

# Child care sooner the better [AU] <sup>[1]</sup>

**Author:** Horin, Adele

**Source:** Sydney Morning Herald

**Format:** Article

**Publication Date:** 12 Nov 2003

## AVAILABILITY

See text below.

## EXCERPTS

Babies who start child care before they are six months old settle in more easily and are happier in the early weeks than infants who start aged eight months or older.

The mothers of the younger babies, however, have a harder time settling back at work, a new Australian study shows.

While the study, to be published in a British journal, confirms what most child-care workers know, it may surprise many people opposed to tiny infants being left in long day-care centres.

The study found babies under six months took less time to settle into care, seemed happier meeting the child carer each day, and were rated overall as happier at child care over the first months than older infants.

It all makes sense to researchers Dr Cheryl Dissanayake and Helen Skouteris, of the school of psychological science at La Trobe University, Melbourne, co-authors of the study.

"It's around eight months we see the onset of 'stranger anxiety'," Dr Skouteris said.

It follows that the second half of a child's first year may be one of the most difficult periods to place infants in care. "Parents need to understand that at eight months or older, babies may experience three or four weeks of difficulty settling into child care," Dr Skouteris said.

Though the younger babies settled in more easily, after nine months in care there were no differences between early and later starters in age-appropriate behaviour and cognitive development.

- reprinted from the Sydney Morning Herald

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

**Tags:** infant/toddler <sup>[3]</sup>

---

**Source URL (modified on 27 Jan 2022):** <https://childcarecanada.org/documents/child-care-news/03/11/child-care-sooner-better-au>  
**Links**

[1] <https://childcarecanada.org/documents/child-care-news/03/11/child-care-sooner-better-au> [2] <https://childcarecanada.org/category/region/australia-and-new-zealand> [3] <https://childcarecanada.org/taxonomy/term/8165>