

September 14, 2009

Dear Representative:

The following organizations strongly support the Early Learning Challenge Fund included in H.R. 3221, the Student Aid and Fiscal Responsibility Act, and urge the bill's passage. The Early Learning Challenge Fund is an important new initiative that will help to expand young children's access to high-quality early learning opportunities, especially disadvantaged children. The pathway to success in school, to college, and to work begins with a strong early learning experience.

The Early Learning Challenge Fund will encourage states to take the steps that are necessary to create a comprehensive system of high-quality early learning environments. As nationally recognized economists have noted, this is one of the best investments our government can make to improve the long-term educational and economic health of our country.

We are pleased that the Early Learning Challenge Fund has the goal of increasing the number of disadvantaged children in high-quality programs at each age from birth to five, an essential period of a child's development. It emphasizes the components necessary to achieve this goal and helps early learning programs raise their quality. These components include core program standards, professional development linked to better compensation, comprehensive supports for young children and their families, improved equipment and resources, data systems, parent outreach, and coordination with health screenings and referrals.

The Early Learning Challenge Fund, as well as sustained and increased investments in the other core early childhood programs—such as the Child Care and Development Block Grant, Early Head Start, Head Start, the Child and Adult Care Food Program, and Section 619 and Part C of IDEA—will help states to ensure that our most disadvantaged children get the strong start they need to become productive and successful citizens. We urge you to support passage of H.R. 3221.

Sincerely,

Alliance for Early Childhood Finance
American Academy of Pediatrics
American Association of University Women (AAUW)
American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees (AFSCME)
Center for Law and Social Policy
Cherokee Nation
Child Care Law Center
Child Welfare League of America
Children's Defense Fund
Children's Investment Fund

Coalition of Labor Union Women
Council for Professional Recognition
Division for Early Childhood of the Council for Exceptional Children
Early Care and Education Consortium
Early Childhood Policy Research
Easter Seals
First Children's Finance
First Five Years Fund
Generations United
IDEA Infant Toddler Coordinators Association
Insight Center for Community Economic Development
League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC)
Local Initiative Support Coalition
Low Income Investment Fund
MomsRising
National Association for Regulatory Administration (NARA)
National Association for the Education of Young Children
National Association of Child Care Resource & Referral Agencies
National Association of School Psychologists
National Black Child Development Institute
National Child Care Association
National Children's Facilities Network
National Coalition for Campus Children's Centers
National Council of Jewish Women
National Council of La Raza
National Head Start Association
National Indian Child Care Association
National PTA
National Women's Law Center
Nonprofit Finance Fund
Service Employees International Union
Smart Start's National Technical Assistance Center
Teaching Strategies
Voices for America's Children
Women of Reform Judaism
YMCA of the USA
Zero to Three

State and Local Organizations

Alabama

Alabama Partnership for Children
Children's Aid Society
Childcare Service Foundation, Inc.
(Birmingham)
Community Enabler (Anniston)
Early Childhood Directions - The
HIPPIY Mobile County Program
(Mobile)
Federation of Child Care Centers of
Alabama
Kidz R Us (Birmingham)
YWCA Central Alabama (Birmingham)
Voices for Alabama's Children

Mental Health America of the Central
Valley (Fresno)
MJ Pramik Communications, LLC (San
Francisco)
Paramore Caremore (Compton)
RESULTS (San Diego)
San Diego Domestic Issues Group (San
Diego)
SAY San Diego (San Diego)
Sellers and Company (San Diego)
Sisters of Mercy US Province
(Redlands)
University of California Riverside Child
Development Center (Riverside)

Arizona

Arizona Association for the Education
of Young Children
First Things First Arizona
Southwest Human Development
(Phoenix)

Colorado

Qualistar Early Learning
American Federation of State, County,
and Municipal Employees (AFSCME)
(Broomfield)
City of Aspen
Clayton Early Learning (Golden)
Colorado Association for the Education
of Young Children
Colorado Head Start Association
Early Childhood Council of Larimer
County
Early Childhood Council of the San
Luis Valley (Alamosa)
National Association of Working
Women (Denver)
Pitkin County Colorado Commissioners
(Aspen)
Triad Early Childhood Council
UCCS Family Development Center
(Colorado Springs)

Arkansas

HIPPIY USA (Little Rock)
Southern Early Childhood Association
(Little Rock)

California

California Association for the
Education of Young Children
California Child Care Coordinators'
Association
CA Child Care R&R Network
California NOW
California Nurses Association/NNOC
Parent Voices Organizer
National Council of Jewish Women
American Association of University
Women (Sacramento)
Avant-Garde Foster Family Agency,
Inc. (Corona)
Differently Abled Student Union
(Berkeley)
El Sereno Early Education Center
(Alhambra)
Jennifer's Loving Care Christian (Los
Angeles)
Kanana Fou Christian Church
(Wilmington)
Long Beach City College Child
Development Center (Long Beach)

Connecticut

Connecticut Association for Human
Services
Connecticut Dept. of Children and
Families
Parent Leadership Training Institute of
Connecticut
All Our Kin, Inc. (Hamden)
Bethesda Nursery School (Hamden)
Collaborative Center for Justice, Inc.
(Hartford)
Early Childhood Board (Stratford)
Early Childhood Laboratory School
(Bridgeport)
Easter Seals Head Start (Meriden)

Family Services of Greater Waterbury, Inc. (Waterbury)
La Via Latina (Torrington)
Middlesex Coalition for Children (Middletown)
New Opportunities Inc. (Meriden)
Partners in Healthy Communities (New London)
Stratford Library Association (Hamden)
Torrington Board of Education (Torrington)
Town of Stratford School Readiness Program (Stratford)
Willowbrook School (East Hartford)

Delaware

Delaware Association for the Education of Young Children
Hannah's Christian Home Day Care/Pre-School (Bear)

District of Columbia

TRIO Upward Bound

Florida

The Children's Forum
End Childhood Hunger
Florida Community Loan Fund
Early Childhood Association (ECA) of Florida
Hispanic Coalition
Catholic Charities Legal Services, Archdiocese of Miami, Inc. (Miami)
Child Care Choice Services (Leesburg)
Children's Foundation of Lake County, Inc. (Eustis)
Early Learning Coalition of Duval (Jacksonville)
Early Learning Coalition of Lake County (Leesburg)
Family Care Council (Cape Coral)
Farmworker Association of Florida (Apopka)
Hunger and Homeless Coalition of Citrus County, Inc. (Homosassa Springs)
Jack & Jill Children's Center (Fort Lauderdale)
Love-N-Care (Davie)
Nubian Connection (Ft. Lauderdale)
Temple Israel Social Action Committee (Miami Beach)
Wesley House Family Services (Key West)

Georgia

Georgia Association on Young Children
Georgia Rural Urban Summit (Decatur)
Quality Care for Children (Atlanta, Georgia)
Voices for Georgia's Children

Guam

Little Darlings Early Childhood & Respite Care (Yigo)

Hawaii

Childcare Business Coalition of Hawaii
Hawaii Association for the Education of Young Children

Idaho

Idaho Association for the Education of Young Children
North Idaho Association for the Education of Young Children

Illinois

Illinois Action for Children
Illinois Association for the Education of Young Children
Illinois Maternal and Child Health Coalition
Ounce of Prevention Fund
Chestnut Health System (Normal)
Health Management Consortium (Homewood)
Holy Family Ministries (Chicago)
Quad Cities Association for the Education of Young Children
The Big Barn Preschool (Schaumburg)
Wayne City Early Learning Center (Fairfield)
YWCA Aurora (Aurora)

Indiana

Campus Center for Young Children (Goshen)
The Child Care Consortium, Inc. (Michigan City)
Indiana Association for the Education of Young Children

Iowa

Iowa Association for the Education of Young Children
Child and Family Policy Center
Development Centers, Inc.

