

THE 2026 RESOLUTION POSITION PAPER

1. Executive Summary: The Urgency of 2026

For more than fifteen years, the RotaKids movement has grown organically from the grassroots level, developing into a global network of verified clubs serving tens of thousands of young leaders across more than twenty countries. Despite this sustained success, the program continues to operate in an institutional grey area, without an officially protected brand identity under Rotary International.

The 2026 Resolution is not a simple request for recognition. It is a complete package solution that directly addresses RI's longstanding concerns regarding legal liability, while simultaneously offering a fully operational digital infrastructure - at zero cost to RI.

2. Historical Analysis: Why Previous Resolutions Failed - And Why 2026 Is Different

A structured review of resolutions submitted between 2014 and 2025 reveals a consistent pattern of two blocking factors:

Factor 1 - Liability Fear: RI Evanston consistently resisted proposals that implied global management responsibility for children under 12, given the complex and varying child protection legislation across 220 countries and territories.

Factor 2 - Lack of Standardization: Previous proposals were fragmented under different names - "Rotary Kids", "EarlyAct", "RotaKids" - with no unified governance framework.

Year / Code	Proposed Name	Result	Primary RI Board Argument
COL 2016	RotaKids	Rejected	Districts already have total freedom to organize locally without RI oversight
17R-18	EarlyAct	Rejected (221 Yes / 262 No)	Policy already allows clubs to sponsor youth activities without formal RI status
17R-19	Rotary Kids	Rejected (200 Yes / 281 No)	Recognition would create unnecessary administrative layers for a local program
18R-23	EarlyAct	Rejected (192 Yes / 301 No)	Current policies already allow youth work without formal recognition
18R-24	Rotary Kids	Rejected (182 Yes / 312 No)	Administrative burden and Child Protection risks exceed benefits
19R-14	RotaKids	Rejected (191 Yes / 286 No)	Board suggested focus on existing programs;
20R-08	Clubs for children aged 6-12	Rejected (185 Yes / 266 No)	Lack of standardized global safeguarding infrastructure for this age group
20R-09	Clubs for children under 12 (district-named)	Rejected (122 Yes / 332 No)	Districts should retain flexibility to name and organize locally

21R-15	Rotary Kids (Structured)	Rejected (181 Yes / 295 No)	RI prefers maintaining the flexibility of the "District-Recognized" status
23R-03	Ad hoc committee for children < 12	Rejected (206 Yes / 209 No)	Failed by only 3 votes; Board claimed a committee was not yet necessary
23R-04	Rotary Kids	Rejected (182 Yes / 238 No)	Management should remain at District level (reaffirmed 2018)
24R-12	Ad hoc committee for children < 12	Rejected (141 Yes / 310 No)	A dedicated committee was not considered necessary at this time
24R-13	Rotary Kids	Rejected (165 Yes / 287 No)	Standardized branding should not imply global administrative control or liability
24R-14	Rotary activity groups for children under 12	Rejected (138 Yes / 313 No)	Restricting membership to children of Rotarians conflicts with Rotary's inclusive values
25R-17	Rotary Kids	Rejected (200 Yes / 248 No)	Support for the age group is high, but administrative costs remain a barrier

The 2026 Pivot: The resolution before the Council on Resolutions proposes a "Light Recognition" model that resolves both blocking factors simultaneously. Rotary International provides brand authorization; Districts and sponsoring Rotary Clubs provide the legal, safeguarding, and operational framework; District 2241 offers the existing digital infrastructure for transfer, licensing, or designated stewardship under terms acceptable to RI. The model is designed to avoid new legal, financial, or administrative liability for RI.

3. The Three Strategic Pillars

A. The Leadership Pipeline

Rotary's long-term membership sustainability depends on a continuous pipeline of service-oriented young people. Data from District 2241 - where RotaKids has operated continuously since 2013 - indicates that more than 60% of RotaKids members make a natural transition into Interact upon reaching the upper age limit (*based on D2241 internal tracking data, 2013-2024; district-level data from other pioneering districts available upon request*).

