



SPONSOR: Rep. Q. Johnson & Sen. Hansen

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
149th GENERAL ASSEMBLY

HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 23

DESIGNATING MAY 10, 2017, AS “EARLY CHILDHOOD ADVOCACY DAY” IN THE STATE OF DELAWARE.

WHEREAS, one of Delaware's most valuable resources is its young children, from birth to age 8; and

WHEREAS, science documents that early experiences shape the brain’s architecture and set the foundation for a child’s lifelong health and success in school and career; and

WHEREAS, learning begins at birth, making it critical for all children in this State to have access to high-quality care; and

WHEREAS, 65% of children under age six in the United States have all available parents in the workforce, making child care a necessity for parents to maintain employment; and

WHEREAS, access to affordable, high-quality care serves a public good; it benefits the economy by ensuring that parents can continue to work and it fosters the health and development of this country’s future workforce and innovators. By investing in its youngest citizens, the country would be investing in its current and future economy.

WHEREAS, research demonstrates that high-quality early learning produces a 10% return on investment in reduced health care, special education, incarceration costs, and increased productivity and tax revenues; and

WHEREAS, all Delaware children deserve a strong foundation for their health, optimal development, learning, and future success; and

WHEREAS, the environment, relationships, and learning opportunities children need to achieve their potential are a shared responsibility of families, early learning professionals, health care professionals, policy makers, and the community; and

WHEREAS, extraordinary efforts on behalf of young children have been made and are underway throughout Delaware, including: 1) building a comprehensive strategic plan with an emphasis on whole-child development, quality early learning, kindergarten readiness, and quality sustainability; 2) growing participation in Delaware Stars, with more than 49% of the state's 1,200 early learning programs voluntarily engaged in raising quality; 3) dramatically increasing access to highly rated Delaware Stars programs for children from families with low-incomes, with more than 15,800 children receiving Purchase of Care enrolled in highly-rated Delaware Stars programs, up from just 5% in 2011 to 83%; 4) catapulting the state from last in the nation to 21st in the percent of young children receiving developmental screenings,

25 with more than 158,000 developmental screenings conducted since 2011 and 25,000 in 2016 alone, which are critical for
26 detecting and addressing obstacles as early as possible; 5) launching a survey of children's physical, cognitive, and social-
27 emotional development and school readiness in preschool and at kindergarten entry; 6) serving more than 2,600 children
28 through Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation services, reducing behavioral challenges, and achieving a 99%
29 success rate in avoiding preschool suspensions; and 7) forging local community volunteer teams (Delaware Readiness
30 Teams) in high-needs areas to strengthen family, community, and school partnerships that improve children's early learning
31 experiences; and

32 WHEREAS, our children's futures, and the future of this State, are too important to leave to chance.

33 NOW, THEREFORE:

34 BE IT RESOLVED by the House of Representatives of the 149th General Assembly of the State of Delaware, the
35 Senate concurring therein, that May 10, 2017, is designated "Early Childhood Advocacy Day" to focus on the importance
36 of quality early learning for young children, for families, for employers, and for the health and viability of Delaware's
37 communities, future workforce, and economy.

38 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that Early Childhood Advocacy Day is a day to celebrate the accomplishments of
39 the past year, to rededicate ourselves to supporting Delaware's growing early childhood system, and to recognize that
40 investments in quality early care and education pay back many times their cost in both economic and social returns that
41 benefit everyone in this State.

42 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this resolution be transmitted to the Governor of the State of
43 Delaware.

SYNOPSIS

This concurrent resolution proclaims May 10, 2017, as "Early Childhood Advocacy Day" to affirm the importance of quality early learning for every citizen and every sector of our State, to celebrate the accomplishments of the past year, and to rededicate ourselves to our shared responsibility for the construction and support of a Delaware early childhood system that will positively impact children, families, communities, and workforce and economic development across the State.