

Spotlight on early childhood education. A newspaper coverage analysis of universal preschool debate in Argentina ^[1]

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Abstract

Throughout the past decade, the Argentinean government has lowered the starting age of compulsory education and early childhood education enrollment has been growing steadily. However, ECE services have evolved in a fragmented manner, leading to an unequal and inequitable scenario: while private education supports the largest part of the growth, children from low-income families are less likely to attend preschool and more likely to receive low-quality service. Through a newspaper coverage analysis, I explore how these problems are addressed in the public debate on universal preschool. Results show that the voices of policy-makers and “experts” are prominent while teachers’ and parents’ views are ignored; I found a widespread consensus for universal preschool and a scarcity of arguments against. I suggest the need to draw on research findings in ECE more critically and posit that the need to ensure high quality preschool for all children should be central in the debate.

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