

Impact of early childcare on immigrant children's educational performance ^[1]

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AVAILABILITY

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Abstract

This paper investigates the impact of attending early childcare on immigrant children's cognitive outcomes. Our analysis makes use of administrative data on the entire population of students in the fifth grade collected by the Italian Institute for the Evaluation of the Educational System (INVALSI) for school years 2014/2015 to 2016/2017, matched to unique administrative records on early childcare availability at the municipal level. Our identification strategy exploits cross-sectional and time series variations in the provision of early childcare services across Italian municipalities as an instrument for individual attendance. Our results indicate that the effect of early childcare attendance differs between native and immigrant children. Estimates show a positive and significant effect on the language test scores of immigrant children, with the effect being mostly driven by children with low-educated mothers and by children who, at home, speak a language highly dissimilar to Italian. Unlike immigrants, native students are negatively impacted by early childcare attendance. Effects are stronger on math test scores for children with highly educated mothers and in municipalities with a relatively low public supply of early childcare.

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