

# For the Love of Learning

## Volume II: Learning - Our Vision for Schools

### Chapter 7: The Learner from Birth to Age 6: The Transition from Home to School

The "curriculum" of the home and of early childhood, although unwritten, has a profound impact on the child's likely success in mastering the curriculum of the school, and in becoming an accomplished learner. For that reason, our discussion of curriculum - what we want children to learn - begins not at age 6 and in Grade 1, or at age 4 and in junior kindergarten, but at birth.

#### **The learner from birth to age 3: The literacies curriculum of home and care**

There is increasingly strong evidence that the relationship between early experience and the later ability to learn (competence), which we touched on in Chapter 5, begins at birth. Recent research suggests that the interaction between environment and learning is intense from the very beginning of the infant's life, and may have far-reaching influence on later development.<sup>(1)</sup> This means that healthy environments for young children must be supported and strengthened. Poverty, after all, is a major determinant in lowering the level of their health and competence. We agree with the Premier's Council on Health Strategy that reducing poverty levels must be an integral part of any intervention strategy.

Effective teachers and schools can offer children advantages, but they are probably not able to undo all the harm that poverty creates. Efforts to improve education that are not accompanied by programs to address life circumstances that handicap children early, and sometimes permanently, will never reach their goals. The equity question, which is most often raised when young people are in secondary school, must also be addressed in social policies and practices that have an impact on what happens before birth and in the first years of life.

*Yours, Mine, and Ours*, the report of the Children and Youth Project of the Premier's Council on Health, Well-Being, and Social Justice, points out that two key determinants of a child's successful transition to life are the health of the mother, and her comprehensive care before, during, and after pregnancy. Therefore, we agree with the project recommendations for a comprehensive range of health, social, and parent support services. Health services for mothers are inextricably linked to educational outcomes for their children. When programs, whether "health" or "education," are funded, policy makers badly shortchange society if they do not consider these links. The opposite of value added is money wasted. Later in this report we suggest mechanisms for ensuring that these links are created and are maintained. A few prototype programs exist; in Ontario there is the Better Beginnings, Better Future project, an umbrella for eight programs in different communities, all of which address the social, emotional, behavioral, physical, and cognitive development of children from birth to 8. These programs work with

children, families, schools, and communities, and are jointly funded by the Ministries of Community and Social Services, Health, and Education and Training, as well as the federal Department of Indian and Northern Affairs and the Secretary of State. They are long-term (25-year) programs with built-in evaluation, and their goal is to help everyone in a community come together to raise healthy children.(2)

As mentioned earlier, the first determinant of a healthy child is the presence of a nurturing, consistent, and dependable caregiver, usually one or both parents or another adult who provides security, stimulation, and positive social interaction. The other is a supportive (and safe) community, which can facilitate parents' efforts and, if necessary, attempt to compensate for ineffective parenting. Teaching good parenting skills in advance is, of course, much more effective and efficient than having to intervene later. Communities support healthy babies and young children through policies that allow families to spend time together and provide good out-of-family settings for children who need them.

*Yours, Mine, and Ours* recommended family-friendly policies in the workplace, to allow working parents flexibility, especially when their children are young - flexibility in hours, sick leave and parental leave, in part-time or at-home work (without diminishing benefits or career choices), and in flexible use of benefits. We view such family-friendly workplace policies as essential support for child care, and believe that governments should offer inducements and public recognition to employers, in order to encourage such policies.

One of the key determinants of school readiness is the amount of stimulation infants and young children receive in a nurturing environment. In a very real sense, the literacy curriculum of infancy and toddlerhood is the curriculum of the home. It is language- and speech-based, but also involves print. Children who are being readied for future learning (and, therefore, for school) are spoken and listened to; have their questions answered; are offered explanations; and are encouraged to try new words and ideas, to imagine, to guess, to estimate, to draw, and to observe. When they watch television, there is often a parent to mediate, either watching with the child or talking afterwards about what has been viewed.

While most parents are aware that babies and young children benefit from stimulation through language, many may not know how important it is and how simply and effectively it can be provided. Because parents are their children's first and most powerful teachers, a society committed to lifelong learning will support and encourage parents in that role, and remind them of the power and responsibility it entails.

