Debating Key Issues on Inclusive Education

Early Childhood Intervention: Why this area is crucial and which are the benefits

Round Table at the European Parliament

Brussels
April 24, 2012

Nature and nurture

The genetic potential of a child can only develop in the interaction with an enhancing environment - family, childcare (Bronfenbrenner 2006).
Brain research - sensitive periods

Results of brain research show that neuronal networks will develop, if neurons are stimulated in an early stage - neuronal networks diminish if there is no early stimulation / intervention (Child Development 2010).

Children with seven risk factors have an average IQ 30 points lower than children with less risk factors (Sameroff 2009).
Effective Intervention design - Balance between risk and protection

ECI is an attempt to shift the balance from vulnerability to protection, either by decreasing risk factors or by increasing the number of available protective factors in vulnerable children´s lives.

Effectiveness

Research Results: Interdisciplinary and family centered ECI has a great impact for
- a healthy brain architecture of the child
- strengthening a positive parent-child relationship to enhance child development
- developing supportive family networks

(Guralnick 2008)
Economical Value
Preschool - school - post school

(Highest Potential for Impact)

Rates of Return to Human Capital Investment
Initially setting investment to be equal across all ages

Source: Heckman and Masterov, The Productivity Argument

(Heckman & Masterov 2008)