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**Early years childcare beneficial for language and behavioural development**

The latest in a series of reports from the major national study of early years education in England has been published today, uncovering the effects of early education and childcare for two year olds.

**Early Education helps both language and emotional development**

The Study of Early Education and Development (SEED), which is following almost 6,000 children in England from age two through to the end of KS1 (age seven), found a significant positive effect of early education at age two on language and socio-emotional development when children were assessed at age three. The benefits of early education and care were found regardless of a child’s family level of disadvantage.

Specifically education and care with childminders at age two had a significant positive effect on children’s language development and behaviour at the age of three.

Group based settings such as nurseries and playgroups were also shown to have positive effects on children’s socio-emotional development including how well they get along with other children.

SEED is conducted by the National Centre for Social Research (NatCen) in collaboration with the University of Oxford, Action for Children, Frontier Economics and is funded by the Department for Education.

**Home life provides wide ranging benefits**

The study also found the beneficial effects of the home environment on child development, independent of the positive outcomes for early childhood education and care. Notably, even children with rich home environments stand to benefit from time in early years education and care.

The study found that a rich home learning environment, how often parents used measures to set limits for child behaviour, and degree of closeness between the parent and the child were associated with improved language and non-verbal development. They were also linked to fewer emotional and behavioural problems and better prosocial behaviour and self-regulation at age three.

**15 Hours funded early education for disadvantaged two-year-olds**

Another key aim of this report was to consider the take-up of early education among two-year-olds following the introduction of 15 hours of funded early education for this age group. While the study did not see increased take-up in the year following the introduction of the policy, DfE census data, including the latest published last month, have indicated increased take-up in subsequent years amongst disadvantaged children. This is particularly important in the context that disadvantaged children are less likely to take up early childhood education and care, and so stand to benefit substantially given differences observed from an early age.

Dr Svetlana Speight, Evaluation Manager, National Centre for Social Research, said: “We’re following the lives of just under 6,000 children to provide high-quality evidence on the effectiveness of early years education and today’s report identifies some clear benefits for children from all kinds of backgrounds. At a time when the main political parties are debating extending childcare, this report provides striking evidence on the benefits of ‎early education at the age of two for all children regardless of their circumstances.”

Professor Edward Melhuish, the report author, University of Oxford, and Birkbeck, University of London, said: “The results from our study show how important children’s early environments, both at home and out-of-home, are for helping their development and well-being. This work can help governments, practitioners and parents make the best choices for children.”

**ENDS**

The report can be downloaded from the Department for Education website: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/study-of-early-education-and-development-seed>

For more information or to arrange an interview with Dr Svetlana Speight please contact Leigh Marshall: Leigh.marshall@natcen.ac.uk 0207 549 8506 / 07828 031 850 or Sophie Brown: Sophie.brown@natcen.ac.uk 0207 549 9550 / 07734 960 069. To arrange an interview with Professor Edward Melhuish please contact [Oxford press office].

The Department for Education is also publishing today “The potential value for money of early education”, authored by Frontier Economics. The report is available here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/study-of-early-education-and-development-seed>

**Notes to editors:**

The Study of Early Education and Development (SEED) is a major longitudinal study which is following almost 6,000 two-year-olds from across England through to the end of KS1 (age 7). The study is being carried out by NatCen Social Research, working with the University of Oxford, Action for Children and Frontier Economics, on behalf of the Department for Education (DfE).

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