A partnership between The University of Melbourne, Queensland University of Technology, the Victorian Department of Education & Early Childhood Development, & the Queensland Department of Education & Training

Research shows that a child's capacity to learn is at its highest in the preschool years.

Early support for vulnerable young children is more effective and less costly than later interventions.

Unanswered Questions
How can Governments best support long day care, family day care and kindergarten programs in Australia in order to improve the lives of children? What do these programs add to children’s learning and development?

Aims of the study
The study will evaluate the effects of long day care, family day care and kindergarten on children's learning, development, social inclusion and well-being. It will include the impact of differing program characteristics. A cost benefit analysis of the economic impact of early childhood education and care programs will also be undertaken.

For further information

General Enquiries:
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Enquiries regarding overall purpose and conduct of study:
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Facts about Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC)

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The Study

E4Kids is an Australian study of over 2,600 children from Victoria and Queensland. The study follows children from 3 to 8 years of age (2010-2015).

The study investigates the impact of participation in long day care, family day care and kindergarten on children’s learning, development and social inclusion.

Selection of child care centres and kindergartens

The study began with the identification of all long day care centres, kindergartens, family day care and occasional care programs in greater Melbourne, greater Brisbane, Shepparton and Mount Isa. A random selection of these programs was then drawn.

The rooms in these services in which 3 and 4 year olds were enrolled were identified. Parents of all children in these rooms were invited to join the study.

In addition over 150 children not enrolled in child care, family day care or kindergarten services in 2010 were recruited.

Timelines

Data collection for 2010 and 2011 was completed with over 2,100 children and 650 services being visited by the E4Kids Team. Survey data was also collected from parents, teachers, directors and principals.

E4Kids will continue to follow the study children until 2015, collecting new information each year.

Funding and partners

The University of Melbourne and Queensland University of Technology are undertaking the study under the leadership of Professor Collette Tayler and Professor Karen Thorpe.

Other research partners include the University of Toronto, the University of London and The Royal Children’s Hospital in Melbourne.

The Victorian and Queensland Governments are providing combined funding of approximately $3m and the Commonwealth Government has provided $0.2m. They are supporting the implementation of the study and have a major role in ensuring that research findings are translated into policy, program and workforce reform.

The Australian Research Council has granted $2.2m to the study.