

*Nothing is politically right
that is morally wrong.*



*Free and fair discussion
is the firmest friend of truth.*

MISSOURI SENATE JEFFERSON CITY

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Senate Leader Charlie Shields Named Child Advocate of the Year

Shields Commitment to Early Childhood Learning Recognized

JEFFERSON CITY – Because of his dedication to improving the lives of Missouri’s children, specifically through legislation he has championed to create a Quality Rating System for early childhood education centers, [Senate Leader Charlie Shields](#), R- St. Joseph, has been named the 2009 Child Advocate of the Year by the Missouri Alliance for Children, Youth and Families. The group presented the award during the Annual Child Advocacy Day rally at the state capitol this week.

“We know the quality of a hotel we stay in – three, four or five star – but we do not know the quality of the education center where we enroll our most precious asset, our children,” Shields said. “We know that children who enter kindergarten prepared to learn have a much better chance of attaining an education past high school. That is why it is so important that we do everything we can to help our children succeed from their earliest years.”

[Senate Bill 4](#) would create a quality rating system for early childhood and before-and after-school programs that operate in the state. The system will allow consumers and parents to compare high quality programs and creates a structure of accountability for policymakers and those who fund the programs.

“The children of Missouri are truly fortunate that Sen. Shields has been such a strong voice for them,” said Kathy Thornburg, Ph. D., of the Center for Family Policy & Research at the University of Missouri, who presented the award. “Many children will benefit from his work for years to come.”

Thornburg noted Shields is also a proven leader in improving Missouri children’s opportunities for a quality education by serving as the architect of a new school funding formula based on student needs rather than local wealth. Shields built on his more than two decades of local school board experience to spearhead the passing of a new formula in 2005 that created a balance so every student, no matter where they live, has an equal opportunity for a quality education.

Shields is also a leader in making sure more students are able to attend, and afford to complete, education experiences past high school. He recently completed a year-long term as chairman of the Midwestern Higher Education Compact (MHEC). The Compact consists of twelve states and is committed to sharing dialogue between the states to improve college access and completion through efforts to improve the overall productivity of colleges and universities.

“I’m glad to know that I played a role in our children’s opportunities to learn and succeed,” he said. “I’m honored to receive an award for working on an issue I care so much about.”

To learn more about Sen. Shields or Senate Bill 4, visit www.senate.mo.gov.

The photo embedded below in this document was also sent as an attachment in the email send. For those receiving this by fax only, and wanting an electronic copy of the photo, call 573-751-3824.



Missouri Senate Leader Charlie Shields
and
Kathy Thornburg, Ph. D., of the Center for Family Policy & Research at the University of Missouri

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