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Early Childhood Education Services

• Provision of preschools: massive benefits for children, but also the potential to increase maternal employment.

• Test this in the context of Indonesia.

• FLFP: 50.9% in 2016.

• Authors view this as low; is lower than East Asian average, but higher than South Asia.

• Pre-primary education: 25% (world avg: 32.1; regional avg: 43.3 and OECD avg: 73.3)
Policy Change in 2003

• National Education System Act (NSEA) in 2003.
• Private and public provision increased
• 2004: <1/4\textsuperscript{th} of children (3 to 6) attended preschool.
• 2016: 60.3%
• Authors exploit the spatial and temporal variations in preschool access to gauge the causal effects of preschool access on maternal employment.
Results

• Mothers of preschool-aged children increase their work participation by 7.4 pp, or 13.8% from the mean, if they are exposed to an additional public preschool per 1000 children.

• Private preschools do not have a statistically significant effect on work participation, but eligible mothers are more likely to hold a second job.

• No effect on earnings or hours worked.
• Carefully done.
• Figure 3: the trend in the growth in the density of public preschools doesn’t show a break in 2003; but that of private schools does. Yet the effect of public preschools is significant.
• Public: WPR of mothers in high growth areas significantly higher than that in low growth areas in all years.
• 2014 onwards: convergence? Effect tapering off?
• Figure 5: WPR for high growth+ eligible > low+elig.
• But WPR for high (low)+not eligible same and higher than both above.
Penalty of motherhood/childcare

• Figure 6: mothers whose first child is preschool aged (3-6) have higher WPR compared to mothers whose first child is 0-2.

• Preschool doesn’t fully take care of childcare constraints.

• i.e. as a policy to push mothers back into the LF, or into the LF, we need childcare provisions earlier in the children’s life.

• Figure 6: again, around 2013-14: convergence in WPR rates across different categories.

• Why should provision of preschools affect mothers’ choice of industry? (Figure 8) (not formal/informal)
Larger questions

• Paper finds that given preschools’ hours of operation, mothers take up unpaid family work and jobs as agricultural workers.
• Preschools operate for less than half the day => tendency for women to take up informal work.
• What is the ultimate goal? To record an increase in WPR or to create conditions for women to participate in substantive work?
• Increase in FLFP, but in ways that increases their earning power and leads to economic empowerment → gender equality.
Evidence from other studies

• Countries with higher affordable childcare have higher maternal employment rates.
• Provision of childcare, esp preschools, helps mothers achieve a better work-life balance.
• Caveats: scope of the policy limited in contexts where FLFP or affordable childcare is already high.
• Or where affordable childcare services crowd out other forms of non-parental care. Quality of caregivers?
• Norms about sharing domestic chores, childcare imp.