



EDUCATION FOR A FREE NATION

## False Data in Ready4K Baby Ed Agenda

**Ready4K and other organizations have engaged in an expensive advertising campaign throughout Minnesota, attempting to scare the public with statements that half of our children begin school not ready for kindergarten. This information is false.**

**Ready4K baits the public and legislators with talk about helping “at risk” children. Then they vastly exaggerate the number of children at risk. Finally, they switch to their “Five Year Plan for each child in Minnesota.” Ready4K lobbies for a state system of early care for all children. We call this a Nanny State.**

**The Ready4K plan would screen all children for mental health at least once by age three. Their plan would put state bureaucrats in charge of defining and indoctrinating all our children in controversial worldview attitudes and values (such as “gender identity,” diversity training, social activism, environmentalism, and job focus), beginning at birth. Their plan would: assess all children at least once by the age of three for their acceptance of these worldview attitudes and values; train parents in these worldview attitudes and values; monitor “all early care and education settings with accountability measures”; require school districts to report on the school kindergarten readiness in their districts; and reward compliance with state grant money.**

**Ready 4 K states:**

“Only one-half of Minnesota children start kindergarten fully prepared for success.” (Website)

**Minnesota Education Commissioner Seagren states:**

“Recently, an advertising campaign was launched overstating that half of our young learners are ‘not fully prepared’ for kindergarten. The radio and TV spots go on to say that these children will be doomed to a life of economic hardship and even prison. The ads ask parents to call legislators to say they are ‘scared for our children.’

“The advocates sponsoring these ads base their claims on some early learning studies done by the Minnesota Education Department. But those studies did not draw dividing lines between children at different levels of development. They did not brand some students ready or not ready for kindergarten.

“The Education Department studies do show that between 2 percent and 11 percent of children do not yet demonstrate some skills or behaviors they need for success in school. Another group, about half, are in the process of acquiring those skills.

”They should succeed in schools that offer solid academic programs. The rest show full proficiency.

“If the claims of the advertising campaign were true, it would certainly show up three years later in the third-grade Minnesota Comprehensive Assessment results for reading and math ability. In fact, in 2004, 74 percent of Minnesota third-graders achieved proficient scores in the reading assessment; 71 percent were proficient or better in math. Some of those successful students must have been in the group ‘not fully prepared’ for kindergarten.”

“Spending money on advertising that attempts to scare the public and brand children as failures before the age of 5 does a disservice to families and to the good work of those in the field of school readiness.” (*Pioneer Press*, Feb. 06, 2005)

**The school readiness studies done in Minnesota directly quote the controversial state early learning standards. They are very subjective and so broad as to be almost meaningless, assessing such things as:**

“Shows beginning understanding of numbers and quantity”

“Shows as appreciation for books and reading

“Shows eagerness and curiosity as a learner.”

“Shows empathy and caring for others.” (Minnesota Work Sampling System)

**Ready 4 K states:**

“Analysis of the most current brain research and state fiscal data show that a child five years of age has completed 75% of the physical brain development that will occur during her lifetime, but has only experienced less than five percent of the public investments in education and development that will be made between birth and age 23.” (Website)

**The very document that Ready4K and Art Rolnick use to discuss the urgency of early childhood education based on brain research states:**

“Assertions that the die has been cast by the time the child enters school are not supported by neuroscience evidence and can create unwarranted pessimism about the potential efficacy of interventions that are initiated after the preschool years.” (Jack Schonkoff and Deborah Phillips, ed., *From Neurons to Neighborhoods: The Science of Early Childhood Development*, National Academy Press, p. 216)

**Ready 4 K states:**

“In fact, the research confirming the benefits of early education on healthy child development has existed for over 30 years and we now know, through the work of top economists, that investment in young children and families yields substantial financial returns for the state.” (Website)

**Edward Ziglar, co-founder of Head Start, states:**

“This is not the first time universal preschool education has been proposed . . . Then, as now, the arguments in favor of preschool education were that it would reduce school failure, lower dropout rates, increase test scores, and produce a generation of more competent high school graduates . . . Preschool education will achieve none of these results...Those who argue in favor of universal preschool education ignore evidence that indicates early schooling is inappropriate for many four-year olds and that it may even be harmful to their development.” (Edward Ziglar, director of the Bush Center in Child Development and Social Policy at Yale University, “Formal Schooling for Four-Year-Olds? No” in *Early Schooling: the National Debate*, ed. Sharon L. Kagan and Edward F. Zigler (1987) New Haven, CT, Yale University Press. Emphasis added.)