

# **Relationships between Socio Economic Status and the Development of Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage: A Secondary Analysis of Data from the Growing up in Scotland and Effective Provision of Pre-School Education Reports**

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## **Abstract**

The recent introduction of ‘free early education’ entitlement for the most ‘disadvantaged 40% of two year olds’ in the UK (Dfe 2013) represents the latest government policy focussed on ‘closing the gap’ in attainment between children from the most and least wealthy backgrounds. In the context of this, this paper utilises a range of sociological theories to analyse potential understandings of the apparent connections between socio-economic status (SES) and children’s early development, as highlighted by secondary research data from the Effective Provision of Pre-School Education (EPPE) Project (Sylva et al 2004) and the ‘Growing up Scotland’ Report (Anderson et al 2007). The highly positivist methodologies these adopt, plus the unavoidable cultural and social positioning of quantifiable development tests within them is explored. Various theoretical interpretations of the results are explored and an argument made against the adoption of highly deterministic theoretical positions which dismiss the potential for human agency to overcome the potentially negative impacts of social structures. It is then asserted that the introduction of the two year old entitlement offers a renewed opportunity to focus on supporting families, with consideration best placed on ‘what parents do’, not ‘who parents are’ (Kellaghan et al 1993).

## **Introduction**

An aspiration to ‘close the gap’ between the levels of attainment of children from the most, and least, wealthy backgrounds has been a recurrent theme of the education policies of

governments in the United Kingdom in recent decades (Gov.uk 2013, Perry & Francis 2010:1). In the past 10 years large scale studies focussing on children's earliest years, such as the Effective Provision of Pre-School Education (EPPE) Project (Sylva et al 2004), have highlighted the apparent significance of the impact of socio-economic status (SES) on the presence of gaps in children's documented developmental levels before they have even started school. When considered alongside a recent all-party parliamentary report (APPG 2012) which asserted that the point of 'greatest leverage' for social mobility is 'what happens between ages 0 and 3', it is evident that a sizeable challenge may well exist if these impacts are to be reversed throughout children's school years. The UK government's current response to this issue is the introduction of 'free early education' for the most 'disadvantaged' 40% of two of year olds in the UK (Dfe 2013). In light of this, my intention for this paper is to respond to the increased relevancy this has created by taking the opportunity to explore elements of two large scale studies relating to early childhood; both of which have been key points of reference for recent policy developments across the UK. These are; the aforementioned EPPE Project (Sylva et al 2004); and the 'Growing Up in Scotland' Report (Anderson et al 2007). With both of these studies reporting significant correlations between SES and a range of indicators of the developmental levels of children prior to school entry age in the U.K., I am concerned with examining the sociological explanations for these correlations, and the significance of early socialisation and parental influence on children's development, future opportunities and life courses. In addition I also intend to explore this from a methodological perspective; considering the social construction of both the data collection methods and the value placed on the measurement of a set of very specific variables.

In effectively conducting a specific analysis of secondary research data, my intention has been to utilise a relatively typical research report format and process, in an attempt to

approach the data in a relatively systematic and informed way. My report therefore begins with an overview of the sociological theories for consideration, developed as a form of theoretical framework, before progressing to a research design section, which addresses methodological perspectives of both the two studies and the process I have adopted for selecting, presenting, interpreting and considering specific elements of these. The main body of my report then presents a discussion which approaches the research questions I have identified below, prior to concluding with a perspective on the potential implications in relation to the two year old free early education entitlement scheme.

My research objective is summarised by the identification of the following research questions:

- What sociological explanations exist for the apparent connections between SES and children's documented developmental levels (vocabulary and language; and social, emotional and behavioural), prior to school entry age in the UK?
- How might these aspects of early socialisation impact on young children's future opportunities and life courses?

### **Theoretical Framework**

Central to sociological theory surrounding the development of young children, and thus to my analysis within this paper, are considerations surrounding the impact of, and relationships between, factors in the child's 'micro' and 'macro' environment; for example the level of significance of the family home, as opposed to the mass media or attitudes in wider culture. Bronfenbrenner's 'ecological systems theory' (1992) presents a key model in relation to this; illustrating proposed relationships between each of four layers of community in an individual's life, building outwards from the micro systems of home and school to much wider macro systems. This model is widely used to illustrate the range of interacting factors

influencing socialisation, for example Taylor et al's (2004) model of 'Academic Socialisation' uses it as a starting point for building on the significance of the relationship between school and home as micro environments; suggesting the number of inter-related factors here alone is numerous; including aspects such as the home learning environment, parent's experiences of school and parental involvement.

