

The Education Begins At Home Act, H.R. 2343

Preparing Children for Success in School, Strengthening America's Families

Investing in our nation's children during their first years of life is critical to helping them arrive at school ready to succeed. Strong healthy relationships between children and their parents during these critical formative years are especially beneficial for a child's development: Children with active and involved parents are more likely to excel in school and attend college.

Early childhood home visitation programs provide parents and children with supportive services that promote positive parenting skills, reduce parenting stress, boost children's school readiness, and encourage parents to stay actively involved in their children's education. Research shows that these programs can help improve student achievement, reduce child abuse rates, improve early identification of developmental delays and disabilities, and improve access to health services.

By expanding access to voluntary early home childhood visitation programs, the Education Begins at Home Act (H.R. 2343) would help strengthen American families. Specifically, the legislation would:

Help more families benefit from early childhood home visits by creating a federal funding stream for programs

Authorizes \$400 million over three years to states, Indian tribes, and territories for establishing or expanding early childhood home visitation programs that serve families beginning when women are pregnant and lasting until children enter school.

Enhance the quality of programs available to families

- Identifies and requires the critical elements that constitute quality research-based home visitation programs but allows states to select the specific service models that best meet individual community needs;
- Encourages states to create partnerships between programs and community services;
- Requires that states demonstrate that funds are used for programs with strong organizational capacities that employ well-trained staff.

Expand access to early childhood home visitation programs for military families and families with limited-English proficiency

- Authorizes a competitive grant program of \$50 million over three years for programs for limited-English proficient families;
- Authorizes a second competitive grant program of \$50 million over three years for programs for military families.

Promote public education and awareness on the importance of proper care for infants and young children

Authorizes funds for the Department of Health and Human Services to carry out a public information and education campaign on the importance of proper care for infants and children under the age of five. This campaign would include the distribution of educational materials to hospitals about the importance of healthy parent-child relationships and effective child abuse prevention practices, as well as the use of public service announcements.