

114TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 2217

To amend the Head Start Act to promote trauma-informed practices, age-appropriate positive behavioral intervention and support, services for young children who have experienced trauma or toxic stress, and improved coordination between Head Start agencies and other programs that serve very young children.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

MAY 1, 2015

Ms. CLARK of Massachusetts introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Education and the Workforce

A BILL

To amend the Head Start Act to promote trauma-informed practices, age-appropriate positive behavioral intervention and support, services for young children who have experienced trauma or toxic stress, and improved coordination between Head Start agencies and other programs that serve very young children.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Caring Start Act of
5 2015”.

1 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

2 The Congress finds the following:

3 (1) Neglect, hunger, abuse, and other forms of
4 trauma present significant challenges to young chil-
5 dren’s learning and social-emotional development.

6 (2) Trauma-informed and trauma-sensitive
7 caregiving is an ideal targeted intervention for vul-
8 nerable children who experience trauma.

9 (3) A child’s development relies significantly on
10 the development of executive function skills, includ-
11 ing cognitive flexibility, self-regulation, and effortful
12 control and attention.

13 (4) Focusing on these skills, even though they
14 are not obviously academic, is critical in order to im-
15 prove children’s long-term outcomes.

16 (5) Providing high-quality early childhood edu-
17 cation can protect young children from some of the
18 most adverse effects of poverty, enable their healthy
19 development, strengthen their health, and reduce or
20 mediate toxic stress responses to adverse experi-
21 ences.

22 (6) Robust support, professional development,
23 and specialized training for the early education and
24 care workforce is essential to providing a high-qual-
25 ity early education to every child.

1 **SEC. 3. AMENDMENTS.**

2 Section 648 of the Head Start Act (42 U.S.C. 9843)
3 is amended—

4 (1) in subsection (a)(3)—

5 (A) in subparagraph (A)—

6 (i) in clause (ii) by striking “and” at
7 the end,

8 (ii) in clause (iii) by striking “and” at
9 the end, and

10 (iii) by adding at the end the fol-
11 lowing:

12 “(iv) activities that support the imple-
13 mentation of evidence-based trauma-in-
14 formed practices, age-appropriate positive
15 behavioral interventions and supports,
16 early childhood mental health consultation,
17 and prevention of suspension and expul-
18 sion; and

19 “(v) activities that appropriately in-
20 crease the level of coordination between
21 Head Start agencies and other programs
22 that serve very young children, in order to
23 increase the general quality, availability,
24 and reliability of services provided; and”,

25 (B) in subparagraph (B)—

1 (i) in clause (xv) by striking “and” at
2 the end,

3 (ii) in clause (xvi) by striking the pe-
4 riod at the end and inserting “; and”, and

5 (iii) by adding at the end the fol-
6 lowing:

7 “(xvii) assist Head Start agencies in
8 adopting evidence-based approaches to best
9 identify and serve children whose experi-
10 ences have elicited a toxic stress re-
11 sponse.”,

12 (2) in subsection (b)(2)—

13 (A) in subparagraph (F) by striking “and”
14 at the end,

15 (B) in subparagraph (G) by striking the
16 period at the end and inserting a semicolon,
17 and

18 (C) by adding at the end the following:

19 “(H) in evidence-based trauma-informed
20 practices, as well as early childhood mental
21 health consultation and age-appropriate positive
22 behavioral interventions and supports; and

23 “(I) in helping children who have experi-
24 enced, or are experiencing, trauma or toxic
25 stress.”, and

1 (3) in subsection (d)(1)—

2 (A) in subparagraph (G) by striking “and
3 children under 3 years of age, where applica-
4 ble” and inserting “children who experience
5 trauma, and children under 3 years of age, es-
6 pecially for whom such experiences have caused
7 a toxic stress response, including appropriate
8 training and professional development on evi-
9 dence-based trauma-informed practices and
10 early childhood mental health consultation”,

11 (B) by redesignating subparagraph (I) as
12 subparagraph (J), and

13 (C) by inserting after subparagraph (H)
14 the following:

15 “(I) Activities designed to prevent suspen-
16 sion and expulsion and to increase utilization of
17 age-appropriate positive behavioral interven-
18 tions and supports.”.

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