

1 **POSITION STATEMENT**

2  
3 **SUBJECT: Early Childhood Education/Development for At-Risk Children**

4  
5 PTA is committed to removing the barriers faced by at-risk children and supports  
6 programs that seek to eliminate poverty for all children. Children who are  
7 educationally disadvantaged benefit from quality early intervention programs.  
8 Research documents that quality early childhood development programs enhance  
9 success in school and reduce problems such as retention, special education  
10 placements, dropouts, teenage pregnancy, unemployment, and delinquency.

11  
12 The first years from birth to age 5 are important determinants for a child's success in  
13 school. All children must receive certain essentials to be ready to learn including  
14 good health care, adequate nutrition, self-esteem, socialization and intellectual  
15 readiness skills, and enriching experiences.

16  
17 PTA strongly supports Head Start. Head Start, a successful educational and  
18 federally funded program initiated in 1965, provides low-income preschool children  
19 with educational, social, medical, nutritional, and mental health services. The  
20 program emphasizes parental involvement in the development and education of  
21 children. In addition, other federal programs follow the Head Start model and many  
22 states provide preschool programs similar to Head Start. Effective programs ensure  
23 developmentally appropriate curriculum and teaching practices and offer coordinated  
24 comprehensive services for young children and their families.

25  
26 PTA supports programs that bridge the transition from Head Start and similar  
27 programs to public schools. These are essential to continue the success of children  
28 in classrooms and promote parent involvement in the schools.

29  
30 Maintaining collaboration between effective programs and community agencies is  
31 important. These programs include, but are not limited to, Head Start, Even Start,  
32 Sure Start, Title I, Bilingual and Toddler and Preschool Programs for Children with  
33 Disabilities.

34  
35 PTA values parents as primary influences and essential partners in the education of  
36 children. Programs that provide education for parents prior to and immediately  
37 following the birth of the child provide foundations for future success. These  
38 programs include education, social, medical, nutritional, and mental health  
39 components.

40  
41 PTA supports programs that assist preschool children to prepare for social,  
42 emotional, academic, and vocational development. The success of these programs  
43 depends on adequate funding for all children and strong parent involvement.  
44 Communication and cooperation between school systems and community based  
45 agencies is essential.

46  
47  
48 Adopted by the Convention Delegates 4/30/99