

Regular Session, 2011

HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 121

BY REPRESENTATIVE PATRICIA SMITH

A RESOLUTION

To urge and request the state agencies which participate in BrightStart to coordinate policy, budget planning, infrastructure, and services that support the development of an early childhood system for Louisiana and to report progress to the House Committee on Health and Welfare.

WHEREAS, a strong society is achieved by ensuring that our youngest citizens grow up to be productive, healthy members of the community; and

WHEREAS, a child's most important brain development occurs before age five and provides the foundation for later social, emotional, and cognitive skill development; and

WHEREAS, studies conducted by noted economists have demonstrated the value of investments in early childhood programs which improve basic social, emotional, and cognitive skills of young children at the earliest possible age; and

WHEREAS, investment in high-quality early childhood programs has an immediate economic development impact as well as long-term economic benefits; and

WHEREAS, the Improving Head Start for School Readiness Act of 2007 authorizes the governor of each state to designate a state Early Childhood Advisory Council to improve the quality, availability, and coordination of services for children from birth to school entry; and

WHEREAS, the governor of Louisiana has designated BrightStart to serve as Louisiana's Early Childhood Advisory Council to carry out the responsibilities required by the Improving Head Start for School Readiness Act of 2007; and

WHEREAS, BrightStart has been in existence for eight years and a statewide needs assessment, strategic plan, and implementation plan have been completed; and

WHEREAS, BrightStart has successfully applied for and received a grant award for a three-year effort to facilitate the building of an early childhood system to enhance children's ability to enter school healthy and ready to learn; and

WHEREAS, the ongoing work of BrightStart requires a joint effort and partnership between the Department of Children and Family Services, the Department of Education, the Department of Health and Hospitals, and the Children's Cabinet and its advisory board; and

WHEREAS, the BrightStart Early Childhood Advisory Council includes members or representatives of agencies and nongovernmental organizations that serve the needs of young children and their families; and

WHEREAS, the House of Representatives of the Legislature of Louisiana has a representative on the BrightStart Advisory Council and recognizes and acknowledges the significant potential contributions of BrightStart for Louisiana's young children and their families.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the House of Representatives of the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby urge and request that the Department of Children and Family Services, the Department of Education, the Department of Health and Hospitals, and the Children's Cabinet and its advisory board work together with the BrightStart staff to carry out the work of BrightStart.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that BrightStart report to the House Committee on Health and Welfare on its progress on or before January 31, 2012, and at six-month intervals thereafter until the end of the grant initiative.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this Resolution be transmitted to the executive director of the Children's Cabinet in the office of the governor, the secretary of the Department of Children and Family Services, the state superintendent of education, and the secretary of the Department of Health and Hospitals.

---

SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES