



FIRST FOCUS

MAKING CHILDREN & FAMILIES THE PRIORITY

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July 20, 2009

House Education and Labor Committee
2181 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative,

I am writing on behalf of First Focus, a bipartisan advocacy organization committed to making children and their families a priority in federal policy and budget decisions. We urge you to vote in support of the Early Learning Challenge Fund as a part of the Student Aid and Fiscal Responsibility Act of 2009. This important legislation recognizes how critical early education is in improving the lives of our nation's disadvantaged children and preparing them for future success in the K-12 years.

The evidence is clear that the most effective way to prepare our nation's most vulnerable children for success in school and in life is to make wise investments in children early on. Research shows that by the time a child reaches her third birthday, differences in the skill levels of low-income children and their more affluent peers are already evident. Over time, society will have to expend significant resources to mitigate the costs of failing to provide quality and comprehensive early childhood services.

The Early Learning Challenge Fund aims to reach young children in the various settings where they are cared for each day and to provide them with services that prepare them for success in school and in life. The Early Learning Challenge Fund represents a much-needed historic investment in our nation's youngest learners.

Again, we urge you to vote in support of the Early Learning Challenge Fund. We encourage your commitment to ensuring that all children are prepared to meet ambitious and rigorous standards in our public schools by assuring that they begin their school careers with the necessary skills and abilities to succeed.

Sincerely,

Bruce Lesley
President