

# GETTING THE MOST BANG FOR THE BUCK: QUALITY EARLY EDUCATION AND CARE

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HEARING  
BEFORE THE  
SUBCOMMITTEE ON CHILDREN AND FAMILIES  
OF THE  
COMMITTEE ON HEALTH, EDUCATION,  
LABOR, AND PENSIONS  
UNITED STATES SENATE  
ONE HUNDRED TWELFTH CONGRESS  
FIRST SESSION  
ON  
EXAMINING QUALITY EARLY EDUCATION AND CARE  
JUNE 9, 2011

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## **GETTING THE MOST BANG FOR THE BUCK: QUALITY EARLY EDUCATION AND CARE**

**THURSDAY, JUNE 9, 2011**

U.S. SENATE,  
SUBCOMMITTEE ON CHILDREN AND FAMILIES,  
COMMITTEE ON HEALTH, EDUCATION, LABOR, AND PENSIONS,  
*Washington, DC.*

The subcommittee met, pursuant to notice, at 10:08 a.m. in Room 430, Dirksen Office Building, Hon. Barbara Mikulski, chairman of the subcommittee, presiding.

Present: Senators Mikulski, Burr, Murray, Sanders, Casey, Franken, and Bennet.

### **OPENING STATEMENT OF SENATOR MIKULSKI**

Senator MIKULSKI. Good morning everybody. The subcommittee on Children and Families will come to order.

I am pleased to convene the subcommittee's first hearing of the 112th Congress on an issue that is very important, I believe not only to the members of the subcommittee, but to the American people. We are talking about the importance of supporting our next generation and making sure that our children are given every chance to succeed and that our Nation has a chance to prosper.

The title of today's hearing is "Getting the Most Bang for the Buck: Quality Early Education and Care."

I would like to first begin by thanking my ranking member, Senator Burr, my dear friend and my dear colleague. We want to note that this is a bipartisan hearing, we both worked on these excellent witnesses that we have and look forward to working together, as we have done on so many issues.

I also want to thank Senator Burr for introducing legislation on comprehensive background checks for those who give licensed care in the homes and agencies that utilize the Childcare and Development Block Grant dollars. Senator Burr, I want to say to you, I would hope after the 4th of July break we could schedule a hearing on your bill. We worked on national service, so anybody who is in touch with a vulnerable population, we are going to make sure we protect that population. We have worked with Senator Burr on a number of issues and look forward to working with him on this one.

I want to thank Senator Franken who also had a particular interest in this issue and who is one of the prime movers in encouraging the subcommittee to have this hearing and I know you have one of the witnesses you will be introducing.

And of course our friend, Senator Casey, introduced some important legislation yesterday.

So today this hearing is going to be really timely, given the ongoing debate in our Nation about how we tackle the Nation's most important needs. There is a lot of talk in the air about how we need to be a more frugal government. I think we would all agree with that. We have to find a way to live within our means and cut the excesses and the unnecessary. But we also have to know when we are going to spend Federal money, how and where do we get the bang for the buck. There is significant evidence that says early childhood education pays the bill. So this committee today will examine all of those issues.

We all know the moral arguments behind investing in our children, but we also have to look at the economic and intellectual benefits of early childhood education and making sure that it is of high quality. From programs such as Head Start and Early Head Start, there does appear to be evidence that children who participate in those programs are more likely to graduate, they are more likely to be productive in the workforce and more likely not to engage in dysfunctional behavior. Some studies have shown that for every dollar we invest, our society seems to get a return on investment of \$16.

Then just speaking as a CJS appropriator, who has to fund our Federal prisons, I know the cost of both human life and to the Federal budget of a Federal prison. Quite frankly, I am not mixing apples and oranges or little pea pods with future big bananas, but we need to just look at what we pay now, so we don't pay later. Do we invest in children so that they have a really sturdy, resilient kind of future? So they are both sturdy, resilient and ready to learn. Or, at the end do we do incredible remediation in elementary and high school?

