

# Fact and fantasy: Eight myths about early childhood education and care <sup>[1]</sup>



Gordon Cleveland and Michael Krashinsky

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Gordon Cleveland and Michael Krashinsky, Economics,  
Division of Management, University of Toronto at Scarborough













This paper examines eight myths often used to argue against public support for early childhood education and care. Its main objective is to respond to these eight myths, to subject them and associated research to critical scrutiny, and to respond in a popular fashion. Research evidence and logic are combined to provide a readable, economically-oriented critique to these frequently heard assertions. The myths are:

- \* Young children need full-time care from their mothers.
- \* Child care harms children.
- \* Families should pay for their own child care.
- \* Parents always know best.
- \* Stay-at-home mothers are discriminated against in public policy.
- \* Mothers would prefer to stay home.
- \* Child care erodes family values.
- \* We can't afford early childhood education and care.

Chapters follow a common format. Each briefly characterizes the nature of the myth being addressed followed by a point-by-point ten to fifteen page critique of the case, with evidence from both research and economic theory. A brief point-form summary of the main arguments is presented at the end of each chapter.

A BRIEFing NOTE summary of this paper <sup>[2]</sup> is available in English and French: Fact and fantasy: Summary [English, 6pp 149KB], Huit mythes à propos des services éducatifs et de garde à l'enfance: Résumé [French, 8pp 70KB].

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