

Children need well-trained educators ^[1]

Letter to the editor

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EXCERPTS:

I am a student in the Lethbridge College Early Childhood Education Program. I would like to inform you about an issue concerning early learning centres and daycares.

Alberta has in place an equivalency program, which allows individuals with very different education majors to practise in the field of early childhood as licensed educators (Alberta Human Services, 2013). The problem here is that these individuals have very little training that is specific to young children, and thus the quality of the care that children receive is compromised.

Training is a major component of quality child care. Not just any training, but that which is specifically about early childhood. There is nothing equal about high school and preschool, so how can we expect teachers to be able to trade places and not compromise the quality of the care the young children or students receive? Studies have proven for decades (since the 1970s) that quality care requires individuals to be trained specifically in Early Childhood Education. So without training in early childhood or early learning, how will these individuals give children what is rightfully theirs?

Children deserve professionals who will help them learn the things that will help them make sense of their world today, and prepare them for tomorrow. The brain is most elastic in the early years. If we decide to discard this information, and give them untrained individuals for educators, we are essentially saying "you don't matter, and it is OK to waste your future." Children who receive quality care grow up to be less likely to commit offences, relieving the strain on the justice system. They are more likely to complete high school and post-secondary education, thus creating more jobs, and becoming skilled workers themselves (Centre for the Child Care Workforce, 2013).

Parents, directors, and the Government of Alberta and Canada need to know this and adjust the existing policies to invest in the future of Canada's prospective leaders. When we change the regulations to ensure that every practising Early Childhood Educator has early childhood specific training, then we value the children and the families. We owe it to our country and the future generation to raise competent, confident and independent children. After all, what children learn today, will guide the steps and choices they make tomorrow.

-reprinted from the Lethbridge Herald

Region: Alberta ^[2]

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