Abstract

Background: Given that environmental factors, such as the school environment, can influence child development, more attention should be paid to the development of children attending day care centers. Objective: To determine whether there are differences in the gross motor, fine motor, or cognitive performances of children between 1 and 3 years-old of similar socioeconomic status attending public and private day care centers full time. Method: Participants were divided into 2 groups, 1 of children attending public day care centers (69 children) and another of children attending private day care centers (47 children). All children were healthy and regularly attended day care full time for over 4 months. To assess cognitive, gross and fine motor performance, the Bayley Scales of Infant and Toddler Development III was used. The Mann-Whitney test was used for comparative analyses between groups of children between 13 and 24 months, 25 and 41 months, and 13 and 41 months. Results: Children in public day care centers exhibited lower scores on the cognitive development scale beginning at 13 months old. The fine and gross motor performance scores were lower in children over the age of 25 months attending public centers. Maternal education was not related to the performance of children in either group. Conclusion: The scores of cognitive performance as well as fine and gross motor performance of children of similar socioeconomic status who attend public day care centers are lower than children attending private daycare centers.

Keywords

Physical therapy, children development, day care centers, environment.