

Family factors in child care research ^[1]

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Abstract:

The purpose of this article is to review evidence concerning the joint impact of family characteristics and child care experiences in understanding children's development. Although child care experiences are related to children's development across a variety of domains, family characteristics, particularly socioeconomic status and parenting quality, are typically stronger predictors of children's outcomes. An important implication of these findings is that high-quality child care experiences are likely to have stronger effects on children who are at risk of poorer outcomes because of less optimal family environments; evidence from experimental and nonexperimental studies generally supports this conclusion. From a policy perspective, an important goal for future research is to identify subgroups of families within the heterogeneous low-income population that are in particular need of relatively more intensive services and to develop effective interventions that are tailored to their needs.

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