

Group opposes British pre-school law

by UPI

LONDON -- Child psychologists said Friday that a new curriculum for British pre-schools could damage young children by forcing them into an academic mold. The group announced the formation of an organization called Open Eye to publicize the curriculum, which becomes law next year, The Times of London reported. The psychologists accused the government of introducing the Early Years Foundation "by stealth." The curriculum aims to introduce 3- and 4-year-olds to basic language and mathematics, including writing simple sentences, using phonics to sound out words and arithmetic to solve real-life problems. The curriculum would be mandatory in all pre-schools, public and private. Open Eye leaders, including psychologists Richard House, Dorothy Rowe and Penelope Leach and Sue Palmer, author of "Toxic Childhood," said that young children learn best through play and imitating other children and adults. "An early 'head start' in literacy is now known to precipitate unforeseen difficulties later on -- sometimes including unpredictable emotional and behavioral problems," they said in a letter.

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