

Lt. Governor & Advocates Announce New Rights for Kids with Disabilities

WILMINGTON, Del. – Today, Lieutenant Governor Matt Denn was joined by disabilities advocates, legislative leaders, and educators to address the rights to reading interventions that students with disabilities gained under a new law passed in June. The new law requires that schools provide young students with dyslexia and decoding disabilities and other disabilities with early, intensive, evidence-based assistance in order to better help those students learn to read.

Senate Bill 229 requires that IEPs for any child with a disability – who is not beginning to read by the age of seven – document the evidence-based interventions the school is using to build the child’s ability to read or document why such interventions are inappropriate. The law also requires the school to provide the interventions through extended school year or summer services, regardless of whether the child would otherwise qualify for those services.

For children who have struggled to read – and their families – this new law presents an opportunity to ensure those students are receiving the instruction most likely to make them readers who are able to access many more opportunities for learning and growth. Because any intervention may deem itself “evidence-based,” the Lt. Governor has a guidance document, included at the end of this post, for parents on how they can determine that their child is receiving interventions in compliance with the law.

The purpose of today’s announcement was to inform parents of eligible children that their children are entitled to this assistance, so they can specifically ask their schools for it.

“Reading is the foundation of education,” said Lieutenant Governor Denn. “When children are exposed to best practices in reading instruction, learning becomes a more positive experience. These practices have the potential to improve lives by giving these kids paths to information and imagination.”

Lieutenant Governor Denn was joined at today’s press conference at the Bear Library by Sen. Nicole Poore, House Majority Leader Valerie Longhurst, and parent Kim Hamstead.

Sen. Poore noted that when children have difficulty reading, they may also develop social and emotional problems that can affect their learning and peer relationships. “A child who sees they are not meeting expectations – their own, their teacher’s, their family’s – are known to be more at risk for anxiety, depression, and low self-esteem, and they don’t always have the language to relieve those feelings through appropriate self-expression.”

“The fact that support will be available throughout the year is a major step forward for these students,” Rep. Longhurst said. “A lot of kids lose some ground over the summer and if you’re already falling behind, it’s even harder to get caught up with everyone else without that extra time for learning and practice.”

“With help from my son’s school, I found a reading specialist that used a specific curriculum and teaching methods that had proven effective for children with reading challenges,” said Ms. Hamstead. “My son followed this program for over 2 years and now he is a very confident reader and likes to volunteer to read in front of his class. The key to his success was early intervention and following an evidence-based reading program.”

[Reading Interventions FAQ for Parents](#)