



Long-Term Effects of Child Care

More than three quarters of four- and five-year-olds are participating in some type of child care on a regular basis. A recent study has reported some long-term effects of the quality of children's care experiences.

The Cost, Quality, and Outcomes study was begun in 1993 and results were reported for a large group of children from 183 full-day child care centers in 4 different states. This study found that the typical quality of child care was below the accepted standards set by the child care and education profession.

Long-term effects of the quality of child care were reported by a follow-up study. The Children of the Cost, Quality and Outcomes Study Go to School was published in 1999. This study followed some of the children in the original study through first and second grade. This study found that higher quality classroom practices in child care were related to:

- Improved language and math skills in preschool, kindergarten, and into the first and second grades.
- Better intellectual and social skills, even when children's kindergarten and elementary school classroom practices were taken into account.
- Lower levels of aggressive and disruptive behaviors in second grade.

The study also found that warmer teacher-child relationships were related to improved social and intellectual skills in preschool and elementary school. Furthermore, child care classrooms which allowed for greater peer interaction were related to children having better social behaviors in second grade.

To learn more about how to find and recognize high quality child care environments, contact your local Child Care Resource and Referral agency.

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Resource: Cost, Quality, and Outcomes Study Team. (1999). The children of the cost, quality, and outcomes study go to school. Frank Porter Graham Child Development Center, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.