

Why early care and education deserves as much attention, or more, than prekindergarten alone ^[1]

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AVAILABILITY

-Full article in pdf ^[2]

Abstract:

High-quality early care and education (ECE) programs promote positive child outcomes, allow parents to work, and contribute to the local economy. Although extant research takes into account the ECE sector in its entirety, recent economic and policy interest has centered on part-day prekindergarten for 3- and 4-year-olds only. Using an ecological framework, Morrissey and Warner review and synthesize the research literature to examine whether the emphasis on pre-k is justified as economically superior to a comprehensive approach. They compare impacts on the macrosystem (regional economy), exosystem (parents), and microsystem (children's long-term human development) and argue that a holistic approach that includes comprehensive ECE services has economic returns as great as or greater than pre-k alone. Finally, they explore the conceptual barriers that have contributed to the narrow focus on pre-k and the policy implications of ignoring the broader ecological context.

This article is part of a larger project, Linking Economic Development and Child Care, by Cornell University.

Tags: economics ^[3]

pre-school ^[4]

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