Today we are going to have our witnesses, and I will be introducing them shortly. But I would like to get right to the hearing and turn to my colleague, Senator Burr, for any opening statements that he has.

#### STATEMENT OF SENATOR BURR

Senator BURR. Madam Chairwoman, thank you very much. I look forward to what this newly constructed subcommittee will be working on. We have had the habit of changing names and responsibilities lately on subcommittees over the past several years, and I certainly look forward to your leadership.

I also want to thank all of our witnesses for their time, their dedication and to our shared goal of improving quality—the quality of early childhood education and care in this Nation.

Quality early childhood education and childcare are critically important to ensuring future generations of students are prepared for the 21st century. In their early years of development, children form cognitive, social, emotional, and physical skills that they will need for the rest of their lives, both inside and outside of the school classroom. Quality childhood education and childcare are essential for ensuring all children, regardless of their socio-economic status, race, or disability, enter school ready to learn and to succeed.

I am especially proud that one of the most important studies on the benefits of quality early childhood care and education was conducted in my home State of North Carolina. Children from low-income families received high-quality education intervention in a childcare setting from birth through age 5. The children's progress was then monitored over time with follow up studies conducted at age 12, 15, and 21. Children who participated in the intervention experienced higher cognitive test scores from the toddler years to age 21 and higher academic achievement in reading and math. Additionally, children in the intervention completed more years of education and were more likely to attend a 4-year institution. These findings are a testament to the importance of quality care and education for children ages birth through 5.

While I know in the last few years the HELP Committee has expended a lot of energy on the topic of ESEA reauthorization and that we have heard a lot about how title I and other ESEA programs can support quality preschool, I think it is important that we all remember the major Federal programs for early education or childcare, especially the Child Care and Development Block Grant, as well as Head Start and Early Head Start.

CCDBG hasn't been reauthorized since 1996, and there are critical, commonsense changes needed to CCDBG to ensure infants and toddlers receive high-quality care in a healthy and safe environment. Far too many kids in this country are in childcare, subsidized and paid for by the Federal Government that is not safe, healthy, or of general good quality. For example, only 10 States currently require comprehensive background checks for childcare workers, and a number of States have minimal to no licensing, inspection, or training requirements. While it is important for working parents to have access to childcare, what is more important is to have access to quality childcare.

When working parents enroll their children in childcare, they shouldn't have to worry that they might be dropping their kids off to be cared by someone who has been convicted of a violent crime. We owe it to working parents to make the changes needed to CCDBG to ensure that children are taken care of by quality individuals in a safe and healthy environment.

Madam Chairman, I can't thank you more for making this the topic of our initial hearings and I look forward to working with you this Congress.

Senator MIKULSKI. Thank you, very much.

To my colleagues, we are going to recognize members on the order of their arrival. For the other Senators we are going to allow them 7 minutes in their first round so that that is the point where they could say an opening statement or two.

I think we would like to get right to Dr. Lombardi and then right to this really excellent panel that we have and move expeditiously.

Dr. Lombardi, we want to welcome you. The deputy assistant secretary and inter-departmental liaison, wow—

[Laughter.]

Senator MIKULSKI [continuing]. For Early Childhood Development Administration for the Children and Families Department of Health and Human Services.

You come with a really distinguished background.

Ms. LOMBARDI. Thanks.

Senator MIKULSKI. Lots of hands-on experience over the years. We welcome your testimony and your insights and recommendations that you might have.

**STATEMENT OF JOAN LOMBARDI, Ph.D., DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY AND INTER-DEPARTMENTAL LIAISON FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT, ADMINISTRATION FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES, WASHINGTON, DC**

Ms. LOMBARDI. Thank you and good morning, Chairman Mikulski and Ranking Member Burr and members of the subcommittee.

