



June 5, 2007

The Hon. Dave Obey  
Chairman, House Appropriations Committee  
United States House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Obey:

We write to ask for your vote in the Subcommittee on Labor/HHS/Education to increase federal support for high-quality early childhood education, including:

- \$1 billion for high-quality, voluntary state pre-k programs through a new incentive grant as part of the No Child Left Behind Act.
- A \$750 million increase over last year's appropriations for the Head Start program, the nation's premiere pre-k program for low-income children.
- An increase of \$720 million for the Child Care and Development Block Grant as advocated by the Child Care NOW! Coalition.

Legislation has been introduced in the Senate and we expect will be introduced in the House to provide grants to states to create or improve their pre-k programs, moving our nation closer to the vision of quality, voluntary pre-k for all three and four-year-old children. High quality pre-k provides a substantial return on every dollar invested. School readiness begins *before* kindergarten, and incentives to states will prepare our children for success in school. We look forward to working with you and your colleagues on a strong federal investment in high quality pre-k.

We applaud the House's action to reauthorize Head Start and make significant improvements in teacher preparation, classroom quality and in coordination between Head Start and state and local early education programs. We urge you to fully fund these improvements in Head Start and make up for the reductions in programs and hours in recent years. The House-passed bill will help more children arrive at school ready to succeed.

A quarter of a million children lost child care assistance because of our failure to invest in this critical service for children and working families. An additional \$720 million for the Child Care & Development Block Grant would restore the losses since 2002 and help another 100,000 children. We urge your support for this critical initiative.

We were pleased to attend the National Summit on America's Children two weeks ago, and concur with Rep. Rosa DeLauro's comment that there is "a gap between what we know and what we do." The FY 2008 appropriations bill is an opportunity to close that gap by investing taxpayer dollars in quality early education, including state-sponsored pre-k, Head Start, and child care.

Thank you for your consideration. Please contact either of us or Federal Policy Fellow Matt Smith ([msmith@preknow.org](mailto:msmith@preknow.org)) if we can provide you with more information about the important work of promoting high-quality, voluntary pre-k for all three and four year olds.

Sincerely yours,



Libby Doggett, Ph.D.  
Executive Director



Kathy Patterson  
Federal Policy Director

CC: Members, Committee on Appropriations, U.S. House of Representatives