

Region wants lead role on early learning^[1]

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EXCERPTS

Kathryn O'Hagan-Todd can see it now.

When the province rolls out plans to full-day learning for four-and five-year-olds, O'Hagan-Todd, the Region's director of children's services, envisions Niagara playing a prominent role.

We're ready for it, she said, and she, along with other local early childhood education advocates did their utmost to convince the man proposing sweeping changes to early learning programs during his recent visit to Niagara.

"There was a strong demonstration of Niagara's readiness to move forward with the report," O'Hagan-Todd said about report author Charles Pascal's stop here.

"We have offered to the province that Niagara should be a lead. If they choose a pilot community, Niagara should be chosen to implement all the recommendations."

The recommendations came earlier this year from Pascal, a former deputy education minister, who drafted a report calling for programs combining day care and kindergarten into a single full-day program in Ontario schools, starting in 2010 in lower-income neighbourhoods.

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With full-day Kindergarten already in 37 local public and Catholic schools, and being a mainstay in French schools for the past decade, O'Hagan-Todd noted Niagara is already doing much of what Pascal suggests.

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