

Better childcare provision increases public support for the service

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People's attitudes to childcare are shaped by the perceived level and effectiveness of the service, new research led by the University of Kent has shown.

Expanding childcare provision can create a 'virtuous cycle' for public support, while rolling back on childcare can lead to a corresponding decrease in support.

The research, which was led by Dr Heejung Chung of Kent's School of Social Policy, Sociology and Social Research, looked at data from 22 European countries. Results showed that, generally, parents across Europe were supportive of public childcare provision.

But the researchers found that existing structures of childcare provision were consistently related to parents' support for childcare. Irrespective of subjective considerations, such as self-interest and [political attitudes](#), the study found that a 'vicious and virtuous cycle' existed in the relationship between policy provision and support.

The findings showed that, at a national level, the larger the current public provision, and the more positively people assess it, the greater the support. Thus, governments' further investment in wider provision of good quality childcare has the potential to drive up assessment, then [support](#) and later demand for public childcare.

The researchers concluded that there may be different mechanisms at

play in explaining [public support](#) for welfare provision in 'newer' areas such as childcare and work-life balance, as distinct from what are perceived as 'old' areas such as unemployment and old age.

European parents' attitudes towards public childcare provision. The role of current provisions, interests and ideologies (Heejung Chung and Bart Meuleman, University of Leuven) is published in the journal *European Societies*.

More information: Heejung Chung et al, European parents' attitudes towards public childcare provision: the role of current provisions, interests and ideologies, *European Societies* (2016). [DOI: 10.1080/14616696.2016.1235218](#)

Provided by University of Kent

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