WHY IS QUALITY CHILD CARE IMPORTANT?

Offering child care services that support children’s development

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HIGHLIGHTS

- High quality child care programs have been shown to have positive effects on children’s development that can last even into adulthood.
- The effects of high quality care are especially profound for low-income or otherwise at-risk children.

Quality child care programs are those that:

- Provide children warm, nurturing interactions with appropriately trained and compensated teachers focusing on school readiness, child development, and health/nutrition.
- Have enough teachers in each classroom so that they have the capacity to interact meaningfully with each child.
- Offer a developmentally appropriate curriculum.
- Engage families in their child’s schooling experience.
- Provide nutritious meals and physical activities suitable for the child’s age.

Babies and toddlers need quality interactions and environments in order to build strong brains, which lays the foundation for all future learning. Higher quality birth-through-3 programs have been shown to improve outcomes for children in the following ways:

- Healthier cognitive development;
- Higher pre-reading and pre-writing skills;
- Lower rates of special education placements later in school;
- Higher high school graduation rates; and
- Lower rates of externalizing behaviors among youth, such as aggression, disobedience, and cheating.
Quality early childhood education (ECE) programs from birth through age 3 are also important to help children build the foundation and begin to develop skills for three critical executive functions: working memory, impulse control, and cognitive flexibility.  

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