I am so pleased to appear before you to discuss the activities of the Department of Health and Human Services, those activities that are promoting early childhood development. I am also really thrilled to be here with so many colleagues who have contributed to this issue over the years and with parents who live this issue every day.

Ten years ago the National Academy's report, "From Neurons to Neighborhoods," found that brain development is most rapid during the first 5 years of life and that early experiences matter for healthy development. Evidence continues to mount demonstrating how children's earliest experiences provide a foundation that can have a profound influence on their later success. Cost benefit analysis of early childhood programs find that high quality early intervention pays off. The scientific and economic case, as you will hear today, for investing in early childhood is strong.

Our job in the Administration is to move forward with policies that build on this evidence. We have established a set of principles that guide our work. These include, among others, focusing on the continuum of development from prenatal to eight, adapting and improving standards for early childhood programs, supporting the workforce so they can develop high quality programs, promoting the importance of families as a core element in quality programs and in their child's development, addressing the health needs of children and making sure that we address the needs of the most vulnerable.

ACF, as you know, administers both the Head Start Program and the Childcare and Development Fund and co-administers, with the Health Resources and Services Administration, the Maternal, Infant and Early Childhood Home Visiting Program. And as a result of language included in the full-year continuing appropriation, we are now jointly administering The Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge with the Department of Education.

Across from these programs, our goal has been to assure young children are healthy, happy and successful, from their earliest years into the transition to school. Nothing is more important to achieving that goal than our efforts to improve the quality of those services. I would like to briefly highlight some of our efforts.

Ongoing quality improvements, first of all, it is critically important to make sure that every Head Start Program across the country is providing quality. In our Roadmap to Excellence in Head Start, we designed quality improvements that used the latest evidence on promoting positive and sustained outcomes for children.

This, as you know, builds upon the historic Head Start Reauthorization Act of 2007 which included raising standards, fully engaging families, raising teacher qualifications and improving monitoring and requiring that low performing grantees compete for Head Start funds.

Head Start is enacting stronger accountability provisions to ensure that grantees meet expectations. For the first time, Head Start programs that do not provide high quality services will have to compete for continued funding. Under the designation renewal system proposed rule, grantees will be evaluated based on criteria that look at measures of classroom quality, health and safety, financial management and program management.

But we didn't stop there, we improved the training and technical assistance system, the monitoring system and took steps to ensure program integrity.

On the childcare side, we are also raising the quality of childcare across the country and we are particularly interested in putting forth—that we put forth principles to reform the Childcare and Development Block Grant and to improve quality, expand access, promote continuity of care, ensure program integrity, streamline and promote better coordination across early childhood programs.

Finally, we are working with the childcare grantees to ensure that all programs are used to the benefit of eligible children. Recently we issued stronger policy guidance to advise programs on how they prevent waste, fraud and abuse.

Taken together, these reforms would help transform the Nation's childcare system into one that provides safe, nurturing care that fosters healthy development, is focused on quality, ensures integrity and supports parental employment.

In closing, we are very excited about our agenda and we are convinced it will lead to real results in healthy child development, school readiness, school achievement. The subcommittee plays a critical role in our reform efforts and we look forward to continuing to work with you on the reform agenda outlined in the President's fiscal year 2012 budget, including the reauthorization of the Childcare and Development Block Grant, which as you know, celebrated its 20th anniversary last year.

I would be happy to take questions.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Lombardi follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF JOAN LOMBARDI, PH.D.

Chairwoman Mikulski, Ranking Member Burr, and members of the subcommittee, I am pleased to appear before you to discuss investments that the Department of Health and Human Services' (HHS) Administration for Children and Families (ACF) is making to promote early childhood development and support working families. Recognizing that children's early experiences are critical in shaping the foundation for their long-term health and education, early childhood development is one of Secretary Sebelius' highest priorities, so we are especially appreciative that you are holding this hearing today.