Sisters of the Presentation (Dubuque)
Child Care Resource & Referral of
Central Iowa (Des Moines)

Hampshire Educational Collaborative
(Northhampton)
Massachusetts Citizens for Children
(Boston)

Kansas

Kansas Action for Children
Kansas Head Start Association
K-State Center for Child Development
(Manhattan)
Butler Community College (El Dorado)
El Centro Inc. (Kansas City)

Kentucky

Kentucky Youth Advocates

Louisiana

Kingsley House (New Orleans)
Majestic Youth Development Inc.
(Monroe)
National Coalition for Campus
Children's Centers (Lafayette)
University of Louisiana at Lafayette
Child Development Center (Lafayette)

Maine

Maine Association for the Education of
Young Children
Maine Children's Alliance

Maryland

Friends of the Family/Maryland
Committee on Children
Maryland Association for the Education
of Young Children
Bluehouse (Baltimore)
Calvert DayCare (Calvert County)
Central Maryland Association for the
Education of Young Children
Creative Ink Interprises (Bowie)
Garrett County Community Action
Committee, Inc. (Oakland)
Owings Grass Roots Group (Owings)

Massachusetts

Massachusetts Association of Early
Education & Care (MADCA)
Associated Early Care & Education
Strategies for Children
Busy Bees Preschool Center, Inc.
(Fitchburg)
Children's Learning Center (Lynn)
Class Action (Hadley)

Michigan

4C Child Care Unlimited
Michigan 4C Association
Michigan Association for the Education
of Young Children
Michigan League for Human Services
Justice Team Sisters of Mercy West
Midwest Community (Detroit)
Leadership Council of the Sisters,
Servants of the Immaculate Heart of
Mary (Monroe)
LolaDiva Designs, Inc. (Midland)
United Way for Southeastern Michigan
(Detroit)

Minnesota

Child Care WORKS
Minnesota Association for the
Education of Young Children
Ready 4 K
AAUW (Hastings)
AAUW (Baxter)
Kids at Risk Action (Minnetoka)
The Way Free Medical Clinic (St.
Augustine)
White Earth Reservation Child Care
Programs (Omega)
MSUM Early Education Center
(Moorehead)
Residents for Affordable Housing
(Minneapolis)

Mississippi

Voices for Mississippi's Children

Missouri

Berkley CFDC (Kansas City)
Metropolitan Council on Early Learning
(Kansas City)
Missouri Budget Project (St. Louis)
Ready, Set, Grow Childcare (Moberly)
Southeast Missouri Child Care
Resource & Referral (Cape Girardeau)
Success by 6 (Joplin)

Nebraska

Nebraska Children and Families
Foundation

Grace Lutheran/Lutheran Metro
(Omaha)

Nevada

Nevada Association for the Education
of Young Children
Reno Association for the Education of
Young Children
Southern Nevada Association for the
Education of Young Children

New Hampshire

New Hampshire Community Loan Fund

New Jersey

Association for Children of New Jersey
New Jersey Association for the
Education of Young Children
YWCA of Bergen County
(Hackensack)
Monday Morning, Inc. (North
Plainfield)

New Mexico

New Mexico Association for the
Education of Young Children
New Mexico Voices for Children
NM Advocates for Children and
Families
Kiwanis Club of Albuquerque
(Albuquerque)
Listening Sage Associates (Santa Fe)
RESULTS (Albuquerque)
Youth Development Inc.-Head
Start/Early Head Start (Albuquerque)

New York

Child Care, Inc.
Child Care Council of Suffolk, Inc.
(Commack)
Child Care Council of the City of New
York (Brooklyn)
Child Care Resources of Rockland
(Spring Valley)
Child Care Solutions (Syracuse)
Claire Heureuse Community Center,
Inc. (Brooklyn)
Cortland Area Child Care Council
(Cortland)
Cortland Association for the Education
of Young Children
Early Childhood Direction Center
(Binghamton)

Leviticus 25:23 Alternative Fund, Inc.
(Elmsford)
New York State Association for the
Education of Young Children
North Country Association for the
Education of Young Children
NYC Early Childhood Professional
Development Institute (New York)
Public Policy Office of the Diocese of
Syracuse (Syracuse)
Schuyler Center for Analysis and
Advocacy (Albany)
Southern Tier Independence Center
(Binghamton)
Young Wonders Early Childhood
Center (Binghamton)
United Federation of Teachers (New
York City)
YWCA of White Plains and Central
Westchester (White Plains)
YWCA of Binghamton & Broome
County (Binghamton)
YWCA of the Greater Capital Region
(Troy)

