

Title: How Does Early Childcare Enrollment Affect Children, Parents, and Their Interactions?

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Abstract: We estimate the effects of childcare enrollment on child outcomes by exploiting a staggered childcare expansion across regions in Japan. We find that childcare improves language development among boys and reduces aggression and the symptoms of ADHD among the children of low-education mothers. Estimates show that the improved child behavior is strongly associated with better parenting quality and maternal wellbeing. Evidence also suggests that promoting positive parenting practices is an important element of an effective childcare program. Our estimates for marginal treatment effects indicate that children who would benefit most from childcare are less likely to attend, implying inefficient allocation.