



## First Five Years Fund

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December 1, 2015

The Honorable Lamar Alexander  
455 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Patty Murray  
154 Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable John Kline  
2439 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Bobby Scott  
1201 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington D.C. 20515

Dear Senator Alexander, Senator Murray, Representative Kline, and Representative Scott:

Thank you for making early learning an integral component of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA/S.1777) and for the bipartisan leadership and cooperation modeled by your committees during the Elementary and Secondary Education Act reauthorization process. The First Five Years Fund supports the ESSA, and we encourage the Senate and House to approve the measure before Congress adjourns later this year.

The ESSA's Preschool Development Grants program will provide invaluable support to states, communities, and programs working to prepare low-income children for Kindergarten and their later development and learning. The program's comprehensive needs assessment and focus on promoting close collaboration within communities, including leveraging existing State Advisory Councils on Early Childhood Education and Care, will ensure existing federal, state, and local resources are used effectively to promote quality and parental choice. Coupled with the program's other core provisions, including encouraging thoughtful strategic planning and promoting sharing of best practices among early childhood education program providers, will make a positive difference for the nation's youngest learners and their families.

FFYF also appreciates the ESSA's emphasis on encouraging greater early learning and elementary education alignment. The ESSA will meaningfully support existing state and local efforts to strengthen standards alignment; enhance local flexibility and decision making by making early learning an allowable use within important ESSA programs; support early childhood focused professional development for elementary teachers and school leaders; and appropriately calls on states and districts to evaluate their local needs and embed early learning within their Title I plans. These and other early childhood provisions will ensure states and communities take a holistic and impactful approach to meeting young children's needs.



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FFYF appreciates your leadership on behalf of the millions of young children who will benefit from your hard work, persistence, and vision. We are eager to begin working with state and local leaders to support implementation of the ESSA's early learning provisions and respectfully encourage Congress to approve the conference report.

Sincerely,

Kris Perry  
Executive Director