



Early Care and Education Consortium

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July 20, 2009

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

Dear Chairman Miller:

The Early Care and Education Consortium applauds your work in helping the Obama Administration fulfill its campaign promise to create an Early Learning Challenge Fund. Through your leadership in Congress and the emphasis that the Administration has placed on investing in early childhood education, our nation can look forward to improvements in the early learning opportunities of disadvantaged young children.

The Early Care and Education Consortium is an alliance of the nation's leading national, regional and independent providers of high-quality early care and learning programs. Consortium members operate more than 8,000 licensed centers caring for and educating nearly 800,000 children every day in 49 states and the District of Columbia. Our members offer full-day/full-year programs for children birth through age 12, state-funded prekindergarten, before- and afterschool programs, extended day, and summer programs with enrollments that reflect the rich diversity of our communities and nation.

The Early Care and Education Consortium welcomes and supports the significant focus and investment in the development of state early learning systems and commitment to increasing the number of low-income children in high-quality programs as found in Title IV of the Student Aid and Fiscal Responsibility Act.

From our perspective, the language authorizing the Early Learning Challenge Fund will help the selected states create early learning systems. We think it is particularly important the Challenge Fund and the state efforts it fund encompass the wide range of program settings and provider types. And we commend you and the Obama Administration for focusing states on children's early development and learning from birth to age five. Families and researchers alike know that early learning opportunities are not limited to a single year of a child's life and working families need full-day, full-year high quality programs for their children.

As providers of high-quality child care and early education programs, we know that quality counts and that quality costs. Too often state quality initiatives provide incentives or perhaps partial cost offsets, but do not themselves cover the full cost of quality. Ultimately, the success of these grant initiatives in the states will depend on a significant and sustained increase in investment in the Child Care and Development Block Grant and Head Start.

We look forward to working with you to move this significant new investment forward.

Best Regards,

Eric J. Karolak, Ph.D.
Executive Director