

Findings from the UK's

Early risk factors and poor outcomes

poor literacy and educational attainment
anti-social and criminal behaviour
unemployment
substance abuse
poor mental and physical health
adult mortality

3

Interventions with Disadvantaged Groups

“If people keep falling off a cliff, don’t worry about where you put the ambulance at the bottom. Build a fence at the top and stop them falling off in the first place.”

ECEC as Intervention for Disadvantaged Children

There are several studies with similar conclusions –

High Quality ECEC can improve development for children from disadvantaged backgrounds

e.g. Perry Preschool Project, Abecedarian, Chicago Child-Parent Center

General Population Studies

Effective Provision of Pre-school Education (EPPE)

Later EPPSE



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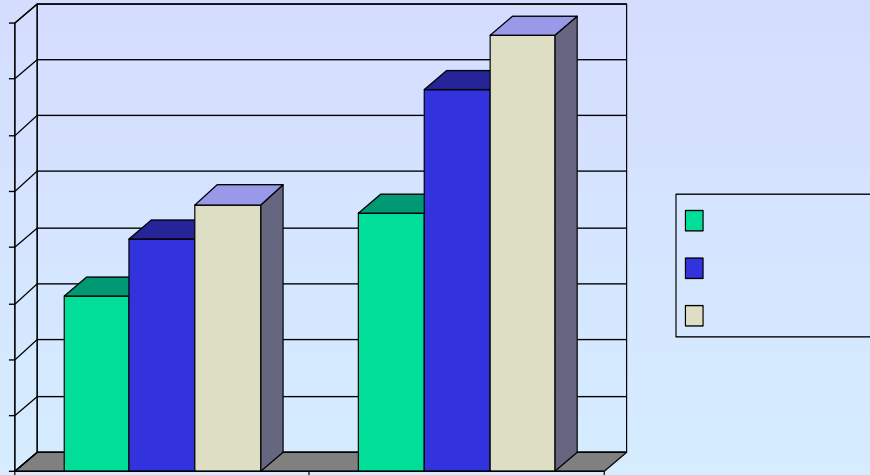
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- Quantitative analyses enable comparisons across settings and by type of provision taking account intake differences in terms of significant child, family and home factors including prior attainments or social behaviour (estimates of pre-school centre effectiveness based on 'value-added' for cognitive progress and social behavioural development).
- Detailed qualitative cases studies of more effective pre-school settings explore organisation and processes, including pedagogy, associated with positive child outcomes and increase understanding of best practice.

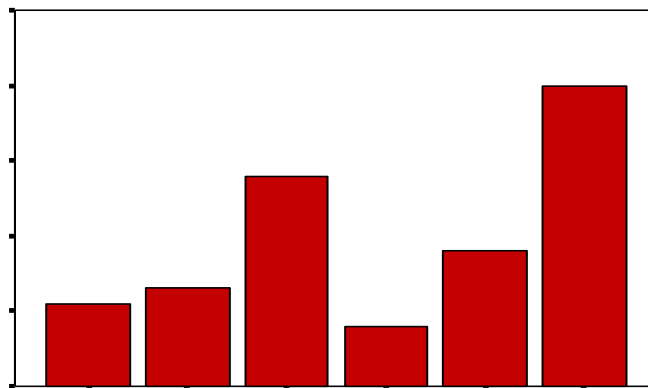
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Quality and Duration matter (months of developmental advantage on literacy)



Effects of child, home, and pre-school compared



Home Learning Environment

Parents asked about activities in the home.

A home learning environment (HLE) index constructed

(Melhuish et al., 2001).

Seven activities linked to development.

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Reading to child

Library visits

Painting & drawing

Playing with letters

Playing with numbers/shapes

Songs/ poems /nursery rhymes

The Home Learning Environment in the early years has powerful long-term effects

“What parents do is more important than who parents are”.

(Melhuish et al., 2001)



Combining quantitative and qualitative methods

From quantitative analyses we identified ECEC centres that were particularly effective.

