

# Quality support infrastructure in early childhood: Still (mostly) missing <sup>[1]</sup>

**Author:** Azzi-Lessing, Lenette

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## AVAILABILITY

- Full paper <sup>[2]</sup>

**Abstract:** Support for early care and education among policy makers and the public is at an unprecedented high. As investments in early care and education programs in the United States continue to rise, the issue of quality becomes increasingly critical. This article addresses the need for adequate infrastructure to support high-quality early care and education—a need that was brought to the forefront by James Gallagher and Richard Clifford in their 2000 article in *Early Childhood Research & Practice*. The present article provides an update and emphasizes the critical roles of infrastructure in establishing and enforcing standards, supporting quality, and ensuring quality and accountability. Progress in developing the mechanisms and systems to support and ensure quality in several states is assessed, and the perils of expanding early childhood programs in the absence of such systems are examined. Also discussed are strategies for building capacity and strengthening the various functions of infrastructure in order to successfully support the expansion of universal prekindergarten and other early care and education initiatives. The article emphasizes the importance of being able to demonstrate that these initiatives truly benefit the children who participate in them.

**Tags:** economics <sup>[3]</sup>

quality <sup>[4]</sup>

kindergarten <sup>[5]</sup>

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[1] <https://childcarecanada.org/documents/research-policy-practice/09/06/quality-support-infrastructure-early-childhood-still-mostly> <sup>[2]</sup>

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