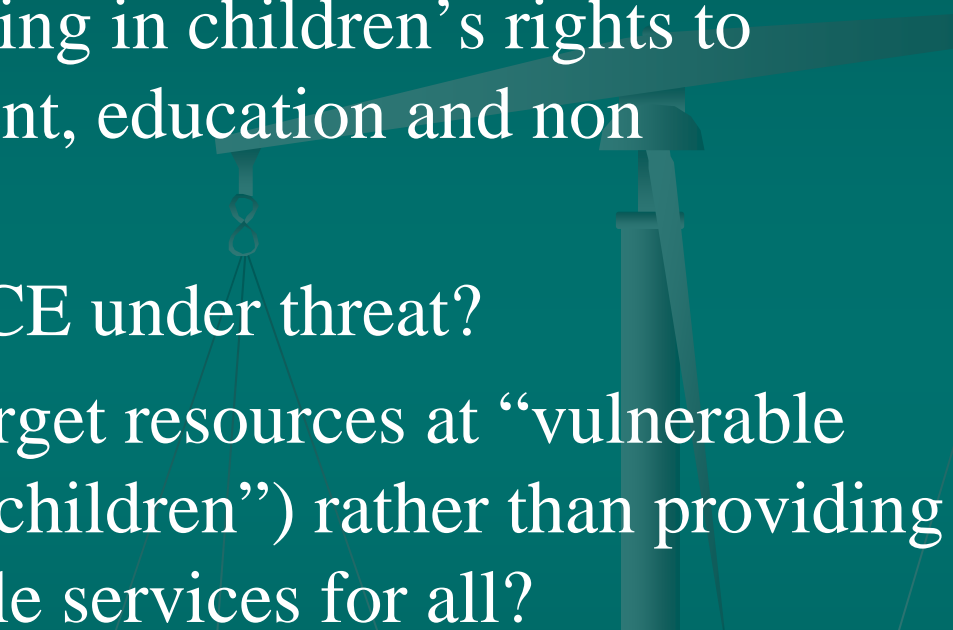




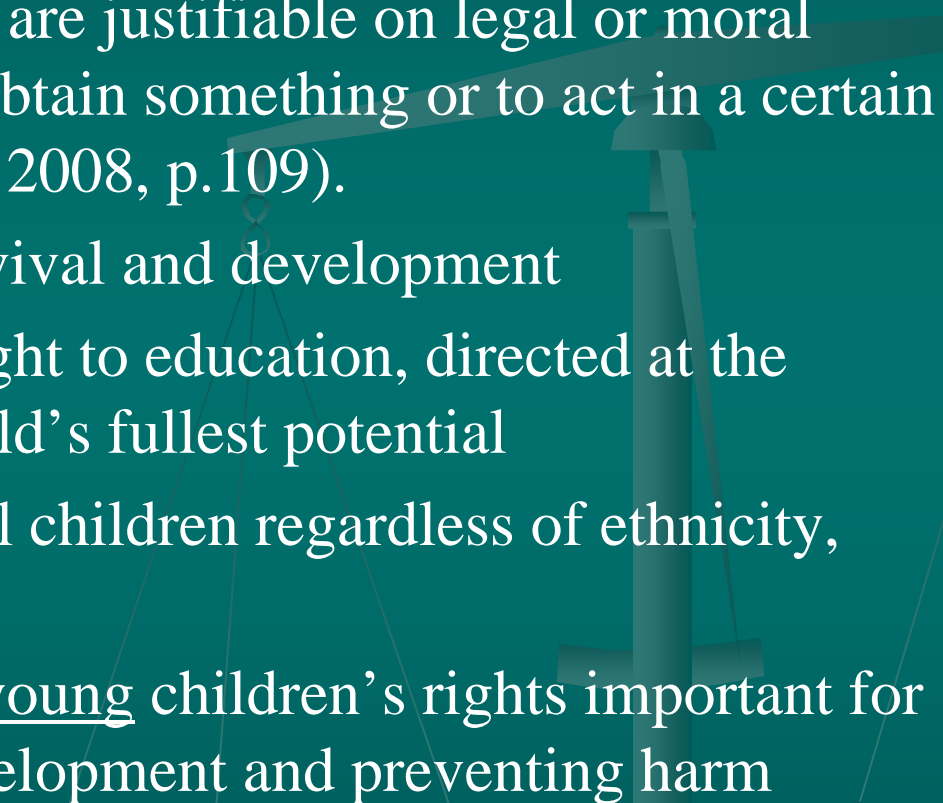
Children's rights to universal, accessible, high quality early childhood education

