

## EARLY LEARNING FOR ALL OF CALIFORNIA'S CHILDREN

- (1) WHEREAS, California's children are our most precious asset, and embody our hopes for our future and the future of the State; and
- (2) WHEREAS, all parents want their children to be successful in learning and in life; and
- (3) WHEREAS, it is a guiding principle of CAPTA that we serve, and believe in serving, and believe it is the state's obligation to serve, *all* of California's children, regardless of the circumstances into which they are born; and
- (4) WHEREAS, CA's overall school achievement levels rank poorly among the states (one number currently being bandied about is 44<sup>th</sup>); and
- (5) WHEREAS, CA's school achievement levels show a large achievement gap, related to ethnicity, socioeconomic status, parental education attainment and other factors; and
- (6) WHEREAS, the results for an individual child depend dramatically on socioeconomic status of the family, ethnicity, and the educational level attained by the child's parents; and
- (7) WHEREAS, a large percentage of California children grow up in poverty and/or in households in which the parents or guardians lack financial and educational resources; and
- (8) WHEREAS, the achievement gap originates very early, and is significant before children enter Kindergarten; and
- (9) WHEREAS, research shows that early learning reduces the need for remedial learning and special education later; and'
- (10) WHEREAS, the costs of post-Kindergarten attempts at remediation to the State, to the child, and to society are large and lasting; and
- (11) WHEREAS, children learn at an especially rapid rate in the earliest years, e.g., age 0 to 3; and
- (12) WHEREAS, brain research shows that learning opportunities while brain is establishing neural connections (again primarily age 0 to 3) set the pattern for life; now therefore be it

(1) RESOLVED, that CAPTA, and its units, councils, and districts advocate for public funding of Early Learning, and be it further

(2) RESOLVED, that CAPTA urge the State Legislature to develop a long-term Master Plan for the improvement and development of Early Learning;

(3) RESOLVED, that CAPTA specifically urge the State Legislature to increase the State's investment in Early Learning, so as to increase the number of children served, with the goal of having free, high-quality, publicly funded Early Learning available to all children; and be it further

(4) RESOLVED, that CAPTA specifically urge the State Legislature to increase the State's investment in the infrastructure required to create and sustain high-quality programs modeled on best practices in the highest-achieving states; and be it further

(5) RESOLVED, that increased investment in Early Learning should NOT be offset by, or at the cost of, reductions in the State's investment in K-12 education, higher education, nutrition, or health care for children, or other programs that improve the lives and prospects of children and youth; and be it further

(6) RESOLVED, that CAPTA work with school districts, county offices of education, and other organizations to help parents of young children learn how best to help their children develop early language skills (speaking, listening, vocabulary, etc.); and be it further

(7) RESOLVED, that CAPTA work to educate parents, voters, and all citizens and residents of the State of California about the importance of Early Learning and the benefits to the child, to the family, and to society as a whole, of providing it to all children residing in the state.

## BACKGROUND SUMMARY

As stated in the Resolution on Early Childhood Development and Education (adopted 2000; reviewed 2010),

*Research over the past few decades has convincingly demonstrated that a young child's environment has a decisive impact on his or her cognitive and emotional development. The years from birth to five are critically important in shaping a child's capacity and enthusiasm for learning. How children are nurtured—talked with, played with, responded to, allowed to explore, and encouraged to express themselves—is formative for subsequent learning and their development into adults. In order for parents to succeed as their child's first teacher, they should have access to the training and support they need,*

and

*Research has shown that early enriched care characteristic of high quality preschool programs can have long-lasting positive effects on cognitive and emotional development and academic achievement, including decreases in special education placements and in involvement in the juvenile justice system. Conversely, poor early environments, including neglect or care in cognitively sterile environments, can have lasting negative effects on brain development.*

While some progress has been made in some places in the past 18 years, support for young children and their parents remains spotty, and is not widely available to the families that need it most. There are no “do-overs” in education. A child cannot, in grade 3, make up for a deficient grade 2, and our schools cannot, in K-12, make up for deficiencies in early learning.

The 2000 resolution recommends actions that can be taken by parents and PTAs. The purpose of this resolution is to ask the State of California to take early learning seriously: to develop, implement, and fund a long-term plan for supporting the learning needs of our youngest children, starting at birth. (It has to be a long-term plan, because California does not have the facilities, the teachers, the infrastructure, or the funding to do this quickly.)