

Pathways to kindergarten: A latent class analysis of children's time in early education and care ^[1]

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AVAILABILITY

Access online ^[2]

Excerpts from abstract

Using a sample of 568 students from 61 kindergarten classrooms whose primary caregivers completed a questionnaire describing their child's early childhood education and care (ECEC) by year from birth to pre-kindergarten, we identified seven pathways characterizing children's ECEC experiences using a latent class analysis. Once identified, profile membership was included as an independent variable in a multilevel model to predict children's cognitive and social-behavioral outcomes at kindergarten entry. Although a considerable body of work has examined dosage of time in (ECEC) and its associations with children's skills in later grades, we extend this work by expanding the definition of dosage to include multiple care arrangements from birth to kindergarten entry and by examining if profiles of ECEC participation have associations with kindergarten-entry skills. Our findings show membership in profiles in which children spent consistent time in center-based care from birth to five were associated with adverse social-behavioral outcomes including behavioral aggression, school adjustment, peer social skills, and self-efficacy. Practice or Policy: Our findings suggest the importance of considering more nuanced differences in children's experiences with ECEC and the need for possible interventions to support the social-behavioral development of children with exposure to 5 years of center-based care.

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