

Quality and early childhood education and care: A policy initiative for the 21st century ^[1]

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Abstract:

The expectation of quality early childhood education and care (ECEC) is that higher quality inputs will produce higher quality outcomes for children. There are many ways that outcomes may be expressed and measured, though current procedures emphasize threshold quality. However, threshold quality is essentially an entry-level concept - once the entry requirements are met, quality is assumed to have been attained and subsequently sustained. A more sophisticated, comprehensive procedure is needed. For more than a decade ECEC policy in Australia has been generally weak, fragmented and dominated by matters related to quantity (market issues) rather than quality (pedagogical issues), despite the rhetoric. What should be measured to identify quality in ECEC settings? What should a quality directed ECEC policy emphasize? This paper addresses significant issues in determining and measuring quality for a comprehensive ECEC policy and the links to a rating system in Australia.

Region: Australia and New Zealand ^[4]

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