TWO CONTRASTING APPROACHES TO EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

Traditional Academic Focus

123 = Learning to name, write and count numbers

ABC = Learning to name, sound, recite and write letters

Inquiry/Play-based Learning Focus

Block play
Measuring projects
Sorting games

Learning numbers and ALSO understanding the meaning of numbers, and the way math is used in different settings

Reading books
Using labels, letters and word games
Rich conversations

Learning letters, and ALSO understanding the power of words; getting excited about using them for meaning

Positive
◆ Helpful in gaining elements of basic reading, writing and math skills

Negative
◆ Less enjoyment of learning
◆ Less independence as a learner
◆ Research shows poorer results after 3rd grade when the focus switches from “learning to read” to “reading to learn”

RESULTS

Positive
◆ Helpful in gaining elements of basic reading, writing and math, PLUS music, art and science
◆ Greater enjoyment of learning
◆ Research shows better success in school, especially after 3rd grade
◆ Increased problem solving and other skills such as sharing, confidence, and sticking to a project, that employers are increasingly looking for.

Negative
◆ None known

RESULTS