

Child care policy and child care burden: Policy feedback effects and distributive implications of regulatory decisions ^[1]

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Excerpts from abstract

The policy feedback literature highlights that the design of public policies can affect recipients' experience of those policies and programs. In this paper, we examine the largely unexplored distributional implications of market-based early childhood education and care (ECEC) services. We present the results of a quasi-behavioral conjoint survey of 606 parents in the City of Toronto. Grouping parent respondents by income and access to public subsidies, we find evidence that access to public subsidies influences the ECEC preferences of lower income parents. We explore these findings with respect to how non-subsidized lower income parents experience the market for ECEC. We find evidence that non-subsidized lower income parents are more cost-conscious; this is likely to result in their using less well-regulated ECEC that is more variable in quality. In turning to less well-regulated care, the burden of performing oversight and quality assessments falls on these parents. However, our study finds that lower income non-subsidized parents report the least engagement with learning about ECEC, suggesting that they are likely to be the least able to effectively monitor their children's care arrangements. We explore the implications of these findings regarding the effects of policy on vulnerable children's access to high quality ECEC services.

Region: Ontario ^[4]

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