

The social agenda and early childhood education and care: Can we really help create a better world? ^[1]

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AVAILABILITY

- Paper in pdf ^[2]

Description:

In describing the social agenda and early childhood education and care, this paper looks at the 'big picture', taking a broad overview and setting the context or background for the factors that influence the provision of early childhood education and care. The author summarizes recent pertinent evidence in the literature and outlines why it is important to take note of these findings.

The paper begins by stressing the importance of the early years in shaping the adult personality. The author describes how economy and culture present two overriding contextual features. He goes on to describe the links between fertility rates and childcare policies and how the context of childhood is changing, particularly in the more affluent developed world where early childhood care and education is normally provided by the public sector and services are becoming increasingly integrated.

A review of several widely publicized benefit&cost analyses illustrates how the provision of early childhood services can give a positive return to the community in both economic and social terms. Advances in scientific knowledge of brain development reinforce the crucial learning and development needs of the early years.

The author concludes by listing the main forces and changes affecting the children of today and ten imperatives for policy and leadership. Finally, he lists the criteria required to ensure the best experience possible for every child born in the 21st Century.

Tags: economics ^[3]

diversity ^[4]

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