

A review of research on the effects of early childhood education and care (ECEC) upon child development ^[1]

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Excerpt

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This report considers international research on the impact of Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) provision upon children's development, using studies reported from a wide range of sources including journals, books, government reports and diverse organisation reports.

High-quality childcare has been associated with benefits for children's development, with the strongest effects for children from disadvantaged backgrounds. There is also evidence that negative effects can sometimes occur. The results of studies partly depend upon the context and ECEC systems in place in different countries, but there is sufficient commonality of findings to indicate that many results are not culture-specific.

Discrepant results may relate to age of starting and also differences in the quality of childcare. In addition, childcare effects are moderated by family background with negative, neutral and positive effects occurring depending on the relative balance of quality of care at home and in childcare. Recent large-scale studies find effects related to both quantity and quality of childcare. The effect sizes for childcare factors are about half those for family factors. The analysis strategy of most studies attributes variance to childcare factors only after family factors has been considered, and, where the two covary, this can produce conservative estimates of childcare effects.

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Region: Europe ^[3]

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