

Does professional development of preschool teachers improve early childhood education? – Evidence from a randomized controlled trial

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Abstract

During the period from 2011 to 2013 a relatively large randomized controlled trial has been run in Danish preschools to obtain evidence on whether it is possible to improve early childhood education by providing better training to the preschool teachers. The intervention (VIDA) consisted of two different treatments: some preschools have received extra training of the preschool teachers (VIDA Basis) while some have received extra training of the preschool teachers along with implementing a program of parent involvement (VIDA+). A third group of preschools did not receive any treatment (the control group). The purpose of the intervention is to improve child outcomes, especially for socially disadvantaged children. This study investigates the effects on children by analyzing changes in socio-emotional skills (measured by SDQ) and cognitive abilities. The results of the analysis show positive effects from both VIDA Basis and VIDA+ on several dimensions of the SDQ scale, whereas no effects are found on cognitive abilities. Heterogeneous effects on socio-emotional skills are investigated, but differences are only found across family status, where no effects are found for children living with a single parent.

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