

What shapes children's experiences in the early years and primary school?

Privacy notice, version October 2021

This project currently uses data from the National Pupil Database from 2007/08 to 2017/18.* All records have been stripped of names and addresses and other non-essential information. However, this remains sensitive and confidential information that requires careful handling and respect at all times. Privacy details can be found below.

Data Controller: London School of Economics

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Personal data obtained: Data (including that not currently accessed but under request) come from the following sources. At the pupil-level, the Early Years Census, Spring School Census, Alternative Provision Census, Exclusions datasets, Absence datasets. At the school-level, the School-Level Census, Geographic Reference Tables, Institution History dataset. Lastly, data come from pupil-level attainment datasets: the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile, Phonics, Key Stage 1, and Key Stage 2 files. Variables include free school meals, birth month, ethnicity, gender, and denoted special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) level and type; instances and recorded reasons for of exclusion and absence; and assessment results.

Purpose and legal basis of processing: These data are processed under the Legitimate Interests condition according to UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR). As per guidance from the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) (<https://ico.org.uk/media/for-organisations/data-protection-reform/overview-of-the-gdpr-1-13.pdf>), the processing of personal data for this project is for scientific and research purposes, and therefore this condition for processing is compatible with the original collection of the data.

The ICO's guidance here (<https://ico.org.uk/for-organisations/guide-to-data-protection/guide-to-the-general-data-protection-regulation-gdpr/lawful-basis-for-processing/legitimate-interests/>), states that processing under the legitimate interests condition 'is likely to be most appropriate...where there is a compelling justification for the processing.' The 'compelling justification' for this work is that it is conducted in the interests of large swathes of society, including those whose data I am processing. I detail this below, in the 'purpose of research' and 'public benefit' sections.

Note importantly that I will never produce individual-level findings. All analyses will be scaled to the aggregate level, so no details which may contravene an individual's privacy will be produced by my analyses or published.

In terms of processing special category data, the legal basis under UK GDPR is Article 9(2)(j) - that is, the research is conducted for archival, research or statistical purposes that are in the public interest. I will respect the right to data protection at all times, and will carry out suitable and specific measures to safeguard the fundamental rights and the interests of the 'data subject,' including ensuring non-disclosive output where individuals can never be identified, and the maintenance of data protection measures when using the data.

Data retention: Access to the data is via the Office for National Statistics Secure Data Service (SRS) and will expire once the project is complete.

All analysis will be conducted in the SRS and the ONS will approve all outputs. No individual record-level data will leave the secure environment. Aggregate findings only will be published, in formats including research papers, presentations, blogs and submissions to peer-reviewed academic journals.

The Department for Education (DfE) has legal powers to collect pupil, child and workforce data that schools and ECEC settings hold, and to share these data with third parties including researchers, provided they comply with strict confidentiality and security rules, with the Data Protection Act 2018 and with the GDPR. More information is available on the [government website](#). No automated decision-making or profiling will be conducted with this data.

Rights available to individuals in respect of the London School of Economics' data processing for research

You have a right to be informed about the research your data will be used in. This will normally be done either via a written notice (such as a Participant Information Sheet) which you can keep or in the introduction of a survey. Where we are unable to inform you before research is conducted, for example, because we are using secondary data (as in the case of the research covered by this notice) or due to the research project using observation, we will try to brief individuals after the research is finished. In this case, the document you are reading covers this right.

You also have the right to: access information held on you, to have it corrected, in some cases to have it erased, to object to your data being used and to object to automated processing.

If you think your data has been used in this research and you have reason to believe it has been used inappropriately, you have a legal right to complain to the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) by contacting them via their [website](#), or by calling 0303 123 1113.

Purpose of research

These data are used for research into the factors that shape children's experiences in the early years and throughout primary school. This includes exploration of attributions of and provisions for Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), as well as children's assessment and attainment results, and their other trajectories and outcomes – including absences, exclusions, and entries to / exits from state education.

Relationships between these factors, and the way children's pathways vary according to their characteristics (including birth month, gender, ethnicity, home language, family circumstance, local area) are being explored. Findings will be interpreted in the context of political / policy and educational environments, and changes to these over time.

The overriding purpose of the research is to discover what – at the child, family, school, area, social, environmental, and policy-levels – influences children's journeys through primary school, their experiences, and educational outcomes.

Alongside this, a deeper understanding of the NPD data itself, and its limitations, implications, valid usages, and nuance and uncertainty in interpretation will be built. Critical examination and exploration of the data, in order to acknowledge its varying correspondences to 'objective' experiences and outcomes, is important so that it can best be used to inform policy-makers, educators, families, and the wider public.

Open access early findings from this work can be found on the links below:

'Relative age and the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile: How do birth month and mean peer group age determine attribution of a 'Good Level of Development' – and what does this tell us about how 'good' the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile is?'

Recorded talk: <https://tinyurl.com/5anf5usu>

PowerPoint slides: <https://tinyurl.com/9xnutyww>

'Special Educational Needs and Disabilities within the English primary school system: What can disproportionalities by season of birth contribute to understanding processes behind attributions and (lack of) provisions?'

Working paper: <https://sticerd.lse.ac.uk/dps/case/cp/casepaper223.pdf>

A journal article can also be found here:

Relative age and the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile: How do birth month and peer group age composition determine attribution of a 'Good Level of

Development'—and what does this tell us about how 'good' the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile is?

<https://bera-journals.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1002/berj.3771>

If you would like a copy of the article but are unable to access it due to the paywall, please email t.campbell1@lse.ac.uk for a personal PDF.

Public benefit

The public benefit intended for this work is to policy-makers / influencers, who require evidence to inform decisions on the SEND, assessment, and wider education systems. By providing a detailed, wide, and deep set of empirical analyses, along with analysis of how the past two decades' educational systems, structures, and environments have shaped children's lives, it intends to help to build, question, and improve these systems for the future.

The benefit is also intended to be to parents, who deserve transparent information on the workings of systems and education policies to understand, question, query and support their children's education and childhood.

Benefit is also intended for education practitioners, as this research may contribute to evidence-informed practice.

Additionally, benefit is intended for researchers (across academic, third sector, government, and other organisations) who seek to use and understand NPD data.

Through these channels, ultimately, the intention of this research is to produce evidence that will feed into discussion and debate, in order to help serve children and their families, and improve their experiences in and outcomes from education.

*Data for the years 2001/02 – 2006/07 and 2018/19 – 2020/21 is currently under request to extend the project; this notice will be updated when / if access is granted.