

JUST THE FACTS...



from CCKM's Research Guide
to Child Care Decision Making
at www.cckm.ca

AIMS

- Decisions about child care are too important to rest on one opinion or one study.
- Parents, teachers, governments, and the public need to know what the research says.
- CCKM's Research Guide to Child Care Decision Making provides easy access to the findings of 66 research reports on the relationship of child care factors to children's development.
- The Research Guide answers two questions:
 - What's better for children's development, home care or centre care?
 - What factors of child care matter to children's development?

BACKGROUND

- National and international surveys describe the conditions and costs of child care.
- To date nations, including Canada, have focused more on the conditions of child care, especially safety, than on how the conditions are linked to children's cognitive, language, and behavioural development.
- Historically, child care research was dominated by studies from the United States that reflected that nation's social and political values on the heels of women's increased participation in the workplace and the impact of anti-segregation laws in the schools. They asked:
 - Does early mother-child separation negatively affect socio-emotional development?
 - Can child care intervention treatments buffer the negative effects of race, teenage parenthood, and poverty?



METHODS

- Research reports were identified by searching library databases, the Internet, scientific journals, and reference lists.
- The 66 reports included in CCKM's Research Guide met at least one of the following criteria: Conducted in Canada, conducted outside Canada and the US, conducted by an acknowledged research team, studied at least 100 children, studied effects on school achievements.
- Seven child care factors were represented in the reports: type of care, age of child care entry, time spent in care, stability of care, quality of care, teacher education, adult-child ratio.
- Characteristics of the studies, the sample, and research methods were extracted and coded from each study.
- The results were quantified, summed, and displayed as positive, null, or negative based on statistical significance.

RESULTS

- Research results represented 563 tests of the development of nearly 28,000 children in five countries.
- Results were obtained after removing possible confounding influences of quality of child care setting as well as family factors such as income and educational level.
- Researchers used large scale databases and standardised tests of cognitive, language, and behavioural development.
- Researchers measured quality of child care in home settings and in centre settings.
- Higher quality of child care is linked to better cognitive, language, and behavioural development.
- Compared with care in home settings, care in centres is typically higher in quality.
- Compared with care in home settings, care in centres is linked to better cognitive and language development.
- Earlier entry in non-parental care is linked to better cognitive and language development; more time in centre care is linked to better language development.
- Children's development is better when caregivers have more education and training.

To learn more and to obtain child care research resources go to www.cckm.ca