

CLASP

CENTER FOR LAW AND SOCIAL POLICY

July 20, 2009

The Honorable George Miller
Chairman, Committee on Education & Labor
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Miller:

The Center for Law and Social Policy (CLASP) is pleased to support the Early Learning Challenge Fund, Title IV in HR 3221. CLASP's mission is to develop and advocate for policies at the federal, state and local levels that improve the lives of low income people. We believe that this proposal creates the opportunity for states to make significant investments in the quality of early childhood programs serving disadvantaged children and their families.

Several strengths of the proposal are worth mention. First is the focus on children from birth to age five, recognizing that children are in different early childhood settings that meet varying developmental needs and provide supports for working families. Second is the definition of a baseline metric designed to increase the number of disadvantaged children in higher quality settings, a measure that will help states prioritize those programs that most need help to improve the quality of teaching, improve equipment and resources, and meet higher program standards that will reduce ratios and group size in order to improve the quality of the provider to child relationship.

CLASP is also grateful for the investment in quality that this proposal represents, with \$1 billion a year over ten years. We hope that this is only the first step in an effort to increase the access and availability of high quality programs for low-income children, and that this proposal is part of an agenda that includes increased investments in the Child Care and Development Block Grant, Head Start and Early Head Start.

We look forward to working with the committee to advance this historic legislation and the additional investments that will be needed to provide high quality early childhood opportunities for all disadvantaged children.

Respectfully,

Danielle Ewen

Center for Law and Social Policy

Director, Child Care and Early Education Policy