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CAVALIER JOHNSON
ALDERMAN, 2ND DISTRICT

Bi-partisan early childhood bill is a positive step in the right direction

**Statement of Alderman Cavalier “Chevy” Johnson
October 31, 2017**

State Senator Luther Olsen and State Senator LaTonya Johnson’s bi-partisan effort to invest in early childhood education opportunities is an exciting step in the right direction. Their bill supporting the Reach Out and Read model (*SB 449*) encourages and supports family reading for children as young as six months old. With the support of Children’s Hospital of Wisconsin and Milwaukee Public Schools this evidence based, independent peer-reviewed early education model will engage adults around children, increasing educational outcomes for our youth.

Parents and caregivers play a crucial role in children’s development during the critical years of early learning between birth and the age of five. Lack of fully funded early childhood education programs increases the disparities of our neighborhoods most in need. This program engages with new parents or caregivers, beginning at the six-month checkup and continues through age five, while focusing on children growing up in poverty. Investing upfront in early childhood education helps empower our youth and better prepares them for a bright future.

Stronger, better-educated youth build stronger communities. This common sense bill has bi-partisan support and is a step in the right direction. Building strong communities starts with early childhood education and offering better access to educational opportunities. I fully support State Senator Luther Olsen and State Senator LaTonya Johnson’s bill.

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