

Information effects on parental choices for early childhood education and care ^[1]

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Access online ^[2]

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Abstract

Existing research demonstrates that parents are poorly informed consumers of early childhood education and care (ECEC) services. Choosing such services is a complex process shaped by a combination of logistical limitations (e.g., cost/location), informational barriers and ideas about what the goal of care should be (e.g., education of young children or provision of an environment that feels like home). Experimental studies have also demonstrated that when study participants are informed of the importance of a specific decision, they engage in more complex decision-making. In this article, we test whether providing parents with information about the regulatory stringency of ECEC options available influences their choices regarding ECEC. A conjoint survey designed to capture quasi-behavioural choices for ECEC services was completed by 682 parents. Before engaging with the survey, participants were randomly assigned into either a control group or a treatment group that informed them about the stringency of oversight regarding ECEC options available in the province of Ontario, Canada. Receiving information did not meaningfully change the choices of the entire sample. However, a subgroup analysis revealed an important information effect on parent decisions for lower income/lower-education parents.

Related link:

Using conjoint survey methods to understand parent preferences and decision making about early childhood education and care serv ^[4]

Region: Ontario ^[5]

Tags: parents ^[6]

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