Berger and Luckmann's theories of socialisation (1966) see the stage of socialisation as also being significant in relation to influence; with childhood viewed as part of a more powerful 'primary' phase of socialisation, before progression into 'secondary' socialisation. Assuming that micro environments, particularly the home, play a more significant role in early life; in relation to Bronfenbrenner's model, it might be suggested that as the interactions between micro and macro layers of influence become more frequent, Berger and Luckmann would suggest that the level of influence may also be becoming less significant. That is to say; values within the school community for a teenager may have less impact than values within the home for a two year old. Alternatively for Bourdieu, there is a 'dialectical relationship' (Swartz 1997:8) between aspects, with individual agents constructing a micro social reality which in turn has already been 'determined by the position they occupy' within the macro environment of wider society (Bourdieu 1989:2). In relation to socialisation this might suggest that any isolation and separation of layers and stage is irrelevant, as the influence of a parent at home for example, is in turn already determined by their own experiences of society. Bourdieu theorised the presence of the 'habitus' within the individual; a sub-conscious 'acquired system of generative schemes objectively adjusted to the particular conditions in which it is constituted' (2004:174 ). He outlined culture as a form of 'capital', which plays a role in reproducing social order and hierarchies, thus micro environments could be seen as constrained by the macro structures within which they are situated.

Bourdieu's ideas regarding cultural capital present an interesting perspective in relation to parental influence, his separation of 'objectified' (resource) and 'embodied' (knowledge) capital outline the apparent significance of parents' capacity to offer the practical means to support their child's development, in addition to the cultural means to influence their child to develop behaviour and knowledge traits which are valued by society. However, Kellaghan et al (1993) present another perspective, citing these aspects of 'who parents are' as being less significant to 'what parents do', which is not necessarily always constrained by the former. The theories of both Bourdieu, and indeed Marx would indicate a fairly deterministic stance in relation to this, assuming that 'what parents do' is effectively a product of who they are, which in turn is determined by their position within society's structure. The conflict theories of Marx suggest that little agency exists within a society which is divided in relation to the ownership of the 'means of production' (Marx 1972) This is contrasted by both the functionalist view; that a meritocracy exists and inequality serves a purpose in relation to motivation, and 'Rational Action Theory', where it is suggested that individuals make a rational calculation in relation to their actions, with any correlations relating to class or status being the product of different 'resources and constraints' being factored into the calculation (Breen & Goldthorpe 1997). Moving even further away from a deterministic perspective, the postmodernist writings of Beck (1992) see class and structure as increasingly irrelevant, with individual agency being the key aspect in relation to opportunity and achievement. This is an interesting concept in relation to exploring differentials here; in what are effectively starting points within the education system.

## **Research Design**

In the following section of this paper I have outlined the basic design of the two projects from which the data has been sourced, before proceeding to an overview of some of the key

methodological considerations. I then include a brief summary and evaluation of the data selection and deductive analysis method employed here.

## **The Data**

I have selected elements of two large-scale, longitudinal studies for consideration in this paper. The EPPE Project (Sylva et al 2004), and the Growing up in Scotland Project (Anderson et al 2007) are both government commissioned studies set up to explore the development of large cohorts of children; 3,000 and 8,000 respectively. They both began with an early years phase, which is where my focus lies here, but are still actively researching children's progression through the education system. Their research questions differ somewhat, with the EPPE Project appearing to have slightly more concern with identifying factors in the micro environment of individual 'pre-schools', for example one of the 5 key questions identified is 'what are the characteristics of an effective pre-school?' and setting this against broader statistical information about background, SES, etc. Alternatively the Growing up in Scotland Project (Anderson et al 2007) refers more broadly to Scotland's 'early years service provision', but also explores more detailed elements of 'what parents do' in the home environment. I believe this creates an interesting opportunity for considering related elements of the studies alongside sociological theory to explore the consistencies and inconsistencies these create.

