



January 13, 2014

**The Honorable Tom Harkin
Chairman
Senate HELP Committee
Washington, DC 20510**

**The Honorable George Miller
Ranking Member
House Education & Workforce Committee
Washington, DC 20515**

**The Honorable Richard Hanna
House of Representatives
319 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515**

Dear Chairman Harkin, Ranking Member Miller and Congressman Hanna:

Nemours greatly appreciates the introduction of the Strong Start for America's Children Act of 2013, S. 1697 and H.R. 3461, and writes in support of both bills. Nemours is a leading integrated children's health system that owns and operates the Nemours/Alfred I. duPont Hospital for Children in Wilmington, Delaware, Nemours Children's Hospital in Orlando, Florida and 36 pediatric primary and specialty care clinics in Delaware, Florida, Pennsylvania and New Jersey. In addition, we provide pediatric research, education, advocacy and prevention programs to families in the communities we serve.

Nemours recognizes the importance of the early years (birth-5) as crucial to a child's healthy development. In addition to caring for children in our health system, Nemours works collaboratively with external partners to promote and integrate the health of children in early care and education (ECE), school and community-based settings. On any given day, we witness the benefits of our investments in improving ECE quality for children, families and providers. In particular, we see positive results because of the professional development, training and technical assistance we offer to ECE providers, regarding how they can promote healthy eating, physical activity, reading readiness and parent/family engagement in their ECE setting

Nemours is pleased to support S. 1697 and H.R. 3461 as both bills promote children's health through the development of high-quality prekindergarten programs for children from low-income and moderate-income families. We commend both bills for placing an emphasis on teacher qualifications and training; developmentally-appropriate, evidence-based curricula; and comprehensive services for children, including strong parent and family engagement, nutritious

meals, and health screening and referrals. Specifically, we applaud the option provided to states to spend up to 20 percent of formula funds to increase quality improvement, including workforce supports and professional development, along with the opportunity for states to set aside 15 percent of formula funds for high-quality early childhood education for infants and toddlers. In addition, we support the provision to allow the Secretary of Health and Human Services to reserve \$100 million in funds for activities to expand quality in the Child Care and Development Block Grant program.

Nemours recognizes the important steps that these bills would take to improve the quality of prekindergarten programs. A strong start does make a difference, and we commend you for your thoughtful leadership. We look forward to working with you on this initiative and others to improve child health and well-being.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Christopher J. Revere", enclosed in a thin black rectangular border.

Christopher J. Revere, MPA
Director
Office of Child Health Policy & Advocacy