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Letters to the editor, Oct. 3, 2010: Educare center path to future



Educare teacher Emily Clark watches as students Caleb Chase and Jia Li Kao play on swings in the Natural Playground at the Waterville school.

2010 Telegram file

I was pleased to read the Sept. 6 article about New England's first Educare center. The Waterville facility sets a gold standard for the highest quality early education for Maine's youngest citizens.

High quality early education is also good for Maine's businesses and economy. A report from the national business leader organization, Americas Edge, found these investments provide a strong boost to local businesses -- generating as much or more in sales of local goods and services as investments in construction, manufacturing, transportation or utilities.

In fact, almost \$2 is generated from every \$1 invested in high-quality early learning. These investments would also create new jobs and reduce the significant monetary losses to businesses from absenteeism caused by employees' childcare problems.

These programs also benefit businesses in the long term. Children who participate in high-quality early learning programs are significantly more likely to enter school with the underlying skills needed to succeed in school and later in the workforce.

These programs have been proven to increase graduation rates and increase rates of employment by as much as 22 percent.

Educare will provide Maine with an amazing learning laboratory. It is my hope that the youngsters there will grow up to become Maine's future community and business leaders.

I also hope that Maine's next governor and legislators will pay close attention to the lessons we learn from Educare and work to ensure that such high-quality early education and care is made available to more Maine children all across our state.

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