

Title: Is it Exit or Voice or Exit and Voice? Labor Turnover in Unionized and Nonunionized Child-Care Centers in the United States

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ABSTRACT

A major factor affecting quality of child care is the high turnover rate among child-care workers. One solution is to raise wages and improve benefits, but child-care centers in a highly privatized market have little access to increased revenue without raising parental fees. Some theories predict that turnover will be lower in unionized child-care centers where workers have recognized alternatives to quitting. In the theory of exit/voice, 'voice' refers to the use of direct communications to bring actual and desired conditions closer together. If 'voice' reduces the probability that workers will quit, then centers with voice alternatives to exit will have a more stable work force than where voice alternatives do not exist.

From a segmented labor market approach, child care is in the secondary sector, a 'bad' job. Here again the absence of unions may play a role in the initial sorting and persistence of this work to remain outside the primary sector. This will be considered.

I will discuss the following questions.

1. What factors, other than compensation, can decrease turnover?
2. Do the specific mechanisms for 'voice' provided by unionization exert an impact independent of other factors such as higher compensation?
3. What is the relationship between turnover and voice?
4. What aspects of voice are present when turnover is low?
5. Are some of these aspects present in nonunion settings?

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