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Questions for this session

- How well are we doing in children's rights to survival, development, education and non discrimination?
 - Is right to quality ECE under threat?
 - Is the best way to target resources at "vulnerable children" ("priority children") rather than providing accessible, affordable services for all?
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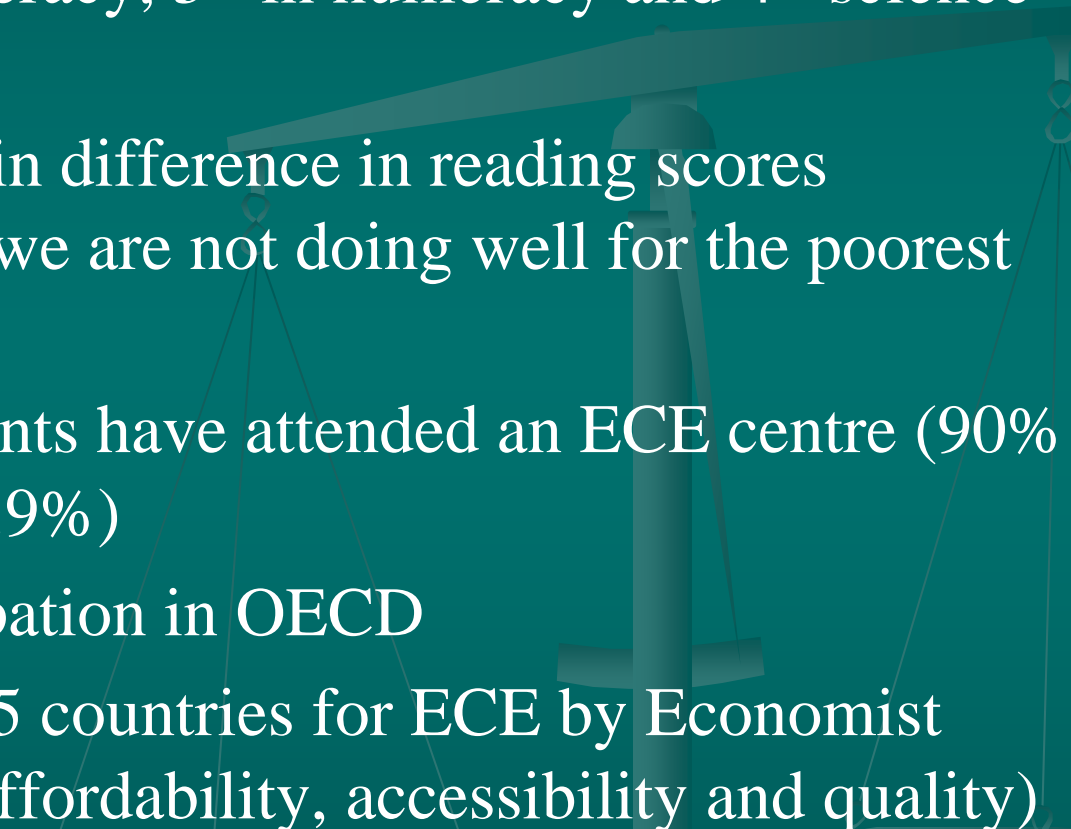
Rights

