

Dear Senator,

We urge you to vote yes on the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. We are especially supportive of the strong investments the Act makes in early childhood programs such as the Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG), Head Start and Early Head Start, Part C for infants and toddlers with disabilities and special needs, Part B (Section 619) grants for preschool-age children with disabilities and special needs, and programs for preschool-age children funded through Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. These investments will save and create jobs for early educators and support staff, help prepare children to enter school ready to succeed and ultimately become productive members of the future workforce, and enable their parents to work today.

The additional funding for child care included in the Act will allow states to provide child care assistance for approximately 300,000 children in low-income working families who have been hit hard by the economic crisis as well as create 125,000 jobs for child care providers. Even before the economic downturn, there was a significant unmet need for child care assistance—only one out of seven eligible children was receiving federal child care help. With more families experiencing financial strains, the need for help with child care costs is only increasing. Reports from around the country indicate that many families are being forced to move their children from more supportive and nurturing early learning environments because they can no longer afford the costs. Parents are turning to less reliable, less supportive options so they can continue to work. Yet, waiting lists for child care assistance are growing as states cut back on their investments in child care and early learning programs.

Increasing child care assistance will enable parents to afford the child care they need to work and to give them peace of mind so they are productive in their jobs. The licensed child care sector allows parents to earn more than \$100 billion annually—and these additional wages, in turn, generate nearly \$580 billion in direct and indirect labor income, approximately \$69 billion in tax revenues, and more than 15 million jobs.

The additional funding for Head Start and Early Head Start included in the Act could allow 110,000 more children to participate in the programs. It will create 50,000 jobs through direct employment of directors, teachers, assistants, bus drivers, and other support staff. Head Start and Early Head Start will also be able to offer parents job training and employment opportunities as part of the program's comprehensive support services. These programs will be able to use the funding quickly to serve children on waiting lists and address unmet demand—currently, only about half of preschoolers eligible for Head Start and less than 3 percent of infants and toddlers eligible for Early Head Start are able to participate—and to restore services cut in recent years as funding failed to keep pace with rising costs.

The Act includes several other investments that can help support child care and early education. The proposed \$3.3 billion increase in Temporary Assistance for Needy Families can be used by states to provide child care assistance to low-income families.

The provision requiring local educational agencies to use at least 15 percent of the additional funding they receive through targeted grants and education finance incentive grants for programs for children prior to the age of school entry will expand local districts' support for early childhood programs

With these critical investments, the Act will immediately create jobs in the child care and early education sector that are certain to stay right here in the U.S., allow parents to stay employed or take advantage of new job opportunities knowing their children are safe and well cared for, and boost children's chances for success in the future by improving learning conditions for young children. In this way, the Act—and the child care and early education investments specifically—will help our economy recover in the short term and strengthen our economy for the long term.

Sincerely,

Alliance for Children and Families
American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry
American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees
American Psychiatric Association
American Psychological Association
Americans for Democratic Action
The Arc of the U.S.
Center for Law and Social Policy
Cherokee Nation
Child Care Law Center
Child Welfare League of America
Council for Exceptional Children
Council for Professional Recognition
Delaware Tribe Child Development
Division for Early Childhood of the Council for Exceptional Children
Early Care and Education Consortium
Early Childhood Consultancies
Early Childhood Policy Research
Easter Seals
First Children's Finance
The First Five Years Fund
IDEA Infant Toddler Coordinators Association
IFF
Insight Center for Community Economic Development
Jewish Council for Public Affairs
Local Initiatives Support Corporation
Low Income Investment Fund
National Association for the Education of Young Children
National Association for Regulatory Administration
National Association of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies
National Black Child Development Institute

National Council of Jewish Women
National Council of La Raza
National Head Start Association
National Institute on Out-of-School Time at the Wellesley Centers for Women
National Migrant and Seasonal Head Start Association
National Women's Law Center
Nonprofit Finance Fund

RESULTS

Service Employees International Union
United Cerebral Palsy
United Neighborhood Centers of America
Voices for America's Children
Women of Reform Judaism
YMCA of the USA
YWCA USA
Zero to Three