

Universal Early Childhood Interventions: What is the Evidence Base?

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November 2011

Abstract

Universality is a hallmark of Canadian social policy for very young children. The evidence base for these policies is small, non-experimental and offers mixed results. In contrast the evidence base for targeted early childhood interventions is largely experimental and offers strong guidance. Policy makers and advocates often cite the research on targeted programs in support of universal programs, although this is problematic for a number of reasons. Universal programs require a better understanding of the developmental trajectories of more advantaged children. Evidence from the NLSCY suggests there are some potentially important differences in the association of early and later childhood developmental outcomes by family economic resources.

JEL codes: J24, I38, I12

Keywords: Child development, early childhood interventions, maternity leave, preschool

I thank Mike Veall and David Green for giving me the opportunity to deliver the 2011 Innis Lecture. Martin Dooley, David Green and Pierre Fortin provided helpful comments. Alfia Karimova provided outstanding research assistance. I gratefully acknowledge the research support of SSHRC (Grant, #410-2008-0346). Finally, I thank the staff of the Toronto Research Data Centre for their technical support. This paper represents the views of the author and does not necessarily reflect the views of Statistics Canada.