The differing focus in relation to micro environments is also reflected in the data collection methods used to determine, and quantify, children's developmental levels. For example, the Growing up in Scotland Report identifies children's 'social, emotional and behavioural' development, through the application of 'The Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire' (Goodman 1997) a behavioural screening tool which they use directly with the parents. For the same area the EPPE Project utilised an 'Adaptive Social Behaviour Inventory' assessment

(Hogan et al 1992) completed by ‘the Pre-School Educator who knew the child best’ (2004:6). Both studies however applied a number of researcher assessment tasks in relation to identifying cognitive development, for example both used a format of a ‘naming vocabulary’ test.

In reaching a quantifiable value for the relationship between specific factors and children’s developmental levels, of which SES is the key variable for consideration here, both studies used a form of ‘multi-level modelling’, where formulae were applied which took into account ‘known’ contributing factors to try and identify the strength of relationship between two specific factors (Sylva et al 2004), e.g. to factor in the perceived impact of low birth weight prior to drawing a conclusion about the relationship between SES and vocabulary. Some methodological considerations related to this are explored below.

### **Methodological Considerations**

Prior to exploring the potential themes and implications of the findings of both projects, it is useful to consider some of the assumptions upon which these are grounded. Both are large scale studies undertaken by teams of experienced and well respected academics, which present strong and robust statistical arguments for the validity and reliability of their results, and communicate some powerful messages about the apparent life opportunities for very young children. However, both also include at some point, a ‘disclaimer’ relevant not to inadequacy of design or process, but perhaps more so to the limitations of research in obtaining any sort of ‘factual’ representation of social reality. For example in the EPPE project it is outlined that the term ‘impact’ implies that a factor appears to demonstrate a ‘statistically significant predictor’ rather than ‘causality’ (Sylva et al 2004). Despite this disclaimer, it could be argued that the apparent ‘validity’ of both studies is grounded in the positivist epistemological assumption that there are ‘facts which we can gather about the

social world' (May 2001:10) as implied by an assertion that children's development can be reduced to numerical form. Furthermore attempts to apply multi-level modelling suggest the assumed presence of a finite number of consistent variables influencing social behaviour/development, which can be 'filtered out', however the selection of these factors (which have already been reduced to numerical form themselves) is inevitably a product of a researcher decision, which will in turn effect the outcome (Cohen et al 2000:641). For example, given that the researchers themselves conduct cognitive assessment in both studies, I may suggest that the results of the social, emotional and behavioural assessment should be built into this model, given that it could realistically be argued that for a child who is less socially confident a key variable could be their level of inhibition in a situation where they are being tested by a less familiar adult.

Researcher decisions are also relevant to determining what specific measures are used to identify developmental levels. As McNamara and Roever (2006) argue, testing of language, and perhaps we may extend this here to wider ideas 'attainment' indicators cannot occur independently of social and cultural values. In reducing an area of human development to a specific set of tests, what results is a specific indicator not of cognition, language, etc. as a whole, but of attainment in relation to that specific set of socially constructed tests and indicators. For example, a child's ability to recall the name of a set of specific pictures may relate to the relevance to their experience, rather than the size of their vocabulary. In turn the tests which were applied have been created, and it could be argued unavoidably influenced, by a researcher with a specific cultural and social perspective. I would also contend that parental responses to questionnaires about social, emotional and behavioural development could similarly be influenced by terminology and social value for specific aspects. In addition to this, given that it has been suggested that children with a lower SES are more likely to be placed in lower sets at school, regardless of their previous attainment (BERA 2007), it could



also be argued that the perspectives of the early years educators in the Growing up in Scotland report, may be similarly influenced by social value.

In outlining some of these potential practical, and philosophical considerations, it is clear that to some extent we also return to a perspective on the role of micro and macro factors in influencing behaviour and development. The relevance of the constructivism-positivism debates in relation to approaches to considering ideas of agency-structure, micro-macro, etc. is also highlighted by Tsekeris & Lydaki (2011) as part of an argument that a critical realist position is beneficial in acknowledging the significance of both elements. Taylor et al (2004:170) assert that large scale studies are useful in acquiring understanding of group differences, but that the use of 'social address variables, does not allow for the process of socialisation to be understood'. The opportunity here is to explore elements of the broader findings of these studies, in relation to other theory and research which focuses more specifically on this process.

