

Original Article

## Criteria of Parents for Choosing Preschool Centers during the Period of Economic Crisis in Greece

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#### Abstract

**Background:** The provision of qualitative early childhood care and education are priorities for European Member States. High quality program have positive outcomes for all children and specially those of disadvantaged social groups.

**Aim:** The aim of the present study was to detect the criteria by which Greek parents evaluate Preschool Centers (PC) for the care and education of their children in the preschool age.

**Methodology:** 315 parents of low income with children aged 2.5-5 years old answered the research questionnaire.

**Results:** Greek parents consider as the most important elements of early childhood care and education quality the good relationship between educators and children (100%), the pleasant learning environment (100%), the respect of children with special needs (97%), the program's emphasis on the children's social development (98%), on emotional development (94%) and on good nutrition (94%). Greek parents, despite the period of economic crisis that plagues society, focus on qualitative criteria such as the services offered by preschool centers (93%), the natural environment of the setting (87%), and the program applied (82%). They put on a second role operational criteria for preschool centers, which would facilitate them on a personal level, such as location and cost.

**Conclusions:** Generally, Greek parents despite the economic crisis insist on assessing the work of PC based on qualitative characteristics or educators, teaching and program and physical characteristics of the PC while they put at a second role practical reasons concerning them.

**Keywords:** Greece, Preschool Education, and parents' attitude, selection criteria of Preschool Center, parents' expectations