

# The rollout of full-day kindergarten <sup>[1]</sup>

The Inside Agenda Blog

**Author:** Martin, Meredith

**Source:** TVO

**Format:** Article

**Publication Date:** 6 Feb 2012

## EXCERPTS:

The rollout of full-day kindergarten; how's it going?

It seemed like a pretty simple question at the time. But after a few days of research, and numerous phone calls to school principals of Toronto District School Board (TDSB) that either already have the full-day kindergarten programs, or are about to get them, the answer is unclear. What is clear is that the seamless day that was touted by Charles Pascal in his 2009 report is not really happening yet, and where pre-and-post kindergarten programming has been implemented, or is about to be implemented, the implementation is messy and confusing.

From a working parent's perspective, the idea of full-day kindergarten is viewed as a panacea, until the school in your catchment area gets it, and you find out you may or may not have before-and-after-school care for your child. Depending on the school your child attends, the kindergarten day ends anywhere between 2:30 p.m. and 3:30 p.m. After your child is registered for the full-day kindergarten program, the school sends out a survey asking parents if they will need pre-and-post care. If 19 other children need the care, then the TDSB is required to facilitate that for you. However, the idea of committing to a program that is run by the TDSB, without any kind of conversation about what the program might look like, is a bit concerning for some parents, especially if your child is lucky enough to have a spot in a decent daycare centre already. Also, the theoretical TDSB pre-and-post care program that your child would be in will likely not be open during the summer, winter, or March breaks, and not on Professional Activity (PA) days either. Charles Pascal's seamless day isn't looking so seamless all of a sudden.

From an educator's perspective, in general, the idea of full-day kindergarten is the right way to go. No one that I spoke to had anything negative to say about the idea of the program; the negative feedback came on the implementation side of things. The ministry creates policy that the school boards must implement, and the boards have had to do it quickly. For a school board the size of the TDSB, which is ginormous (that's the technical term), there hasn't been time to make the roll out of the seamless day, well, seamless.

There are a few options for working families who have preschool aged kids: daycare that is public not-for-profit; private not-for-profit; private for-profit; or homecare. The vast majority of daycare centers in Toronto are not-for-profit. The care of preschoolers and school-aged kids actually costs the daycare centre less than what most parents get charged, but the care of infants and toddlers costs quite a bit more than what parents get charged. The money taken in for the less expensive kids helps pay for the expensive infant program. If many of those less expensive kids end up in full-day kindergarten, it could be extremely taxing on the daycare system in Toronto as it now stands. Martha Friendly, executive director of *childcarecanada.org*, pointed me towards a City of Toronto report that implies that the funding discrepancy could bankrupt a number of daycare centers (23 per cent). This could lead the way for large for-profit daycare centers to move into the city. Friendly thinks that would be a shame.

One principal of a school who is looking down the road to implementation acknowledged to me there isn't space in his school as it's currently configured to accommodate all the children he expects to enrol. Presently, he has seven morning kindergarten classes and seven afternoon ones. This doesn't mean he'll need double the classrooms, because the class sizes will be going up to approximately 26 students per class instead of 20, but he is going to need more than seven. On top of that, all of the kindergarten classes need to have an ensuite bathroom, for obvious reasons, and where those bathrooms are going to go is a bit of a mystery. He's got some time to figure that out, but these are the nuts and bolts of implementation that most people don't think about when they think of full-day kindergarten.

Last but not least is the issue of class size. As it stands in Ontario today, 90 per cent of primary classes have fewer than 20 kids. The Ministry of Education is projecting the average junior and senior kindergarten class size to be 26 students, once full-day kindergarten is fully implemented. A couple of full-day kindergarten teachers approached me to let me know that class sizes of 30 kids is not uncommon.

-reprinted from TVO.org

**Region:** Ontario <sup>[2]</sup>

**Tags:** kindergarten <sup>[3]</sup>

full-day early learning <sup>[4]</sup>

#### Links

[1] <https://childcarecanada.org/documents/child-care-news/12/02/rollout-full-day-kindergarten> [2] <https://childcarecanada.org/taxonomy/term/7856> [3] <https://childcarecanada.org/category/tags/kindergarten> [4] <https://childcarecanada.org/taxonomy/term/8149>