## **Analysis**

The volume of data collected by both projects is unsurprisingly high, indeed both reports consist of multiple papers, and therefore consideration of more than a sample of key findings would be well beyond the scope of this paper. In analysing this information I have selected key elements of two central consistent concerns of both projects; the exploration of the relationship between SES and children's social, emotional and behavioural development; and SES and children's vocabulary and language. A key element of the decision to focus specifically on vocabulary was that it presents an explicit example for the exploration of the role of language as 'cultural capital', which remains a key area of sociological concern. In addition the apparently socially driven 'word gap' in early childhood is something which has

been highlighted elsewhere as fundamental to the emergence of differences in children's attainment prior to school entry (Hart & Risley 1995). It should also be noted that, for the purposes of this paper, my analysis addresses the specific selected data, as presented, in isolation from the project as a whole, which does inevitably create potential for some simplification in comparison to the full projects where the same data may be cross referenced and presented in various formats.

Central to my analysis is a deductive approach to interpreting the information presented by the two projects, that is to say, that the information has been considered against a theoretical framework which represents a set of pre-conceived notions about society. Cohen et al (2000:4) outline the potential for this approach to create elements of bias, with the findings fitting the theory, rather than the alternative; an inductive approach where the theory is developed from the findings. However, Ritzer (2001:13) asserts that virtually all macro theories are developed in the abstract, most theorists do not spend time 'studying the world directly' and thus the consideration of these in relation to empirical data may be seen as an important function of the academy in utilising research to develop a form of 'truth by verification' (Bridges 1999). Indeed Wiessinger expands, suggesting that if it is acknowledged that theory is of value to the academy in understanding the social world, then first and foremost deductive inquiry should be judged on 'how well it serves theory' rather than vice versa (1995:141). However, in relation to this paper, I have approached my analysis with an awareness that my interpretation of both data and theory is likely to be influenced by considering it in relation to the other (Bryman 2012:27), thus what is presented, as could potentially be considered with all research, contains significant levels of subjectivity in relation to my perceptions and interpretations. Therefore a position which accepts that there is no 'one perspective' of social reality (Roos 2003:27) has been adopted, in the context that in relation to exploring theory; 'rigour' may be best achieved through explorations from

multiple perspectives (Kincheloe 2001) within the academy, of which this paper represents just one.

## **Discussion**

The discussion section of my paper is structured into the two key areas highlighted in the research design; social, emotional and behavioural development and vocabulary and language. The two identified sections will be considered in relation to sociological explanations drawn from my theoretical framework and relevant research, prior to a final section which explores more directly the second research question relating to potential implications for education and children's future opportunities.

### **Social, Emotional and Behavioural Development**

Fig. 1a/b & 2 in Appendix 1 detail findings in relation to the apparent relationship between SES and the outcomes of the social, emotional and behavioural assessments used by the EPPE Project and the Growing up in Scotland report respectively. The EPPE Project concluded that SES (represented by occupation type) was a significant 'predictor' in relation to confidence and conformity (Sylva et al 2001:i), whilst the Growing up in Scotland report suggested that children in higher income households were less likely to develop social, emotional or behavioural difficulties than peers in lower income households (Bradshaw & Tipping 2010:90). Therefore, where the EPPE report focuses on confidence and conformity in relation to higher SES being a predictor for a positive outcome, the Growing up in Scotland report reports on lower SES as a predictor for 'borderline and abnormal' development.

Interestingly the use of income by one study and occupation type by the other, could be considered consistent with Bourdieu's consideration of the relevance of both 'objectified' and

‘embodied’ capital (2004). Although we could assume that the two will be very closely related in the data, one highlights the apparent practical benefit of possessing the financial capacity to support social development, perhaps through access to social activities or groups, the other the potential embodied capital that may be held and transferred by high level professionals whose ability to sustain high level, confident, social interactions may be fundamental to their success in their career. Certainly in relation to objectified capital, further results from the Growing up in Scotland report (Appendix 3), suggest that children from households with higher income levels are involved in more activities/events (from a list determined by the researchers) than those from lower income households. If we assume that access to such events/activities contributes to social, emotional and behavioural development, then there is a question of whether possession of ‘objectified capital’ alone determines this access. To an extent applying ‘Rational Action Theory’ to parenting choices from this very early age, might result in a similar conclusion though. The ‘resources and constraints’ of lower income families, could be seen in effect as representing their lower level of ‘objectified capital’, which in turn influences decisions about where to invest time and money, and a conscious decision is made not to engage in as many activities/events, or at least not those which have been identified by the researchers as noteworthy.

