



CALL FOR PAPERS – SPECIAL ISSUE

Investing in Young Children: Early Childhood Development and Capabilities

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Deadline for Submissions: January 31, 2015

Theme

Investing in young children is one of the best investments that countries can make. A child's earliest years present a unique window of opportunity to address inequality, break the cycle of poverty, and improve a wide range of outcomes later in life and thereby expand individuals' capability set. Recent brain research suggests the need for holistic approaches to learning, growth, and development, recognizing that young children's physical and intellectual well-being as well as their socio-emotional and cognitive development are interrelated. To fully benefit from future opportunities and become productive members of society, by the end of early childhood, young children should be: healthy and well-nourished; securely attached to caregivers; able to interact positively with families, teachers and peers; able to communicate in their native language; and ready to learn throughout primary school.

Interventions in the early years are essential for early childhood development. New biological and social science evidence provides a wealth of resources to inform innovative strategies that promote optimal child growth and development. Programs that combine services (such as nutrition and psychosocial stimulation) may have especially large beneficial impacts and rates of return. Unfortunately, most countries fall short in their delivery of essential services for young children and their families. The challenge ahead is to develop scalable, cost-effective models for delivering these services, especially in low- and middle-income countries.

This special issue of JHDC will bring together a unique collection of articles on the benefits from investments in young children. The challenges faced by developing countries in implementing ECD policies and programs will be discussed. Innovative solutions to overcome such challenges will be suggested. The issue will combine papers with different types of focus, ranging from impact evaluations to cost-benefit analysis and policy analysis, with both country specific case studies and multi-country analysis. The aim of the special issue will be two-fold: firstly, to further demonstrate the validity and usefulness of the capability approach and how it can be implemented in practice using ECD as a highly relevant topic or case study; and secondly, to provide guidance and new research results for researchers as well as policy makers and practitioners in the rapidly developing field of early childhood development.

Topics

Some of the research papers will focus on specific sub-topics within the field. While various definitions of early childhood development (ECD) have been proposed, in this special issue ECD will refer to a child's growth and development starting from a woman's pregnancy through the child's entry into primary school. ECD interventions therefore include services for pregnant and lactating mothers, as well as young children and their families. These services are meant to address the health, nutritional, socio-emotional, cognitive, and linguistic needs during this age period. They are essential because a child's early life forms the basis for future learning, good health, and well-being, as well as the ability of the child to work well with others in adulthood. Papers touching on one or more of these services could be submitted for the special issue.

Some of the papers could consider the returns to ECD interventions, for example through cost-benefit analysis. There is an emerging consensus that investments in ECD have high returns, particularly when compared to investments made at later stages in life. By contrast, failure to invest can lead to long-term and often irreversible costs not only for individuals and their families, but also for communities and society at large. Papers documenting the benefits from interventions and the cost of non-interventions will be welcome. Papers considering the policy challenge faced by countries will also be welcome. Why are countries falling short in their investments in ECD? One factor is the fact that countries usually operate under strict budgetary constraints. But experience also suggests that another factor is related to the fact that ECD is highly complex and multi-sectoral. There is still lack of awareness of the benefits of ECD and how countries can design successful policies and scalable programs in this area. Papers relying on various policy diagnostic tools and techniques could be proposed as well for the special issue.

The issue will welcome both quantitative and qualitative papers, and contributions from various fields. The papers will need to be written in such a way as they could be readable by a wide audience beyond the specific technical area of expertise of the authors. Overly technical papers are not encouraged. Below are some examples of papers that could be submitted (this list is in no way exhaustive):

- Impact evaluation of a specific ECD intervention in a specific country
- In-depth qualitative study of the reasons why some households may not use existing ECD services, or of the success encountered by specific interventions among hard to reach groups
- Innovative analysis of DHS, MICS, or other household survey data on the determinants of ECD outcomes or take-up of ECD interventions, typically with regression analysis
- Assessment of the quality of different types of ECD providers, for example comparing public and private providers and how (if the data permit) quality of provision may affect outcome
- In-depth policy analysis of ECD interventions in a country or set of countries
- Analysis of the cost of ECD interventions and their likely returns, with a discussion of potential trade-offs between higher cost and lower cost interventions that may have different returns
- Assessments of the cost of scaling up investments in young children at a country, regional, or global level, and the potential benefits from doing so

Again, the list above is only illustrative, and other types of papers could be considered as well.

Submission Procedure

Please submit papers online at: <http://mc.manuscriptcentral.com/cjhd>. According to the JHDC's guidelines for preparing manuscripts, please send the paper identified as "Main Document", with all information identifying the authors removed to allow it to be refereed anonymously. When submitting, please choose 'special issue article' as the manuscript type, and 'Special Issue on Early Childhood Development' as the special issue name.

The main document should include the following:

- The title of the paper.
- An abstract of approximately 150–200 words.
- Up to five key words.
- Numbered pages in sequence.
- All necessary material (e.g. figures and tables and their captions; appendices).

In addition to the main manuscript, a separate file should also be sent, identified as "Title Page", and must include all of the following information:

- The title of the paper
- The names of the authors
- The full postal and email addresses of all the authors
- Affiliation details for each author (job title, institution, city, country)
- A brief biographical note for each author (around 100 words)
- One author should be indicated as "Corresponding author". He/she will be notified of the selection outcome after submission of the manuscript to an anonymous peer review process, and if the paper is selected.

Complete instructions for authors can be found at the publisher's website:

<http://www.tandfonline.com/action/authorSubmission?journalCode=cjhd20&page=instructions>

The deadline for submissions is January 31, 2015. For inquiries, please contact Quentin Wodon, email: qwodon@worldbank.org