Children who are developing strong literacy skills at home are being read to, and are watching others read and write. Children of parents who cannot read or write are less ready for school, because there is such a wide gap between the curriculum of home and school. Thus, parental literacy programs are a very significant component of an educational system that supports children's learning.

We are aware that services to support new parents may have to be integrated and delivered in a different way, that the balance between centralized and local authorities and the relationship between public and private sectors may have to change. We are aware, too, that concern about these kinds of changes prevented implementation of recommendations made in earlier reports. The many government departments with responsibility for children's health, welfare, and education, and the local agencies they fund operate under different legislation and regulations, making co-ordination and integration very awkward. We believe that if government does not provide leadership in these areas, and if public support for a stronger commitment to children's well-being is not made clear, we cannot expect any decline in the factors that put children at risk for life - low birth weight, neglect, and abuse; we cannot expect children who live with this level of risk to be ready for school. We must understand that these consequences,

which are universally deplored, follow from conditions that are obvious, and that we have the capacity to change. If we choose not to change them, we cannot be surprised that they continue to exist.

If we want to build a learning system, we must begin, not at age 6, but before birth. We must address issues of income and the health of mothers, so that newborns will be fully equipped to learn. After that, the essential need is to reach out to new parents with information and support for effective parenting. Policies that help parents to parent, to spend time with their children, to be nurturant, to become literate, and to provide a stimulating environment for the development of language and learning are a vital component of a learning system. Information, too, can make a difference, especially if it is widely disseminated. The Ministries of Education and Training and Community and Social Services could take joint responsibility for ensuring that all new parents have information and support in creating a stimulating home environment for children. Informative brochures could be delivered to parents in doctors' offices and clinics, in hospital maternity wards and birthing centres, in public and school libraries, and at parenting and child-care centres. As well, television, telephone (an 800 number across the province), and computer networks are media that reach out to parents.

As an example we suggest that the Ministries of Health, Community and Social Services and Education and Training collaborate with TVO/La Chaine Francaise to produce brief informational videos on stimulating home environments for infants and toddlers, showing the link to school readiness, and describing the availability of adult and family literacy courses. These tapes, in addition to being aired publicly on TVO/La Chaine and elsewhere (CBC, YTV) should be available at doctors' offices, pre-natal clinics, and maternity wards, as well as through public libraries and schools, for individual use and as components of parenting courses. Such information is only one example of a variety of child-care services and resources that should be available to parents.

The Ministry of Community and Social Services funds a number of parent resource centres that offer information and materials that assist parents and other caregivers. While these centres are sometimes located in schools and are often well used, it is not clear how strong a connection they have to schools. In our view, the two Ministries, Education and Training and Health, would enhance preparedness if they co-operated to help children with school readiness, and linked parents and schools before children enter the formal system. These and other recommendations in this report require inter-departmental co-operation in program development and delivery, and they are supported, later in the report, by a discussion and recommendations for implementing strategies that cross government departments.

## **The learner from age 3 to 6: The literacy curriculum in a school setting**

At present, children arrive in Grade 1 at various stages of readiness, and with a wide range of prior knowledge and understanding, to learn in a group setting. The curriculum of pre-school or early education is a continuation of the curriculum of the home: the stress is on acquiring speaking and listening skills, increasing vocabulary, learning by observation and inquiry, developing the ability to communicate through writing and reading, and on learning in an environment which is both very stimulating and very nurturant. And, as at home, a great deal of learning occurs within the context of games and play. What can be added to the curriculum of the home, as a vital piece of school readiness, are the skills for learning in a group - what we might call "interpersonal literacy."

Many children, especially in disadvantaged neighbourhoods, are identified in Grade 1 as having a poor

prognosis for school success, and all too many of those do become unsuccessful students and eventual school failures. While some children categorized as at-risk are helped successfully to overcome early gaps and to progress with their peers, many others are not. Earlier education is one of the most promising tools in the struggle to help these children, and to overcome the handicap of lack of stimulation and development. Effective school readiness programs are known to make a substantial difference for children's ability to benefit from compulsory education at age 6.(3) Thus, these programs are a very major response to the issue of inequitable outcomes of schooling.

