

Time to learn, and play, at full-day kindergarten ^[1]

Author: Rushowy, Kristin

Source: Toronto Star

Format: Article

Publication Date: 7 Sep 2010

AVAILABILITY
See text below

EXCERPTS

...

The kindergarten kids at James S. Bell Junior Middle School in Etobicoke spent their first day adjusting to the longer day and learning a new routine as part of the province's new, full-day program.

But with a play-based curriculum, and a new teaching team - a teacher and early childhood educator - it's a learning curve for the adults, too.

The Star spent the day in one of the three full-day classrooms at James Bell.

9 a.m. The kids arrive at Room 103 and begin to explore their classroom. The class has 27 students but just 14 were expected on Tuesday because of staggered start dates.

But a new student arrives and, later in the morning, teacher Jaylene Kostiuk learns another will start Thursday.

Kostiuk gathers with the children on the green carpet and reads a story about dinosaurs going to school. The kids then have some more time to play together and look at books.

"This is building social skills," considered a crucial first step in learning, says early childhood educator Melanie Leis.

10:15 a.m. The entire class takes a washroom break, making a brief trek down the hall (a "potty parade") under adult supervision.

Kostiuk and Leis then inform the kids about snack protocol - where they can eat, where garbage goes, what to do if they make a mess. One boy opens up his lunch and a little girl wants to eat her sandwich; "Can you wrap it up and save it?" Kostiuk suggests.

10:40 a.m. Kostiuk wipes down the snack tables as Leis sits on the carpet with three girls, sorting plastic animals. A few boys and girls look at books while others play with blocks.

To signal a change in activity, Leis claps and asks the kids to copy her. She also teaches them "hands on top, that means stop," where they drop what they're doing, put their hands on their head and listen.

After they put away their activities, while singing a tidy-up song, Leis reads a story and the kids ask questions.

Just one boy complains about school. "It's so long it makes me tired."

11:15 a.m. Clutching their Tinkerbell and Bakugan lunch bags, Kostiuk painstakingly leads the class, single file, down to the kindergarten lunchroom. "Walk very, very quietly," she says in a whisper, as other classes are still in session. One boy who has cried off and on all morning begins to tear up; his family soon picks him up and he does not return for the afternoon.

12 p.m. Back to class for some down time. Classical music plays, the lights are dimmed. Two boys lie on a red pillow atop a crib mattress in the reading corner; others do puzzles or look at books.

About 15 kids from another full-day class join the room; apart from one girl who cries softly, the room remains quiet.

12:40 p.m. Time to go outside - but first, teachers go over the playground rules. Then, a quick pit stop where two boys laugh about getting their faces wet. "We shouldn't be sticking our heads in the fountains," Kostiuk gently reminds them. The class makes it outside just before 1 p.m.

1:20 p.m. Kostiuk leads a walk to the school's vegetable and butterfly gardens. A monarch flies by and the kids shout out in excitement. They "flap" their way back to class.

1:30 p.m. The teachers sense the kids are tiring. "I think this is when we are going to have a little change in plans," Kostiuk says. She keeps the lights low and tells them they may lie down while she reads a story - they all do - a strategy she's also used for older kids to give them a break.

2 p.m. Kostiuk has the kids watch author Bill Martin Jr. read Brown Bear, Brown Bear, What Do You See? on YouTube using the SMART Board (digital blackboard) in the classroom. The kids then embark on a scavenger hunt looking for animals mentioned in the story.

2:35 p.m. The kids talk about all the fun they've had. "I liked painting," says one girl. "I liked everything," offers another. Leis then leads several hand rhymes with the kids before they grab their backpacks and head home.

3 p.m. Dismissal. Mom Ashley Prosser waits outside for her son, Kayden, who is in Kostiuk's class. "I think it's great," she says as he bounds out of school. Another benefit: "It allows me to go to work during the day. Half days were very hard for my husband and me."

-reprinted from the Toronto Star

Region: Ontario ^[2]

Tags: quality ^[3]

kindergarten ^[4]

staff ^[5]

school system ^[6]

full-day early learning ^[7]

curricula and pedagogy ^[8]

Source URL (modified on 27 Jan 2022): <https://childcarecanada.org/documents/child-care-news/10/09/time-learn-and-play-full-day-kindergarten>
Links

[1] <https://childcarecanada.org/documents/child-care-news/10/09/time-learn-and-play-full-day-kindergarten> [2]

<https://childcarecanada.org/taxonomy/term/7856> [3] <https://childcarecanada.org/category/tags/quality> [4]

<https://childcarecanada.org/category/tags/kindergarten> [5] <https://childcarecanada.org/category/tags/staff> [6]

<https://childcarecanada.org/category/tags/school-system> [7] <https://childcarecanada.org/taxonomy/term/8149> [8]

<https://childcarecanada.org/category/tags/curricula-and-pedagogy>