

Investing in Early Childhood Care and Education: The Impact of Quality on Inequality

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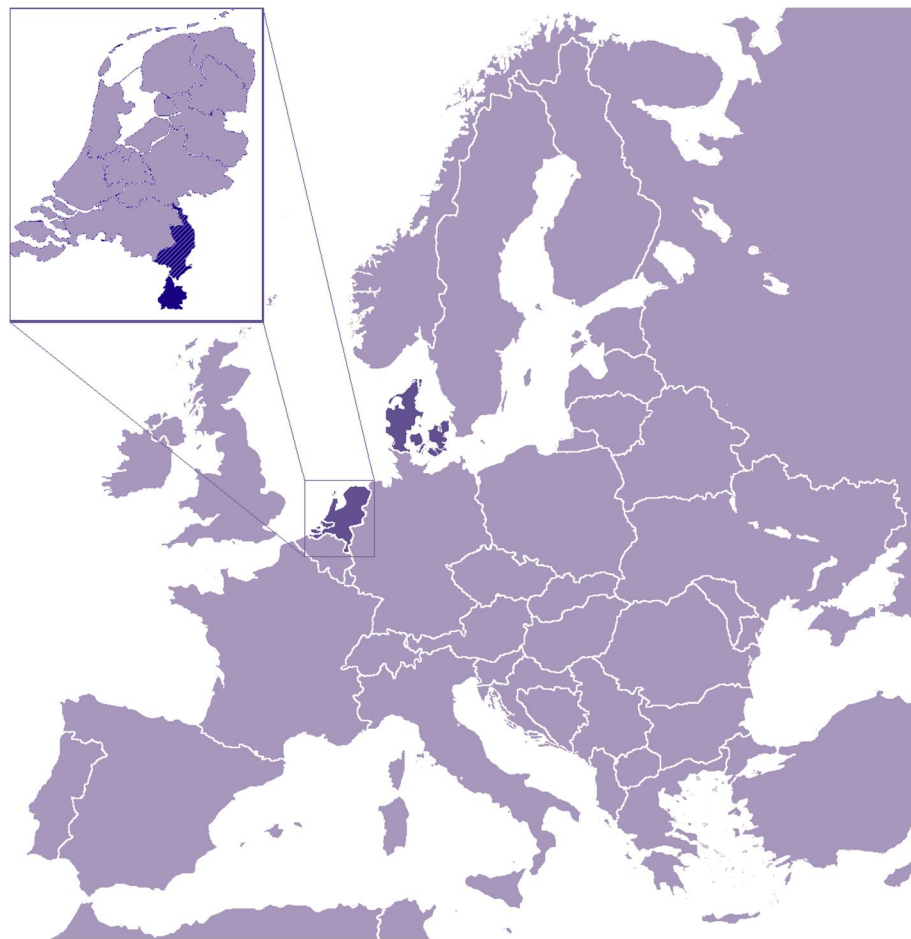


Research context

- “ rapid extension of public investments in early childhood care and education
- “ centre-based childcare aiming at enabling maternal employment
- “ early childhood research stressing relevance of early years for child development
- “ policymakers seeking social returns; despite economic progress, equality of opportunities not been reached in most countries
- “ demographic trends threaten to raise burden young generations will have to carry
- “ policymakers may influence quality, but little is known about relevant quality aspects