Research on early learning has changed our understanding of what is appropriate for toddlers. We now know, for example, that children acquire number concepts in infancy, and that by age 3 there are substantial differences among children in their understanding of how to count and calculate. These result in very different degrees of readiness for learning in Grade 1, gaps that schools must work intensely and extensively to eliminate, and which, in fact, usually grow rather than shrink in the elementary years.

*Although many children start school with a well-developed understanding [of the concept] of number ... not all children do so. In particular, when tests of conceptual knowledge were administered to groups of kindergarten children attending schools in low-income, inner city communities, [in Canada and the United States] a significant number have been unable to demonstrate the knowledge possessed by their middle-class peers.(4)*

The gap that develops among children between infancy and age 3 is the result of differences in environmental stimulation and emotional support in areas that affect the chances for later school success. We have known for some time that, by the time children begin Grade 1, variations in oral language, vocabulary, and comprehension are so great that it is difficult for teachers to narrow the distance between children who are more and less ready to learn in a formal setting. It is clear that, by and before age 4, the failure of a great many of our children to acquire knowledge and understanding will have serious consequences for their formal education.

There are a myriad of model programs for early childhood education, some operating in the child-care framework and others in the public education systems of various jurisdictions. Many have been evaluated on how well they prepare children for compulsory schooling.

One category is the full-day kindergarten for five-year-olds. In a 1989 review of studies that compared various effects of full-day and half-day kindergarten programs in the United States, almost two-thirds showed academic advantages for the full-day program. All the studies that focused on disadvantaged students reported significant differences in academic gains for those in the full-day program. Nine studies compared such social effects as classroom behaviour and attitude to school and only one favoured the half day. Staff and parent reactions to full-day programs were very positive.(5)

A Toronto study of all-day kindergarten showed gains in language, attentiveness, and positive student-student and student-teacher interaction. A follow-up four years later found that students who had been in the all-day program had a lower rate of failure by Grade 4 than the comparison group.(6)

An Ottawa-Carleton study conducted in the context of French-language education in a minority setting examined the impact of full-day kindergarten on the development of specific aspects of competence in French (reading readiness, oral vocabulary, and language use). After a year, all the children in full-day programs showed significantly greater gains in language development than those comparable children not in the program.

One of the groups for whom pre-school education could be most critical in Ontario is the Franco-Ontarian community and other francophone children. Assessments consistently show francophone students performing below anglophones in mathematics, science, and literacy/communication. Not only do Franco-Ontarians have, overall, a relatively low number of years of schooling; they also often have weak skills in French, and consequently real difficulty supporting their children's education when they have elected to send them to a francophone school.

At present, 85 percent of Ontario's four-year-olds and 99 percent of five-year-olds are enrolled in kindergarten programs, almost all half-day. While these are intended to stimulate children's curiosity and develop their language awareness and desire to learn, they are not defined as school readiness programs. As a result, they suffer some isolation from the rest of the curriculum, as well as a certain devaluing by those parents, teachers, and others who often view them as mere baby-sitting.

Although good pre-school education can benefit all children, much of the research on pre-kindergarten programs has focused on programs targeted to children who come from disadvantaged backgrounds, and who are likely to be at risk of later school failure. The most cited example in the educational research literature is the Perry Preschool Study, which has a very unusual longitudinal component - follow-up over 24 years. Children who, at the age of 3, participated in small groups in a well-designed pre-school program, based on a curriculum that emphasized thinking and learning skills and that included meals and health care as well as outreach to parents, have been followed to age 27. They came from an extremely poor neighbourhood in the state of Michigan, and they and a comparison group from the same area, who did not go to the pre-school, have been followed by researchers through the intervening years. The high school completion rate of the pre-school group was 71 percent, compared with 54 percent for the others.

After 24 years, the pre-school group was characterized by higher incomes, fewer children born outside marriage, lower arrest rates, and more home ownership. This study is cited so often because the long-term follow-up makes clear how much is saved, financially as well as socially, by effective early education. If the Perry alumni and the members of the comparison group continue to be followed, one would expect to see further differences in the next generation, whose early learning context is affected by their parents' levels of education and stability.<sup>(7)</sup>

The Perry follow-up data help to clarify the connection between high-quality education that begins early, and poverty: a strong start means a better chance of succeeding in school, which, in turn, means a better chance for a decent job, which means that the next generation does not grow up in poverty, does not need extra help to succeed in school, and so on.

