

September 2, 2011

The Honorable John Kerry
United States Senate
218 Russell Building, Second Floor
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Kerry:

The Child Care and Early Learning Coalition thanks you for your leadership in introducing The Children First Act of 2011, which will help low-income parents afford the child care they need to get and keep a job in this challenging economy. With growing state waiting lists for child care assistance, increased funding is essential. Child care assistance not only enables parents to work but also to be more productive knowing that their children are in safe and stable settings. In addition, we appreciate that the bill recognizes the importance of ensuring that all federally funded child care meets minimal health and safety standards and that school-age children are not left home alone if their families cannot find affordable child care.

You have been a long-time champion striving to improve low-income children's access to higher-quality early learning opportunities. We look forward to continuing to work with you to achieve this goal and to protect essential funding for child care and Head Start.

Sincerely,

American Federation of State County and Municipal Employees
Children's Defense Fund
Child Welfare League of America
CLASP
Division for Early Childhood of the Council for Exceptional Children
Early Care and Education Consortium
Early Child Policy Research
First Five Years Fund
HighScope Educational Research Foundation
IDEA Infant Toddler Coordinators Association
National Association of Child Care Resource & Referral Agencies
National Association of Early Childhood Specialists in State Departments of Education
National Association for the Education of Young Children
National Association for Family Child Care
National Association for Regulatory Administration
National Black Child Development Institute
National Children's Facilities Network
National Council of Jewish Women
National Coalition Against Domestic Violence
National Head Start Association
National Indian Child Care Association
National Migrant Seasonal Head Start Association

National Organization for Women
National PTA
National Women's Law Center
Save the Children
Service Employees International Union
Teaching Strategies, Inc.
Voices for America's Children
ZERO TO THREE