

Early childhood education and care (ECEC) and its long-term effects on educational and labour market outcomes ^[1]

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AVAILABILITY

Full paper PDF available to read or download online ^[2]

Executive summary

US studies have shown that the provision of early childhood education and care (ECEC) is associated with positive social and economic outcomes, both in the short and long term. This brief reviewed the available evidence on the short and long term outcomes of ECEC within the European context: how do existing differences between EU countries in ECEC implementation relate to outcomes?

Results show that:

- For all children, the provision of high quality ECEC is beneficial in terms of cognitive and social development.
- For children under three who come from a disadvantaged background both the duration of attendance and the quality of the provision is important, with longer attendance of good quality ECEC yielding best results.
- ECEC quality benefits from provision through a unified system, where ECEC for under threes and older children is in one provision centre, as opposed to ECEC provided in a split system.
- Availability and access, in combination with country-specific cultural norms and parental leave policies is strongly related to ECEC participation.

Optimizing the potential outcomes related to ECEC attendance depends on the successful integration of different policies: Increasing the number of places where ECEC is provided from an early age up to school age within one integrated setting will contribute to higher quality ECEC. At the same time, lowering the age of guaranteed access and providing sufficient financial support to bridge the gap between sufficiently paid parental leave and the age of guaranteed access will contribute to higher participation.

Region: Europe ^[3]

Tags: outcomes ^[4]

access ^[5]

workforce participation ^[6]

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