
TEN REASONS TO EXPAND PUBLIC KINDERGARTEN

an increasing number of jurisdictions are following the research and committing to a two-year kindergarten experience for four- a wB/F3 11.04e(r)p.00Tm/ew110.00012 0 612 92 reW hB/F3 11.04 Tf1 0 0 1 216.41 633

All of these studies mention the importance of ensuring high quality early learning to maximize reduction in special education. In the UK, a recent study compared the impact of high quality versus low quality early education.

Melhuish, et al., (2019) concluded that those with low quality preschool had a 36% reduction in cognitive risk by age five versus those with high quality who had a 45% reduction. By age 16 the impact had widened to 55% reduction for those with high quality versus 40% reduction for those with a lower quality experience.



5. MORE TIME WITH FRIENDS, MORE TIME TO PLAY

Children want and need other children to complement their development. During the full school day, children benefit from being able to socialize and play with other children on a regular basis. This allows more time for both formal and informal instruction while also accommodating child-directed play. Children in full-day kindergarten programs report higher levels of enjoyment in their day and with their friends (Pelletier, 2012; Page & Tayler, 2016).

Children who are English or French language learners benefit from regular interactions with peers that accelerates the acquisition of a second language while consolidating their home language (Hertzman, 2011).

6. A SEAMLESS DAY AND EXPERIENCE

A two-year experience, especially those with an extended day to accommodate parents' work schedules, allow children to remain in familiar surroundings with educators and friends, rather than moving between different programs and locations. Extending the day beyond the school hours within the school facility or in a nearby location is often possible. The elimination of transitions not only benefit children, they reduce daily stress, and cost, for their parents (Janmohamed, et al., 2014).

It is estimated that ON families are saving over \$6000 per year in child care fees since that province expanded its half-day Junior and Senior Kindergarten program to full-day.

7. PLAY-BASED LEARNING CURRICULUM

Young children benefit from a play-based learning curriculum that capitalizes on the power of play to engage children in intentional learning opportunities. The Nordic countries that typically report strong academic achievement do not begin formal instruction in reading and math until age seven. But they do offer full-day programs to most younger children that emphasize a play-based learning approach and they do lead the world in literacy, numeracy and science outcomes in later school years (McCain, Mustard & McCuaig, 2011).

Rather than 'schoolification' or the push-down of academic instruction onto younger children, the concept of play-based learning in school-based four-year-old kindergarten is pushing up into the primary grades (Akbari & McCuaig, 2014). Play-based learning is the pedagogy that builds strong STEM skills (McClure, et al., 2017)

When a two-year-old kindergarten is delivered as a continuation of the school system, it is possible to establish a continuum of learning that benefits children's academic and social skill acquisition (US Department of Education, 2016).

8. EDUCATORS ARE CRITICAL TO EFFECTIVE PROGRAMS

Effective pedagogy for young children relies on educators who have foundational knowledge about early development and learning (LaRue & Kelly, 2015). They continually make decisions about the curriculum that respond to children's knowledge, skills and learning dispositions. The continuum of play-based learning defines the role of educators in implementing play-based learning on a continuum from child-directed to educator-guided learning experiences (Pyle & Danniels, 2016).

Qualified early childhood educators are grounded in an understanding of early human development and play-based learning. Educators with degrees, including Bachelors of Education, in classrooms with

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