- “Rights are claims that are justifiable on legal or moral grounds to have or to obtain something or to act in a certain way” (James & James, 2008, p.109).
 - Article 6 – right to survival and development
 - Articles 28 and 29 – right to education, directed at the development of the child’s fullest potential
 - Article 2 – rights for all children regardless of ethnicity, income etc
 - General Comment 7 – young children’s rights important for positive impact on development and preventing harm
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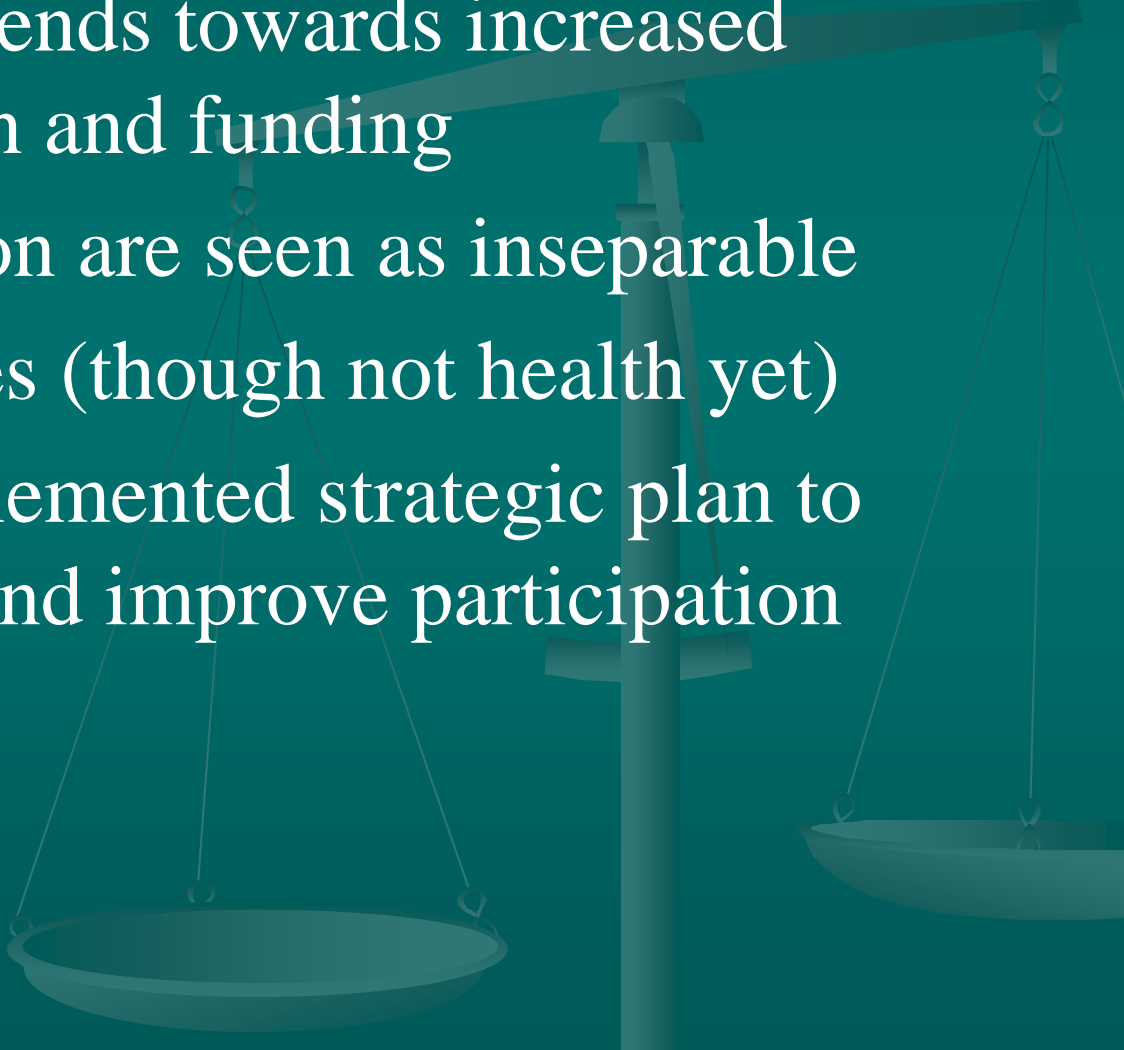
Survival and Development (PHA Report, 2010)

- NZ ranked 29th out of 30 countries for child health in 2009;
- Bottom third of OECD for most child indicators
- Infant mortality (5.1 per 1000) twice that of Iceland
- Infant mortality in “deprived neighbourhoods” 3rd from the bottom of OECD.
- High rates of child poverty, child injury, pneumonia, whooping cough, child maltreatment
- Spend ½ OECD average on ECE for >5s

Education

- NZ ranked 4th in literacy, 5th in numeracy and 4th science (PISA at age of 15)
 - NZ ranked highest in difference in reading scores according to SES –we are not doing well for the poorest children
 - 94.7% of new entrants have attended an ECE centre (90% Maori, Pasifika, 85.9%)
 - 11th highest participation in OECD
 - Ranked 9th out of 45 countries for ECE by Economist Intelligence Unit (affordability, accessibility and quality)
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History of ECE

- Proud history – trends towards increased status, recognition and funding
 - Care and education are seen as inseparable
 - Integrated services (though not health yet)
 - Successfully implemented strategic plan to improve quality and improve participation
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Quality



