



香港教育大學
The Education University
of Hong Kong

Research Brief **EPL IMPACT**



Student Inequality in the Starting Line

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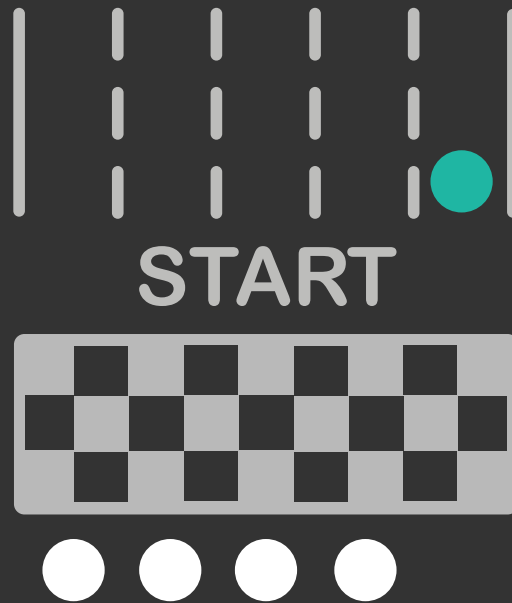
The Joseph Lau Luen Hung Charitable Trust
Asia Pacific Centre for Leadership and Change
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Introduction

Part of this large-scale project was to explore teaching quality and inequalities among children at the kindergarten entry such that policymakers and educators should work together to make a difference. Inequalities in education often refer to unequal educational opportunities in gender, class, race, ethnicity, and socioeconomic backgrounds. It was assumed inequalities might exist in the subtle parental preferences in school sponsoring bodies (SSBs), programmes and levels of tuitions, apart from teaching quality.

Data were collected from 285 children enrolled in the 26 participating kindergartens offering whole-day or half-day programmes.



Key Issues and Significant Findings

Regarding the teaching quality of kindergarten teachers, it was found:

- 1 First, Hong Kong kindergarten teachers were sensitive to K1 children's emotional and academic needs. But they might not have paid sufficient attention to whether their selected instructional formats adequately promoted children's conceptual development.
- 2 Second, teachers sensitive to their students' academic and social needs did not necessarily help children develop more robust higher-order thinking concepts.

Regarding the debate on inequalities among children at the kindergarten entry, it was found:

- 1 Most parents who tend to focus on pre-academic learning may miss other important aspects of child development.
- 2 Children in high-tuition kindergartens tended to outperform their peers in other kindergartens in self-regulation and self-care, suggesting children from better socioeconomic family backgrounds showed stronger preparations at kindergarten entry.

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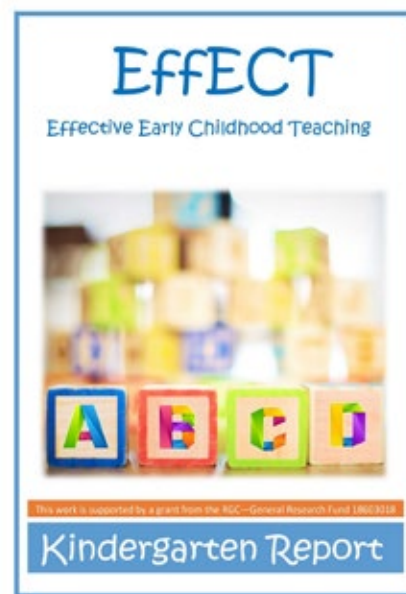
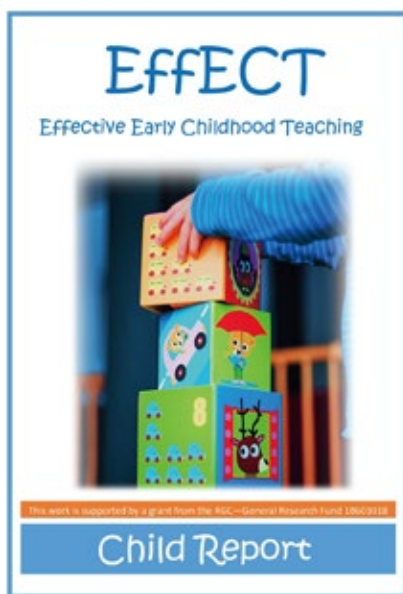
Significant interaction effects between School Sponsoring Body (SSB) & programme, between programme & tuition, and between SSB & tuition were found in pre-academic learning.

