

### EARLY CHILDHOOD REPRESENTATION IN UTAH

WHEREAS, Utah PTA is supportive of statewide representation and coordination of early childhood services for all children ages birth through eight and their families; and

WHEREAS, Utah has the highest proportion of children under the age of five in the nation totaling 0.4% or 209,000 children but ranks as one of only a handful of states in the nation that does not provide any state funded pre-K programs, and is the only state in the nation that does not have early childhood specialists in the state department of education; and

WHEREAS, in 1998, only 55%, and in 1999, only 57% of Utah's children demonstrated a literacy background on the statewide kindergarten assessment test with no significant changes in scores in subsequent years; and

WHEREAS, children who are behind when they enter school are unlikely to catch up with their peers, are much more likely to develop later reading difficulties and require later remediation; and

WHEREAS, children from less affluent families are at greatest risk of entering kindergarten behind their peers, and the disparity in what children know and can do are evident well before they enter kindergarten and are predictive of subsequent academic performance; and

WHEREAS, national research studies demonstrate that for every \$1.00 spent on high quality, comprehensive preschool programs, \$7.16 is saved in welfare, special education and criminal justice costs; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, that Utah PTA and its constituent bodies encourage and support an early childhood Representative to be named on the Utah Governor's Council, to inform the Governor and his staff on issues relating to early childhood; and be it further

Resolved, that Utah PTA and its constituent bodies encourage and support the establishment of a mandated early childhood specialist house in the Utah State Office of Education specifically charged with informing parents of issues relating to school readiness, provide professional development opportunities for early childhood professionals, help draw down federal funds targeting this population and ensure Utah's pre-K guidelines are consistent with national standards and support the Utah State Core Curriculum; and be it further

Resolved, that Utah PTA and its constituent bodies work collaboratively with existing programs serving children ages birth through five, to better coordinate all services; and be it further

Resolved, that Utah PTA and its constituent bodies continue to lobby for policies and funding to improve early childhood services throughout the state.