Without an officially recognized RotaKids program, Rotary loses contact with children during their most formative years - leaving this generation to other youth organizations (Lions Cubs, Scouts, Kiwanis K-Kids) that do not share Rotary's values or pipeline.

B. A Unique and Protected Brand Identity

The RotaKids visual identity, built around a distinctive Turquoise color (PMS 7466C / Hex #00adbb) unique within the Rotary family, separates the program visually from Interact and Rotaract, while keeping the Rotary wheel at its center. The innovative three-stage progression system (TO BE → TO DO → TO MULTIPLY) provides a structured developmental framework that no competing youth organization currently offers.

C. The Digital Infrastructure Offer

District 2241 is not merely proposing a policy - it is offering an existing, decade-old digital infrastructure that may be transferred, licensed, or placed under designated stewardship under terms acceptable to RI. This offer eliminates the need for brand acquisition or initial domain development from day one, while recognizing that some components are functional, some are manually administered, and some remain prototype or placeholder interfaces requiring RI-approved technical, safeguarding, privacy, and governance review before any official deployment.

Domain Registration Timeline (Proof of Stewardship)

Domain	Purpose	Registered
<i>RotaKids.ro</i>	<i>District 2241 origin</i>	<i>2012-11-12</i>
RotaKids.com	Future impact / fundraising prototype	2013-04-23
RotaKids.net	World club registry	2016-04-04
RotaKids.org	Resources & governance library	2018-07-16
RotaKids.club	Future club tools / basic reserved presence	2022-02-03
RotaryKids.com/.net/.org	Brand protection (generic)	2026-04-08

- 1. The generic RotaryKids.com/.net/.org domains were registered in April 2026 as a deliberate brand protection measure, completing the ecosystem ahead of the Council on Resolutions vote. Their recent registration does not diminish the fourteen-year stewardship of the core RotaKids infrastructure - it demonstrates continued proactive commitment to protecting the brand on behalf of Rotary International.*
- 2. For clarity, the current status of the infrastructure is mixed: rotakids.org functions primarily as a public documentation and resolution-support website; rotakids.net functions as a registry maintained manually by the current administrator; rotakids.com is a PHP/HTML prototype and not an MVP fundraising or operational platform; rotakids.club is currently a basic presence. These limitations are disclosed in order to distinguish between domain/infrastructure value and production-readiness.*

4. Global Landscape and Statistics (April 2026)

RotaKids has become the de facto global standard for the 7–12 age segment.

Program	Verified Clubs (rotakids.net)	Estimated Total*	Est. Members	Growth 2021–26	Key Regions
RotaKids	250+	800–1,000	~25,000	+40%	UK, Romania, Australia, India, South Africa
EarlyAct	15	550–650	~14,000	+10%	USA, Philippines, Canada
Rotary Kids	30	200–250	~5,000	Stationary	Brazil, Mexico, Germany

**Estimated totals are based on a database built over multiple years through systematic internet research and manual verification by the District 2241 RotaKids team. The rotakids.net registry reflects clubs individually identified and verified through this process; it does not rely on self-registration or district reporting. Official centralized data collection, enabled by the proposed recognition, would allow this baseline to be expanded and maintained globally.*

Competitive Landscape: RotaKids vs. Peer Organizations

Program	Parent Organization	Age Range	Est. Clubs	Est. Members	Annual Fee	Model
RotaKids	Rotary (unofficial)	7-12	800 - 1,000	~25,000	Zero	District-led
K-Kids	Kiwanis International	6-12	~1,100	~22,000	\$235 / club / y.	Centralized
Leo Cubs	Lions International	0-12	undefined	undefined	Variable	Family-based
EarlyAct	Rotary (unofficial)	5-13	~600	~14,000	Zero	District-led

The data above reveals a critical strategic reality: Kiwanis charges \$235 per club per year for K-Kids, yet RotaKids has grown at 40% over five years with no RI dues, no mandatory child fees, and no central administrative structure. Official recognition is not expected to create a substantial financial burden for Rotary International; it will legitimize what already exists. A further distinction: K-Kids membership is tied to family affiliation with a Kiwanis member. RotaKids is open to any child in any school or community, regardless of parental affiliation. This inclusivity is not incidental - it is the program's greatest competitive strength, and it is fully consistent with Rotary International's own values of diversity and openness.

