

Voices from the field: Policy implications of child development research for ECEC policy ^[1]

Encyclopedia on early childhood development

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AVAILABILITY

Article in English ^[2]

Article in French ^[3]

Excerpts from the article:

The CEECD summaries of child-care research are written from the perspective of child care's impact on child development. Nine prominent researchers sum up research concerned with the use of child care by two age groups; Belsky, Howes and Owen, with a commentary by Andersson, consider zero to two-year-olds and Ahnert and Lamb, McCartney, Peisner-Feinberg, with a commentary by Barnett, write about the two-to-five age group. Overall, there are two main conclusions to be drawn from the diverse studies reviewed: one, as Kathleen McCartney concisely notes, "the main conclusion is that the effects of child care are complex" and two, as Barnett comments, "overall, the research reviewed provides support for our hopes while it puts to rest the most serious fears."

From a policy perspective, it is useful to consider this body of research from several points of view: first, understanding the importance of particular policy contexts; second, within the frame of broader social and family policy; third, considering the care/early education tie; and finally, fully acknowledging social and economic changes in families and gender roles.

The research presented in these papers makes it apparent that &em; while the details may be complex &em; much is known about the effects of child care and the factors associated with its effects.¹⁻⁸ High quality child care, provided by well-educated, sensitive early childhood educators, well-supported and accompanied by a good mix of other family policies, is a benefit, not a danger, to the social and cognitive development of children across the economic spectrum. As McCartney points out, "child care is now an ordinary part of life for children in most western countries."⁶ The key policy challenge is to take the knowledge from the research presented in these papers and put it into practices and public policies that ensure that the effects of child care on children and families are the best they can be.

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The impact of child care on young children (0&em;2) ^[5]

by Carollee Howes

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by Margaret Tresch Owen

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by W. Steven Barnett

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