North Carolina

Center for Community Self-Help
Child Care Services Association
North Carolina Association for
Education of Young Children
North Carolina Partnership for
Children, Inc.
Advocacy for the Poor, Inc. (Winston-
Salem)
Chapel Hill Day Care Center (Chapel
Hill)
Ms. Bea's Childcare Center (Spring
Lake)
Partnership for Children of Wayne
County (Goldsboro)
Sandhills Association for the Education
of Young Children

Ohio

Ohio Finance Fund
Child Care Resource Center (Lorain)
Community Dispute Resolution Center
Inc. (Dayton)
Member of the Sisters of Notre Dame
de Namur (Cincinnati)
Perrino Consulting (Warren)
Stark County Department of Jobs &
Family Services (Canton)
United Church of Christ Justice &
Witness Ministries (Cleveland)

Oklahoma

Child Care Resource Center (Tulsa)
Luv N Stuf Childcare, 2nd Generation
L.L.C. (Shawnee)

Oregon

Oregon Association for the Education
of Young Children
Peninsula Children's Center (Portland)

Pennsylvania

PA Partnerships for Children
Pennsylvania Association for the
Education of Young Children
Pennsylvania Child Care Association
(PACCA)
Pennsylvania NOW, Inc.
Prevent Child Abuse
Providence Connections
Early Connections
Pittsburgh Area Association for the
Education of Young Children
(Pittsburgh)
Begin With Us Child Care and
Preschool, Inc. (Altoona)
Delaware Valley Association for the
Education of Young Children
Dignity Housing (Philadelphia)
District 1199C Training & Upgrading
Fund (Philadelphia)
Haysire United Church of Christ (York)
Maternity Care Coalition (Philadelphia)
Montgomery County Community
Action Development Commission
(Norristown)
Nat's Day Care (Philadelphia)
Palmer's Group Day Care Home
(Natrona Heights)
Rodman Daycare Center (Pittsburgh)
United Way of Beaver County
(Monaca)
Women's Community Revitalization
Project (Philadelphia)
YWCA of Lancaster (Lancaster)

Rhode Island

Rhode Island Kids Count
The Jewish Federation of Rhode Island

South Carolina

Solomon Financial Center, Inc. (Hilton
Head Island)
Levin Consultants (Columbia)
Rise (Hartsville)

South Dakota

South Dakota Association for the
Education of Young Children
Mitchell Congregational United Church
of Christ (Mitchell)

Tennessee

Tennessee Association for the
Education of Young Children
The Center for Family Development
(Shelbyville)

Texas

Texas Association for the Education of
Young Children
La Fe Policy Research and Education
Center (San Antonio)
United Way of San Antonio & Bexar
County (San Antonio)
United Way of Southern Cameron
County (Brownsville)
Voices for Children of San Antonio
(San Antonio)

Utah

Voices for Utah Children

Vermont

Umbrella (St. Johnsbury)
Vermont Association for the Education
of Young Children

Virginia

Virginia Association for Early
Childhood Education
Voices for Virginia's Children
Northern Virginia Association for the
Education of Young Children
Smart Beginnings South Hampton
Roads (Norfolk)
Southside Association for Early
Childhood Education

Virgin Islands

Community Foundation of the Virgin
Islands (St. Thomas)

Washington

Children's Alliance in Washington
State
Economic Opportunity Institute
Washington Area Community
Investment Fund

League of Education Voters
Sea Mar Community Health Centers
(Ferndale)
Washington Association for the
Education of Young Children
Yakima County CASA Program

West Virginia

West Virginia Association for Young
Children
West Virginia Statewide Independent
Living Council (Huntington)

Wisconsin

Celebrate Children Foundation
Disability Rights Wisconsin
Wisconsin Council on Children and
Families
Wisconsin Early Childhood
Association, Inc.

Wisconsin Family Child Care
Association
Stepping Stones Children's
Center/WCCAA
Animal Crackers, Inc. (Mazomanie)
Carthage College Social Work Club
(Kenosha)
Ebenezer Child Care Centers, Inc.
(Wauwatosa)
Grace School-Age Childcare (Eau
Claire)
Multicultural Community Services
(Milwaukee)
School Sisters of St. Francis
(Campbellsports)
Under The Rainbow Child Care
(Leopolis)

Wyoming

Wyoming Children's Action Alliance