

Letters to the editor regarding the Early Learning Advisor's report [CA-ON] ^[1]

Author: various

Source: various

Format: Article

Publication Date: 22 Jun 2009

AVAILABILITY

See text below.

TORONTO STAR:

Dr. Pascal's report and vision on full-day early learning and care finally reflects that learning and care are not separate and goes further to support the idea that children, especially young children, learn best when they are considered at the centre of their curriculum.

For too many years our society has separated learning and play, valued one over the other and neglected the use of play in the process of learning. As a person holding both an Ontario teachers and an ECE certificate, I am fortunate to see the daily magic in curriculum that is play based and planned and facilitated by trained teams of teachers and ECEs. Flexible curriculum when inspired by a child's expressed interests and guided by professional knowledge of a developmental continuum (not an extrinsic test score) is what makes the difference between a lesson and an unforgettable experience.

Teachers are still living with requirements of misguided policy during the deep dark days of the Harris years. Many of my teacher friends express their dismay at having to teach to a test and with a rigid and unforgiving timeline. The report allows us an opportunity to make a change for what is more in tune with who our children are. They are the future.

The vision as described in the report (and I have read every word of it) is one that I wish I could have taken advantage of while I was bringing up my children. I hope my now adult children are able to experience the benefits as the new system rolls out to become a reality.

I urge all Ontarians, indeed Canadians, to embrace this vision and encourage Premier McGuinty and others in government to support it with our tax dollars because our whole society will reap the rewards.

- Cheryl DeGras, Manager, University of Toronto Early Learning Centre, Toronto, 20 Jun 09

Dr. Pascal's report is a groundbreaking opportunity to make changes in the care and education of Ontario's youngest citizens. The report proposes a thoughtful, publicly funded and coherent way to put right a chaotic approach to early childhood services in Ontario. Because program quality that young children experience depends on knowledgeable educators, Dr. Pascal proposes sound strategies to prepare an early years workforce for a full day of early learning. The report offers a framework for early years programming that educators can use to inform and support their practice and put "our best future in mind." It is with great excitement that we await an educational transformation that will communicate to the world how much Ontarians care about and value the early experiences of young children and the needs of their families.

- Rachel Langford, Director of the School of Early Childhood Education Ryerson University, 20 Jun 09

Congratulations to Dr. Charles Pascal and Premier Dalton McGuinty on their plans to roll out an early learning/child care system that will build a strong foundation for Ontario's future! We know first-hand that it will work: For more than five years, WoodGreen Community Services has successfully partnered with a parenting centre and a local TDSB school (Bruce Junior) to model and deliver the very program Dr. Pascal recommends. In our culturally and economically diverse neighbourhood, we know the Bruce WoodGreen Early Learning Centre makes a difference to children and families from all walks of life. As a social service agency, we know Ontarians face many challenges, particularly in today's economy. When Dr. Pascal's recommendations are implemented across the province, they will position our young people to meet those challenges and will yield proven benefits for society in the long run. To those who say we can't afford to implement

the report's recommendations, we say that right now, Ontario can't afford not to!

Betty Augaitis, Chair, Board of Directors, WoodGreen Community Services

I'd like to commend the special adviser for his terrific recommendations for reforming early childhood education in Ontario.

It's been 15 years since the Royal Commission on Learning first recommended early childhood education programs for all 3-, 4- and 5-year-olds as part of the education system in Ontario. Since then we've had the Early Years Study, parts 1 and 2, and still there has been little movement toward a comprehensive system of early learning in the province. Can we make this one the last report please?

It's time for some action.

- Carolyn Ferns, Childcare Resource and Research Unit, Toronto, 17 Jun 09

The recommendation by Charles Pascal to integrate kindergarten-aged children into the regular school system is a step in the right direction toward a universal, publicly funded and operated childcare and early learning system in Ontario. It would benefit children from working-class households, parents who seek educational and career development or advancement, and early childhood educators (ECE) who are likely to benefit from better access to professional development opportunities, pay and working conditions.

I am in favour of ECE teachers being in the lead because that would increase the likelihood of racialized and aboriginal workers teaching these racially diverse children. Racialized people make up more than 16 per cent of Canada's population, yet just 4 per cent of elementary teachers. In Toronto, only 23 per cent of teachers are racialized, yet about 70 per cent of students are from racialized and aboriginal groups. By having trained and qualified ECEs do the teaching in the kindergarten programs, the province would be showing its commitment to the removal of structural employment barriers and the delivery of a high-quality educational program to our children. Requiring an additional year of education in teacher's college is an unnecessary and discriminatory barrier.

- Ajamu Nangwaya, Toronto, 17 Jun 09

OTTAWA CITIZEN:

Research shows us that building a strong infrastructure for the province's early learning and care programs would greatly contribute to a healthy economic outlook for Ontario, so even in these tough economic times investing in children now makes sense.

The return on investment is substantial. Child poverty and youth violence decrease, children perform better in school, and they ultimately grow up to become healthier contributors to society.

It is not only children and families but all Ontarians who will benefit from Dr. Charles Pascal's vision of a more cohesive early learning and care system.

It's time to act on a report that really puts Ontario's children, and Ontario's future, first.

Eduarda Sousa, Executive Director, Association of Early Childhood Educators Ontario, 22 Jun 09

GLOBE AND MAIL:

Some of Canada's social programs perform well internationally - public pensions and child benefits come to mind - but we fare miserably when it comes to early learning and child care. Among 25 OECD countries surveyed recently by Unicef, Canada ranked last (along with Ireland) on a set of internationally applicable benchmarks for early childhood care and education.

Most Canadian parents are in the work force, and have to cobble together bits and pieces of child care and early learning for their children. Decades of research and effort on the part of parents, experts and advocates have finally become accepted wisdom: Early learning and child care are crucial to Canada's social and economic health.

High-quality early learning and child-care services are not just social policy - they're also core elements of economic policy because they invest in the critical first years of human capital development and enable parents to work or study.

The Pascal report has drawn a bold new architecture for early learning and child care in Ontario. We hope it will spread to other provinces.

- Ken Battle and Sherri Torjman. President and vice-president, Caledon Institute of Social Policy, 17 Jun 09

As a parent who has experienced first-hand both integrated and non-integrated kindergarten and daycare for my children, fixing the patchwork of programs in Ontario is an obvious thing to put on the province's "to do" list. It is reasonable for those who have children in public daycare to expect a continuum of care and learning as their children move through kindergarten into full-time school.

What strikes me as exciting and somewhat lost in the reporting of this initiative is the concept of the school as a "community hub." As we witness the closing of community schools across Canada, it is important to think of these facilities as centres of learning for children, parents and the entire community. I am familiar with several small initiatives - the Youth Fusion Centre in Ingersoll, Ont., to name just one - that demonstrate what can be accomplished if we put schools at the centre.

As government investments go these days, a bet on Ontario's four- and five-year-olds is a good one.

- Stephen Couchman, Thornbury, Ont., 17 Jun 09

It's no surprise that the first response to the release of the Pascal report is, "I don't know where they're going to find the money." With the implication that "they" need to solve Ontario's early learning crisis, the statement serves as a stark reminder of the source of the problem. And that problem is not how "they" find the money but how "we" find the will. If we wait for partisan solutions, we'll never fully address the need for quality education programs for all children.

- Elizabeth Morley, Principal, Institute of Child Study, Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, University of Toronto, 17 Jun 09

Related link: Early Learning Advisor's website ^[2]

Region: Ontario ^[3]

Tags: advocacy ^[4]

public opinion ^[5]

kindergarten ^[6]

full-day early learning ^[7]

Source URL (modified on 27 Jan 2022): <https://childcarecanada.org/documents/child-care-news/09/06/letters-editor-regarding-early-learning-advisor%E2%80%99s-report-ca>

Links

[1] <https://childcarecanada.org/documents/child-care-news/09/06/letters-editor-regarding-early-learning-advisor%E2%80%99s-report-ca> ^[2]

<http://www.ontario.ca/earlylearning> ^[3] <https://childcarecanada.org/taxonomy/term/7856> ^[4] <https://childcarecanada.org/category/tags/advocacy> ^[5]

<https://childcarecanada.org/category/tags/public-opinion> ^[6] <https://childcarecanada.org/category/tags/kindergarten> ^[7]

<https://childcarecanada.org/taxonomy/term/8149>