

**In response to “All-day classes: Too much, too soon” (*Windsor Star*, June 9, 2011)**

The recent news stories in the Windsor Star based on a small scale study by Rachel Heydon, challenging the value and experience of children in full day kindergarten is built on spotty reports from a pilot study in two Ontario classrooms suggesting that the new Full Day Kindergarten program may harm children based on too much academics and too little play. Although recent news stories have acknowledged that a study of two classrooms doesn't give us a clear picture, some journalists truly believe further study will prove the researchers right.

To the contrary, research underway at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education at the University of Toronto in three dozen full day kindergarten classrooms across several school boards is suggesting that the kindergarten program and the staffing combination of an early childhood educator and kindergarten teacher provides play-based learning for children and is moderating the push-down pressures from Grade 3 testing. Interestingly, the press releases on the pilot study that the Windsor Star quote from, have been withdrawn in error.

In fact the study was carried out in a half-day kindergarten program and one childcare program. No full day kindergarten programs were involved.

This particular example of translating limited research into a news story should have been based on more journalistic research or “homework” before reaching the broad conclusions in the editorial. Our young children deserve reasoned and informed debate with real evidence.

The response from the lead researcher in the form of a letter to the editor (“Kindergarten Pilot Only Preliminary” *Windsor Star*, June 15, 2011), suggests that the journalist misconstrued the result findings. However, it is also incumbent that researchers are thoughtful about how they communicate their work to ensure fairness, credibility and most important clarity describing the limits of the “pilot study”.

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