



Brief

The Impact of Mother's and Father's Income and Education on Cognitive, Social, and Academic Development in Early Childhood Education and Care and for Further Learning

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Although Norway is a country with a social democratic welfare system, we still see social differences, and there are indications that poverty is rising. In the period 2004–2006, 7 per cent of Norwegian children lived in low-income families, while this proportion increased to 11.3 per cent in 2019–2021 (Rege et al., 2023). Traditionally, the effects of family background have been seen as less impactful in Norway compared to other countries (OECD, 2016; Passaretta & Skopek, 2018). However, the effects of socioeconomic background on school results have risen over the years (Nordahl & Nordahl, 2023; Sandsor et al., 2023), and it is important to continue to study the effects of family background for young children in Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC).

According to the Norwegian *Framework Plan for Kindergartens*, ECEC centers are required to work to counteract negative consequences of social inequality, e.g., related to parents' education and income. Thus, it is crucial to identify what kind of differences exist between children in ECEC related to family background. This kind of knowledge can serve as a basis for early intervention to counteract the negative effects of low parental income and education. In this study, we use data from the *Skoleklar* [School Ready] study to examine cognitive, social, and academic differences in children's development linked to parents' education and income in ECEC. Results reveal differences between young children of parents with high versus low income and between children of parents with high versus low education across all developmental areas. The negative effects continue or even grow as children enter school and high school.

Keywords: *academic development; cognitive development; social development; social differences*