

Is child care a good public investment? ^[1]

Childcare Resource and Research Unit

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EN & FR

4pp

This BRIEFing NOTE summarizes *The benefits and costs of good child care: The economic rationale for public investment in young children* ^[2] by Gordon Cleveland and Michael Krashinsky, Economics, Division of Management, University of Toronto at Scarborough.

Summary originally released 1998. Reprinted November 2003.

EXCERPTS



This economic study concludes that for every dollar invested in high quality child care, there is a two dollar benefit to children, parents and society.

The study calculates the costs and benefits of providing publicly funded early childhood care and education for all children 2-5 years of age—those whose mothers are in the paid workforce, as well as those whose mothers are not.

This traditional economic cost-benefit analysis concludes that:

- public spending for high quality child care is a good investment for Canada;
- high quality early childhood care and education has long-lasting effects on all children's social, intellectual and emotional development, regardless of socio-economic background or mothers' workforce participation;
- high quality child care provides not only private benefits for children and parents, but public benefits for society at large;
- the public benefit comes from the future effects of enhanced child development (higher school performance, high school completion and income) and mothers' workforce participation;
- development is enhanced only if child care is good quality; and
- high quality child care is not likely to be produced through the free market approach to child care currently employed in Canada.

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