

New Zealand Conservative

Sine dominico non possumus

22 Five year olds too young to start school

oct Posted by Lucia Maria in [Children](#), [Education](#), [Lucia](#)

A while back I posted on the shock, horror many here in NZ felt over many [five year olds not be able to hold a pencil when they started school](#). For in NZ, you see, they start school right on their fifth birthday, and holding a pencil is surely something that pre-schools ought to be teaching. In these enlightened days of turning children into little adults, much is expected of them by the time they are five.

Now, Cambridge University has released a study in Britain that shows not only is there no benefit to five years olds starting formal schooling, but that starting at five could actually be detrimental to long term learning.

LONDON, October 21, 2009 (LifeSiteNews.com) - A study of primary education by Cambridge University recommends that formal schooling of children should begin at the age of six, a year later than the present norm in the UK.

The 608-page Cambridge Primary Review, which was based on 28 surveys and 1,052 written submissions by 14 authors, 66 research consultants and an advisory committee, said there was no evidence suggesting formal teaching environments benefited young children, and that **introducing children at the age of five into the structure and discipline of a classroom could even be harmful**.

So where did the idea of starting school at age 5 come from?

England's custom of starting school at five, shared in Europe only by Wales, Scotland and the Netherlands, dates from the **requirements of Victorian factory owners**, the report states, and warns of the "Stalinist overtones of a 'state theory of learning'" enforced by the "machinery of surveillance and accountability."

Machinery of surveillance and accountability is what the National Government is trying to introduce in NZ with state standards in primary school. If little Johnny can't hold a pencil at age five, it'll be catalogued in some database somewhere, to be kept in perpetuity.

Naturally, the British Government is not impressed.

The government dismissed the review as "disappointing" and out of date.

Schools Minister Vernon Coaker said the recommendations would actually disadvantage British school children.

"It's disappointing that a review which purports to be so comprehensive is simply not up to speed on many major changes in primaries," he said.

"The world has moved on since this review was started. We want to make sure children are playing and learning from an early age and to give parents the choice for their child to start in the September following their fourth birthday."

Blah, de, blah, de, blah, de, blah.

Funny, I seem to remember a certain Helen Clark talking about "moving on" whenever things came up that were politically uncomfortable. Must be something else from the Stalinist playbook.

Related Link: [Cambridge Study Says 5-year-olds Too Young To Start School ~ LifeSiteNews](#)

This entry was posted on Thursday, October 22, 2009.

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