Outlined for the purposes of illustration, the above obviously involves a progression to a fairly simplified idea that these activities alone will determine aspects of social, emotional and behavioural development, but the broader and more relevant exploration here is whether parental decisions such as this, and other factors in the micro environment, are influencing the findings in relation to social, emotional and behavioural development, and consequently opportunities. Certainly Bronfenbrenner’s model (1992) would suggest that they are highly relevant, but in highlighting the interactions between these and the wider macro factors, a number of theories, including those of Marx and Bourdieu would see the number of structural

factors determining the micro environment as leaving little room for individual agency. In relation to the correlation between SES and confidence for example, Bourdieu's theory would view the 'habitus' as containing ideas acquired from parents about a sense of worth, a position within society, etc. and Berger and Luckmann's (1966) ideas would add that the examples of parental behaviour, which would relate to confidence, during early stages of 'primary socialisation' have a significant and long term influence

There is significant research which suggests that what could be 'hidden' in this data is details about 'what parents do' as opposed to solely 'who parents are' (Kelleghan et al 1993) in relation to SES. From this perspective the focus moves from analysing the basic relationship between SES, or other social indicators, to the more specific parental actions and behaviours which may be impacting on social, emotional and behavioural development. Whilst it is acknowledged that many of these behaviours also appear to correlate with SES (Taylor et al 2004) this stance outlines the potential for educational systems to support the promotion of these behaviours and actions as a means to overcoming inequalities. For example research by Thompson et al (2003) would suggest that within figure 2 the presence of more negative 'authoritarian' attitudes in parenting could be contributing to an increased likelihood of conduct problems, whilst alternatively research by Applegate et al (1992) suggests that more reflective forms of parental communication could be accounting for elements of the positive impact of professional parents in figure 1a/b. It would of course be unrealistic to imply that correlations between SES and these outcomes relates entirely to one or two specific behaviours, however it could be argued that examining these in relation to the correlations could offer more productive information about 'closing the gap'. In relation to Bourdieu's theory, it also presents the question of whether there are elements of 'embodied' capital which can be acquired, either through a functionalist model where because of the same inequality an individual acts on a motivation to improve their social position, or by seeing

educational systems as having the potential to change structures, by supporting parents to build and improve skills in relation to this.

### **Vocabulary and Language**

Figures 3 and 4 in Appendix 2, show the findings of the Growing up Scotland Report (Bradshaw 2010) in relation to factors effecting children's score on a naming vocabulary test and of the EPPE Project (Sylva et al 2002) in relation to the correlation between SES and children's language scores at school entry. The findings of the Growing up Scotland Report suggest that household income, SES and parent qualifications all impact on children's vocabulary, with the most significant impact being from parental qualification levels. The EPPE Project reported that in relation to SES there were consistent increases in language scores (at school entry assessment) for each tier; from the lowest average score where parents had 'never worked' to the highest relating to 'professional non-manual'.

Guy (1989:37) asserts that relationships between language and SES present 'interdisciplinary' questions, because processes and theories applying to both linguistics and sociology are relevant. These include quite practical linguistic explanations about micro environments resulting in changes occurring over relative short time periods; for example a study by Labov (2006:41) found of employees at a department store that, regardless of SES, stratification of language developed in relation to the requirements of a the employee, e.g. customer facing employees acquired more prestigious terms than warehouse employees. They also include theories at a much more structural level, for example a Marxist view of language as part of a societies' 'superstructure' with connections between class and power and the definitions of exactly what language, dialect, etc. is and isn't valued within society. Both of these levels of explanations are interesting in relation to the Growing up in Scotland (Bradshaw 2010) report's finding that the strongest predictor of children's vocabulary is

parental education. In relation to Labov's (2006) findings this initially suggests a basic functionalist rationale; that certain valued language is of practical significance for parent's in achieving a qualification level, it's use in the home is then highly relevant as children's exposure to this has an obvious influence on the language they develop (Hart & Risley 2003). However, Bourdieu's theories would then highlight the question of whether this creates, or in fact is already part of, a process of social reproduction, whereby education is part of a process which means that the vocabulary of the children of parents with higher qualification levels represents significant 'cultural capital' putting them at a significant advantage to repeat this cycle. Beck's (1992) views might suggest that any individual has the agency to take the educational opportunities that are available, and thus develop their language and vocabulary, but if we accept Berger & Luckmann's (1966) ideas of 'primary socialisation', or indeed the APPG's (2012) report on social mobility, then we could suggest that the differences highlighted by both the EPPE report and Growing up in Scotland are more significant indicators of future opportunities than differentials highlighted at any other point in children's journey through the education system.

