

Early childhood education has widespread and long lasting benefits ^[1]

Special report: TD Economics

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Source: TD Economics

Format: Report

Publication Date: 27 Nov 2012

AVAILABILITY

Full report in pdf ^[2]

Powerpoint presentation ^[3]

Excerpts:

The following is a literature review of the benefits and costs associated with high-quality early childhood programs. It is not meant to provide explicit policy recommendations, as it is a very complex sector and requires a more in-depth analysis before detailed recommendations can be made.

Highlights

- There is a great deal of literature showing compelling evidence of the benefits of early learning. Not only do high-quality early childhood education programs benefit children, they also have positive impacts on parents and the economy as a whole.
- Several studies show that the benefits of early childhood education far outweigh the costs. However, quantifying these benefits is not an exact science and results are likely subject to a large margin of error.
- Given the unquestionable number of benefits that early childhood education can provide, it follows that more focus should be put on investing in, and improving, the system. Indeed, in most parts of Canada, there currently exists a gap between parental leave and the start of formal schooling, and the limited child care spaces that are available are often very costly for parents.
- The federal and provincial/territorial governments provide some funding for early childhood education, and have taken some steps to improve the system. Still, public spending in Canada falls short of that in many advanced economies. While governments at all levels are in no position to boost program spending at this time given budget constraints, this is one area that they should consider making a high priority over the medium term, as their finances move back into balance.
- Ultimately, investment in early education can help to address core economic and social challenges facing Canada. It can help reduce poverty, address skills shortages, improve productivity and innovation, and a host of other national priorities.

Related link: TD Economics says child care should be a top spending priority for governments after deficits eliminated ^[4]

Region: Canada ^[5]

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