Programs like Perry Preschool were designed for children from disadvantaged homes, those who have the most need, and stand to gain the most from good early education. They are exemplars of fairness and equity, of attempts to decrease the disadvantages borne by children who otherwise would be severely limited in their opportunities for later success in school and in life.

In some countries full-day public education begins at age 3 for all children, because the culture subscribes to the idea that all or most children will benefit from the group learning experience at that age. In such systems, early education serves goals of both equity and excellence; it is viewed as a head start for all, and a way of increasing opportunities for learning later on, by building a strong foundation.

Universal early education is not uncommon in Europe. In France, for example, the *ecoles maternelles* for three- to five-year-olds were established as a response to the perceived advantages of early education,

long before it became common for mothers of young children to enter the workforce. The école maternelle was not conceived as a child-care program and was not targeted at those living in poverty, but as part of universal, free, public education. The staff is led by teachers, and while the curriculum is tailored to the age of the children ("age appropriate"), the goals are academic and social preparation for primary school. According to a Toronto teacher quoted in the media:

*The world can look to France's preschool system the way it can look to Canada's health-care system: Despite its critics and the inevitable recession-induced financial strains, it's there and it works: Ninety-nine percent of French children, ages 3 to 5, are in preschool for free or for next to nothing ... The French take preschooling seriously ... It's not something done to and with kids alone; it's an integral part of the community ... it pays off financially ... It also pays off socially. Children who go through the preschool "don't have the difficulties" in later levels of school experienced by kids who don't go to pre-school ... Teachers alone don't determine what happens to a child. Local government is involved ... And the parents have their say too ... in North America ... it seems schools are left to the teachers and students. Here it's everybody. As a teacher, I can say it helps.(8)*

There is evidence that this is true: 1983 data from France indicate that, with each year of pre-school (one, two, or the maximum of three), the number of children who are required to repeat Grade 1 decreases, and this is true regardless of the parents' occupation. The gap between the children of the most and least skilled workers does not disappear, but, at each level, the children benefit. In 1980, the French Ministry of Education identified a sample of 20,000 sixth-graders and monitored their progress. Each year of pre-school enrollment increased the likelihood that a child would be promoted from sixth to seventh grade, and later follow-up showed this was also true at the high school level.(9)

A recent review of research on pre-school education in Britain, Sweden, and the United States concludes that

*the long-term educational benefits stem not from what children are specifically taught but from effects on children's attitude to learning, on their self esteem, and on their task orientation ... learning how to learn may be as important as the specifics of what is learned. The most lasting impact of early education appears to be children's aspirations for education and employment, motivations and school commitment. These are not moulded directly through experiences in the pre-school classroom but are indirect effects of children entering school with a learning orientation and beginning a "pupil career" with confidence. This enables them to avoid early school failure and placement in special education ... Early childhood education may be viewed as an innovative mental health strategy that affects risk and protective factors.(10)*

Early childhood education is an innovative educational strategy in North America, where the new demographics of families, and an understanding of the importance of early learning, have been ignored.

Time and again, the Commission was told to learn from other countries, and early education is an area in which we found much to learn.

Because there is powerful evidence that early education alters the amount and kind of learning students engage in, and because this is most true for children whose potential is otherwise most likely to be unrealized, we believe early education is one of the most powerful engines for transforming our educational system. That is why one of the four major recommendations of this Commission is that a

school readiness program be created for three- to five-year-olds, closely modelled on that in France.

While we appreciate the need to proceed gradually, we are convinced that early childhood education must be part of public education, offered as an option for all three- to five-year-olds for the full day, with the option of a half-day schedule for those parents who may prefer it.

### **Recommendation 1**

\*We recommend that Early Childhood Education (ECE) be provided by all school boards to all children from 3 to 5 years of age whose parents/guardians choose to enrol them. ECE would gradually replace existing junior and senior kindergarten programs, and become a part of the public education system.