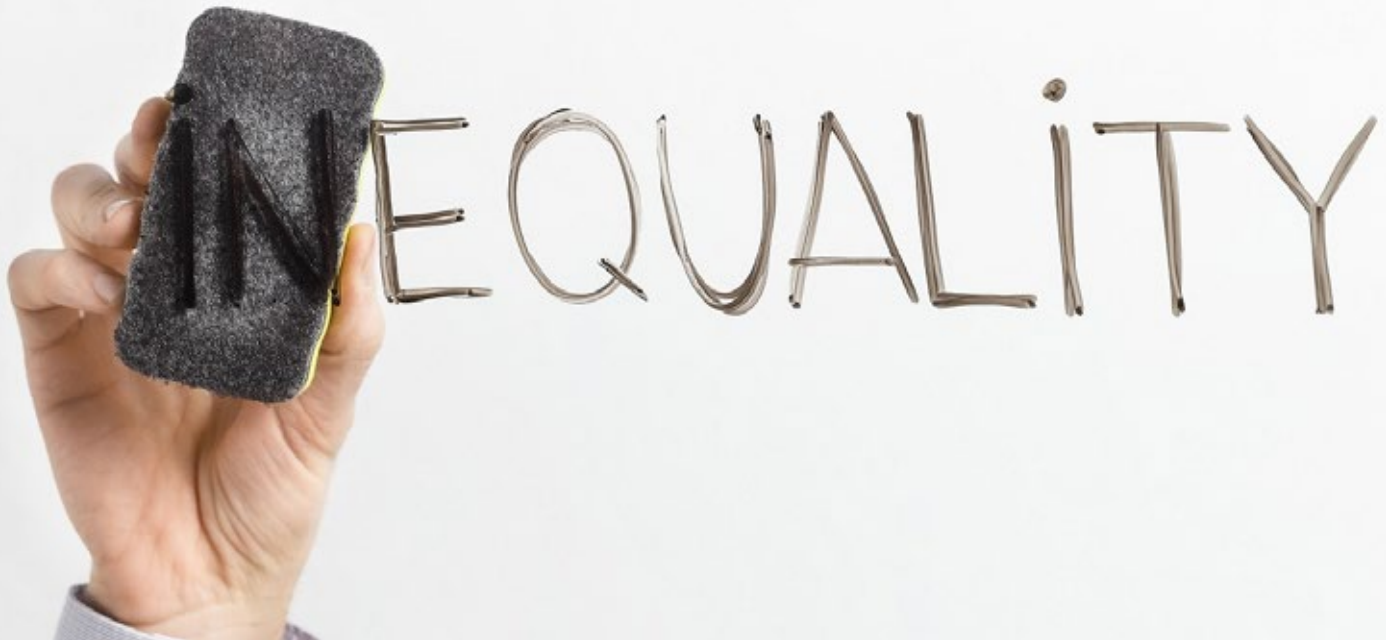
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There were also significant interaction effects between SSB, programme and tuition in self-care.

Main Stakeholders and Engagement with Them

- Kindergarten teachers and principals
- Parents of the participating children.
- Good communication is valued with stakeholders. On-going school reports and child reports are sent to summarise findings from teaching observations and child assessment results.





Research Impact and Recommendations

- Whenever parents are allowed to choose their preferred SSBs, programmes, and fee-paying kindergartens, some inequalities need to be tolerated.
- Hong Kong education policy is adequate to minimise only some admission inequalities despite free kindergarten education being provided through direct subsidies to kindergartens since 2017.
- Developed mobile applications could help teachers use high-quality data to inform and improve teaching and learning, and teachers could benefit by reducing their workload on preparing quality evidence-based portfolios for parents.

Early Years Progress Journal (EYPJ)					
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Cognitive Development					
A-co concentration		1	2	3	4
A-co observation skill		1	2	3	4
M-to life experience-episodic		1	2	3	4
M-to memory (Short/Long?)		1	2	3	4
M		1	2	3	4
T-co common sense		1	2	3	4



For more Information:

- 1 Ko, J., Sammons, P., & Reunamo, J. (2019, March). *Developing a theoretical model for comparing effective teaching practices and their effects on early childhood development*. The 7th International Conference on Business and Social Science, Kyoto, Japan, Kyoto, Japan.
- 2 Ko, J., & Reunamo, J. (2017, August). *How to implement observation strategies to raise the Quality of Early Childhood Education*. European Association for Research on Learning and Instruction (EARLI) Conference 2017, Tampere, Finland.
- 3 For any inquiries, please contact Dr James Ko at jamesko@eduhk.hk.



Video Interview

