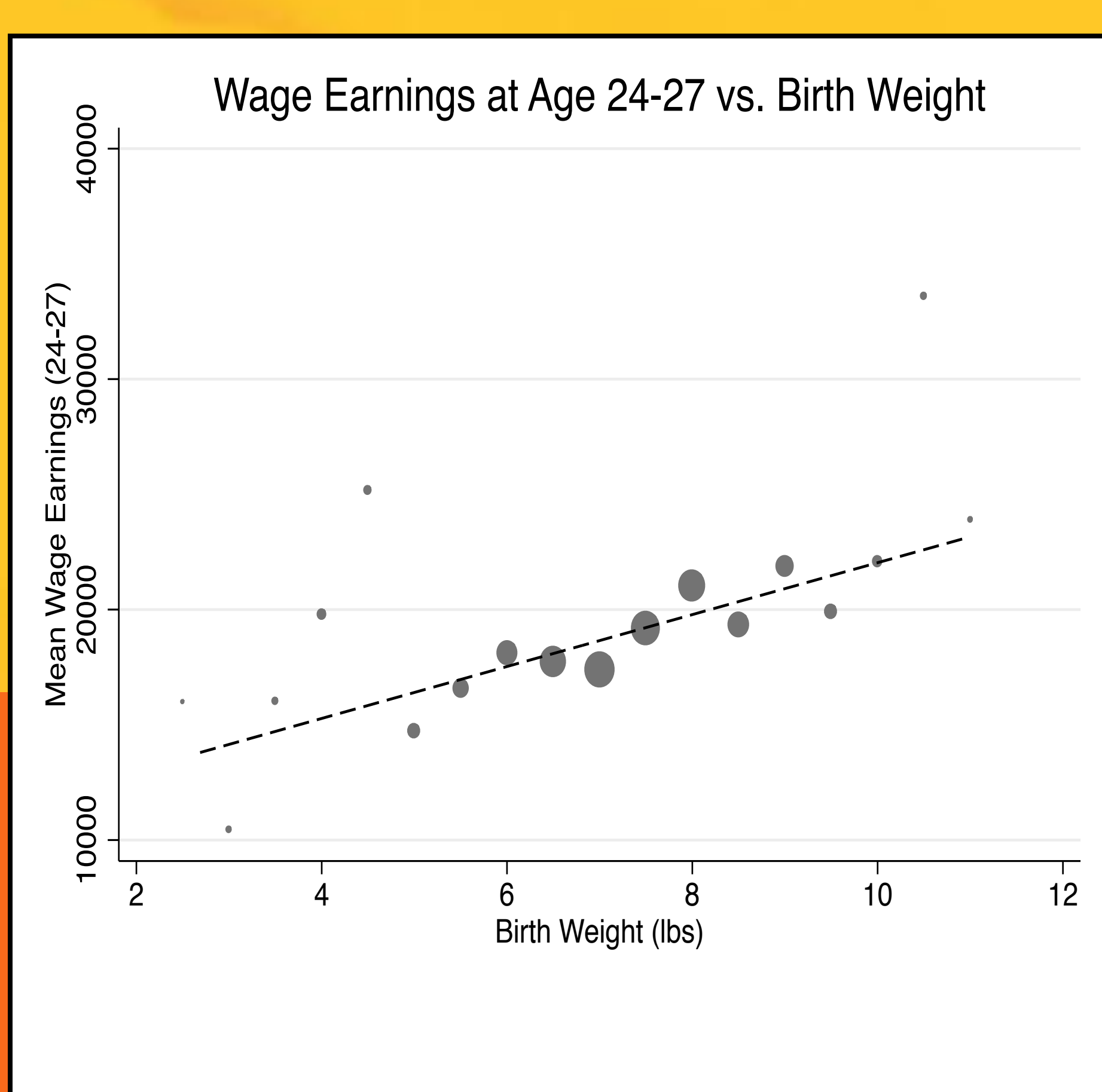
CHILD DEVELOPMENT



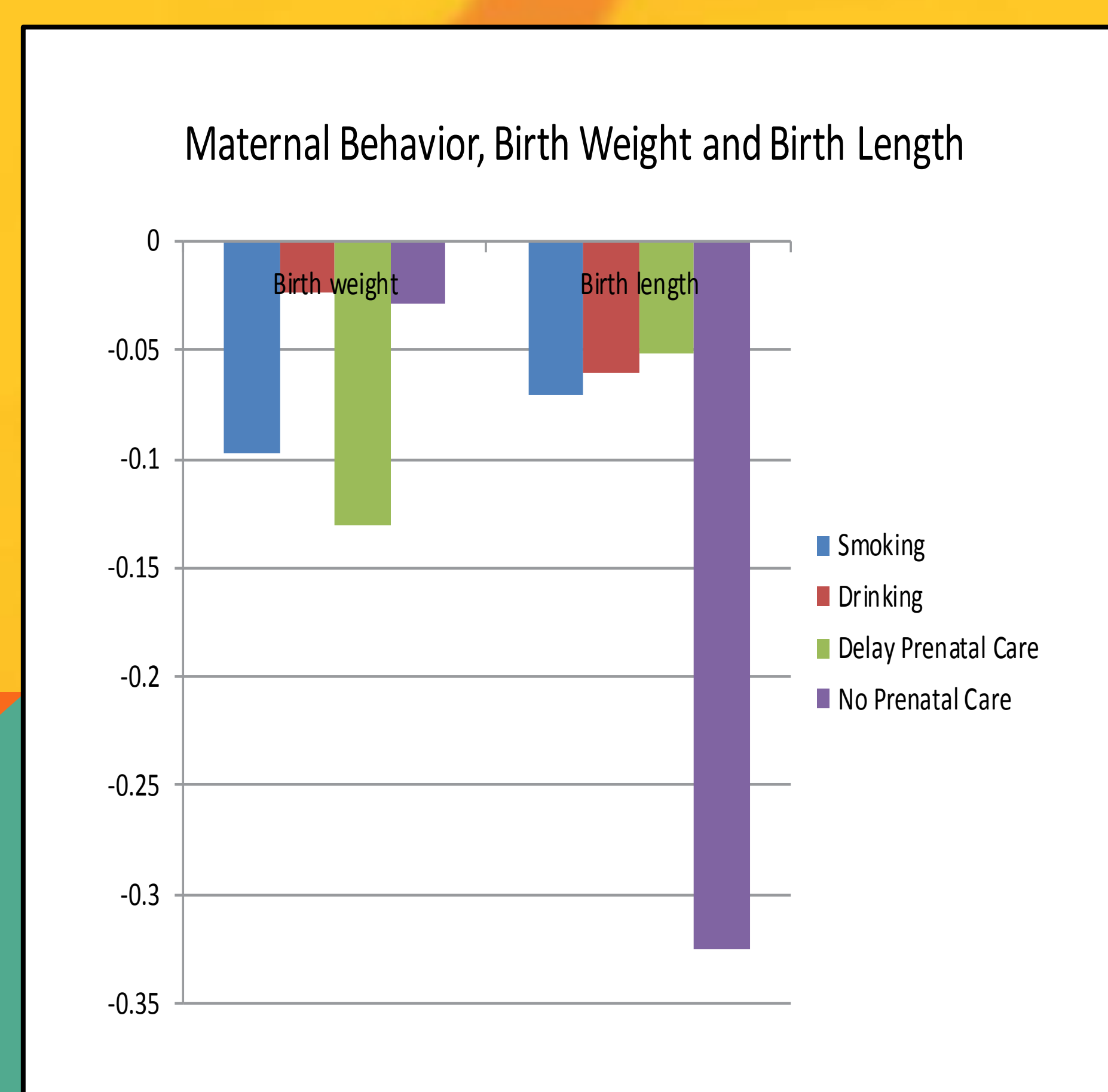
Source: Case and Paxson, "Causes and Consequences of Early Life Health." Since the NLS measures both health and test scores, it is ideal for measuring the relationship. The figure shows the effect of height-for-age Z scores on outcomes of children 5 to 14 where family background is controlled using sibling comparisons.



Source: Carneiro, Meghir, and Patey, "Maternal Education, Home Environments, and the Development of Children and Adolescents." The rich NLS data about family background can be used to examine the effect on child outcomes. The figure shows the percentage reduction in two outcomes with maternal college education.



Source: Currie, "Inequality at Birth: Does Higher Birth Weight Predict Higher Income?" Research in Human Capital, Education, and the Labor Market. The figure shows the relationship between maternal behaviors and birth outcomes (controlled in models that control for family background by comparing siblings).



Source: Case and Paxson, "Causes and Consequences of Early Life Health." The figure shows the relationship between maternal behaviors and birth outcomes (controlled in models that control for family background by comparing siblings).