



September 15, 2009

Dear Representative:

I am writing on behalf of the First Five Years Fund to express our support of the Early Learning Challenge Fund provisions included in H.R. 3221, the Student Aid and Fiscal Responsibility Act. We urge you to vote in favor of H.R. 3221 when it comes to the House floor this week. This Early Learning Challenge Fund will help give more young children access to high quality early learning opportunities and the many social, emotional, and cognitive benefits that result.

Investments in high-quality early childhood education provide enormous returns to the individuals that they serve, as well as to the American taxpayer. Children who participate in high quality early learning programs, particularly those who come from at-risk backgrounds, demonstrate improved academic achievement, reduced grade retention, fewer referrals for special education, higher high school graduation rates, and increased and improved job opportunities later in life. They are also less likely to be involved in the criminal justice system or dependent on public assistance.

It is no secret that a thriving economy requires a stable, skilled, and innovative workforce, or that our nation's social and economic viability depends upon the quality of educational opportunities available to our children. The evidence abounds – quality learning opportunities for children age birth to five are wise investments that yield ongoing dividends to participants, their families, and to society as a whole.

By investing early, we ensure that the next generation is well-equipped with skills necessary for academic, professional, and life success. We look forward to continuing to work with the Congress and the Administration to ensure that even more disadvantaged children have access to high quality early education opportunities. We urge swift passage of H.R. 3221 and the Early Learning Challenge Fund.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Cornelia Grumman". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Cornelia Grumman  
Executive Director