We note that a very similar recommendation was made by George Radwanski in his report to the Ontario Ministry of Education in 1987: "That all school boards in Ontario be required to provide universally available early childhood education in public and separate schools for children from the age of three." Radwanski concluded that such education should be universal rather than targeted at disadvantaged children for a number of reasons, and suggested that

*The need for deliberately provided early learning experiences and intellectual stimulation outside the home may no longer be limited to children from the most obviously disadvantaged households ... numerous children of non-needy and relatively well-educated parents are spending much of their time in sub-optimal care arrangements that do not provide the fullest opportunities for early development.(11)*

Although the reduced need for later remedial school programs, as well as for income support and correctional services, offers the promise of enormous savings, providing one and one-half extra years of education also involves an initial cost. Some monies will be recovered as the need to subsidize child care for low-income parents is eliminated. (There will be other economies in the system that will help to fund Early Childhood Education. For example, see Chapter 9 for a discussion of eliminating the fifth year of high school.)

For these reasons, as well as because it affords an opportunity to monitor and evaluate new programs, and because some schools currently lack the physical space to expand their programs, gradual phase-in would be sensible, initially providing funding for only a limited number of spaces, and looking at mandated province-wide delivery as being some years away.

### **Recommendation 2**

\*We recommend that the ECE program be phased in as space becomes available.

We do, however, wish to make a recommendation regarding priorities in funding because of the particular disadvantage suffered by the many children of Franco-Ontarian cultural background who do not have a strong home background in the French language.

### **Recommendation 3**

\*We recommend that, in the implementation of ECE, the provincial government give priority funding to French-language school units.

ECE classes would likely be served by teams headed by trained teachers, would include child-care

workers, and would emphasize cognitive and linguistic stimulation, socialization, and skills in learning in a group.

Our expectation that the costs of this program would be partially offset by less money spent on remedial and special education, and on other programs for those who now fail to thrive in school, is supported by evidence from well-designed child-care and early education programs.(12) Extended daycare should be available (before and after the school day) on a cost-recovery (parental-fee) basis, with subsidies available (as at present) for low-income parents.

We have stressed the critical importance of Early Childhood Education for Ontario children, and we also insist that, despite its urgency, the recommendation we make is a longer-term one, and implementation of the program should proceed gradually. The question of existing and additional human resources needed to staff the ECE classes, of personnel training or retraining, of the issues of differentiated staffing provisions, of the portability of experience, and of educational backgrounds are but a few of the challenges of implementing ECE. Our thinking on this subject will be found in Chapter 12, where we discuss issues and concerns of educators as professionals.

In the same vein, we do not want to minimize the challenge posed by the space needed to accommodate ECE classes. Lots of work will be required to develop and design good detailed implementation of this key proposal of our report. But it would be very disappointing, and frankly only too facile, to hide behind such constraints to do nothing, or to turn them into insurmountable barriers prohibiting the implementation of a much-needed policy for our children.

Just as new parents need to know, even before their child is born, what constitutes a nurturant and stimulating environment for infants, so do parents of older pre-schoolers need to be able to obtain information on ways they can support growth in learning for three- to five-year-olds, irrespective of whether their children are enrolled in ECE. The Ministries of Education and Training and Community and Social Services would perform a useful service by making information widely available on healthy environments for learning for three- to five-year-olds. Information tailored to the home environment, describing ways of supporting learning for toddlers, whether or not they are enrolled in ECE, could be distributed very widely at schools and elsewhere.

It is clear that children flourish when the worlds in which they live intersect. They are supported if parents are familiar with the class, and teachers are familiar with the home, and, when before- and after-school programs are involved, the child-care and the teaching staffs know one another and are willing to work co-operatively.(13)

Research supports the belief that these links have a positive effect on children. Home visits by teachers, for example, are a very effective vehicle for welcoming new children into school. Early childhood education programs that involve regular contact with parents tend to be among the most successful in the long term, and have shown benefits for younger siblings as well.(14) Early involvement of parents in their child's education lays the foundation for a strong home-school link.

While excellent early education is an advantage for all children, those who, as early as age 3, show signs of learning or interpersonal problems will have the advantage of being identified and helped much earlier. Experience in primary classes in Ontario and elsewhere shows that teachers can identify such difficulties in young children,(15) and in some cases, early remediation has been effective. To the extent that this identification and intervention takes place earlier in the child's life, it has the potential to be

more effective in the long term, including in the primary years when the fundamental literacies and numeracies are being acquired.

