

## Early Childhood Care and Education Resolution

**Approved by a vote of the JCRC at the April 24, 2023 meeting.**

Jewish tradition emphasizes that raising and educating children are among our greatest obligations. In addition, we have long known that improving early childhood care and education for those of low income has a direct correlation to reducing poverty and inequality, also a core concern in Jewish teaching. The words of Deuteronomy emphasize the importance of reducing poverty, stating “There shall be no needy among you.”

Neuroscience research shows that prenatal nutrition and healthcare and the care and education of children from birth to age five are the most important determinants of a child’s future productiveness and success in school and later in life. This is the time period in which children develop critical linguistic and cognitive skills as well as social and emotional competence skills essential for later socio-economic success.

To be most effective, quality early child care and education (ECCE) programs should include:

- Access to quality, affordable health care and proper nutrition for parent and child.
- Early stimulation and education for young children (including home-based stimulation, preschool, playgroup and day care).
- Education and support of parents, including expectant parents, in parenting skills, and the importance of proper healthcare and nutrition.

Leading economists have concluded that these programs are an urgently needed, cost effective means to fight poverty and improve economic development because:

- The ability gap between the advantaged and disadvantaged opens up very early in a child’s life.

Children who receive high quality early childhood education and care are less likely to drop out of school or commit crimes, more likely to graduate from high school and college, with a better chance to find gainful employment and achieve greater success in life.

State and federal government do not invest sufficient resources in quality early child care and education. Many low-income families are unable to find quality, affordable and accessible childcare facilities for their pre-school age children.

Therefore, the Jewish Community Relations Council supports taking the following action steps:

- Educate the Jewish community, the general public and public officials about the effectiveness of very early, quality ECCE programs for all low-income and underserved children; and educate the community on actions they can take to have a positive impact.



- Advocate for legislative and administrative action at the Federal level to create and implement quality ECCE programs from prenatal to age 5 to serve more families in need.
- Advocate for legislative and administrative action by the state of Louisiana to protect, restore and increase its investment in ECCE.
- Participate in coalitions with other local, state and national faith, community and non-governmental organizations that work to improve access to high quality, affordable ECCE.
- Engage political and community leaders to work toward making high quality, affordable ECCE available to all through education, service and advocacy.