

# Kindergarten of hard knocks could be harming kids [AU] <sup>[1]</sup>

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## AVAILABILITY

See text below.

## EXCERPTS

Children's academic progress could be being hindered by the stark differences between the way child-care centres, preschools and schools manage behaviour, according to a new study from the University of Sydney.

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An analysis of policy documents from 40 child-care centres, preschools and schools in Sydney found a sharp shift from the more positive approach of gently guiding children at child-care centres, to a system based on rules, discipline and rewards at schools.

Children who have difficulty coping with the transition from preschool or child care to the school environment may have trouble establishing a rapport with their teacher, which in turn can have long-lasting effects, says researcher Natalie Johnston-Anderson.

"The nature and quality of the kindergarten teacher-child relationship can have repercussions throughout a child's schooling," says Johnston-Anderson who completed the research as part of her education master's degree at the University of Sydney.

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Prior-to-school policies recognise young children are naturally explorative and will act out in response to being 'controlled' by adults, she found. In contrast, most school policies featured a 'student welfare' or 'student discipline' approach.

While 86 per cent of school policies identified using rewards (such as), less than 10 per cent of preschools in the sample did. Just 12 per cent of child-care policies mentioned rewards, but when they did, they were all against the use of rewards.

While most child-care centres, preschools and school policies emphasised acknowledging positive behaviour at a one-on-one level, every school policy emphasised the public celebration of positive behaviour, but none of the child care policies did.

Seventy one per cent of school policies featured ordered lists of specific school rules, while just one third of preschool policies did, and no childcare centre policies did. And 86 per cent of school policies identified specific children's responsibilities, while no preschool or child-care policies did.

...

While acknowledging the different staffing levels between the two sectors is partly accountable for the different approaches, Johnston-Anderson calls for "greater consistency between teacher training for early childhood (0-8) and primary (5-12)."

More coordination between the sectors is also needed, she says. "Teachers in kindergarten classrooms should understand and use the best elements of good childcare and good preschool practice to make the transition easier for children."

- reprinted from University of Sydney

**Region:** Australia and New Zealand <sup>[2]</sup>

**Tags:** kindergarten <sup>[3]</sup>

curricula and pedagogy <sup>[4]</sup>

**Source URL (modified on 27 Jan 2022):** <https://childcarecanada.org/documents/child-care-news/09/01/kindergarten-hard-knocks-could-be-harming-kids-au>  
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