

Full-day kindergarten best delivered by certified teachers ^[1]

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Charles Pascal's recommendations for a full-day early learning program will not provide the best educational foundation for four- and five-year olds, say public elementary teachers.

"ETFO rejects Dr. Pascal's notion of replacing qualified teachers in Kindergarten programs with staff with lower credentials," says David Clegg, President, Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario (ETFO). "The proposed model reduces student contact with a qualified teacher to only one half day. This is not full-day Kindergarten."

Clegg was commenting on the report "With Our Best Future in Mind, Implementing Early Learning in Ontario", that was released earlier today.

"Research has shown that the foundation of a student's success is developed in the early years," Clegg said.

"Certified teachers are specifically trained to provide the educational foundation for four- and five-year olds that will prepare them for the more structured learning environment they will encounter in later years. Full-day Kindergarten taught by certified teachers would substantially strengthen that foundation by providing greater opportunities for learning, as well as additional opportunities for teachers to identify and address literacy problems and build numeracy and social skills."

Qualified teachers are the best equipped to provide full-day programs for four- and five-year olds:

- Research indicates that it is important for educators who work with children to have a university degree.
- Teachers are trained to understand the connections between the kindergarten program and the curriculum from grade 1 and beyond.
- Teachers participate regularly in professional development that is linked to enhanced student learning.

"It's about quality education that should be provided to all Ontario students, particularly in their earliest years," Clegg said.

"If Ontario truly wishes to be a leader in ensuring that all our children get the best possible start in life, our children must begin their journey in the best possible learning environment. That environment is one in which certified teachers occupy the critical role.

"We expect the Premier to fulfill his campaign promise to implement full-day Kindergarten programs in Ontario's elementary schools; not to implement a watered down and cheaper version of what he promised to parents who trusted him with their vote," said Clegg.

The Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario represents 73,000 elementary public school teachers and education workers across the province and is the largest teacher federation in Canada.

- reprinted from the CNW Group

Tags: kindergarten ^[2]

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