5. Addressing Rotary International Key Concerns

5.1 Legal Liability The District-Led model is the definitive answer to RI's historical liability concern. The resolution explicitly states that Rotary International shall not be legally or financially liable for RotaKids club activities. Responsibility rests with the sponsoring Rotary Club and the District, in accordance with local law and any formal agreement with a host school or community partner.

5.2 Child Protection The accompanying Safeguarding Framework (Document 7) establishes a decentralized accountability model that mirrors existing Interact standards, adapted for the younger age group. School-based clubs operate under the host school's existing child protection protocols; community-based clubs operate under District-level screening and the mandatory 2-Adult Rule.

5.3 Relationship with Existing GB&I Clubs The RotaKids program was pioneered in Great Britain and Ireland, and the GB&I network represents the largest and most established RotaKids community in the world. The 2026 Resolution does not require existing GB&I clubs to re-charter or modify their current operations. Recognition by RI would grandfather all existing chartered clubs, providing them with an official brand identity while preserving their

established governance structures. This resolution is designed to elevate what RIBI built - not to replace it.

5.4 Administrative Burden Unlike Interact, which is a Structured Program with direct Rotary International administrative involvement, RotaKids is proposed as a District-Led Program. RI's role is limited to brand authorization and to any digital infrastructure stewardship arrangement it chooses to accept or designate. No new RI staff, budget lines, or administrative structures are anticipated.

5.5 Precedent: The Rotarian Action Group Model

RotaKids is not asking Rotary International to invent a new framework. The "light recognition" model proposed in this resolution already exists within RI's own structure, in the form of Rotarian Action Groups (RAGs).

RAGs are officially recognized by RI without RI assuming direct legal liability, administrative control, or financial responsibility for their activities. They operate independently, under their own governance, with RI providing only brand authorization and visibility. This is precisely the model proposed for RotaKids.

The Council on Resolutions is not being asked to take a leap of faith. It is being asked to apply an existing, proven framework to a new and younger audience.

5.6 A Proposed Pilot Framework: Built-In Accountability

To address any remaining concerns about long-term commitment, District 2241 proposes that the initial recognition be structured as a three-year pilot program, subject to evaluation by the RI Board at the end of the pilot period.

Suggested evaluation criteria:

- A minimum 20% increase in the number of verified RotaKids clubs registered globally.
- Submission of at least one Safeguarding compliance report per District operating a RotaKids program.
- Zero legal liability incidents attributable to RI as a result of the recognition.

If these criteria are not met, the RI Board retains full authority to withdraw recognition at the conclusion of the pilot period. This sunset clause is not a weakness - it is a demonstration of confidence. District 2241 is certain the program will exceed these thresholds. We offer the exit door because we know it will never need to be used.

6. Conclusion: A Vote for the Future of Rotary

Rejecting recognition will not stop RotaKids from growing - it will simply leave it without coordination, brand protection, or institutional legitimacy. By adopting the 2026 Resolution, the Council on Resolutions does not hand Rotary International a burden. It hands Rotary International a future.

The pioneers of District 2241, building on the foundation laid by Great Britain and Ireland, have spent fourteen years constructing the house, securing the perimeter, and developing the tools. They now offer the keys, freely and unconditionally, to Rotary International.

In 2023, resolution 23R-03 (a modest request to merely appoint an ad hoc committee to examine the need for a program for children under 12) failed by three votes: 206 in favor, 209 against. Three votes separated Rotary International from beginning a conversation that this movement has been requesting for over a decade.

The 2026 Resolution does not ask for a committee. It delivers the answer. The infrastructure is built, the framework is tested, the legal model is sound, and the children are waiting. We are not three votes away from history - we are one vote away from it.

It is time to let the children in.