

# Is child care a good public investment? <sup>[1]</sup>

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* <sup>[2]</sup> 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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