

CHILD CARE CHOICES IN FINLAND: COPING WITH INCOMPLETE REGISTER-BASED DATA

Maria Valaste

The Social Insurance Institution, Finland, maria.valaste@kela.fi

The Finnish Government plans to cut the subjective right to municipal child day care from parents who are at maternity leave, paternity leave, parental leave or child home care allowance. After parental leave (at which point child is 9–10 months of age) until the child is 3 years of age there is available: subjective right to a municipal child day care or cash for care, which is called child home care allowance.

Analyses of potential outcomes of a possible reform may be assessed with a microsimulation model (Haataja and Valaste 2014). Our analysis makes use of the Finnish static microsimulation model SISU. Microsimulation is an empirically based data modelling technique that has been traditionally used in the areas of taxation, social benefits and other types of economic activity.

Register-based data are originally produced for other purposes than for specific research question (Wallgren and Wallgren 2007). Our challenge for analysis is that there is information about children's care spells in public day care but the information is inadequate. Very little systematic work has been done to validate the data or to produce systematic imputation or editing for various abnormal observations (Haataja and Juutilainen 2012). This is an attempt to utilize child based spell data. We aim to utilize existing data sources to construct a new in-home and out-of-home child day care model which would incorporate information from the perspectives of children, their parents and the family as a whole.

The data covers 50 percent of mothers who gave birth in 1999-2009 in Finland, their spouses and children. The data comprises Kela benefits and background information. Our aim is to place care spells into a monthly calendar for each child under school age using existing data sources. To combine information on different spells, a priority system has been created (Haataja et al. 2013). The priority system produces a single status for a child for each month in the calendar year. The idea is that the most reliable or logical data source is selected first, in the absence of that the next, and so on. Imputation rules have been implemented to solve the problem of missing data in the child day care spells. We present the outcomes of simulations relating to the current reforms and comparisons of the attendance of public day care between our calendar data and the other data sources.

References

Haataja, A. and Juutilainen, V-P. (2012). Päivähoitotietoa Kelassa. Nettityöpapereita 36. Helsinki: Kelan tutkimusosasto.

Haataja, A., Mattila, J., and Valaste, M. (2013). Applying individual level data on children's care periods to microsimulation models. <http://hdl.handle.net/10138/154062>

Haataja, A., and Valaste, M. (2014). Applying child-based information to a microsimulation model. A better tool to assess outcomes of alternative entitlements to child care provisions?. Working papers 52. Helsinki: Kela Research Department.

Wallgren, A., and Wallgren, B. (2007). Register-based statistics: administrative data for statistical purposes. John Wiley & Sons.