

Fab Abs

Recent Research Abstracts

Vol. 29 - April 2005

EARLY CHILDHOOD YEARS

Fish, E (2002) "The benefits of early intervention", *Stronger Families Learning Exchange Bulletin* No.2 Spring - Summer 2002: 8-11

<http://www.aifs.gov.au/sf/pubs/bull2/ef.html>

Part of the brief of the Stronger Families Learning Exchange at the Australian Institute of Family Studies is to provide support to early intervention projects, funded under the Commonwealth's Stronger Families Fund. In this article, the author explores evidence for the effectiveness of early intervention. She refers to the growing evidence that has emerged from a wide research base in health, developmental psychology, neuroscience, education and criminology, of the importance of promoting positive family and community experiences for young children during the earliest years of childhood. The importance of early childhood prevention and early intervention programs is based on the premise that the first few years of life of a child's development are crucial in setting the foundation for lifelong learning, behaviour and health outcomes. Early intervention services that may have a positive impact on children and families include: home visiting services for pregnant women and families with new babies; parenting skills training; family relationship education; family counselling; and support services for families with very young children, such as play groups, all of which help stimulate brain development.

Haviland, Maya (2004): "*What makes evidence, and who gets to say so? How participatory action research contributes to evidence on early childhood intervention and community development*". VCOSS Congress 2004: strategies for equality and inclusion, 4-6 August 2004. Melbourne, Vic: Victorian Council of Social Service

<http://www.vcross.org.au/congress04/Haviland%20Maya.doc>

What kind of evidence is produced using participatory action research (PAR), and is it appropriate to base policy decisions on this kind of evidence? This paper describes the way in which PAR has been used in community development and early childhood intervention projects. It discusses the ability of this methodology to inform policy making and practice in community based projects.

Lindjord, Denise (2002): "*Preschool Intervention Programs: Investing in the Future of Young Children, Families and Society*", *The Journal of Early Education and Family Review*, Vol. 9(5), 4-5; 2002

The question being debated in public policy circles about early intervention programs is: Should the federal government fund preschool intervention programs? A recent Carnegie Foundation study found that 35% of students entering kindergarten lacked the early language and literacy skills needed to make them successful readers. The author considers why early childhood years are particularly critical to children's development and future success.