

The economic rationale for investing in children: A focus on child care -- Final report ^[1]

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AVAILABILITY

Available in print for order (see SOURCE) and online for download.

- Full report in pdf ^[3]

Excerpts from summary:

Discussion about the extent to which the government could and should invest in the child care market has increased among policymakers...[To further discuss] these issues, the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation (ASPE) of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) sponsored an invitational conference on May 3, 2001, entitled "The economic rationale for investing in children: A focus on child care." The primary purpose of the conference was to engage a multidisciplinary group of economists, developmental psychologists, child care researchers, and policy analysts in a dialogue about the rationale for public investment in quality child care.

The conference built on a paper commissioned by ASPE - "Child care quality: Does it matter and does it need to be improved?" - by Deborah Vandell and Barbara Wolfe. The paper reviews evidence on the effects of quality child care on children's health and development and sets out an economic rationale for public investment that emerges from that evidence. To explore further the arguments discussed in the paper and to identify other potential arguments, the conference addressed the following questions:

- What are the current economic arguments for investing in quality child care, and what are the strengths and weaknesses of these arguments?

- What are the current economic arguments for public investment in other markets (labor, education, and health care)? To what extent could these be applied to the arguments for investing in quality child care? What are the strengths and weaknesses of these arguments when applied to quality child care?

-What questions need to be addressed to strengthen the economic rationale for investing in quality child care?

Region: United States ^[4]

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