

Comparing child care policy in the Canadian provinces ^[1]

Paper presented to the Annual Meeting of the Canadian Political Science Association June 12 - 15, 2012, University of Alberta, Edmonton, Alberta

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Source: Canadian Political Science Association

Format: Article

Publication Date: 22 Oct 2013

AVAILABILITY

Paper in pdf ^[2]

Description:

Many analyses of child care policy proceed from the assumption that the collections of government policies relating to the regulation and funding of child care can be understood as coherent regimes, subject to classification and analysis. This paper problematizes this assumption by examining the regulations and funding arrangements implemented by the ten Canadian provinces, arguing that these arrangements comprise a rather complex and occasionally incoherent set of policies that defy straightforward description and categorization.

The ten Canadian provinces offer a rich site for comparative analysis of child care policy, as their governments have taken very different paths when it comes to government spending on child care, the provision of spaces, the regulation of programs, and other aspects of child care policy. However, relatively little research has been done to examine in detail the differences in child care policies from province to province. With a view to undertaking systematic analysis of these policy differences, this paper constructs a comparative framework that measures variation in child care policy arrangements in the ten Canadian provinces. This framework provides a clear method for defining and measuring child care policy by measuring several key characteristics of child care policy. An analysis of this data suggests that existing research that attempts describe and understand variation in child care policy is problematic because it fails to account for the complex, multidimensional nature of variation in child care policies.

Region: Canada ^[3]

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