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Teachers Speak Out Against School Reforms

New Report Documents How Mandates Fail Poor Young Children

BOSTON – January 9, 2017 – In the wake of federal and state education mandates, a new report documents interviews with early childhood teachers across the country about how school reforms negatively affect low-income young children.

Authored by Diane E. Levin, Professor of Early Childhood Education, Wheelock College and Judith L. Van Hoorn, Professor Emerita, University of the Pacific and published by Defending the Early Years, the report finds that the mandates disregard teachers' knowledge of child development, culturally appropriate practice and how to meet the diverse educational needs of poor children.

"Today, many teachers are now confronted with a profound ethical dilemma: instead of providing an educational program that will do the most good for their children, they must now focus on finding ways to do the least harm," says Diane Levin.

Interviews with teachers of low-income children revealed that the mandates not only negatively affect children's overall development, learning and wellbeing, and their attitudes about school, they also have negative impacts on their families and teachers.

"With this extreme emphasis on rigorous academics, drills are emphasized. It's much harder for my children to become self-regulated learners," said one teacher interviewed for the report.

The report concludes with several recommendations including the withdrawal of current early childhood standards so they can be rethought along developmental lines and focusing on strategies to better meet the diverse needs of young children living in poverty.

To read the full report, visit:

https://www.deyproject.org/uploads/1/5/5/7/15571834/teachersspeakfinal_rgb.pdf

Or, to read the two page summary:

<https://www.deyproject.org/uploads/1/5/5/7/15571834/teachersspeaktwopagergb.pdf>

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Diane E. Levin PhD:

Diane is Professor of Early Childhood Education at Wheelock College. She studies and speaks widely on how various forces in today's society affect children—media, marketing, war and conflict, and differing approaches to parenting and education and how to promote optimal development, learning and behavior in these times. She is Cofounder of Defending the Early Years and Teachers Resisting Unhealthy Children's Entertainment (TRUCE; www.truceteachers.org). She is the author of ten books, three public health booklets, over 75 book chapters and articles, and writes opeds on her own Huffington Post webpage.

Judith L. Van Hoorn, PhD:

Judith is a Professor of Emerita, University of the Pacific. She taught as a Peace Corps Volunteer, worked for Head Start, and was Co-Director of the Mills College Children's School. She is co-author of numerous books, chapters and articles, including Play at the Center of the Curriculum and Adolescent Development and Rapid Social Change. She is past president of the Society for the Study of Peace, Conflict and Violence: Division 48 of the American Psychological Association. Currently, she is on the Board of Global Grandmothers, and serves on the National Advisory Board of Defending the Early Years.

Defending the Early Years:

Founded in 2012, Defending the Early Years is committed to supporting and nurturing the needs and rights of young children and promoting best practices in early childhood education. DEY is a non-profit project of the Survival Education Fund, Inc. - a 501(c) 3 educational organization. For more information visit www.deyproject.org

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