

Starting School –

The effect of early childhood factors on child well-being
Mette C. Deding, Mette Lausten and Angelo Rosenstjerne Andersen

Starting school and well-being in the long term Several studies have established a link between a good start in school and the child's overall success in the educational system (Entwisle, Alexander & Olson, 2005; McLeod & Kaiser, 2004). The reason for this link is evident. Both cognitive and non-cognitive skills—like work habits and positive attitude towards school and learning—at first grade, are positively related to later outcome in school (Entwisle, Alexander & Olson, 2005). Furthermore, a clear link exists between how well children do in primary school and long-term outcomes, such as highest level of education or risky behavior— (see e.g., Currie & Thomas, 1999; and Krueger, 2003). Other factors also link childhood outcomes and long-term outcomes. Most of the studies on child well-being assume that factors from early childhood—especially during the first year—are crucial to the development of cognitive skills and to development in general (Harris, 1983). In addition, children's scores in cognitive and developmental tests (measured in childhood and early adolescence) are considered strong predictors of later outcomes (Ermisch & Francesconi, 2005). Relationship between early childhood and child well-being A vast amount of papers have provided us with a lot of empirical evidence on investment in children and child well-being (e.g., Ermisch & Francesconi, 2005; and Haveman & Wolfe, 1999 for comprehensive reviews of earlier findings). Many of them are based on Becker's framework on household preferences and child "quality" (Becker, 1981), using household production functions to explain child outcomes (Baum, 2004, and Ermisch & Francesconi, 2005).

A bad start in school is likely to lead to more problems later in school life and therefore poorer chances of doing well in school (Entwisle, Alexander & Olson, 2005).