

Sammons, P., Sylva, K., Melhuish, E.C., Siraj-Blatchford, I., Taggart, B. and Elliot, K. (2002). The Effective Provision of Pre-School Education (EPPE) Project: *Technical Paper 8a - Measuring the Impact of Pre-School on Children's Cognitive Progress over the Pre-School Period*. London: DfES / Institute of Education, University of London.

Abstract: This Technical Paper describes the results of analyses of young children's cognitive progress during their time in pre-school. Equivalent results on social behavioural development are reported in EPPE Technical Paper 8b. Five measures of cognitive attainment assessed at entry to primary school have been studied: pre-reading, language attainment, two measures of non-verbal attainment and early number concepts. A range of statistical methods (multilevel modelling) have been used to analyse data for around 2,800 children, to measure cognitive progress over the pre-school period. This explores the unique (net) contribution of particular characteristics (child, parental background and the home) to variations in children's outcomes, in particular, whether there is evidence of pre-school influences on young children's cognitive gains. The multilevel value added analyses also illuminated the pre-school characteristics such as type of pre-school attended, number of sessions, quality characteristics, ratios and staff qualifications which show statistical relationships with children's cognitive outcomes.

Findings concerning a sample of 'home children', who have had no pre-school centre experience before starting primary school, are reported for comparison with the pre-school sample. The main findings of the EPPE study point to the continued strength of background influences on young children's cognitive attainments and progress at entry to school and also provide new evidence concerning the impact of pre-school. In combination with the findings for social behaviour reported in Technical Paper 8b, the results indicate that pre-school can help to combat social exclusion and promote inclusion by offering disadvantaged young children, in particular, a better start at school.