

Implementing Full-Day Learning For Four- and Five-Year-Olds

February 17, 2010

Ontario's new legislation

The Full-Day Early Learning Statute Law Amendment Act, 2010, would, if passed, amend the Education Act to:

- Give school boards the responsibility and authority to implement full-day early learning for four- and five-year-olds, staffed by teachers and early childhood educators
- Give school boards the responsibility and authority to implement an extended day program - before- and after-school -for four- and five-year-olds, led by early childhood educators
- Permit boards to offer before- and after-school programs for older children (ages six to 12)
- Permit boards to offer programs throughout the year for children aged four to 12, including non-instructional days such as professional development days, school breaks and summer holidays
- Give boards the authority and responsibility to set, charge and collect fees for the before- and after-school programs
- Recognize the new role of early childhood educators in elementary schools
- Require collaboration among teachers and early childhood educators to provide high-quality and effective play-based education to support enhanced learning and cognitive, emotional and social development for children.

If passed, the legislation would also make necessary amendments to the Education Act to ensure the entire full-day learning program and its staff are held to the same high quality and safety standards as any other component of the education system.

An enriched, integrated program

In September 2010, Ontario's new full-day learning program for four- and five-year-olds will be offered in approximately 600 schools across the province. In this new program, our youngest students will benefit from a full day of learning with both a teacher and an early childhood educator in the classroom and an integrated, extended before- and after-school program, led by an early childhood educator.

The before- and after-school program is optional and parents would pay a reasonable fee if they enrol their child. Subject to legislative approval, school boards will set and collect fees. Subsidies will be available to some families based on need.

This innovative new program will build on the strong kindergarten programs already in place across the province. Schools and boards that currently offer their own full-day kindergarten program will continue to do so and will eventually align with the provincial program.