

Support Investments in Our Children: CCDBG & Head Start

From: The Honorable Dale E. Kildee
Sent By: lillian.pace@mail.house.gov
Date: 3/8/2010

SUPPORT CRITICALLY IMPORTANT INVESTMENTS IN OUR NATION'S CHILDREN THROUGH THE CHILD CARE AND DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT AND HEAD START

Dear Colleague:

We ask you to join us in sending the attached letter to the Appropriations Committee requesting a \$1 billion increase for the Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG) and a \$1 billion increase for Head Start in the fiscal year 2011 Labor, Health and Human Services, Education and Related Agencies appropriations bill. Improved funding for early education and development is integral to every child having the opportunity to succeed in school and in life.

Stable high-quality child care contributes both to helping working families stay employed and to children's school readiness. For many families, child care is the highest or second highest cost in family budgets. The National Institute of Child Health and Human Development found that children from birth through age five in higher quality care scored higher on assessments of cognitive skills, language ability, vocabulary, short-term memory and attention than children in lower quality care. Without child care assistance, many low-income working families cannot access safe, stable, and effective child care.

Head Start is our country's premier comprehensive early learning program and helps low-income children arrive at kindergarten ready to succeed. It combines early education, health care, social services, and nutrition services with a strong focus on parent involvement and support and builds on the strengths of local communities.

Whether or not America's most vulnerable young children will reach their potential depends in large part on our investment in these programs.

If you would like to sign the letter or have any questions, please contact Lillian Pace with Chairman Kildee (Lillian.pace@mail.house.gov).

Sincerely,

/s George Miller, Chairman
Committee on Education and Labor

/s Dale E. Kildee, Chairman
Subcommittee on Early Childhood,
Elementary and Secondary Education

Dear Chairman Obey and Ranking Member Tiahrt:

We respectfully request that you include \$1 billion increase for the Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG) and a \$1 billion increase for Head Start and Early Head Start in the fiscal year 2011 Labor, Health and Human Services, Education and Related Agencies appropriations bill. These two programs are essential to our country's efforts to support parents' employment and help our children arrive at kindergarten with the skills they need to succeed in school and in life.

Child care fees are now often the highest or second highest cost in a family budget. In these challenging economic times, it is especially important to help families afford stable child care so parents can get and keep a job. Unfortunately, only about one in seven children eligible for Federal child care assistance receives help under the Child Care Development Block Grant. We urge you to include a \$1 billion increase in CCDBG so that we do not reduce the number of children currently served by this important program. High quality child care also contributes to children's school readiness: research finds that children from birth through age five in higher quality care score higher on assessments of cognitive skills, language ability, vocabulary, short-term memory and attention than children in lower quality care. CCDBG helps low-income families afford care that can support their children's development.

Head Start is central to our country's effort to help low-income children arrive at kindergarten ready to succeed. It combines early education, health care, social services, and nutrition services with a strong focus on parent involvement and support and builds on the strengths of local communities. A \$1 billion increase in Head Start will keep classrooms open and provide comprehensive support for the almost 65,000 children who receive Head Start and Early Head Start services as a result of the investments in ARRA.

Whether or not America's most vulnerable young children and their families will reach their potential depends in large part on our investment in these programs, and so, once again, we respectfully ask that you consider our request.

Sincerely,