

Junior kindergarten for 4-year-olds ^[1]

The quality of the educational environment and its association with school readiness among children from disadvantaged backgrounds

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AVAILABILITY

Full article PDF attached

Attachment	Size
 Japel et al study EN translation.pdf ^[2]	330.67 KB

Overview

The academic success of children from disadvantaged areas, many of whom enter school with a significant cognitive and socio-affective gap relative to their more advantaged peers, is a source of concern for our society.

To help provide all children with equal opportunities, in 2013 the Québec government introduced a new measure providing full-day kindergarten for 4-year-olds to foster school readiness in children from disadvantaged areas.

This research project is innovative in that it is the first to examine the quality of the educational environment of kindergarten services for 4-year-olds and their potential contribution to school readiness among children from disadvantaged areas. The main results show that the 4-year-olds attending full-day kindergarten are more vulnerable than those attending half-day kindergarten.

However, the educational quality in kindergartens for 4-year-olds (both full-day and half-day) is relatively low, and the intensity and quality of kindergarten for 4-year-olds have very little effect on school readiness. These services therefore do not significantly reduce the influence of children's socio-demographic conditions on their school readiness, meaning that this large investment of public funds, in its current state, is not having the expected effect.

These findings highlights the importance of improving the quality of the educational environment provided in kindergartens for 4-year-olds. This effort will involve all levels of the education system, in that there needs to be sufficient investment to ensure the establishment of an environment rich in experiences and adapted to the children's needs. In addition, the teaching staff must be trained to implement best practices that foster the overall development of children at risk of academic failure.

Related link:

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