*The Common Curriculum, Grades 1-9*, recently developed by the Ministry of Education and Training, specifies desired learning outcomes for students. The Ministry could usefully develop a similar set of desired learning outcomes for ECE, to make clear how the curriculum of the early years is connected to that of the primary years. The earliest outcomes described in *The Common Curriculum* apply to the end of Grade 3; a parallel description should be created for the transition to Grade 1, indicating desired outcomes for literacy, numeracy, and interpersonal and group-learning skills.

As well, a developmental continuum that indicates stages of cognitive and social growth for children from birth to adolescence would be a real asset to all parents, teachers, and child-care workers, and would promote continuity and consistency among the home, daycare, and school.

#### **Recommendation 4**

\*We recommend that the Ministry of Education and Training develop a guide, suitable for parents, teachers, and other caregivers, outlining stages of learning (and desirable and expectable learner outcomes) from birth onwards, and that it link to the common core curriculum, beginning in Grade 1. This guide, which would include specific learner outcomes at age 6, would be used in developing the curriculum for the Early Childhood Education program.

Speaking generally, we would suggest that the outcomes of ECE should include both achievement and attitude-related elements, including a greater readiness to learn to read, a better sense of number and quantity, and better skills related to working with others, listening to directions, and helping others. Children should be both more mature, as a result of opportunities for social and emotional growth, and more learned, as a result of increased exposure to an environment that is rich with talk and print.

We note that research supports a carefully structured environment for young children, with considerable adult-child and child-child interaction. A recent study of exemplary kindergarten programs in Ontario found three basic components: play and problem solving, language and literacy, and social-emotional development.<sup>(16)</sup>

Play, structured or unstructured, is demonstrably related to problem solving, cognitive development, emerging literacy, and social and personal development. It is not, as sometimes it is assumed to be, a frivolous and purposeless use of time. The extensive literature on children's play documents the extent to which children at play are working on understanding and expanding language, as well as such concepts as cause and effect, patterns and categories, and other basics.<sup>(17)</sup> When teachers structure play so that children are confronted with new problems and new challenges, and observe it systematically, they have an optimal opportunity for both evaluating a child's level of development and building on it - to know what the next step is and help the child reach for it.

Over and above what would occur naturally as children mature, language development is a realistic and central component of early education; it depends on an active, purposeful, interaction of adults with children in the classroom. Number pattern and sense, too, are also reinforced by structured play and experiments.

Similarly, children's best social and emotional development depends on teachers' abilities to arrange positive peer experiences and prevent or interrupt negative ones.

Well-structured programs for young children must also be based on careful observation and monitoring of individual progress. Youngsters' ability to use language varies considerably, as does their skill in carrying out tasks and interacting successfully with peers. The teacher's role as child monitor and as program designer and redesigner is crucial, and she or he must be able to amplify or simplify tasks so that each child has opportunities to be challenged and to succeed. Those whose literacy develops earlier must have appropriately demanding tasks in order to move on.

In fact, research suggests that children from backgrounds where the language is other than that of the school may be more successful in school if they participate in pre-school or kindergarten programs that use their first language for instruction.<sup>(18)</sup> In other words, a local school community might opt for ECE in Portuguese or Vietnamese; there is evidence that, when skills in their native language are more fully developed, children are likely to be more successful in English later. (See Chapter 10 for more discussion of transitional use of languages.)

There must be acknowledgment of the minority groups from which children come, in order to foster the child's sense of self-worth. All educators must be sensitive to identity issues: in a study of both English- and French-language kindergartens, for example, an emphasis on their culture was identified as a key to French-language kindergarten programs for the Franco-Ontarian community. Its members want an educational milieu that counteracts the forces of assimilation by validating and supporting the non-dominant language and culture.<sup>(19)</sup> Children in a French environment who have opportunities to use that language in different contexts and for different purposes are building a solid base for conceptual development, as well as a positive personal and cultural identity. All children benefit from the opportunity to build a positive personal and cultural identity.

One of the best ways to honour all children's identities, and at the same time to strengthen home-school and school-community ties, is to bring parents and other community members into the school as valued helpers and resources; it is also useful to take children out to see and participate in diverse community and work settings in the neighbourhood. Such community-based curriculum, while simple and enjoyable, offers a multitude of benefits by combining community studies, career awareness, and neighbourhood safety. (There may have to be additional planning and organization for community-based curriculum in municipalities with few activities, programs, and resources in French.)