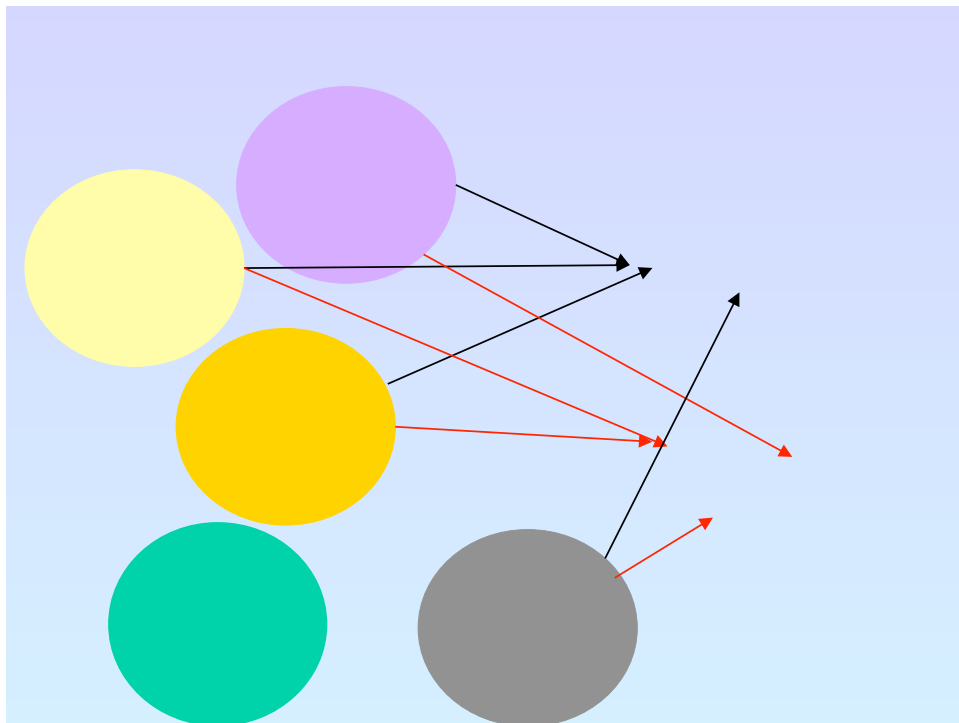
Then qualitative case studies looked at what made them effective.

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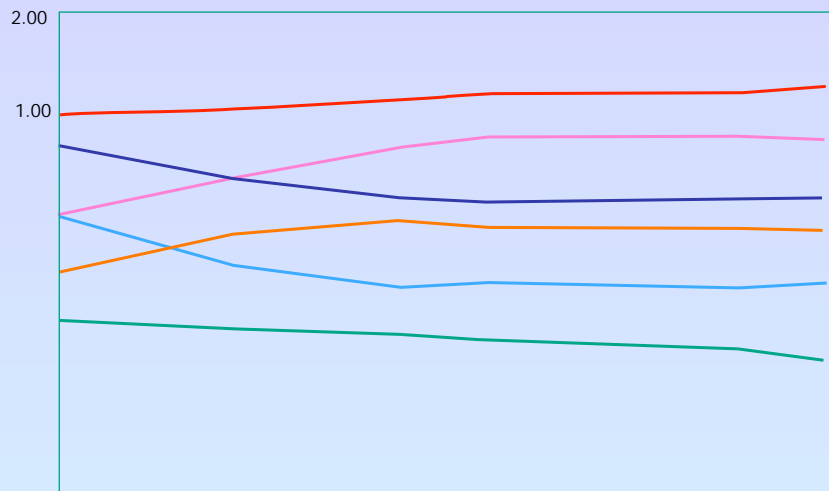
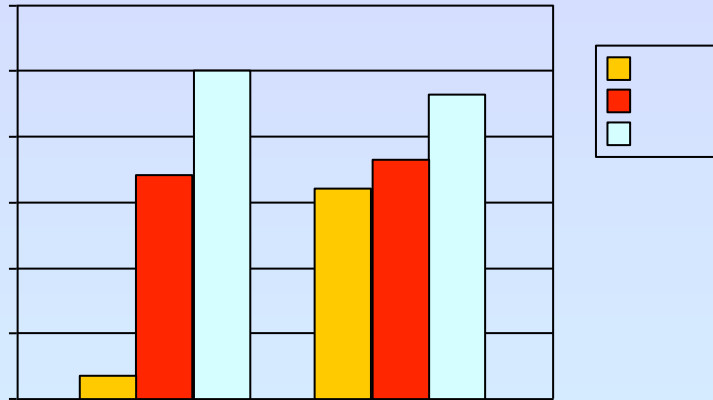
Good outcomes are linked to:

Adult-child interactions that involve 'sustained shared thinking' and open-ended questioning to extend children's thinking

Sustained shared thinking: An episode in which two or more individuals "work together" in an intellectual way to solve a problem, clarify a concept, evaluate activities, extend a narrative etc. Both parties must contribute to the thinking and it must develop and extend.



Pre-school Quality and Self-regulation and Pro-social behaviour (age 11 and 14)



Conclusions

- From age 2 all children benefit from preschool.
- The quality of preschool matters.
- Part-time has equal benefit to full-time.
- Preschool effects persist until teenage years
- High quality preschool can protect a child from effects of a low effective school.

Effects on policy in UK

- Free part-time pre-school from age 3 (2004)
- Extension of parental leave (2004)
- 10-year Childcare Strategy (2004)
- Guidance for Children's Centres (2005)
- Childcare Bill (2006)
- Acceptance that money spent on pre-school produces savings later

LESSONS

1. Early years are very important
2. Preschool is part of infrastructure for a successful society
3. High quality preschool boosts development
4. Parenting is also very important
5. Preschool lifts population curve.

Example References

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