

Public preschool for all P.E.I. 4-year-olds recommended by new study ^[1]

'Rich kids get good preschool, poor kids don't'

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Source: CBC News

Format:

Publication Date: 25 Mar 2019

AVAILABILITY

Access online ^[2]

EXCERPTS

A research study into the well-being and educational development of Island Children by Chances and the Margaret and Wallace Family Foundation recommends public preschool for all four-year-olds on P.E.I.

The non-profit Chances and the McCain foundation carried out a six-year research project between 2012 and 2018 and based on the study, delivered seven recommendations today at a news conference at Chances Family Centre in Charlottetown.

"We recommend preschool for all four-year-olds, specifically calling on the government to appoint a special advisor reporting directly to the premier," said foundation co-founder Margaret McCain.

The project offered families who did not qualify for a government subsidy the opportunity to have their child attend one of Chances' nine early years centres for free for 20 hours a week for children aged three to five.

Researchers concluded that children had improved language, social and thinking skills that helped them make a smoother transition to public kindergarten. Parents of children who participated were able to work or look for work as well as look after themselves and other children.

Every person offered the program took it, and 110 Island children participated, McCain said

'Wasted talent'

McCain said she is worried about access to early education for Island families. The door is shut for too many, she said.

"This is wasted talent for this province and a wasted opportunity for the child. Twenty-first century economies cannot afford to leave half of their future behind," she said.

Right now Canada has a patchwork system when it comes to early education, McCain said.

"I'm going to have to be honest and spell it out — rich kids get good preschool, poor kids don't."

Spinoffs, benefits of early learning

The research project contains seven recommendations including revamping the child-care subsidy application process to make it less intimidating and stigmatizing for families.

The study also recommends early years centres be part of the province's economic planning.

"Every job in early education creates two spinoff jobs, in addition to supporting parents to work. We are able to showcase these results in O'Leary where the new early years centre has brought needed jobs and economic growth to a rural community," McCain said, adding that centre has provided 22 jobs in the area.

The study recommends government continue to invest in the early childhood education workforce.

"This is such important work and educators need the recognition, they need the compensation and they need the supports necessary to do it well," McCain said.

Related link:

Region: Prince Edward Island ^[3]

new-study

Links

[1] <https://childcarecanada.org/documents/child-care-news/19/03/public-preschool-all-pe-4-year-olds-recommended-new-study> [2]

<https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/prince-edward-island/pei-chances-mccain-study-1.5071821> [3] <https://childcarecanada.org/taxonomy/term/7852>