



EARLY LEARNING

For most children, kindergarten will be the first time they experience a full-day learning environment in a public school setting. It's an experience that should be positive and encouraging, designed to bolster a child's love for school and for life-long learning. At OSSTF/FEESO, we know that none of that happens by accident.

We know that when a child has a learning disability, delays in assessment and identification can negatively affect learning and jeopardize a child's growth and success at school for years to come. Early intervention is key. The earlier we offer appropriate supports, the more likely that a child will be able to embrace learning opportunities and find success.

We know that the Early Learning classroom must be a safe place for all children. But in Ontario today, many students are struggling with the trauma of witnessing violence in classrooms, and some are at direct risk of injury when violence occurs. That's why we need two qualified educators in each Early Learning classroom. When we ensure that our most vulnerable children have the specialized support of highly-trained educational support staff, we are helping to ensure the well-being of every child in the classroom.

We also know that play-based education is central to the development of young children. Through play-based inquiry, children consolidate their knowledge, learn social skills, and express their emotions. Early childhood educators, as key members of the education team, bring that essential component to the full-day kindergarten classroom.

OSSTF/FEESO IS CALLING FOR:

- Equitable and timely access to professional student services to ensure that the Early Learning team is fully prepared to help every child reach their full potential.
- A commitment to safeguard the well-being of children with special needs through the presence of highly-trained educational assistants. When we do this, we enhance the learning of every child in the classroom.
- A teacher and an early childhood educator in each kindergarten classroom to ensure a robust, play-based learning environment where every student will benefit and feel supported.
- School boards to spend their Early Learning funding allocation on kindergarten classrooms.