In relation to the correlation between the 6 identified groups for SES used by the EPPE project, and children's language assessment scores, Hart & Risley's (2003) research presents a powerful explanation of how this may occur. Their report entitled 'The Early Catastrophe' highlighted an apparent '30 million word gap' in the language heard by children from the families supported by 'welfare' in comparison to children with parents in professional roles. A prominent point made in their report is the fact that this gap occurs in a period 'before children can take charge of their own experience', this view starts to erode Beck's (1992) claims relating to the significance of agency. Indeed, Becker (2009:1) outlines the process in a very straightforward way, stating; 'children start school with differing levels of skills', thus

children have different chances of ‘educational success right from the start of their school career’.

### **Impact on Future Opportunities**

Given the above analysis, the discussions relating to the impact on children’s future opportunities seem to relate to whether it is concluded that three main stakeholders can have any significant, and perhaps more importantly autonomous, impact, or whether this impact is already determined by the structure of society. These stakeholders are; the educational establishment(s) which a child attends, a child’s parents/main carer and the child themselves.

Critically, the potential impact of pre-school education was a fundamental question of the EPPE project as a whole. The project eventually concluded that there were ‘structures and processes’ which determined more effective pre-school provision and that attending pre-school (as opposed to none) did have an impact on children’s all round development(Sylva et al 2004:1). The findings of both Becker (2009:1) and Hart & Risley (2003) agree with these principles in relation to language and vocabulary, but along with EPPE and Growing up in Scotland, seem to stop short of claiming that pre-school education in isolation can ‘close the gap’ between the attainment levels of children whose parents with varying SES. Instead suggestions are made regarding the potential of education to prevent widening of these gaps (Becker 2009) which in itself does at the very least conflict with Bourdieu’s view of education as actively enforcing, rather than resisting, social reproduction.

This leads to the next consideration; of the impact/autonomy of parents/main carers of children. The prominent contemporary view appears to be to take the ‘what parents do’ approach, as opposed to the ‘who parents are’ approach. The EPPE report (Sylva et al 2004) concludes that ‘what parents do’ is more important than parent ‘occupation, education or income’, the Growing up in Scotland (Anderson et al 2007) reports on a range of potentially



positive influencing factors including the activities accessed by parents, the involvement of grandparents, etc. In addition a number of smaller scale research projects cited in this report produce findings which suggest correlations between specific behaviour and children's social, emotional and behavioural development (e.g. Applegate 1992, Kelleghan et al 1993, Thompson 2003). This appears to sit more readily with the theories of Bronfenbrenner (1992) and the model devised by Taylor et al (2004) than with some of the more deterministic views such as those of Bourdieu and Marx. It also introduces the practical possibility; that the well-structured support and influence of the education establishment, on the parent and family, might help to shape behaviours that promote development regardless of social factors. I'm sure few of these sources would deny that the potential for this to close the gap entirely seems somewhat unrealistic though.

The level of autonomy at the final site of influence, the child themselves, seems to be seen as somewhat less significant. Research regarding early brain development (Mustard 2006), current policy and opinion (APPG 2012, Dfe 2013) and sociological theory (Berger & Luckmann 1966) all suggest that a critical period of development occurs within the early years, at a point 'before children can take charge of their own experience' (Hart & Risley 2003:4) which has a profound impact on children's future development and opportunities. Indeed one of the later phases of the EPPE project concludes that social-behavioural outcomes 'emerge early and stay relatively stable' (Sylva et al 2011). Yet a related publication entitled 'Performing Against the Odds' (Siraj-Blatchford et al 2011) highlights the fact that life courses do not have to follow a set pattern and I would assert that there is significant danger in any educational professional believing otherwise. Ultimately, if we (as educators) accept Bourdieu's ideas of social reproduction in their entirety, they quickly begin to become a self-fulfilling prophecy, as part of our construction of a social reality which

assumes that it is 'what we are', not 'what we do' which influences our journeys and achievements.

