

Early education and children's outcomes: How long do the impacts last?^[1]

Impact of Nursery Education Project

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Source: Institute for Fiscal Studies

Format: Report

Publication Date: 1 Jul 2005

AVAILABILITY

- Report in pdf^[2]

Abstract: We evaluate the effects of undergoing any early schooling (before the compulsory starting age of 5) and of pre-school on a cohort of British children born in 1958. In contrast to most available studies, we are able to assess whether any effects on cognition and socialisation are long-lasting, as well as to estimate their net impact on subsequent educational attainment and labour market performance. Controlling for a particularly rich set of child, parental, family and neighbourhood characteristics, we find some positive and long-lasting effects from early education. Specifically, pre-compulsory education (pre-school or school entry prior to age 5) was found to yield large improvements in cognitive tests at age 7, which, though diminished in size, remained significant throughout the schooling years, up to age 16. By contrast, attendance of pre-school (nursery or playgroup) was found to yield a positive but short-lived impact on test scores. The effects on socialisation appear to be more mixed, with adverse behavioural effects from parental reports at age 7 persisting, for pre-school participants, up to age 11. In adulthood, pre-compulsory schooling was found to increase the probability of obtaining qualifications and to be employed at 33. For both pre-compulsory education and pre-school per se we found evidence of a marginally significant 3-4% wage gain at 33.

Region: Europe^[3]

Tags: child development^[4]
outcomes^[5]

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