

Ontario Ministry of Education “releases” a short-term study showing the benefits of full-day kindergarten

Existing long-term research shows benefits of early learning disappear over time; Actual study won't be available to the public until late October 2013

Ottawa, Canada, September 3, 2013 – Today the Ontario Ministry of Education “released” a study showing “amazing, life-changing” results from a child’s attendance in full-day kindergarten.

However, the release does not include the study itself, which will not be made available for scrutiny by the public until late October 2013, as per the Ontario Ministry of Education.

Short-term studies have typically shown improved cognitive outcomes for children participating in early learning programs. However, these even out over time, as per existing research. A recent meta-analysis by researchers at Duke University showed improvements in academic achievement disappeared by third grade. The researchers go on to note that social development measures showed mixed results.

The Ontario Ministry of Education study is based on the factors measured by the EDI: the Early Developmental Instrument. The EDI measures five factors: Physical health and well-being, social competence, emotional maturity, language and cognitive development, and communication skills and general knowledge.

“While today’s release says there are improvements in all areas, what we are allowed to see stresses improvements in social competence and cognitive skills. There appears to be less commentary on things like a child’s emotional maturity and physical health and well-being. This may mean there was less benefit in those areas,” says Andrea Mrozek, Executive Director of the Institute of Marriage and Family Canada and author of *The Cost of a Free Lunch—The Real Costs of the Pascal Early Learning Plan for Ontario*, which accurately pegged the costs of Ontario’s full-day learning plan prior to the Ontario government.

“It would appear that this short-term study—two years is not long enough to conclude anything—is showing what studies before it have already shown,” she adds.

“Were we able to see the actual study, we could provide more informed commentary on the topic. This is not accountable or transparent on the part of the Ministry of Education,” she concludes.

To arrange an interview please contact Eloise Cataudella, at 613-565-3832, ext. 7505.