Creating a good life for children through quality early education

Kerry McCuaig, University of Toronto, Canada
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Canada: 10 provinces, 3 territories

13 education systems
QUEBEC: Unique culture, language, legal code, education system
First Nations peoples dominate the North
Disconnect between population density & economic areas
Regarding the good life for children

Creating a good life for small children is not a priority for Canadian policy makers

- Human capital development/global competition
- Labour market stability
- Demographic considerations
- Education outcomes/closing the gap between advantaged and disadvantaged groups
Programs targeted towards the earliest years

Preschool programs

Schooling

Job training

Rate of return to investment in human capital

0-3

4-5

School

Post-school

Age
## 3 U.S. studies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Abecedarian</th>
<th>Chicago Centres</th>
<th>Perry Preschool</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Began</strong></td>
<td>1972</td>
<td>1967</td>
<td>1962</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sample</strong></td>
<td>58</td>
<td>1286</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Design</strong></td>
<td>Random control</td>
<td>Comparison</td>
<td>Random control</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Duration</strong></td>
<td>5 years</td>
<td>18 months</td>
<td>2 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Full time</td>
<td>Part time</td>
<td>Part time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Last assessed</strong></td>
<td>21 years</td>
<td>28 years</td>
<td>40 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Per child</strong></td>
<td>$69,500</td>
<td>$7,428</td>
<td>$30,400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Benefits</strong></td>
<td>$143,674</td>
<td>$83,511</td>
<td>$258,888</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Return rate</strong></td>
<td>$4:1</td>
<td>$10:1</td>
<td>$17:1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Cost-benefit Perry Preschool study per participant at 40 years old ($17.07:1)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Benefit/Cost</th>
<th>2001 Constant Dollars, 3% Discount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Preschool program</td>
<td>$15,166</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total savings</td>
<td>$258,888</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal benefit</td>
<td>$63,267</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Welfare</td>
<td>$2,786</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schooling</td>
<td>$7,303</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taxes on earnings</td>
<td>$14,078</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Justice system</td>
<td>$15,240</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crime savings</td>
<td>$171,473</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

UK - random sample of children born in 1958 who attended preschool

- Pre-school leads to better cognitive scores at 7 and 16 years
- In adulthood, pre-school was found to increase the probability of good educational qualifications, being employed and having better earnings at age 33.

Other international findings

**Norway**
- Higher educational levels, better job outcomes and higher income later in life.
(Melhuish & Barnes 2012)

**Switzerland**
- Improved intergenerational education mobility
- Especially beneficial for disadvantaged children
(Bauer &. Riphahn 2009)
Disconnect between population density and economic areas
Mothers labourforce participation rate by age of child: Canada 1976-2012
What has low cost ECE done for Quebec?

• 70,000 more mothers are working
• They generate $1.5-billion annually in taxes
• And draw $340-million less in social transfers
• Boosting the GDP by $5-billion

Quebec mothers have:

• Moved Quebec from the bottom to the top in female labour force participation in Canada
• Halved child poverty rates
• Halved social assistance rates for lone parents
• Boosted fertility
• Reduced vulnerability in children starting school and increased student test scores

Done right early education and care pays for itself

For every dollar Quebec spends on ECE, it collects $1.05 in increased taxes and reduced family payments, while the federal government gets $0.55

Factors affecting achievement – Age 11

Public cost of high school non-completion in Canada by cohort (2008 dollars)

Social class and pre-school on literacy (age 7)

- **Pre-school**
- **No pre-school**

Mean year 2 reading level:
- Professional
- Skilled
- Un/semi skilled

Social class by occupation

Expected minimum
PISA results for 2009

- Pre-school participation is strongly associated with reading at age 15 in countries that:
  - have sought to improve the quality of pre-school education
  - provide more inclusive access to pre-school education.

“The bottom line: Widening access to pre-primary education can improve both overall performance and equity by reducing socio-economic disparities among students, if extending coverage does not compromise quality.”

OECD (2011). *Pisa in Focus 2011/1: Does participation in pre-primary education translate into better learning outcomes at school?*. Paris: OECD.
Outcomes linked to quality

Preschool quality and self-regulation and pro-social behaviour (age 11)

Effect size

- Self-regulation
- Pro-social behaviour

Duration matters
(months of developmental age)

Developmental advantage (months)

low-quality
average
high-quality

ECE program attendance

What’s trending now?

Largely positive:
• Public investments in ECE have doubled since 2006 when OECD revealed Canada’s last place finish (.5% of GDP)
• More attention paid to governance – merging early education and child care
• More focus on quality - the status of the ECE workforce, pedagogy and program monitoring
• ECE access growing though public education
Why the schools?

- More cost effective than a brand new social program
- Public education enjoys public confidence. Highest percentage enrolment of all the Anglo-American countries
- Facilitates the building of strong relationships between children, families, the community and the school
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Governance</th>
<th>Policy</th>
<th>EC Workforce</th>
<th>Curriculum</th>
<th>Parents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lead ministry</td>
<td>Strategy for 0 to 8</td>
<td>EC trained</td>
<td>Have one</td>
<td>Free access</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Merged functions</td>
<td>Quality agenda</td>
<td>Narrow qualification gap</td>
<td>Living documents</td>
<td>Lower school age</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ECE units with experts</td>
<td>Research/evaluation</td>
<td>Ongoing professional development</td>
<td>Align with school to support transitions</td>
<td>Ceiling on fees &amp; supports</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regional leadership</td>
<td>Reconcile goals</td>
<td>Enhance recognition</td>
<td>Expert &amp; sector input</td>
<td>Democratic input</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dedicated funding</td>
<td>Reduce transitions</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Open doors</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Adapted OECD policy findings to the Canadian context

- 5 Categories/equally weighted
- 19 Benchmarks
  - Limited by the availability of consistent data across jurisdictions
  - Availability of similar information in future to allow for across time comparisons
- Thresholds
  - Influenced by those established by UNICEF (2008) and UNESCO (2010) to support international comparisons
  - Adapted to Canada – has been achieved, or be in development, in at least one jurisdiction