Early Childhood Education is one way of creating learning contexts for young children. There are others for those who will not be participating in ECE but will be cared for at home; the network of support and education described in the section on birth to age 3 must continue, along with parent-friendly policies in the workplace, and the informational outreach suggested earlier. Some schools already operate drop-in centres for parents and others who care for young children; and some of these centres are located elsewhere in communities. Parenting courses and adult and family literacy courses are offered, through both schools and community agencies. School libraries can also be available to parents of young children, especially if an older child already attends school. Public libraries offer resources for children and parents in many languages.

In the following pages, we build on the idea of a learning system that is continuous from age 3 through secondary school, and is based on the belief that children can know and do much more by the time they are adolescents than is now the case. That concept rests on the fundamental premise that, having entered compulsory schooling with the advantages of Early Childhood Education, children will be predisposed to become literate and numerate in the primary grades. An early start - whether at home, at school, or

ideally, both - will enable teachers and students to embark on the common curriculum with high expectations.

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## Endnotes (Chapter 7)

1. See, for example:
  - R. Arend, F. Gove, and A. Sroufe, "Continuity of Individual Adaptation from Infancy to Kindergarten: A Predictive Study of Ego-Resiliency and Curiosity in Pre-Schoolers," *Child Development* 50, no. 4 (1979): 950-59.
  - J.K. Kielcot-Glaser and R. Glaser, "Stress and Immune Function in Humans," in *Psychoneuroimmunology*, 2nd edition, ed. R. Ader, D.L. Felten, and N. Cohen (New York: Academic Press, 1991), p. 849-67.
  - U. Shafir, M. Ogilvie, and M. Bryson, "Attention to Errors and Learning: Across-Task and Across-Domain Analysis of the Post-Failure Reflectivity Measure," *Cognitive Development* 5, no. 4 (1990): 405-25.
2. Ontario, Ministry of Education and Training, *Better Beginnings, Better Futures Project: Model, Program and Research Overview* (Toronto, 1994). Prepared by R. DeV. Peters and C.C. Russell.
3. J.R. Berreuta-Clement and others, *Changed Lives* (Ypsilanti, MI: High/Scope, 1984).
4. S. Griffin and others, "Providing the Central Conceptual Prerequisites for First Formal Learning of Arithmetic to Students at Risk for School Failure," in *Classroom Lessons: Integrating Cognitive Theory and Classroom Practice*, ed. K. McGilly (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press/Bradford Books, 1994), p. 25-50.
5. P.M. Bickers, "Effects of Kindergarten Scheduling: A Summary of Research," Research Briefs series (Arlington, VA: Educational Research Service, 1989).
6. Ontario, Ministry of Education, *Kindergarten Programs: Comparison and Follow-Up of Full- and Half-Day Programs* (Toronto, 1986). Prepared by J.H. Bates and others.
7. Berreuta-Clement and others, *Changed Lives*. Also, W.S. Barnett, "Benefit-Cost Analysis of Pre-School Education: Findings from a 25-Year Follow-Up," *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry* 63, no. 4 (1993): 500-508.
8. Goddard, "Educators Eye French Success," *Toronto Star*, 5 June 1994.
9. Ian McMahan, "Public Preschool from the Age of Two: The Ecole Maternelle in France," *Young Children* (July 1992): 22- 25.
10. K. Sylva, "School Influences on Children's Development," *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry* 35 (1994): 135-70.
11. Ontario, Ministry of Education, *Ontario Study of the Relevance of Education, and the Issue of Dropouts* (Toronto, 1987), p. 125. Prepared by George Radwanski.
12. K. Sylva and P. Moss, "Learning Before School," NCE Briefing no. 8 (London, England: National Commission on Education, 1992).
13. U. Bronfenbrenner, *The Ecology of Human Development* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press,

1979).

14. K. Swick, *Teacher-Parent Partnerships to Enhance School Success in Early Childhood* (Washington, DC: National Education Association, 1991).
15. See, for example:
  - R.G. Stennett, *Early Identification System: Six-Year Followup of the Grade 1 Class of 1978-79* (London, ON: London Board of Education, 1985).
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