Over the past 2 years, ACF has developed a more integrated early childhood unit that has become a focal point for early childhood activities at the Federal level. ACF not only provides oversight to the two largest Federal programs, Head Start and the Child Care and Development Fund, but we are engaged in a series of interagency efforts within HHS and with our colleagues at the Department of Education that provide a unique model of collaboration within the Federal Government. To describe our agency's successes further, I would like to focus my remarks today on three topics. First, I will highlight why investments in the early years are so important. Sec-

ond, I will describe some of the core investments we are making in early childhood. Finally, I will discuss our efforts to improve quality to better achieve results.

#### INVESTMENTS IN THE EARLY YEARS LAY THE FOUNDATION FOR SUCCESS

Ten years ago, the Department of Health and Human Services (in collaboration with other Federal agencies and private funders) funded the National Academies to produce *From Neurons to Neighborhoods*, a seminal report on early childhood development. The most important findings from this comprehensive synthesis of the science of early childhood development are that brain development is most rapid during the first 5 years of life, and that early experiences matter for healthy development. Evidence continues to mount demonstrating how children's earliest experiences provide a foundation that can have a profound influence on their later success. Nurturing and stimulating care given in the early years of life literally builds optimal brain architecture that allows children to maximize their enormous potential for learning. On the other hand, hardship in the early years of life can increase the odds towards later problems. Interventions in the first years of life are capable of helping to shift the odds for those at risk of poor outcomes toward more positive outcomes. Because of the relationship between early experience and later success, investments in high quality early childhood programs can pay large dividends.

Cost-benefit analyses have been conducted for a number of early childhood programs, and while the specific numbers vary depending on the method used to calculate them, all find that high quality early interventions pay off. For every dollar invested in these high quality early interventions, there was a long-term return on that investment.

These investments are most critical for disadvantaged children and families—the families ACF and our State and local partners serve in Head Start and child care assistance programs.

High quality early care and education programs support school success and positive outcomes for children promoting long-term productivity in the next generation's workforce. We cannot win the future without ensuring that every child reaches his or her full potential—and to do that, we need every child to start kindergarten ready to succeed. Finally, early care and education programs also have an important economic impact. By providing safe, supervised settings for young children, programs allow parents to work—and look for work during temporary periods of joblessness. In addition, many States and communities have conducted studies and discovered that the early care and education sector has an economic impact that can be as valuable as many other sectors. This economic effect comes not only through direct employment of early care and education teachers, but also from the goods and services that child care providers purchase.

#### EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAMS IN THE ADMINISTRATION FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

As you will hear this morning, both the scientific and economic case for investing in the early years is strong. Our job in the Administration is to move forward with policies that build on this evidence. In order to assure that children grow up healthy, happy and successful, we have established a set of principles that guide our work. These include: focusing on the continuum of development from prenatal to age 8, adopting early learning and development standards, improving quality standards in early childhood programs, developing a comprehensive assessment system, coordinating uniform data collection, supporting the workforce so it can deliver high-quality programs, promoting the importance of families as a core element in quality programming and in their children's overall development, addressing the health needs of children, and making sure that we address the needs of the most vulnerable.

HHS administers a set of programs that affect the healthy development of young children and support families. The early childhood programs administered by ACF are designed both to provide enriching early childhood experiences that promote the long-term success of children and to assist low-income working parents with the cost of child care. Creation of my position as Deputy Assistant Secretary and Inter-Departmental Liaison for Early Childhood Development was a first step in the Department's vision to better align our early childhood programs. The interagency work includes stronger linkages with the health side of HHS and bold new initiatives with the Department of Education.

ACF administers both the Head Start Program and the Child Care and Development Fund and co-administers with the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) the Maternal and Infant and Early Childhood Home Visiting Program. And, result of language included in the Full-Year Continuing Appropriations Act, 2011, we are now jointly administering the Race to the Top—Early Learning Challenge with the Department of Education.