## **Implications**

In relation to the government's recent launch of 'free early education' for 2 year olds (Dfe 2013) this information seems to suggest that targeting support across, potentially, another full year of a child's life during such a critical period appears to be a well-informed approach.

The critical factor here seems to be how this support is targeted however; if during this period it is perceived that education is to be targeted at these children alone, then the impacts on 'closing the gap' may be minimal. Alternatively if this scheme is seen as providing an opportunity for children, parents and educators to work together with the focus on 'what we do' not 'who we are' then perhaps there is the possibility of a new longitudinal research study following a new cohort of children, where results follow a slightly different pattern.

Considering the volume of research suggesting the significant value of parental involvement in children's education (e.g. McNeal 1999, Desforges et al 2003, Fan & Williams 2010 ) and the earlier references to the significant value of experiences within the early years of a child's life, then there must be potential for substantial impacts of promoting more parental involvement from an even earlier age.

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## Appendix 1 – Social, Emotional & Behavioural Development Findings

**Fig1a. EPPE (Sylva et al 2001)**

### Final regression model of predictors for co-operation/conformity

R = 0.35      R<sub>2</sub>= 0.12      Adjusted R<sub>2</sub> = 0.12  
 F (21,2747) = 18.53,      **Standardized**  
 significance  
 p<0.0001 **Variable**

Variable	Standardized	Significance
<b>PARENTS</b>		
<i>S.E.S – comparison to professional</i>		
Intermediate	-0.06	0.037
Skilled non-manual	-0.07	0.019
Skilled manual	-0.09	0.001
Semi-skilled	-0.09	0.001
Unskilled	-0.04	0.042
Not in employment category	-0.06	0.002

**Fig 1b. EPPE (Sylva et al 2001)**

### Final regression model of predictors for confidence

R = 0.30      R<sub>2</sub>= 0.09      Adjusted R<sub>2</sub> = 0.08  
 F (22,2748) = 12.11,  
 significance p<0.0001

Variable	Standardized	Significance
<b>PARENTS</b>		
<i>S.E.S – comparison to professional</i>		
Intermediate	-0.6	0.046
Skilled non-manual	-0.7	0.030
Skilled manual	-0.8	0.004
Semi-skilled	-0.12	0.0001
Unskilled	-0.04	0.030

**Fig 2. Growing up in Scotland Report (Bradshaw & Tipping 2010)**

**Table A1.2** Associations between pre-school SDQ score, key demographic, socio-economic, parenting and development characteristics and borderline and abnormal score in each scale at primary school entry

	Conduct problems	Emotional symptoms	Hyper-activity	Peer problems	Total difficulties
Equivalised annual household income (ref: < £11,875)					
2nd Quintile (>=£11,875<£19,444)	0.56*	0.84	0.57	1.04	0.90
3rd Quintile (>=£19,444< £25,625)	0.70	0.53*	0.61	0.67	0.43*
4th Quintile (>=£25,625< £37,500)	0.60*	0.64	0.56	0.68	0.60
Top Quintile (>=£37,500)	0.54**	0.38*	0.57	0.68	0.39*

## Appendix 2 – Vocabulary and Language

Fig 3 – Growing up in Scotland Report (Bradshaw 2010a)

Table 1 Naming vocabulary social background multiple linear regression – full results

Demographic characteristic	Unstandardised co-efficient	Standardised co-efficient	P-value	95% confidence interval	
<b>Standardised ability score at age 2</b>	0.487	0.490	0.018	0.450	0.523
<b>Household equivalised income</b> (ref: lowest income quintile)					
2nd Quintile (>=£11,875<£19,444)	0.087	0.086	0.085	-0.012	0.186
3rd Quintile (>=£19,444< £25,625)	0.109	0.109	0.050	0.000	0.219
4th Quintile (>=£25,625< £37,500)	0.153	0.153	0.007	0.043	0.264
Top Quintile (>=£37,500)	0.144	0.144	0.019	0.024	0.264
<b>Parental level of education</b> (ref: no qualifications)					
Lower SGs or VQs or 'Other' quals	0.032	0.032	0.820	-0.248	0.312
Upper level SGs or Intmed VQs	0.224	0.223	0.009	0.058	0.389
Higher Grades or Upper level VQs	0.228	0.227	0.017	0.043	0.414
Degree level academic or VQs	0.336	0.336	0.000	0.164	0.508
<b>Household socio-economic classification</b> (ref: routine/semi-routine)					
Lower supervisory	-0.083	-0.083	0.271	-0.233	0.066
Small Emps and Own Account	-0.014	-0.014	0.872	-0.183	0.156
Intermediate	0.043	0.043	0.453	-0.071	0.158
Managerial/professional	0.048	0.048	0.404	-0.067	0.163
				<i>Rsquared</i>	<i>0.30</i>

