

Senate Resolution 977

By: Senators Payne of the 54th, Hickman of the 4th, Parent of the 44th, Kemp of the 38th, Sims of the 12th and others

A RESOLUTION

- 1 Recognizing October 5–9, 2026, as Georgia Pre-K Week; and for other purposes.
- 2 WHEREAS, Georgia's Pre-K Program was started by Governor Zell Miller in 1992 as a pilot
3 program serving 750 students and now provides quality early education experiences to more
4 than half of the state's four-year-old children; and
- 5 WHEREAS, Georgia's Pre-K Program has been formally administered statewide by the
6 Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning since 2004; and
- 7 WHEREAS, Georgia's Pre-K has helped prepare more than 2 million of Georgia's children
8 for success in kindergarten and beyond since it began; and
- 9 WHEREAS, findings from the longitudinal study on Georgia's Pre-K conducted by the Frank
10 Porter Graham Child Development Institute show that children in Georgia's Pre-K
11 demonstrate significant gains across all learning domains, and these gains are sustained
12 through the end of fourth grade; and

13 WHEREAS, multiple studies of Pre-K programs, including Georgia's Pre-K, show that
14 participation in Pre-K can greatly improve school readiness skills, particularly for high-risk
15 populations; and

16 WHEREAS, Georgia's Pre-K Program has recognized two outstanding educators—one from
17 a public school system and one from a private child care center—as Georgia's Pre-K Program
18 Teachers of the Year for 2025-2026: Teresa Swaim from West Jackson Elementary in
19 Hoschton and Autumn Hart from Bundle of Joy Academy in Marietta; and

20 WHEREAS, Georgia's Pre-K Program is ranked eighth best in the nation for access to Pre-K
21 for four-year-olds; and

22 WHEREAS, there is a growing commitment to improving the quality of child care in
23 Georgia, with more than half of Georgia's Pre-K programs participating in Quality Rated, the
24 voluntary quality improvement system for child care programs; and

25 WHEREAS, the House Working Group on Early Childhood Education was appointed during
26 the 2023 Legislative Session to determine ways in which the system of Pre-K education in
27 Georgia could be improved; and

28 WHEREAS, the working group's recommendations include specific areas in need of change
29 to make the Pre-K program more accessible and effective, such as restoring class sizes to 20
30 students, increasing salaries for assistant teachers, providing pay parity between Pre-K and
31 K-12 teachers, increasing operating funds for Pre-K programs, counting Pre-K enrollment
32 in entitlement earnings for public school systems, and ensuring equivalent lease payments
33 for private Pre-K providers; and

34 WHEREAS, Georgia Pre-K programs serve more than 70,000 children annually in
35 approximately 3,785 classrooms operating in all 159 counties in Georgia; and

36 WHEREAS, Voices for Georgia's Children and the Georgia Department of Early Care and
37 Learning will host Georgia Pre-K Week for the 16th consecutive year during the first full
38 week of October.

39 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE that the members of this body
40 recognize October 5–9, 2026, as Georgia Pre-K Week; thank the hundreds of programs,
41 teachers, aides, and staff who have built a nationally recognized Pre-K program and other
42 high-quality early education programs; and encourage parents, educators, community
43 members, and business leaders to participate in Georgia Pre-K Week and support
44 high-quality, accessible, and affordable early education for all children in the great State of
45 Georgia.

46 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Secretary of the Senate is authorized and directed
47 to make an appropriate copy of this resolution available for distribution to Voices for
48 Georgia's Children.