

Early school leaving and early childhood^[1]

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AVAILABILITY

Read online^[2]

EXCERPTS

A new research study, published by the European Commission, examines the links between early school leaving and early care and education.

While there is a growing body of evidence to show that children's early experiences have long-term impacts, there is not so much evidence on the causal connections between early childhood education and specific long-term outcomes such as early school leaving. The study is careful not to overstate the direct impact of early childhood experiences.

Instead, the study argues that the sort of skills and dispositions fostered by high quality early childhood care and education are precisely the mix of skills and dispositions that reduce the risk that children will become early school leavers. These include both cognitive skills (including literacy and numeracy) and non-cognitive skills and dispositions (such as emotional development, self-regulation, and attitudes to learning).

But the study also makes clear that high quality early years services are not sufficient on their own to ensure children remain at school ten years later. It is essential, the study finds, that the positive skills and dispositions developed in early childhood continue to be supported right through the education system.

A 'well-balanced' education system

As a result, the study's overall conclusion is that we need what it calls a 'well-balanced education system' - an education system that supports young children's early development of competences and that then supports those children to practise and further develop those competences, turning them into 'capabilities', right through their experiences in school.

A 'well-balanced education system' is one in which the different components - early years services, primary schools, secondary schools etc. - work well together, reinforcing each other, rather than working against each other.

The study identifies many features of a 'well-balanced education system', including:

- Smooth transitions between educational levels, 'especially between ECEC [early care and education] and primary school'.
- 'Early warning systems' and positive supports right through the education system for children at risk of poor educational outcomes.
- Harmonised curriculums across the early years and schools, with early years educators and primary teachers working in dialogue with each other.
- Stronger focus right through the education system on pupil-centred learning, problem-solving and group work, rather than teacher-centred approaches.

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Related link: Study on the effective use of early childhood education and care in preventing early school leaving^[3]

Region: Europe^[4]

Tags: quality^[5]

child development^[6]

outcomes^[7]

school system^[8]

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Links

^[1] <https://childcarecanada.org/documents/child-care-news/15/01/early-school-leaving-and-early-childhood> ^[2] http://www.startstrong.ie/contents/588?utm_source=Start%20Strong%20E-newsletter%20January%202015&%3Butm_campaign=December%20E-Newsletter%202014&%3Butm_medium=email ^[3]

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