

Preventing child maltreatment: Beneficial side effects of public childcare ^[1]

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Abstract

We investigate the impact of public childcare provision on the incidence of severe child maltreatment. For identification, we exploit a reform that expanded early childcare in Germany, generating large temporal and spatial variation in childcare coverage at the county level. Using high-quality administrative data covering all reported cases of child maltreatment in Germany by county and year, we find that an increase in childcare slots by one percentage point in a county reduced child maltreatment cases leading to out-of-home placement by about 1%. Our results suggest that the provision of universal public childcare may be more cost effective than previously thought.

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