# Changes in children's cognitive development at the start of school in England 2000-2006 [1]

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Abstract:

England has seen massive changes in the Early Years over the last few years. There is now an official early childhood curriculum, free nursery education for threeyearolds, the Sure Start programme has started, the Neighbourhood Nurseries programme has been introduced for the most deprived communities and a national network of children's centres was launched in 2003. There have also been important demographic changes. During this period, the CEM Centre at Durham University has been collecting consistent data from many thousands of children when they start school at the age of four on a range of variables that have been chosen because they are good predictors of later success. These include vocabulary, concepts about print, letter and word identification, phonological awareness, ideas about maths, digit identification and simple arithmetic (without any formal notation). The extent to which thousands of children's scores on these measures have changed from 2001 to 2006 inclusively are examined and the link between the major initiatives and the findings are discussed.

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