

[IZA News](#)[About IZA](#)[Organization Chart](#)[People](#)[Research](#)[Labor Policy](#)[Publications](#)[Discussion Papers](#)[Policy Papers](#)[Standpunkte](#)[Books](#)[Research Reports](#)[IZA Compact](#)[IZA in the Press](#)[Publication Record](#)[Journals](#)[Events](#)[IZA Prize / YLE Award](#)[Teaching](#)[Links / Resources](#)[Press](#)

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### Exploring the Impacts of Public Childcare on Mothers and Children in Italy: Does Rationing Play a Role?

by Ylenia Brilli, Daniela Del Boca, Chiara D. Pronzato  
(August 2011)

**Abstract:**

This paper investigates the effects of public childcare availability in Italy on mothers' working status and children's scholastic achievements. We use a newly available dataset containing individual standardized test scores of pupils attending second grade of primary school in 2008-09 in conjunction with data on public childcare availability. Public childcare coverage in Italy is scarce (12.7 percent versus the OECD average of 30 percent) and the service is "rationed": each municipality allocates the available slots according to eligibility criteria. We contribute to the existing literature taking into account rationing in public childcare access and the functioning of the childcare market. Our estimates indicate that childcare availability has positive significant effects on both mothers' working status and children's language test scores. The effects are stronger when the degree of rationing is high and for low educated mothers and children living in lower income areas of the country.

**Text:** See [Discussion Paper No. 5918](#)

[Back](#)