



Spatial Economics Research Centre

Wednesday, 17 September 2008

Early intervention

I have just returned from paternity leave, so should declare a personal interest in the issue of early years intervention - the subject of a joint [Smith Institute / Centre for Social Justice report](#) published yesterday.

While there are clearly many strong arguments to be made for early years intervention, there is however one conclusion, [highlighted by the press release](#), that I find difficult to square with research literature. This is the idea that "a child stands a better chance in life if he or she comes from a bad family in a good neighbourhood than a good family in a bad neighbourhood".

As Paul Cheshire, Steve Gibbons and Ian Gordon discuss in a recent [SERC policy paper](#) "there is little evidence of material effects from local social m on [life chances] at least for the disadvantaged groups which are the major focus of this concern". If such effects are detected their influence is usually swamped by those of individual and family characteristics so it seems highly unlikely that the influence of a 'bad' neighbourhood could outweigh that of 'good' family.

This matters because it means that the policy response needs to be targeted to help particular families rather than particular neighbourhoods. And one would imagine that how to go about the former is a much more politically contentious issue than tackling the latter.

Posted by [Prof Henry G. Overman](#) on [Wednesday, September 17, 2008](#)

Recommend this on Google

No comments:

[Post a Comment](#)

[Newer Post](#)

[Home](#)

[Older Post](#)

Subscribe to: [Post Comments \(Atom\)](#)

Simple theme. Powered by [Blogger](#).