### *Head Start*

Head Start promotes school readiness for children, ages 3 to 5, in low-income families. Head Start programs also promote school readiness through the provision of educational, nutritional, social, and other services to enrolled children and families. Programs actively engage parents in their children's learning and help parents make progress toward their own educational, literacy and employment goals. The Office of Head Start (OHS) provides grants to 1,661 local public and private non-profit and for-profit agencies to provide Head Start and Early Head Start services to meet the needs of local communities. The size and structure of these agencies vary widely from a program serving 20 children in an Alaska Native village to a large metropolitan school district serving more than 20,000 children.

Early Head Start (EHS), launched in 1995, provides support to low-income infants, toddlers, pregnant women and their families. EHS programs enhance children's physical, social, emotional, and intellectual development; assist pregnant women to access comprehensive prenatal and postpartum care; support parents' efforts to fulfill their parental roles; and help parents move toward self-sufficiency.

The Recovery Act included \$2.1 billion to expand Head Start and Early Head Start, support investments in teachers, classroom materials, and quality services and establish State Advisory Councils on Early Childhood Development and Education. With this historic investment in early childhood education, Early Head Start programs increased the number of children served by 48,000 infants and toddlers and 13,000 3- and 4-year-olds.

In total, more than 965,000 children and families are receiving comprehensive services, including early care and education, health, nutrition, disability services and a range of other family supports this year. The President's fiscal year 2012 budget for Head Start of \$8.1 billion would maintain services for these children and support critical quality improvements to maximize the effectiveness of the investment in Head Start. Even with the historic expansion under the Recovery Act, Early Head Start serves less than 5 percent of poor infants and toddlers across the country are receiving services. Head Start serves less than half of poor 3- and 4-year-olds.

Results from the Head Start Family and Child Experiences Studies (FACES) (1997, 2000, 2003, 2006, and 2009) document that, on the whole, children enter Head Start at a great disadvantage in terms of school readiness skills compared to their more economically advantaged peers. The FACES studies show that the gap is diminished, but not eliminated, as children enter school. Nonetheless, there is considerable evidence that Head Start makes a difference in the life course of disadvantaged children.

*The Head Start Impact Study* (HSIS), which randomly assigned children to Head Start or community services as usual, found that, at the end of 1 year in Head Start, children in the Head Start group had better cognitive skills and younger children had fewer behavior problems than children in the non-Head Start group. Despite these early gains, by the end of first grade, overall, children in the Head Start group had similar levels of achievement as children assigned to the comparison group.

Although effects of Head Start were not evident in first grade on traditional measures of children's achievement, there were positive differences in other areas. For instance, Head Start children received a broader range of health, parent, and family social services than the control group children. Head Start children had higher rates of health insurance coverage into first grade and were 15 percent more likely to receive dental care. Additionally, after 1 year in Head Start, parents reported participating in more educational activities (i.e., read to child, family cultural enrichment) with their children, and parents of children who entered as 3-year-olds were less likely to use physical discipline.

It is also important to note that there were benefits into early elementary school for some groups of children. By the end of first grade, children in the 3-year-old Head Start entry group had closer and more positive relationships with their parents. In addition, a number of gains persisted for certain subgroups of children, including children who were dual language learners, children in higher risk families, and children with special needs.

A rigorous random-assignment evaluation found that at the end of the program, Early Head Start was effective in improving outcomes for children across all areas of development studied—cognitive, language, social emotional, and health—as well as parenting and family self sufficiency. Impacts were especially strong for African-Americans, families who entered during pregnancy, those programs that had the potential to provide both center- and home-based services, and those programs that were fully implementing the Head Start Program Performance Standards. The research found the potential for long-term impacts as well. Two years after the end

of the program, positive impacts remained for children's social emotional development and for many parenting outcomes. Both short and longer term outcomes depended on what experiences children had after leaving Early Head Start.

