



THE JACOBS CENTER
RESEARCH SEMINAR SERIES

PROF. DR. ORLA DOYLE

University College Dublin

ASSESSING THE CONTINUITY OR FADE-OUT OF EFFECTS:

EVIDENCE FROM THE PREPARING FOR LIFE TRIAL AT AGE 9

This study investigates the impact of early and continuous investment in parenting, from pregnancy until age five, on children's academic outcomes and skills at age 9. Prior evidence on the sustained effect of home visiting and parent-training programmes in middle childhood is inconclusive, with many of the pioneering studies in the field experiencing a dissolution of treatment effects once the programmes end. Using data from the randomised controlled trial of the Preparing for Life programme, this study finds little evidence of cognitive fade-out at age 9, with effect sizes of 0.67 of a standard deviation (SD) on general conceptual ability, and significant treatment effects on executive functioning (inhibitory control (0.61SD), attention flexibility (0.66SD), working memory (0.56SD) and standardised school achievement tests of reading (0.74SD) and math (0.47SD). The programme, however, has no impact on absenteeism or the use of school resources and the significant treatment effects observed for children's socio-emotional skills and behaviour at age 4 are no longer present at age 9. While about 50% of the sample recruited during pregnancy are retained at the age 9 follow-up, the treatment groups are still balanced on all key baseline characteristics. Preliminary mediation analysis suggests that ~45% of the treatment effect on cognitive skills is explained by improvements in parental investment.

Friday, April 3, 2020, 10:00 h

At the Jacobs Center for Productive Youth Development
Andreasstrasse 15, 4th floor, AND 4.19, 8050 Zürich

*Individual meetings with Prof. Doyle are available,
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