- No “one true way” of measuring it
- Involves cultural values and goals
- Measured aspects of quality include:-
 - Structural aspects – ratio, group size and training
 - Process quality – reciprocal, responsive, warm engagement with children, sustained shared thinking, affirming culture, language, identity

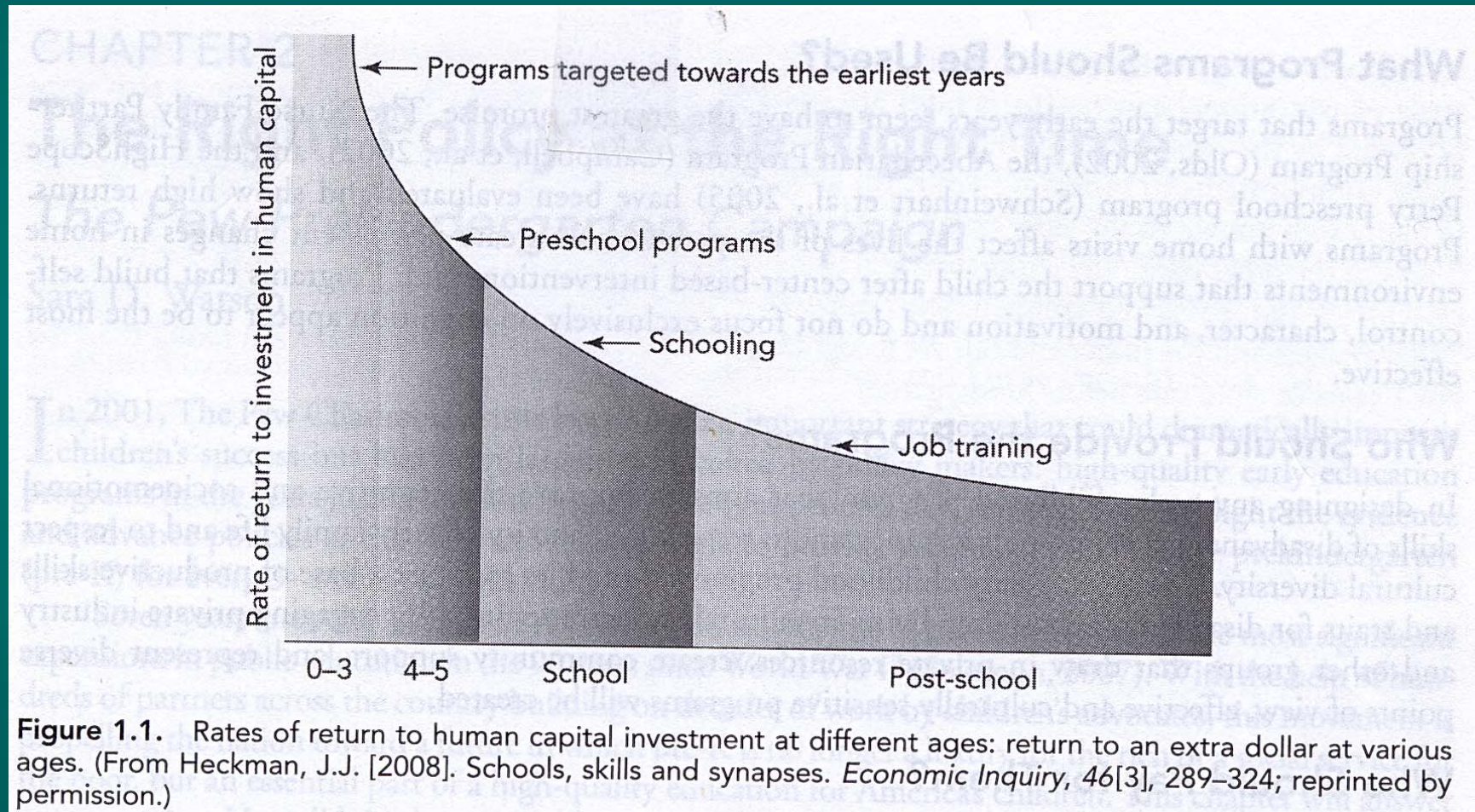


Impact of ECE



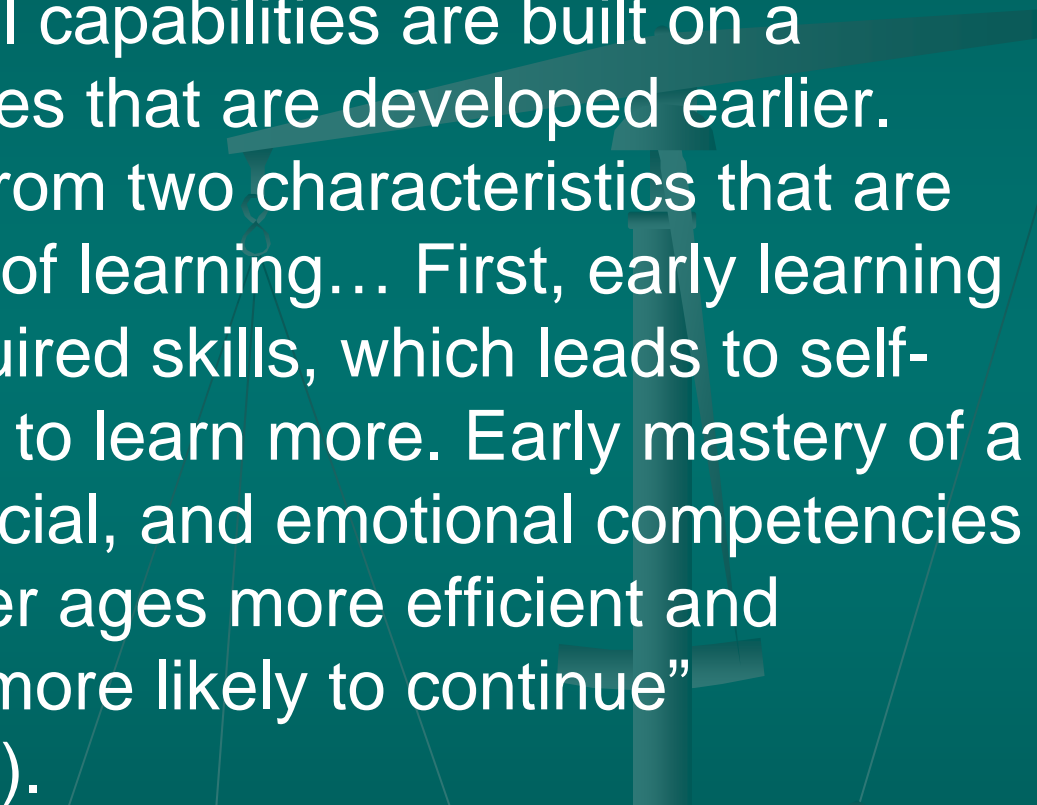
- Most powerful impact from families
- Huge weight of international evidence of long term benefits of participation in quality ECE on development and learning outcomes
- Evidence that participation in low quality ECE is harmful – particularly for low SES children
- No point in increasing participation without maintaining and improving quality

Investment in ECE



James Heckman

“Skills beget skills. All capabilities are built on a foundation of capacities that are developed earlier. This principle stems from two characteristics that are intrinsic to the nature of learning... First, early learning confers value on acquired skills, which leads to self-reinforcing motivation to learn more. Early mastery of a range of cognitive, social, and emotional competencies makes learning at later ages more efficient and therefore easier and more likely to continue” (Heckman, 2011, p. 6).



