

Early Child Development In China: Breaking The Cycle Of Poverty And Improving Future Competitiveness - , Mary Eming Young

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In China, despite the introduction of economic reforms that have lifted millions out of poverty, the income gap between rural and urban areas remains wide. There is a growing realization in policy circles that economic growth alone cannot reduce absolute poverty and inequality, and that investment in human development is needed to sustain growth and improve social cohesion. Prepared as a collaborative study between the World Bank and China's National Population and Family Planning Commission, *Early Child Development in China: Breaking the Cycle of Poverty and Improving Future Competitiveness* analyzes the challenges facing the country in the care, development, and education for children from birth to six years of age, and details the long-term social benefits and high economic returns that targeted early child development interventions for disadvantaged children can provide. Investments in early child development are one of the most cost effective strategies for breaking the intergenerational transmission of poverty and improving productivity and social cohesion in the long run. This report studies how programs to improve prenatal care, raise the health status and nutritional standards of young children, improve the knowledge of mothers and primary caregivers about health, child care, and nurturing techniques, and expand the availability of preprimary education services across China can strengthen a child's prospects for success later in life. Ensuring that children can grow and live to their full potential is essential to enable the country to improve its future competitiveness and overcome the challenges it faces from an aging population and the transition from a middle- to a high-income economy.

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