

Keeping current in child care research annotated bibliography: An update ^[1]

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AVAILABILITY

- Full article ^[2]

Excerpt from introduction:

This update is organized in the same format as the original bibliography. The first four sections review research that continues to address questions raised in the 1970s: Will child care attendance be harmful to the child? What benefits do children receive from child care? Can child care serve as an effective intervention program in the short and long term? For example, we include recent data from the Abecedarian project, begun in 1972. This longitudinal study details the effectiveness of child care as an intervention for at-risk children.

The next five sections highlight studies that address research questions begun in the 1980s. What features distinguish high- from low-quality child care? What are the effects of age of entry, length of day, and total time in child care? What is the relation between family factors and child care? These sections include information from several well-known studies that have greatly impacted how we think about child care, such as the Cost, Quality, and Outcomes Study; the Florida Quality Improvement Study; and the National Child Care Staffing Study.

Finally, we created new sections for studies on family child care and inclusive settings. These two areas have been studied extensively since 1987, with enough research that a separate section for each seemed warranted. Most of the research in our update continues to examine questions posed earlier, yet new questions continue to emerge. For example, just when those in the early childhood field have begun to feel more confident about what constitutes high-quality child care (low staff turnover, high-quality teacher-child interactions, safe and healthy environments, etc.), many people have begun to notice that parents often disregard the advice of child care experts. Thus, we are beginning to ask questions such as: What do parents actually look for when they choose child care? How well is the current child care system meeting the needs of parents, especially single mothers, who are leaving welfare? It is our hope that this update will provide a comprehensive look at what we have learned about child care so far, so that early childhood professionals will use that information to continue searching for answers to both the old and the new questions.

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