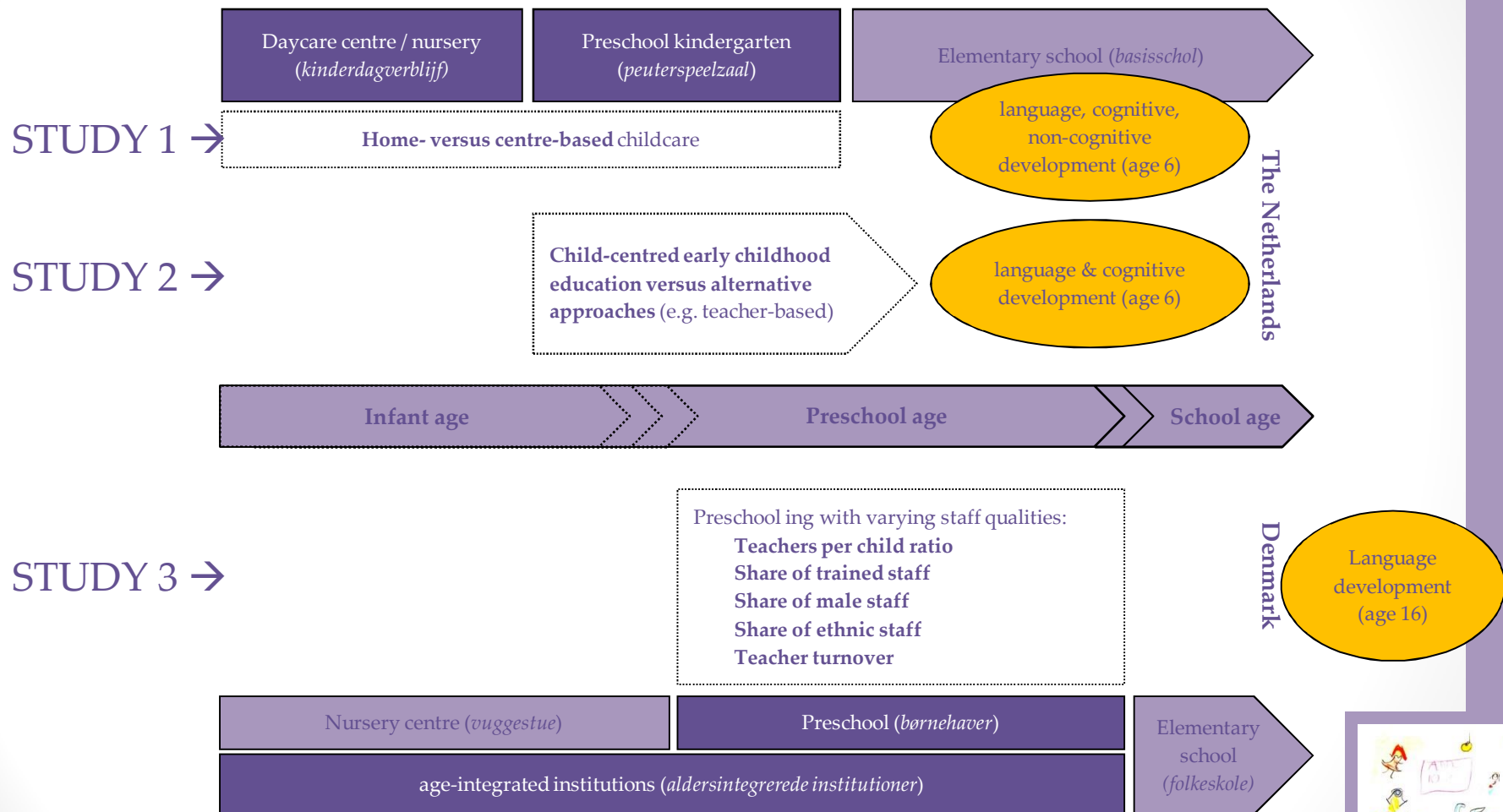
Studied country cases



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Quality aspects investigated



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Empirical findings

STUDY 1: CENTRE-BASED VERSUS HOME-BASED CHILDCARE

- “ significant short-term effects of centre-based childcare stated in international literature not confirmed
- “ indication that children of single-parent benefit, but children of less educated parents perform weaker

STUDY 2: CHILD-CENTRED EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION VERSUS ALTERNATIVES

- “ child-centred early childhood education has not yet led to anticipated effects on school readiness
- “ indication that children of less educated may benefit from it, as expected

STUDY 3: VARIATION IN 5 PRESCHOOL STAFF QUALITY INDICATORS

- “ better preschool staff quality associated with better Danish (4 of 5 quality indicators associated with significant improvements; no main effect for teacher turnover)
- “ Boys benefit more than girls; ethnic minority children benefit from higher staff stability



Limitations of results

- “ effects are modest, tend to weaken with applying more severe empirical strategies
- “ Tested child outcomes too limited measures
- “ Treatment still too weak
- “ Complementary policies not supporting effects
- “ Empirical strategies not advanced enough yet to identify effects



Conclusions

- “ policymakers have been investing in centre-based childcare mainly to facilitate maternal labour market participation
- “ high hopes also put in impact on child development and social mobility
- “ investments into childcare quality can be based only on theoretical or piecemeal evidence
- “ **policymakers cannot yet be certain that public resources are being spent effectively**



Reference:

Bauchmüller, R. (2013). *Investing in Early Childhood Care and Education: The Impact of Quality on Inequality*. Maastricht University: [MGSOG Dissertation Series nr. 33](#).
http://www.merit.unu.edu/training/theses/BAUCHMULLER_Robert.pdf

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