

Two years in early care and education: A community portrait of quality and workforce stability-- Alameda County, California ^[1]

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AVAILABILITY

Report in pdf ^[2]

Excerpts from the report:

Over the past 30 years, numerous studies have documented variability in quality among types of early care and education services for young children. Adding a new element to the inquiry, this bird's-eye view of the full range of early care and education services in a large, diverse, urban California county documents systemic inequities that are likely to reinforce inequality among children and families, leading to unequal opportunity among children in the years before they enter school. We also found levels of instability in children's care arrangements that are not only administratively burdensome but potentially harmful to children.

The discussion of universal preschool has brought early care and education for four-year-olds into the national debate on education reform, but thus far, it has sidestepped the question of the quality of services we are providing for younger children and for the large number of preschoolers who are not in preschool programs. The time has come to apply the same expectations and goals to the early care and education field that we currently apply to K-12 education - equal standards of care, opportunities and outcomes for all young children, no matter what type of program or setting they attend. The findings of this in-depth community portrait indicate that a varied early care and education system is not necessarily an equitable or dependable one. A broad reassessment of the kinds of opportunities for young children that public dollars are purchasing is particularly overdue. As long as subsidy and other policy decisions in early care and education are based on considerations unrelated to the needs of young children to grow and learn, the goal of lifelong equal opportunity for all Americans will continue to elude us.

Region: United States ^[3]

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Links

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