



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Suzi Oppenheimer

Oppenheimer Applauds Senate Passage of Bill to Evaluate Early Childhood Education

SUZI OPPENHEIMER May 14, 2012

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Senator Suzi Oppenheimer (D-Mamaroneck) is pleased to announce Senate passage of S.5650-C, a bill aimed at strengthening the New York State daycare system by focusing on early childhood education in daycare settings. The bill directs the Commissioner of the NYS Department of Education (SED) to examine and make recommendations on early education in a variety of child care settings.

“I am a firm believer that the door to education opens long before kindergarten,” said Senator Oppenheimer. “All of our children deserve the chance to learn and prosper, and daycare can be an ideal place for educating our young children, as well as keeping them safe.”

In New York State, early education is not mandated before age six, but numerous studies show that children enrolled in early education meet their developmental milestones at a higher rate than those who are not enrolled. Additionally, it has been found that children enrolled in structured daycare settings have better long-term mental health outcomes than others in more informal daycare settings.

Under the bill, which Oppenheimer co-sponsors, SED would be required to review:

- Requirements for education in day care settings
- Existing statewide early childhood education initiatives
- Educational and training requirements for all day care employees supervising children
- Health and social services available to children in day care settings
- All federal, state and local day care funding streams

Currently, early childhood education in New York is provided in various settings from day care centers to nursery schools to private homes and public schools. The guidelines governing these various child care settings differ by venue and are overseen by one of two state agencies: the Office of Children and Family Services and SED. This fragmentation of regulations and services creates unequal educational opportunities for young children and may hamper New York's efforts to obtain federal funding for early learning initiatives.

"The legislation I co-sponsor is an important first step towards a more coordinated early childhood education system that will give all New York children the services they need for school readiness, regardless of the child care setting they attend. I have long believed that harnessing the natural curiosity of a young child through early learning programs is key to later school success and a brighter future," concluded Oppenheimer. "I urge my colleagues in the Assembly to act quickly to approve this bill."