

## Full-day kindergarten makes a difference

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As a superintendent of schools, I see firsthand the difference that access to early education has on the success of young people. These early educational experiences in a child's life actually shape the architecture of the developing brain. That's right, children who build a strong foundation in the early years do have a much better chance at succeeding in school and in life. That's why we need to ensure that New Hampshire's kids have access to full-day kindergarten which will help prepare them for the future.

Academic success, civic engagement and a strong workforce depend on our ability to nurture qualities such as initiative, self-confidence, persistence and an ability to work well with others. These are skills that can be further developed in all children through quality full-day kindergarten. Unfortunately, the majority of New Hampshire families with young children do not have access to full-day public kindergarten. It is essential that we make full day kindergarten available in every school district.

Studies suggest that every dollar spent on expanding early education yields \$8.60 in savings for our communities. That's because early experiences shape the developing brain, setting a strong or precarious foundation for all of the development that follows. Investing in early education that builds these strong foundations have been shown to yield long term savings in expenses for special education, child welfare, juvenile justice, adult welfare and unemployment. This is precisely the reason why New Hampshire must ensure that all of the communities in this state have access to full-day kindergarten. New Hampshire has the second-lowest number of full-day kindergarten programs in the country. We can and must do better to ensure that our youngest citizens have the chance to thrive.

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