



## University of Wyoming Early Care and Education Center Statement on Kindergarten Readiness

We believe that the focus on “Kindergarten readiness” in early childhood education has changed the way that parents, teachers, schools, and society view children. Some of the results that are negatively impacting young children include:

- Prioritizing certain discrete skills such as letter and shape recognition, name-writing, or cutting, while ignoring other vitally important characteristics that contribute to learning success.
- Placing blame on the child, the family, or the preschool if these discrete skills are not achieved before entry into Kindergarten.
- Viewing children from a deficit perspective – assessing and focusing on what a child cannot do rather than celebrating each child’s strengths and contributions.
- Defining some children as “ready” to learn while others are not.
- Implying that what a child could be expected to know and do at the end of the Kindergarten year is best accomplished before entry into Kindergarten.
- Seeing children as a set of skills rather than as unique individuals with rights.
- Reliance on contrived rewards and punishments to motivate children’s behaviors.
- The creation of “cookie cutter” learning environments that do not reflect the unique children and teachers in each classroom.
- Sterilizing curriculum and assessment so that it can easily be measured using standardized instruments.
- Ignoring relationships as the foundation for all learning.

*We believe that early childhood educators have a choice in responding to these pressures and challenges. While we support parents as they navigate the stressful transition to schools that prioritize readiness, we also choose not to alter our program philosophy in response to these outside pressures.*

We believe that the emergence of literacy in young children is an exciting process that begins at birth, and that parents and teachers play an important role in facilitating a child’s experiences with language and literacy. We also believe that literacy is much more than naming letters or writing a child’s name and that literacy is best learned in authentic contexts in a child’s life.

We believe that recognizing and enriching children’s capacities to love, experience joy, act independently, care for others, create, make connections, solve problems, and contribute to a community must be the focus of education.

We believe that children have the right to learn in schools that value them as unique individuals and recognize their human rights. We believe that children’s voices must be heard. We believe that teachers must prioritize their relationships with children above all else.

We believe that it is the job of parents, teachers, schools, and society to recognize and celebrate that all children come to us “ready”.