



July 21, 2009

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

The Honorable John Kline
Ranking Member, House Education and Labor
Committee
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Miller and Congressman Kline:

Voices for America's Children (Voices) supports the Early Learning Challenge Fund included in H.R. 3221, the Student Aid and Fiscal Responsibility Act. Voices is a leading, nonpartisan children's advocacy organization with 60 member organizations nationwide. Voices speaks up for children through effective public policies at the local, state and national levels.

We believe that all infants, toddlers and their parents should receive the necessary services and supports that enable children to start school prepared for success. All children, regardless of economic circumstance and race, must be given the opportunity to develop the skills necessary to succeed in school. Investments in young children and their families are crucial for the long-term education and healthy development of our future generation as well as closing disparities in opportunity. Yet, America currently invests only 13 cents in young children's development for every dollar invested in school-aged children.

The Early Learning Challenge Fund encourages states to increase the number of low-income children, from birth through age five, receiving comprehensive, high-quality early learning opportunities. In addition, the Challenge Fund encourages states to transform their early learning programs focusing on state standards and practices. Voices is committed to working with the Committee on this important legislation.

Thank you for all you do on behalf of our nation's children. If I may be of assistance to you in any way, please contact me at (202) 289-0777.

With regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "William H. Bentley", is written over a light blue horizontal line.

William H. Bentley
President and Chief Executive Officer

cc: Members of Education and Labor Committee