

Mindi Shelow, Teacher

I taught nursery/pre-k for 14 years and elementary school 18 years so far. I teach first grade, but have taught K-3. The students I'm getting, as the "bar is raised by Common Core" are slightly higher level reading than when I began, but are emotionally and socially so far behind and getting further each year. We, in NYC, have a cut off date of 12/31. So we are trying to force reading, sitting, fine motor skills, and abstract math beginning at age 4. They are not ready. They are not able. They have no way to rebel other than act out or develop self harm habits like hair pulling and nail biting. When they come to 1st, they have no self control or social skills, because they didn't learn in the developmentally correct way-play. They were all expected to comply and meet standards they were not ready for. They don't understand the math I have to teach, then they fail tests. The CC says they will develop greater number sense this way rather than memorization. This might be true, if in early childhood years they were allowed to develop true number sense, and not given 6 ways to do something till only confusion is left. It might be true if we weren't asking 5 year olds to do algebra which their brains don't understand. It might be true if we weren't giving multistep word problems to students who can't read and haven't mastered addition or subtraction. They develop "I can't" attitudes and feelings of failure starting in K. How can anyone advocate this continue?