

Child care and school performance in Denmark and the United States ^[1]

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Source: Child and Youth Services Review

Format: Article

Publication Date: 1 Mar 2012

AVAILABILITY

Full article in PDF ^[2]

Abstract

Child care and early education policies may not only raise average achievement but may also be of special benefit for less advantaged children, in particular if programs are high quality. We test whether high quality child care is equalizing using rich longitudinal data from two comparison countries, Denmark and the United States. In Denmark, we find that enrollment in high-quality formal care at age 3 is associated with higher cognitive scores at age 11. Moreover, the findings suggest stronger effects for the lowest-income children and for children at the bottom of the test score distribution. In the US case, results are different. We find that enrollment in school or center based care is associated with higher cognitive scores at school entry, but the beneficial effects erode by age 11, particularly for disadvantaged children. Thus, the US results do not point to larger and more lasting effects for disadvantaged children. This may be because low income children attend poorer quality care and subsequently attend lower quality schools.

Region: International ^[3]

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