

National Association for the Education of Young Children

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November 12, 2013

The Honorable Tom Harkin
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable George Miller
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Richard Hanna
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Senator Harkin and Representatives Miller and Hanna:

The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), the nation's largest voice for high-quality early childhood education from birth through age 8, applauds the introduction of the Start Strong for America's Children Act. The legislation reflects the research that validates the importance of infants, toddlers, and preschoolers having access to high-quality early learning. Neuroscience has demonstrated that a solid foundation in language, literacy, social emotional development, and executive functioning is the backbone to young children arriving at kindergarten prepared for success in school—and in life.

This legislation will accelerate the existing commitment of federal, state, and local programs for young children's early development and learning, creating greater access to and quality of early childhood education for children from birth to kindergarten. NAEYC is particularly pleased to see the emphasis on:

- Using high-quality, research-based and developmentally appropriate standards and assessments in all settings;
- Building on the use of existing state systems to deliver preschool programs in high-quality child care, Head Start, and school settings;
- Ensuring that programs engage families and support children's comprehensive needs;
- Attracting and retaining teachers by helping them to gain the specialized knowledge required and earn degrees in early childhood education, including improved compensation;
- Improving and expanding access to infant and toddler care in child care and Early Head Start; and
- Strengthening families by providing access to voluntary home visiting in the critical infant and toddler years.

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The economic and societal benefits of high-quality early learning and development experiences for all young children are better known and appreciated than ever before. National and state polls show that the public, on a bipartisan basis, understands and supports a greater public investment in high-quality early learning. We look forward to working with you to strengthen the legislation and advance the sound investment to help children, families, and our nation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in purple ink that reads "Rhian Evans Allvin". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Rhian Evans Allvin
Executive Director