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THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

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# SENATE RESOLUTION

No. 261 Session of  
2024

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INTRODUCED BY STEFANO, APRIL 5, 2024

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REFERRED TO RULES AND EXECUTIVE NOMINATIONS, APRIL 5, 2024

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A RESOLUTION

1 Recognizing April 6 through 12, 2024, as the "Week of the Young  
2 Child" in Pennsylvania.

3 WHEREAS, The first years of life our brains grow faster than  
4 any other time; and

5 WHEREAS, This is the foundation upon which all later  
6 learning, behavior and health depend; and

7 WHEREAS, Children's cognitive, physical, social and emotional  
8 and language and literacy development are built on a foundation  
9 of children's positive interactions with adults, peers and their  
10 environment; and

11 WHEREAS, There are 1.2 million children between birth and  
12 eight years of age in this Commonwealth, 18% of whom live in  
13 low-income families; and

14 WHEREAS, High-quality early childhood programs provide  
15 important benefits to children, families and this Commonwealth  
16 and national economies; and

17 WHEREAS, Participation in high-quality childhood education  
18 saves taxpayer dollars, makes working families more economically

1 secure and prepares children to succeed in school, earn higher  
2 wages and live healthier lives; and

3 WHEREAS, Parents will always be the most important influence  
4 on their children, and there are nearly 796,000 working parents  
5 with children under six years of age in this Commonwealth; and

6 WHEREAS, Evidence-based programs that strengthen our families  
7 and ensure access to high-quality early care and education are  
8 needed to maximize children's potential in the first five years;  
9 and

10 WHEREAS, Despite the proven benefits of high-quality early  
11 care and education, more eligible Pennsylvania children and  
12 families need access to these services; and

13 WHEREAS, Just 2% of all children under six years of age and  
14 only 7% of low-income children under six years of age are  
15 receiving publicly funded, evidence-based home visiting  
16 services; and

17 WHEREAS, Only 49% of subsidized children under five years of  
18 age and 45% of subsidized infants and toddlers attend a high-  
19 quality child-care program and only 46% of child-care capacity  
20 in this Commonwealth meets high-quality standards; and

21 WHEREAS, Seventy-one percent of eligible children under five  
22 years of age and 75% of eligible infants and toddlers are not  
23 enrolled in the Child Care Works subsidized child-care program;  
24 and

25 WHEREAS, Fifty-seven percent of eligible children three and  
26 four years of age do not have access to high-quality  
27 prekindergarten; and

28 WHEREAS, Early childhood educators and professionals should  
29 be valued, respected and compensated for the important roles  
30 they play; and

1       WHEREAS, Many early childhood educators earn poverty-level  
2 wages and do not have basic workplace benefits, including health  
3 insurance and paid sick leave; and

4       WHEREAS, Twenty-one percent of child-care workers in this  
5 Commonwealth make so little that they live in families accessing  
6 public benefits; and

7       WHEREAS, Paying the costs of high-quality early childhood  
8 education is a revenue-generating investment over time resulting  
9 in a broad range of benefits that accrue to individuals and  
10 society at large; and

11       WHEREAS, Payment rates provided to early childhood programs  
12 to provide high-quality early care and education services to  
13 low-income children do not cover the costs of quality; and

14       WHEREAS, The continued staffing crisis can be detrimental to  
15 the quality of the environment, impacting the development of  
16 young children and families' ability to work; and

17       WHEREAS, The lack of sufficient and sustained public  
18 investment results in staffing shortages caused by low  
19 compensation, which are leading to child care supply shortages  
20 that negatively impact families' ability to work, children's  
21 access to safe and quality care and educators' health and well-  
22 being; and

23       WHEREAS, Young children need skilled, educated, competent,  
24 consistent and compensated early childhood educators; and

25       WHEREAS, Working families need sufficient high-quality child-  
26 care spaces beginning at birth to be available in the community;  
27 and

28       WHEREAS, Early childhood educators need the ability to earn  
29 a family-sustaining wage that is commensurate with the required  
30 education and skills they bring to the complex and valuable work

1 they do; therefore be it

2 RESOLVED, That the Senate recognize April 6 through 12, 2024,

3 as the "Week of the Young Child" in Pennsylvania.