

P.E.I. educator backs kindergarten-daycare combination [CA-PE]

[1]

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EXCERPTS

A full-day kindergarten-daycare program similar to that being introduced in Ontario next year could be beneficial for students and parents, says a P.E.I. educator.

However, the Department of Education said it doesn't have the resources to follow Ontario's lead any time soon.

Starting in 2010, some Ontario families will have the option of sending their four- and five-year-olds to an all-day program that calls for kindergarten for half a day and daycare the other half.

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Nearly three-quarters of Atlantic Canadians would like to see a similar program in their provinces, according to a recent Canadian Press Harris-Decima poll.

"You know, it might make sense to delve into this deeper," said Linda Lowther, the P.E.I. Department of Education's senior director of learning and early childhood development.

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"The research is showing that it makes a difference for kids, especially those that might have some special needs," said Lowther. "They may need more socialization, they may need more language development. If they don't have those opportunities, then they fall behind the eight ball before they enter school."

But, Lowther cautions, the program wouldn't work unless it's implemented properly.

"I think it depends on the players, and in order for that to work, you don't just say, 'People, go do it.' You have to talk about what your beliefs are, if you don't have that good collaboration, it becomes intimidating, and it's not as welcoming to parents," she said.

P.E.I. does have a few schools that already integrate childcare and kindergarten, said Lowther. And more facilities are interested in expanding into an all-day program.

But it will likely be a few years before a province-wide program is considered, she added.

In the meantime, a report on kindergarten has been delivered to the government by P.E.I.'s public kindergarten commissioner, Pat Mella, but it's not known if this issue will be mentioned in the report.

- reprinted from the CBC News

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