It is important to remember that there is a large body of research on Head Start, in addition to these impact studies that were undertaken by the Department. A number of studies, taking advantage of longitudinal data sets such as the National Longitudinal Study on Youth or the Panel Study of Income Dynamics, have found long-term effects of Head Start for children who participated in Head Start when compared to siblings who did not. Head Start children were less likely to be retained in grade or receive special education services by the time they were 14 (Currie & Thomas, 1995; Deming, 2009). Additionally, a random sample of children who attended Head Start between 1988 and 1990 performed better on an index of adult functioning that considered educational attainment, employment, teen parenting, criminal behavior, and health outcomes (Deming, 2009), while some groups were more likely to complete high school and attend college or less likely to be charged with a crime or become obese during childhood (Frisvold, 2006; Garces, Thomas, & Currie, 2002). At least one of these studies also found a long-term increase in cognitive test scores (Currie & Thomas, 1995). There is also a growing body of research demonstrating effective strategies for improving Head Start and other early care and education programs through curricular enhancements, professional development for teachers, and other key supports (for example, research by Pianta, Bierman, Fantuzzo, Raver, and others).

Evidence indicates that Head Start helps get our most vulnerable children ready for kindergarten. However, we can and must strengthen the program and raise the bar on quality. Our efforts on this front are discussed below.

#### *The Child Care and Development Fund*

The high cost of child care presents real barriers to work for low-income parents and limits their ability to access high quality care. The average annual price of care for an infant in a center ranges from \$4,550 in the least expensive State to \$18,750 in the highest (National Association of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies, 2010).

The Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) program plays a critical role in assisting low-income working parents with the cost of child care, as well as improving the quality of programs to promote the long term success of disadvantaged children. Investments made in the CCDF program are especially important because they have a two-generational impact. Low-income parents need access to child care in order to work and gain economic independence and low-income children benefit the most from a high quality early learning setting.

The first part of the investment from CCDF is to support financial assistance to families to reduce the burden of high child care costs. In 2009, the program provided subsidies to 1.6 million children each month. Nearly half of the families receiving subsidies had incomes below the poverty level (which was \$18,310 for a family of three in 2009), and only 15 percent had incomes above 150 percent of poverty. Approximately 75 percent of families receiving assistance were working; the remaining families were enrolled in training and education programs leading to work, or to assist children in need of protective services. CCDF also leverages child care investments from the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program and other funding streams, resulting in financial support to make child care more affordable for a total of 2.5 million children each month. However, even counting these additional investments, only 1 in 6 federally eligible children actually receives assistance—leaving many families that are forced to choose lower quality care, quit their jobs, leave their children unsupervised, or make other untenable choices.

The second, and equally important part of the investment from CCDF, is in improving the quality of child care. States spend \$1 billion annually in CCDF funds to support child care quality improvement—on average, nearly three times the 4 percent required by law. CCDF quality investments result in better learning environments and more qualified caregivers in child care settings across the country. In many States, CCDF is the primary funding source for infrastructure and systemic reform that supports quality improvement—such as Quality Rating and Improvement Systems to help programs meet higher standards and provide parents with critical information about the quality of their child care choices. In addition, States are focusing on professional development for caregivers, creating career pathways leading to higher levels of qualifications, professional recognition, and better compensation. These investments benefit millions of children nationwide—not just those receiving child care subsidies.

Congress significantly increased funding for the Child Care Development Fund through the Recovery Act to meet the needs of low-income families during the reces-

sion. That funding helped support child care assistance as well as critical quality improvement efforts. However, as States exhaust their Recovery Act funds and continue to struggle with lower revenues, many are scaling-back services and reducing investments in quality. We are concerned about some of the cuts we are hearing about throughout the country and hope that as the economy and States' revenues improve, States will once again invest in these important efforts.

The President's budget request provides a \$1.3 billion increase for the CCDF program, for a total of \$6.3 billion in fiscal year 2012, and would support services to approximately 1.7 million children. This investment would not only expand access, but it would support new quality investments that can help improve quality for all children in care.