Fig 4 – EPPE Report (Sylva et al 2002)

Table 1.10 The Distribution of Children's Scores on the EPPE School Entry Assessments by Family SES Level

	Professional non-manual			Intermediate non-manual		
	n	mean	sd	n	mean	sd
Pre-reading	263	30.68	10.85	722	25.29	12.44
Early number concept	263	21.40	4.98	723	20.13	5.04
Language	263	47.34	7.05	724	44.89	7.17
Non-verbal reasoning	263	24.57	3.59	725	23.22	4.35
Spatial awareness/reasoning	254	14.93	7.44	687	12.78	7.46

	Skilled non-manual			Skilled manual		
	n	mean	sd	n	mean	sd
Pre-reading	885	20.46	12.24	328	17.63	11.05
Early number concept	885	18.32	5.39	330	17.35	5.28
Language	888	41.65	6.89	333	39.82	7.07
Non-verbal reasoning	891	22.15	4.43	336	21.62	4.49
Spatial awareness/reasoning	839	11.44	6.89	312	10.08	6.46

	Semi-skilled manual			Unskilled manual			Never worked		
	n	mean	sd	n	mean	sd	n	mean	sd
Pre-reading	340	15.97	11.11	59	13.41	11.49	60	17.65	12.14
Early number concept	342	15.53	6.07	59	15.39	5.32	61	16.61	6.76
Language	344	38.23	7.22	60	37.38	5.75	63	35.27	10.22
Non-verbal reasoning	344	21.15	4.49	60	19.93	4.62	64	20.34	6.55
Spatial awareness/reasoning	322	8.98	6.57	59	9.54	7.99	64	10.27	7.88



## Appendix 3 – Additional Information

Fig. 5 Growing up in Scotland Report (Bradshaw 2010a)

**Table 3.5** Total number of different places or events children had been to in previous year, at age 22 months, by Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation, equivalised household income, family and employment type, age of mother at birth and mother's educational attainment

Socio-demographic factors		No. of places/events in past year					Bases Weighted	Unweighted
		0 or 1	2	3	4	5 or more		
<b>Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation</b>								
15% most deprived areas	%	24	28	23	15	9	821	679
Rest of Scotland	%	12	21	25	22	20	3653	3794
<b>Equivalised household income quintile</b>								
Up to £8,409	%	27	30	24	12	8	1067	918
£8,410-13,749	%	15	27	25	19	13	798	771
£13,750-21,784	%	11	21	27	22	19	802	839
£21,785-33,570	%	6	16	26	24	28	731	783
£33,571 and above	%	5	14	23	29	29	849	950
Income unknown	%	25	22	25	14	14	264	250
<b>Family and employment type</b>								
Lone parent working >16 hours	%	15	26	31	18	10	326	288
Lone parent unemployed/working <16 hours	%	27	32	23	12	6	570	459
Couple both working >16 hours	%	8	18	27	23	25	1867	2008
Couple one person working >16 hours	%	13	21	23	23	19	1465	1508
Couple both unemployed/working <16 hours	%	40	31	17	6	6	222	195
<b>Age of mother at birth</b>								
Under 20	%	24	35	27	11	2	337	262
20 to 29	%	16	26	28	18	12	1839	1723
30 to 39	%	11	17	23	23	25	2126	2304
40+	%	14	14	20	23	28	149	162
<b>Mother's highest qualification</b>								
Degree	%	4	12	23	29	33	1204	1334
Vocational below degree	%	12	25	27	20	16	1650	1672
Higher grade	%	13	18	28	20	20	366	378
Standard grade	%	21	33	26	13	8	844	761
No qualifications	%	39	25	19	13	5	428	350
<b>All children</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>4511</b>	<b>4511</b>