

Sammons, P., Sylva, K., Melhuish, E.C., Siraj-Blatchford, I., Taggart, B., Smees, R., Dobson, A., Jeavons, M., Lewis, K., Morahan, M. and Sadler, S. (1999). *Technical Paper 2 - The Effective Provision of Pre-School Education (EPPE) Project: Characteristics of the EPPE Project sample at entry to the study* London: DfEE / Institute of Education, University of London.

Abstract: In this paper the relationships between young children's entry assessments and various child (e.g. age, gender, ethnicity) and parent characteristics (e.g. educational and occupational background) are explored to examine the extent to which variation between children in their cognitive and social/behavioural attainments can be accounted for by different factors.

Marked differences between individual pre-school centres were identified in terms of the characteristics of children entering the EPPE study. In order to investigate the impact of different types of provision and of individual pre-school centres it is essential to have accurate baseline data about children's cognitive attainments and details of their social/behavioural development so that subsequent progress and development can be measured. The information is also interesting in its own right because it provides a snapshot of children and families at the start of the study. Only in this way will it be possible to establish whether children attending specific centres show greater progress or more positive social/behavioural outcomes by entry to school. Control for differences in the characteristics of children at entry to the study is also necessary to examine any differences in effects related to type of pre-school experience (e.g. nursery class, playgroup, private day nursery or local authority day care nursery).