

# Partnering on early childhood education <sup>[1]</sup>

Letters to the Editor Re: Teachers and early educators can be classroom partners, Aug. 25

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EXCERPTS

To follow up on Rachel Langford's piece and Charles Pascal's recommendations for full-day early learning, let's put aside territorial issues and focus on Ontario's 4- and 5-year-olds who are poised to reap the benefits of high-quality full-day early learning. Top quality programs for children will come about when all professionals are well-trained and leadership is strong.

In addition to high quality pre-service ECE training programs, there are outstanding graduate programs for ECE and teacher practitioners to develop deep collaborative understanding about early child development and education. There is a wide range of pre-service, inservice and graduate options in the area of early child development research and education.

Some of this research has already shown not only how kindergarten, child care and parenting support can be integrated in school-based models, but the benefits for staff, parents and children that accrue as a result of such innovation.

Let's not drop the ball.

- Janette Pelletier, PhD, Institute of Child Study, OISE/University of Toronto

As a long time elementary teacher, I was ashamed to read that the ETFO voted against sharing their classrooms with early childhood educators.

It appears to be a vote of (mostly) women against women. We have waited decades for universal childcare in Ontario and now teachers are standing in the way of progress. Our ECE grads are also professionals and they are trained to work with babies, toddlers and preschoolers. Most have not been recognized for their dedication to the important work they do and most are underpaid.

We, as teachers, should be the first to acknowledge their worth and expertise in the future of childcare.

- Anne Mare McMullen, Stratford

How do we meet young children's developmental and learning needs? It requires the collaboration of early childhood educators (ECE) and teachers. They both have a body of knowledge and skill set that differs but is complementary. How do we meet the needs of parents and families? The type and quality of child care and early learning, as well as much-needed family support services, depends on ECEs and teachers working together. How do we meet the needs of ECEs and teachers? They need resources, further specialist education, and most importantly, community support.

- Sue Martin, Professor, Former Primary and ECE teacher, Centennial College

I value my profession as an ECE and as many children's "first teacher." I have successfully prepared preschoolers for kindergarten and helped ease them into the school system by providing creative, stimulating programs that have taught age-appropriate skills. Why can't we recognize and appreciate each others' teaching abilities? Our children would only blossom and benefit by our "shared" knowledge.

- Ingrid Artymko, RECE, Brooklin

Becoming an elementary school teacher is to become a member of a profession dedicated to the educational betterment of children. It is not just about earning a living, or having summers off, or great insurance and retirement benefits. Our children come first.

If it is in the best interest of our young learners to have the benefit of ECE, then that should be the overriding goal of every kindergarten teacher. If that means partnering with experts in child development, then working in that milieu should be the aim of the kindergarten teacher.

A partnership of that kind can be of optimum value to our children and should be instituted by the Ministry of Education.

- Morley S. Wolfe, Brampton

- reprinted from the Toronto Star

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