

SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 29

BY SENATOR MIZELL

A RESOLUTION

To urge and request the state Department of Education to study the education and training requirements, compensation, and employment turnover rates of early childhood care and education teachers and the implications of the data surrounding these issues on child outcomes in Louisiana.

WHEREAS, through enactment of the Louisiana Early Childhood Education Act, the Early Childhood Care and Education Network, and the School Readiness Tax Credit Program, the legislature recognizes that the benefits of quality child care are indisputable and that a strong connection exists between a child's early learning experiences and readiness to enter kindergarten and ultimate academic success; and

WHEREAS, eighty percent of brain development takes place before the age of three and ninety percent by age four; and

WHEREAS, children who start school behind generally stay behind, and more than fifty-five percent of Louisiana's children entered kindergarten below grade level in literacy in the 2019-2020 school year; and

WHEREAS, two out of three young children in Louisiana have both parents or their single parent in the workforce, necessitating that the child be cared for by someone other than a parent for the majority of the day; and

WHEREAS, the cost of child care in Louisiana has risen twelve percent over the past three years and currently costs almost as much as tuition at a public college or university; and

WHEREAS, breakdowns in the provision of child care have significant impacts on parents' ability to work and impair the business community's access to a reliable workforce; and

WHEREAS, studies estimate the annual loss attributable to child care breakdowns to Louisiana's pre-COVID economy at \$1.1 billion a year; and

WHEREAS, although the state has made sweeping reforms to early child care and education, a teacher in a Type I or Type II early learning center and an assistant teacher in a Type III early learning center is not required to have even a high school diploma to be qualified to teach under current licensing regulations; and

WHEREAS, national data indicates that, despite the high child care costs borne by parents, the median wage for child care workers in Louisiana in 2019 was \$9.13 an hour, which is less than half of the average kindergarten teacher's salary; and

WHEREAS, the turnover rate among early child care and education teachers reduces the continuity of care for children and causes logistical, business issues for providers; and

WHEREAS, specific data on the education, training, compensation, and employment turnover rates of early child care and education teachers in Louisiana is not easily or readily available.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Senate of the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby urge and request the state Department of Education to study the education and training requirements, compensation, and employment turnover rates of early childhood care and education teachers and the implications of the data surrounding these issues on child outcomes in Louisiana.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the state Department of Education collaborate with the State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education, the Louisiana Workforce Commission, the Board of Regents, relevant stakeholder groups, and research organizations to study these issues, including an analysis of the following data and information:

- (1) The education levels, compensation, and employment turnover rates of early child care and education teachers of children from birth through age four in Louisiana as compared to other states.
- (2) A comparison of the compensation of Louisiana's early child care and education teachers with similar professions in the state.
- (3) The costs of early child care and education to parents of children from birth to age four in Louisiana as compared to other states.

- (4) Information on how other states or cities have endeavored to increase pay for early child care and education teachers and the effectiveness of those initiatives.
- (5) Any other data or information the department deems pertinent and relevant.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the state Department of Education submit a written report of its findings, including recommendations, to the Senate Committee on Education, the Senate Committee on Commerce, Consumer Protection, and International Affairs, the Senate Committee on Finance, and the State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education by February 1, 2021.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this Resolution be transmitted to the president of the State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education and the state superintendent of education.

PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE