



National Center for Infants, Toddlers, and Families

Board of Directors

Kathryn E. Barnard
T. Berry Brazelton
Robert M. Chang
Maria D. Chavez
Helen Egger
Robert N. Emde
Linda Gilkerson
Walter Gilliam
Brenda Jones Harden
J. Ronald Lally
Alicia F. Lieberman
John Love
Ann Pleshette Murphy
Brian A. Napack
Joy D. Osofsky
Jeree H. Pawl
Cheryl Polk
Lia Sareen
Rizwan Shah
Rebecca Shahmoon Shanok
Paul G. Spicer
Eugene Stein
Mindy Stein
Lynn G. Straus
Ross Thompson
Ginger Ward
Serena Wieder
Harry H. Wright
Charles Zeanah

Directors Emeriti

Samuel J. Meisels
Kyle D. Pruett
Arnold J. Sameroff
Marilyn M. Segal
Jack P. Shonkoff
Edward Zigler

Founding Members

T. Berry Brazelton
Selma Fraiberg
Stanley I. Greenspan
J. Ronald Lally
Bernard Levy
Reginald S. Lourie
Peter B. Neubauer
Robert A. Nover
Sally Provence
Julius B. Richmond
Albert J. Solnit
Leon J. Yarrow

Executive Director

Matthew E. Melmed

November 12, 2013

The Honorable George Miller
U.S. House of Representatives
2205 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Richard Hanna
U.S. House of Representatives
319 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Mr. Miller and Mr. Hanna:

On behalf of ZERO TO THREE: National Center on Infants, Toddlers, and Families, I am pleased to offer our support for the Strong Start for America's Children Act. We greatly appreciate your leadership in proposing bold new investments in the early development and learning of children, starting at birth, as a means to secure a brighter future for them as well as our country. With its comprehensive vision, this bill is a milestone in the effort to establish early childhood as a critical first segment of education policy.

We particularly appreciate the bill's birth-to-five arc, with the inclusion of services for infants and toddlers. As you know, at-risk children begin falling behind almost from birth, and significant learning gaps are evident long before they cross the threshold of a preschool door. The bill recognizes the challenges of reaching and supporting the earliest development of vulnerable infants and toddlers by proposing to reach them wherever they are, through home visiting, Early Head Start, and high-quality child care. We are especially pleased at the opportunity provided in the Prekindergarten Access program for states to use some of these funds to build high-quality early care and learning programs for infants and toddlers. This provision is an important signal to states of the need to direct attention to the earliest learners if they are to prevent or minimize the gaps we see as children enter prekindergarten. In that way, the preK experience will be one of forging ahead, rather than playing catch up.

Thank you again for your leadership and untiring work on behalf of our nation's youngest children. We look forward to working with you to help this bill move forward and, in particular, strengthen those portions aimed at giving infants and toddlers a strong start on the path to school readiness.

Sincerely,

Matthew E. Melmed
Executive Director