

February 22, 2011

The Honorable Pete Stark
United States House of Representatives
239 Cannon Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Representative Stark:

As early childhood advocates, we strongly support your efforts to sustain the Child Care and Development Block Grant. Investments in early education help us build a smarter, healthier, and stronger America. These programs make a real difference for the millions of families and children they serve. However, due to insufficient funding, only one in six eligible children receive child care assistance.

Given this gap in demand and service distribution, families with constrained budgets are often forced to decide between maintaining a job and providing quality care for their children. Some families will have no choice but to use lower-cost child care that may not offer the early learning environment their children need to get a strong start. Others will have no other option but to turn to welfare to support their families despite the desire to work. Deficit reduction will only come from wiser investment of public dollars and data consistently shows that starting early is such a wise choice.

We thank you for all that you have done to help ensure that low-income children get a strong start and their families have the help they need to get and keep a job.

Sincerely,

CLASP
Early Care and Education Consortium
First Five Years Fund
National Association for the Education of Young Children
National Association of Child Care Resource & Referral Agencies
National Women's Law Center
ZERO TO THREE