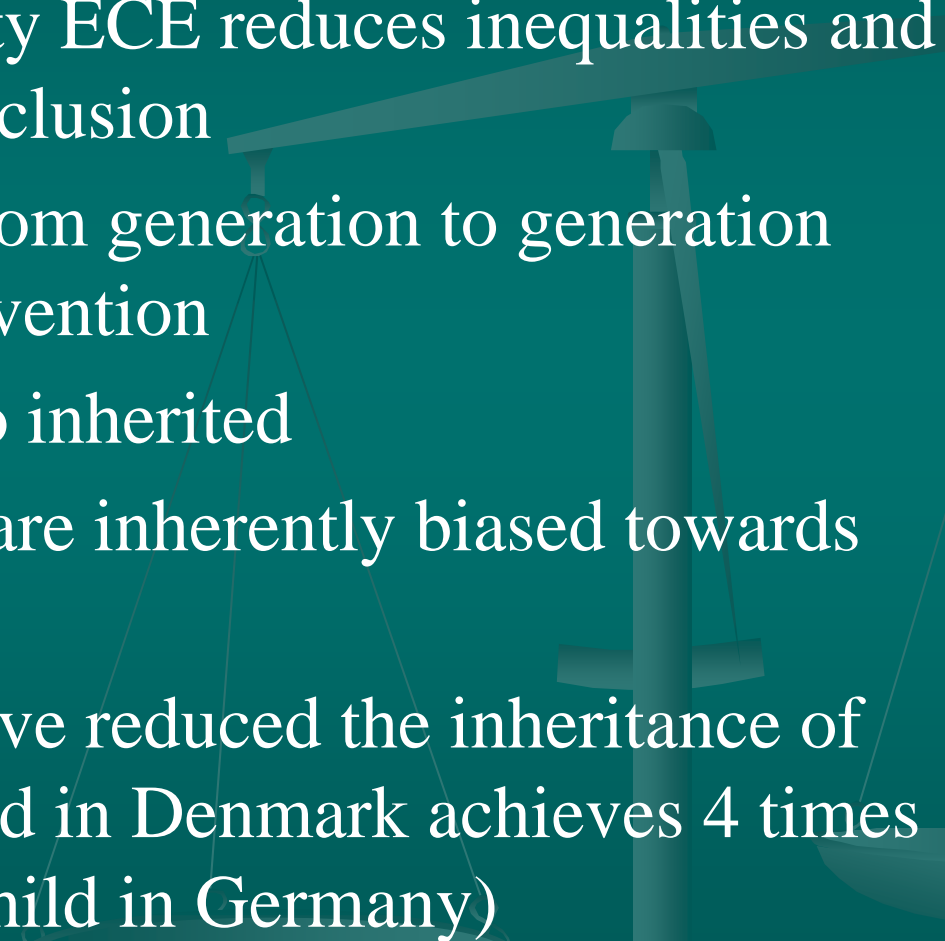
Benefit-Cost Ratios



- Abecedarian Project (21yrs) 3.23
- Chicago Child-Parent Centres (26yrs) 10.83
- Perry Pre-school (40yrs) 16.14

For every dollar invested benefits vary from 3.23 to 16.14

Esping-Andersen

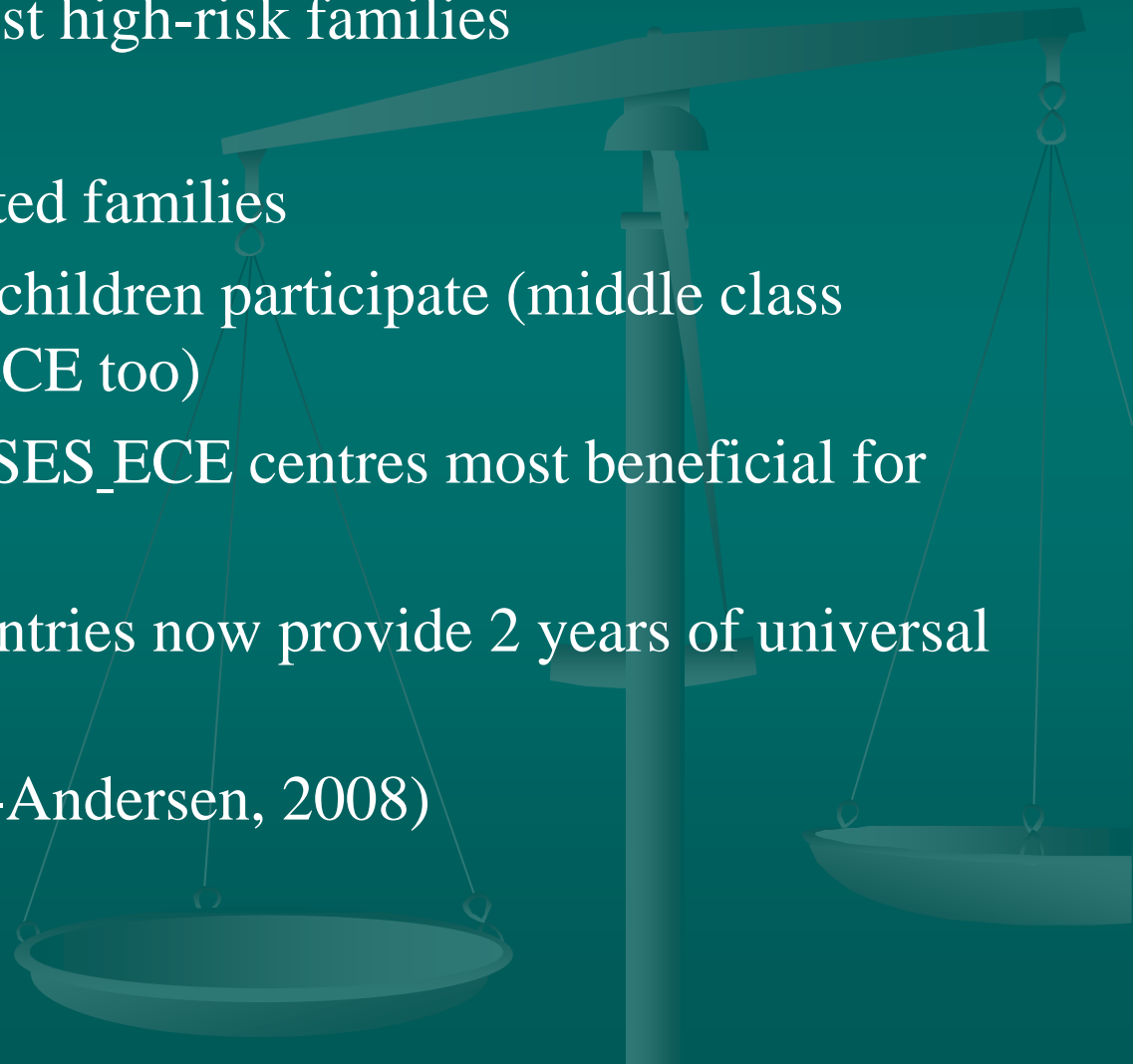
- Investment in quality ECE reduces inequalities and minimises social exclusion
 - Poverty inherited from generation to generation unless there is intervention
 - Cultural capital also inherited
 - Education systems are inherently biased towards middle-class
 - Nordic countries have reduced the inheritance of poverty (a poor child in Denmark achieves 4 times better than a poor child in Germany)
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Universal or Targeted Services?

