

POSITIONS AND POLICIES ON EDUCATION

Early Childhood Education/Preschool

FILE CODE

6178

Kindergarten

- A. **The NJSBA believes** that full-day kindergarten programs benefit students. Technical assistance from the Department of Education and financial incentives including state funds for program planning, staff development, and renovation or construction of suitable kindergarten classrooms should be made available to districts seeking to convert from a half-day to full-day program.
- B. **The NJSBA believes** that full-day kindergarten programs should be developmentally appropriate.
- C. **The NJSBA believes** that full-day kindergarten should not be mandated by the State unless state funds are provided to meet the need for necessary additional facilities and staff.
- D. **The NJSBA believes** that full-day kindergarten programs should be supported under the T&E budget and the state funding formula should apply the same per-pupil cost weight for full-day kindergarten programs that is used for the elementary grades 1-5. *[Authority: DA 6/89-CR (Early Childhood Education), DA 11/97-SR, DA 5/01-2, DA 11/02-SR, DA 11/07-SR, DA 11/12-SR, DA 11/17-SR, DA 11/22-SR]*
- E. **The NJSBA believes** that Kindergarten should be a required grade in New Jersey Public Schools to help local education agencies facilitate instruction and mastery of the New Jersey Student Learning Standards, as well this mandate should be supported through a well thought out school funding formula. *[Authority: DA 5/24-10]*

Early Childhood Development and Education

- A. **The NJSBA believes** that healthy development begins during the pre-natal period and that education begins at birth. Ideally, every child during the early childhood period (commonly defined as birth through age eight) should be provided with a continuum of developmental experiences that will enable him/her to grow and learn to his/her potential. In order to promote a positive and inclusive climate, these programs should embrace the inclusion of all students of all abilities.
- B. **The NJSBA believes** that the development of a comprehensive system of early childhood programs and services is a wise investment of public and private funds that will likely produce long-term educational and social dividends .
- C. **The NJSBA believes** that early childhood development and education should be a priority issue in the state and the nation. State, county, and local structures should be developed through which all education, health, and social welfare agencies work together to provide appropriate programs for young children and their parents.
- D. **The NJSBA believes** that the public schools can play an important role in the development of a comprehensive system of early childhood development and education through partnerships with other agencies and organizations that offer family-focused programs and services for young children and their families. School leaders should actively participate as members of community coordination bodies and state, county, and regional panels convened to plan and provide support for services to children and families.
- E. **The NJSBA believes** that programs that provide medical and nutritional services for mothers and infants in at-risk populations can result in healthier babies and avert later educational problems.

- F. **The NJSBA believes** that the smooth transition between early intervention programs and school-based preschool programs can be facilitated by adequate articulation between program administrators, teachers, and parents.
- G. **The NJSBA believes** that appropriate school staff (i.e., counselor, nurse, social worker) should be assigned the responsibility for planning collaboration of the child and family services in schools.
- H. **The NJSBA believes** that parents are children's "first teachers" and supports programs that through joint sponsorship of schools, community groups and social service agencies provide parenting education and aid to young parents.
- I. **The NJSBA believes** that federal and state funding should be available to support child development programs for parents of children in the first three years of life; address the need for more trained early childhood professionals in early childhood education; and provide services for at-risk children under the age of three and their families. *[Authority: DA 6/89-CR (Early Childhood Education), DA 11/97-SR, DA 11/02-SR, DA 11/07-SR, DA 11/12-SR, DA 5/14 (Special Education Task Force), DA 11/17-SR, DA 11/22-SR]*

Preschool Programs

- A. **The NJSBA believes** that the development of age-appropriate preschool programs for three- and four-year olds that include full-day care for children of working parents should be encouraged. Programs should provide an environment that is racially and culturally integrated and allows for the inclusion of children with physical and mental disabilities with their peers in the general education environment.
- B. **The NJSBA believes** that preschool programs should provide for the recognition of cultural and language diversity and efforts should be made to hire staff that can reflect the ethnic and cultural heritage of the children being served.
- C. **The NJSBA believes** that preschool staff should have an understanding of the emotional needs of young children and be knowledgeable about school and community resources available to families to meet identified needs.
- D. **The NJSBA believes** that preschool programs can be improved through the collaborative efforts of the public schools and community-based programs, including joint staff training opportunities and program articulation. Local school districts should be encouraged to work with community groups, institutions of higher education and the corporate sector to develop partnerships targeted to the delivery of quality preschool programs.
- E. **The NJSBA believes** that preschool education should not be mandated by the State unless state funds are provided to meet the need for necessary additional facilities and staff. *[Authority: DA 6/89-ER (Early Childhood Education), DA 11/97-SR, DA 11/02-SR, DA 11/07-SR, DA 11/12-SR, DA 5/14-3, DA 5/14 (Special Education Task Force), DA 11/17-SR, DA 11/22-SR]*

Primary Grades (Pre- Kindergarten through Grade Three)

- A. **The NJSBA believes** that a statement of philosophy, objectives, and principles for early childhood programs should be developed at the district and school level to provide a framework for development of policies, curriculum, instructional materials, program assessment, staff development and teacher evaluation.

