

# TOO MUCH TOO SOON CAMPAIGN

## THEY'RE TOO YOUNG TO FAIL

The Too Much Too Soon Campaign was launched in September 2013 with an open letter to The Telegraph signed by 127 eminent advisors and early years experts. It achieved significant national and international attention.

## THE FACTS:

- Young children In England are being negatively impacted by the downward pressures of the schooling system.
- There is no evidence to support the claim that an early introduction to formal learning results in improved performance later, in fact the opposite is the case.
- The children most at risk in the current system are those that most need the right early support i.e. those from disadvantaged backgrounds, the summerborn and premature babies.
- Developmental readiness is an essential prerequisite for successful learning. It cannot be accelerated.
- Developmentally inappropriate pressures harm young children's wellbeing and their motivation to learn.
- In the last decade, there has been a steep increase in the number of primary school children suffering signs of depression with children as young as five now suffering from the condition.
- There is growing concern about the possible high levels of misdiagnosis of special educational needs in the early years.

## THE OBJECTIVES OF THE CAMPAIGN ARE TO:

### 1. Re-establish the Early Years as a unique stage in its own right and not simply a preparation for school

A vital and productive society with a prosperous and sustainable future is built on a foundation of healthy childhood. It is a crucial and enormously active period of human development during which we develop the building blocks that then underpin later learning dispositions, values, personal wellbeing and achievement.

### 2. Protect young children's natural developmental rights:

Article 3 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child says that 'In all actions concerning children, whether undertaken by public or private social welfare institutions, courts of law, administrative authorities or legislative bodies, the best interests of the child shall be a primary consideration. We need to ensure that this is the case.

### 3. Prevent baseline testing

There are many dangers in applying tests to young children, especially with the imposition of developmental 'norms'. Children's capabilities may be misjudged, results are neither reliable nor valid due to the wide variation in prior experience and children may experience 'failure' with the subsequent impact on their wellbeing and learning dispositions



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A DAYNURSERY.CO.UK POLL SHOWED THAT **98%** OF THE RESPONDENTS WERE **AGAINST THE IDEA OF BASELINE TESTING**

#### 4. Reinstate the vital role of play

Play has been badly misunderstood by policy-makers. It is, in fact, 'the work of the child'. Through play children develop their thinking capacities, consolidate their conceptual understanding, learn about the minds of others, process and work through emotionally difficult experiences, extend their knowledge and ideas and use their creativity while developing their imagination, dexterity, and physical, cognitive, and emotional strength. It is essential to healthy child development.

#### 5. Call for a developmentally appropriate Foundation Stage in England for children between the ages of 3 and 7 (until the end of Key Stage 1)

It's really not about the school starting age, but about young children engaging playfully in sensitively structured, creative and responsive environments, in the company of well-trained, professional and loving adults who invest in a link with the whole family. This gives children the opportunity to develop all their physical, mental, emotional and social capacities and, most importantly, enables the healthy neurological development of their brain architecture that can then support higher level learning

**OVERWHELMING PUBLIC SUPPORT OF 75 - 90% FOR A LATER START TO FORMAL SCHOOLING WAS SHOWN TO CAMPAIGN VOX POLLS RUN BY BOTH THE DAILY TELEGRAPH & THE GUARDIAN**

## WHAT WE ARE ASKING YOU TO DO

- Look at the evidence
- Support the experts in the field
- Ask questions of those in power
- Defend children's natural developmental rights
- Link early development with healthy, sustainable societies
- Ensure that we get it right in 2015

**PLEASE HELP US TO BUILD A BETTER FUTURE FOR OUR CHILDREN**

All the facts are on our website



[www.toomuchtoosoon.org](http://www.toomuchtoosoon.org)

