

A RESOLUTION

IN THE COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

To declare the existence of an emergency with respect to the need to amend the Day Care Policy Act of 1979 to establish a pilot, community-based Quality Improvement Network that will allow children and families to benefit from early, continuous, intensive, and comprehensive child development and family-support engagement services, including educational, health, nutritional, behavioral, and family-support services.

RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, That this resolution may be cited as the “Early Learning Quality Improvement Network Emergency Declaration Resolution of 2015”.

Sec. 2. (a) The District of Columbia leads the nation in providing high-quality pre-K to 3- and 4-year olds. In order to ensure that the District’s youngest children are prepared when they enter our pre-K programs, a need exists to increase the quality child care and services that our 0-3 year old population receives.

(b) Currently, 3,542 children ages 0-3 years receive child care subsidy in the District of Columbia, and of those children, 38 percent come from families with no income, 63% come from families whose incomes are under 100 percent of the federal poverty level (“FPL”), and 75% come from families whose incomes are under 130 percent of the FPL. These are generally the District’s most vulnerable residents who need comprehensive services and a continuity of care to ensure that they are poised to succeed when they enter pre-K and kindergarten.

(c) In order to address the needs of the population discussed in subsection (b) of this section and their families, the Office of the State Superintendent of Education (“OSSE”) is creating a pilot Early Learning Quality Improvement Network (“QIN”) composed of child development facilities that will serve as hubs to provide quality improvement technical assistance and comprehensive services to licensed child development centers and licensed child development homes. The child development centers and child development homes will provide low-income infants and toddlers high-quality, full-day, full-year comprehensive early learning and development services, including health, mental health, nutrition, and family engagement support, and a continuum of care.

(d) The pilot QIN will allow the District to demonstrate the effectiveness of an evidence-based model of infant and toddler child care to support children’s learning and development outcomes. Federal studies of use of the Early Head Start standards have shown improved cognitive skills and social development by the age of 3 years. Thus, better preparation of the

1 District’s youngest children will allow them to be more successful later in school, as well as lead
2 to long-term positive social and educational outcomes.

3 (e) Under current District law, children receiving child care subsidy are not guaranteed
4 continuity of care, as their subsidy status is linked to their guardian’s employment status. Thus,
5 if a parent loses his or her job, his or her child will lose subsidy and thus child care. This
6 disruption is particularly detrimental to these children, as they are often the population with the
7 greatest need for consistency and continuity. Thus, a need exists to allow the children in the
8 pilot QIN to continue to receive child care subsidy, and therefore child care, in spite of the
9 employment status of their guardian.

10 (f) In August 2014, OSSE applied for a federal Department of Health and Human
11 Services grant to support the QIN. This federal grant requires recipients to provide continuity of
12 care for children participating in the QIN. To date, OSSE has heard from the HHS that we are in
13 the fundable range and thus anticipate receiving the federal grant, thereby further elevating the
14 need for this legislation.

15 (g) Additionally, the federal HHS grant requires recipients to provide children enrolled in
16 the QIN free child care and comprehensive services. Under current District law, this is not
17 possible. While a child’s family may receive subsidy to cover his or her child care, the law still
18 requires the parent to pay for a portion of the child care based on a sliding scale adjusted for the
19 guardian’s income level. Therefore, in order to fulfill the requirement of the federal grant, as
20 well as to ensure that the District’s most vulnerable population has access to complete and
21 comprehensive health, mental health, nutrition, and family engagement services, a need exists for
22 the children included in the pilot QIN to be exempt from the payment requirement sections of the
23 Day Care Policy Act of 1979.

24 (g) The permanent version of legislation to implement the QIN, the “Early Learning
25 Quality Improvement Network Temporary Amendment Act of 2015” (B21-271), was introduced
26 on June 22, 2015 and referred to the Committee on Education. The Committee on Education held
27 a public hearing on the bill on October 1, 2015 and is expected to move to favorably approve the
28 bill soon.

29 (h) This emergency legislation is necessary to prevent a gap in the law as the Early
30 Learning Quality Improvement Network Temporary Amendment Act of 2014 (D.C. Law 20-
31 238) expires on October 24, 2015. There will be 400 children enrolled in QIN by the end of
32 October and it is important that this program continues for those families.

33 Sec. 3. The Council of the District of Columbia determines that the circumstances
34 enumerated in section 2 constitute emergency circumstances making it necessary that the Early
35 Learning Quality Improvement Network Emergency Amendment Act of 2015 be adopted after a
36 single reading.

37 Sec. 4. This resolution shall take effect immediately.