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Letter from the President

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Letter from the President

BY LYNN BIGELMAN

As the new year began, many schools for the first time introduced full-day kindergarten programs. Imagine how fantastic this truly is that young children now have the time to linger over learning. The purpose of implementation was not to raise the academic bar for young children, but to give them the appropriate time they need to explore, wonder, and discover learning inside and outside the classroom.

As a school principal, my biggest concern was over the lunchtime experience. How would they manage the lunch room, hold their trays, manipulate their lunch boxes, and, of course, stay safe and happy at the same time? I spent the first few weeks of school in the lunch room with three classes of kindergarteners, and what I found were children capable of much more than I realized. The experiences in the lunchroom were charming and reassuring. For example, during the first week of school, I gently leaned over a child and said, "Honey, are you done?" He promptly responded, "No, I'm Joshua!" The children continue to amaze and charm me.

In an age where the term "response to intervention" is a commonplace phrase, I am quite sure that full



Bigelman

day kindergarten is our most authentic vehicle toward intervention. By investing in our youth and giving them valuable learning experiences, we are giving them great opportunities toward literacy achievement.

Our young children are taking the first steps toward walking on the "Bridges to Lifelong Literacy." The theme for this year's conference in Grand Rapids will address not only our young children, but all learners as we continue our common goal toward lifelong literacy.

Sincerely,

Lynn Bigelman
President MRA