

Study: Developmental program helps students

By Casey Hans
staff writer

A seven-month study of the Farmington Public Schools' Early Fives developmental kindergarten program showed the program helped, not hurt, student learning.

That was a surprise to Farmington school officials, some of whom theorized the study would show little difference between Early Fives students and other, and had considered dropping the program. Developmental kindergarten programs like Early Fives are designed to give special attention to youngsters who are not developmentally ready to begin regular kindergarten.

"I was questioning it very seriously," said assistant superintendent for curriculum, Judith White who initiated the study because of national trends away from developmental kindergarten in 1988. The district

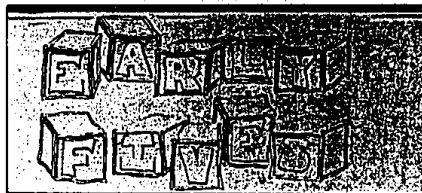
had also moved into a developmental kindergarten for students through grade three, and wondered if the Early Fives program was needed.

"There were a lot of questions — was it labeling children? What was it doing to them?" White added. "People all around us were getting rid of programs, and we, frankly, felt the pressure."

"As a result of this study... we made conclusions we probably wouldn't have made."

ACCORDING to consultant Robert Pepper, the study used a sampling of 73 pairs of students, half who went through the Early Fives program and half who were recommended for it but who did not enroll in the program, who were used as a "comparison group." Students were matched by gender and age.

Using years 3-6 of the Early Fives program, which would include the



years 1982-85, various data were matched by computer and analyzed between the two study groups and districtwide results. Measures included the Iowa Test for Basic Skills, MEAP scores, cognitive tests, report card grades, and parent surveys.

A minimum probability level of .05 was applied in all analyses.

The study showed:

- Of 10 measures, eight were shown to favor Early Fives students.
- Consistently, Early Fives students had higher scores in academic testing when compared with other groups.
- Early Fives students were found to have 12 times fewer retentions, or being held back in school, than their comparison group. They also had two times fewer remedial reading services.

In report cards, Early Fives showed higher achievement marks in reading, math and discussion areas in third grade and better attendance and higher grade point averages for both language arts and math in seventh grade.

The report recommended the program be continued, and that an Early Fives data base be updated to monitor the future of the program. The report also recommended the district look at alternative methods of assessing student achievement.

One local grandparent and former elementary school teacher spoke out against the developmental kindergarten concept, saying she was concerned about the students who are moved normally through the system

having to compete with the older students who are held back for a program like Early Fives.

Her comments reflect some of the concern raised about developmental programs over the years.

"I must protest against gimmicks like Early Fives," said Helen Gornowski. "Tinkering with chronological age does not solve problems but creates them." She called for grouping older children and revising curriculum to handle such problems.

Farmington Superintendent Michael Flanagan said he was pleased with the results and discussion generated, and said the district is attempting to find grant money to hire an evaluation person to do similar studies of programs in the district.

"It's bigger than Early Fives — it's much bigger for us," he added. "It's gratifying to see this work has paid off."

Exhibit looks at graduation memorabilia

It's high school graduation season, of course.

And to honor 1991 graduates, there's a Farmington Public Schools graduation retrospective on exhibit in the Farmington Hills Historical Commission display case in the Farmington Hills City Hall.

The exhibit was put together by Kay Briggs, historical commission chairwoman.

The exhibit includes her aunt Jennie Cox's 1892 diploma signed by

J.P. Field, principal, and the school board, which included C.W. Bolzard, Fred M. Warner and M.H. Power, all from pioneering families. Warner went on to become Michigan's first three-term governor (1905-11).

Pictures include the Union School, built in 1888 and that burned in 1918, the old Farmington High, which stood from 1918 to 1953, the current Farmington High, which recently underwent renovation, and (for comparison) the graduation classes of

1896, 1952 and 1991.

There's also a copy of Farmington High's closing exercises on June 26, 1951 and a picture of the graduating class of 1929 at Mount Vernon on its class trip.

THE EXHIBIT includes the book-shaped diploma from Kay Briggs' 1929 graduating class, her mother Minnie Cox's 1898 graduation picture and certificate, and a picture of her uncle Edgar's 1896 graduating class.

The Briggs family had students at the Union School as well as the two Farmington highs, Kay Briggs proudly points out.

Her mother, Minnie, had seven brothers and sisters, all of whom graduated from Farmington High between 1892 and 1919.

"At the school's annual banquet in 1924, honoring the centennial of the

founding of Farmington, my family was honored for having the most graduates up until that time," Briggs said.

Her graduation retrospective runs through June in the lobby off the city council chambers in the Farmington Hills City Hall, 11 Mile and Orchard Lake Road.

Farmington Observer

(USPS 187-840)

Published every Monday and Thursday by Observer & Eclectic Newspapers, 505 E. Maple, Farmington, MI 48009-0910. Second-class postage paid at Farmington, MI 48009-0910. Postmaster: Send address changes to Observer & Eclectic Newspapers, 505 E. Maple, Farmington, MI 48009-0910, Telephone 544-1100.

SUBSCRIPTION RATES
(in Oakland County)
One year . . . \$38.40
(Elsewhere in Michigan)
Newsstand . . . per copy, 50¢
One year . . . \$55.00
(Elsewhere in U.S.A.)

One year . . . \$80.00
All advertising published in the Farmington Observer is subject to the conditions stated in the applicable rate card, copies of which are available from the advertising department, 21898 Farmington Road, Farmington, MI 48336 (313) 477-5450. The Farmington Observer reserves the right not to accept an advertiser's order. Observer & Eclectic's ad-takers have no authority to bind this newspaper and only publication of an advertisement shall constitute final acceptance of the advertiser's order.

O&E Classifieds work!

an an inexpensive cabinet really be this good?

Absolutely! Brand new Encore cabinetry has been designed from the beginning to be the very best value on the market. Encore brings quality construction, longer life, convenience features, plus a great selection of styles to you at very affordable prices. We're excited about conveniently affordable Encore Cabinetry. See us today and find out just how good Encore cabinetry really is.

Introducing New Encore Cabinetry

ENCORE
Conveniently Affordable Cabinetry

Kitchen TOP SHOP
31166 Eight Mile Rd. • Farmington Hills
E. of Merriman (Orchard Lake)
477-1515 Open Thursday
Until 9:00 p.m.

BioGuard

FUN IN THE SUN SALE

ALGICIDE 28X[®] ONLY **\$3.59** OT.

BioGuard Computerized Water Analysis

\$2.00 OFF

Save \$2.00 when you purchase one quart of BioGuard[®] Polysheen[®] BioGuard[®] Polysheen[®] Polish your water for a sparkling pool.

One coupon per purchase.

SUPER SOLUBLE ORGANIC CHLORINE CONCENTRATE

\$49.99 16 LBS.

B-3 POOLS AND SPAS

LIVONIA
29440 SIX MILE
522-SWIM

DEARBORN HTS.
19224 VAN BORN
274-3242

BARBARA LEVINE-BLASE D.O.

announces the relocation of her office for the practice of

OBSTETRICS & GYNECOLOGY

at

ST. JOSEPH MERCY MEDICAL CENTER

28270 Orchard Lake Rd.
Farmington Hills, MI 48334
(313) 855-6773

PLYMOUTH FLOOR COVERING

- Bradley
- Anderson
- Bruce
- McAnnamon
- Harco

33760 Plymouth Road • Livonia
One Block W. of Farmington Road **427-7120**

Hardwood Flooring Center

"I insisted on the most expensive eyeglasses made. But my optician talked me into the best."

DOLAN OPTICAL CO.
Since 1964

Large selection of Men's, Women's & Children's Eyewear. Two year warranty on all frames. 7001 Orchard Lake Road West Bloomfield **855-3360**. Open weekdays and Saturdays.

WE CAN TURN A SUMMER VACATION INTO A GREAT SCHOOL YEAR.

Summertime is a fun time and a good time to get a head start on the school year. Just a couple of hours a week this summer at a Sylvan Learning Center can help your child do better this fall in subjects ranging from reading and writing to basic math and algebra.

Sylvan guarantees when enrolled in our basic reading or math, your child will improve at least one full grade equivalent score after first 36 hours of instruction, or we will provide up to 12 additional hours of instruction at no further cost.

Product: Reading, Math Writing, Study Skills, Reading, Algebra, College Prep, ACT/MAT Preparation.

5755 W. Maple (West of Orchard Lake Rd.) West Bloomfield **737-2880**

40% OFF

ALL PENNSYLVANIA HOUSE FURNITURE!

2 WEEKS ONLY

You loved it the last time, so we're bringing it back. Classic Interiors is bringing back factory-authorized savings of 40% on all Pennsylvania House Furniture.

Bedrooms, dining rooms, living rooms in solid cherry, oak, pine, mahogany, and more. Comfortable, custom-tailored sofas and chairs in styles you'll love. All Pennsylvania House — all on sale. Visit Classic Interiors today...Michigan's leading Pennsylvania House dealer.

PENNSYLVANIA HOUSE
It's what we're known for.

Classic Interiors
Fine Furniture...where quality costs you less

20292 Middlebelt, LIVONIA • South of 8 Mile
474-6900

SALE ENDS Mon., June 24th All Previous Sales Excluded