- There is clear evidence that universal access to quality ECEC is more beneficial than interventions targeted exclusively at vulnerable groups. Targeting ECEC poses problems because it is difficult in practice to identify the target group reliably, it tends to stigmatise its beneficiaries and can even lead to segregation at later stages of education. Targeted services are also at more risk of cancellation than universal ones. (European Commission, 2011, p.5)

Problems with Targeting

- Difficult to identify most high-risk families
- High transaction costs
- Stigmatization of targeted families
- Greater gains when all children participate (middle class children benefit from ECE too)
- Participation in mixed SES_ECE centres most beneficial for low SES children
- Majority of OECD countries now provide 2 years of universal free ECE
- (Barnett, 2011; Esping-Andersen, 2008)



Moves towards Targeting




- Green Paper (2011) on “vulnerable children” favours identifying 15% most vulnerable
 - Children viewed in terms of their vulnerabilities and deficits
 - Danger of ignoring their resilience and strengths
 - Violation of privacy rights
- ECE Taskforce (2011) recommends funding system with strongly differentiated subsidies for “priority children”
 - Will the new funding system remove the right to 20 free hours of ECE for 3 and 4 year-olds?

The Erosion of Quality

- Ratios – government rescinded previously agreed to ratio changes to lower ratios for 2 to 2 ½ year-olds and ignored recommendations of 2008 review
- Qualifications – cessation of additional funding for centres with 100% qualified staff, abandoning goal of 100% qualified staff (Meade et al, 2012 have shown that centres with 100% qualified staff provide higher process quality)
- Curriculum Support – Budget 2009 removed funding to support *Te Whariki* and *Kei Tua o te Pae*

Erosion of Quality (cont)

- Centres of Innovation – new ideas of best practice projects, resources and support for excellent practice and its dissemination in 2009
 - Group Size – In 2011 the regulations were changed so that ECEC centres can now operate with 150 children over 2 yrs and 75 children under 1 yr (previously 50 for over 2s and 75 for under 1s).
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Conclusions

- Universal provision of ECE helps ensure children's education, development, survival and non discrimination rights
 - Especially in the current context of inequality and economic hardship
 - We must maintain and improve rather than erode quality
 - It is necessary to provide additional resources for some children and families, but should be against a background of universal provision
 - Important to maintain NZ's status as a world leader in ECE, rather than diminish it by introducing a highly targeted approach
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