

Child care decision making literature review ^[1]

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Excerpts from Executive summary

The purpose of this review is to summarize research on the context and factors that facilitate parents' decisionmaking about child care. It is intended to provide a foundation of empirical knowledge for state administrators, early childhood program developers, and policymakers who can use information about child care decisionmaking processes and outcomes to improve their programs and services for families. The review reflects current and seminal work completed by researchers throughout the U.S. on the preferences, constraints and supports that influence parents' child care decision-making. Literature for this review comes from published journal articles as well as reports from studies funded by the Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluation and other federal government agencies. The structure and content were selected to reflect topics of interest to early care and education administrators, policymakers, and stakeholders.

We use a child care decision-making model developed by Weber (2011) and policy-relevant issues identified in discussions with state administrators to frame the review. Additionally, we focus on literature related to the child care decisions of parents with young children (age 0-5). Findings from the literature are organized into four main sections reflecting empirical findings about: 1) parents' child care decision-making processes, 2) parents' preferences and priorities in selecting a care arrangement, 3) constraints to selecting preferred care arrangements, and 4) policies and programs that support parents in selecting their preferred care arrangement. Key findings from each of these sections are provided below. Further details and citations can be found in the full literature review.

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