- B. **The NJSBA believes** that education programs for 4- to 8- year olds should be regularly evaluated to ensure that the quality and effectiveness of the classroom environment is consistent with exemplary early childhood practices.
- C. **The NJSBA believes** that primary grades (pre-kindergarten through grade three) should be structured to provide a continuum of educational experiences for young children through cooperative planning by teaching teams and coordination of activities.
- D. **The NJSBA believes** that the State Department of Education should make available staff training and technical assistance to local school districts so that teachers, administrators, board of education members, and parents are able to recognize and articulate developmentally appropriate practices and be able to structure early childhood programs according to accepted practices. *[Authority: DA 6/89-CR (Early Childhood Education), DA 11/97-SR, DA 11/02- SR, DA 11/07-SR, DA 11/12-SR, DA 11/17-SR, DA 11/22-SR]*

Child Care

- A. **The NJSBA believes** that school-based before/after school programs can help meet the childcare needs of working parents. Local boards of education should be encouraged to work with municipal government, community-based groups and agencies, and parents to form partnerships that allow for the assessment of childcare needs; collaborative planning, and delivery of comprehensive services to make optimum use of all available resources.
- B. **The NJSBA believes** that state and federal incentives should be available to fund the development of child care programs that target high-need populations such as infants of adolescent parents and young children with disabilities.
- C. **The NJSBA believes** that boards of education should work with social service agencies and other school districts to develop childcare programs that meet the needs of adolescent parents. *[Authority: DA 6/89-CR (Early Childhood Education), DA 11/97-SR, DA 11/02-SR 11/07-SR, DA 11/12-SR, DA 11/17-SR, DA 11/22-SR]*

Administration of Early Childhood Programs

- A. **The NJSBA believes** that an early childhood education unit should exist within the department of education and should be sufficiently staffed to provide local boards of education with on-going technical assistance; staff training; research information, and successful program models, and to coordinate early childhood efforts with the department of human services. *[Authority: DA 6/89-CR (Early Childhood Education), DA 11/97-SR]*
- B. **The NJSBA believes** that the department of education should provide technical assistance to local boards of education to enable them to expand and improve their early childhood programs. Assistance should include pre-service and in-service training for teachers and administrators; program design, implementation, and evaluation techniques; and identification of developmentally appropriate practices.
- C. **The NJSBA believes** the commissioner of education and the State Board of Education should have the benefit of a state-level advisory committee to advise them on early childhood policies, programs, and legislation. Representation on the advisory committee should include NJSBA, other statewide child advocacy organizations, Head Start agencies, local school districts, community-based programs, and parents.

- D. **The NJSBA believes** that school districts should be permitted to provide programs using a blend of funding streams, including federal, state and local monies. Private sources of funding should be sought from foundations and the corporate sector. Federal and state funding should be available to support early childhood education programs and to enable school districts to build or renovate facilities for early childhood education and child care programs.
- E. **The NJSBA believes** that boards of education should explore all options for providing facilities suitable for early childhood programs. Options should include, but not be limited to, unused elementary and high school classrooms, under-utilized public community-based facilities, and shared facilities with other school districts.
- F. **The NJSBA believes** that on-going public awareness activities should emphasize: current demographic information related to young children and their families, the impact of unresolved social problems on the education system; the educational and social benefits of good quality, comprehensive early childhood development programs; and the need for creativity in early childhood education planning. *[Authority: DA 6/89-CR (Early Childhood Education), DA 6/90-CR (Early Childhood Education), DA 11/97-SR, DA 11/02-SR, DA 11/07-SR, DA 11/12-SR, DA 11/17-SR, DA 11/22-SR]*

Certification for Early Childhood Education

The NJSBA believes that teachers of young children should have the appropriate training, knowledge, and experience. An early childhood teaching certificate should be required for teachers of preschool through grade three.

The NJSBA believes that the State Board of Education should consider the development of an Early Childhood/Special Education Certificate. *[Authority: DA 6/89-CR (Early Childhood Education), DA 11/97-SR, DA 11/02-SR, DA 11/07-SR, DA 11/12-SR, DA 11/17-SR, DA 11/22-SR]*

Cross References:

1500	Relations between area, county, state, regional, and national associations and NJSBA
1600	Relations between other entities and the district
1600.1	School/business partnerships
3220	State funds
4112.2	Certification
5020	Role of parents/guardians
5134	Married/pregnant pupils
5141	Health
5142	Pupil safety
5145.4	Equal educational opportunity
6142.1	Family life education
6171.4	Special Education

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