#### *Maternal, Infant and Early Childhood Home Visiting Program*

I would like to briefly discuss the Department's efforts with the Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting Program to implement the Home Visiting program, another example of the President's commitment to targeting funds towards evidence-based approaches while also spurring—and evaluating—continued innovation. In a little over a year since enactment of the Affordable Care Act, we have made great strides implementing the program. The fiscal year 2010 programs are well underway and the fiscal year 2011 funding opportunity announcements are being issued, with a competitive announcement issued on June 1 and a formula announcement forthcoming. Most of the increase in funding in fiscal year 2011 as compared to fiscal year 2010 (the fiscal year 2011 allocation is \$250 million, compared with \$100 million in fiscal year 2010) will be awarded through this competitive process. Technical assistance is being provided to all grantees to support their planning and implementation activities and the Secretary's Advisory Committee on the National Evaluation was convened to inform the design of the evaluation and a request for proposals for the national evaluation has been issued.

ACF and HRSA continue to collaborate on the implementation of the Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting (MIECHV) Program, drawing on the important work both agencies do to support healthy child development through programs such as HRSA's maternal and child health block grant and ACF's early education and child welfare programs.

Research has found that home visiting programs can have both short- and long-term effects on the well-being of children and families that participate in the programs. Each home visiting program is unique in the constellation of services it provides and in the ages of children and the type of family it targets. As a group, home visiting programs can produce an array of positive outcomes, including improvements in child and maternal health, child development, and school readiness; reductions in child maltreatment; increases in positive parenting practices; and improvements in family economic self-sufficiency.

#### *Race to the Top Early Childhood Challenge*

We are very appreciative of Congress for including, in the fiscal year 2011 CR, \$700 million for Race to the Top and for adding "Improving Early Childhood Care and Education" as a core goal. On May 25, 2011, U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan and U.S. Secretary of Health and Human Services Kathleen Sebelius announced that the Administration plans to use approximately \$500 million of the fiscal year 2011 Race to the Top funding for a major competition in support of bold and comprehensive State plans for reforming early learning and development programs to close the school readiness gap.

This competition, the Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge (RTT-ELC), jointly administered by the Departments of Education (ED) and Health and Human Services (HHS), will not mean another program or more bureaucracy. It will award grants to States that show the most promise in narrowing the school readiness gap by aligning existing programs and resources more effectively and making key reforms to improve quality across programs.

Specific competition requirements, priorities, and selection criteria are still under development. However, consistent with the statute, applicant States will need to take actions to:

- Increase the number and percentage of low-income and disadvantaged children in each age group of infants, toddlers, and preschoolers who are enrolled in high-quality early learning programs;
- Design and implement an integrated system of high-quality early learning programs and services; and
- Ensure that any use of assessments conforms with the recommendations of the National Research Council's reports on early childhood.

Because high quality early childhood education spans the ages of birth to age 8 and involves the transition of children from early childhood programs into our Nation's schools, we look forward to continuing the historic collaboration between the Department of Health and Human Services and the Department of Education.

#### *Other Interagency Initiatives*

Secretary Sebelius has charged all of us at HHS to seek out collaborations within the Department and with other Departments where those collaborations can improve outcomes and make our efforts more effective. The following are just some examples of those efforts:

The Office of Head Start and the Office of Child Care have joined forces with the Department of Defense as part of a Military Family Federal Interagency Collaboration. This collaborative effort is focused on increasing the availability and quality of child care in 13 States for military families, especially those families not near military bases or not having easy access to other military child care supports.

- Asset/Financial Stability for Families with Young Children is a special ACF initiative stressing the importance of family financial stability in the development of young children. Through this initiative, ACF seeks to explore new opportunities for ensuring that those involved in early care and education services—providers and families with children—have access to financial education, Individual Development Accounts (IDAs) and other asset building strategies.

- In 2009, ACF established an early childhood child welfare partnership among Federal agencies to increase communication, coordination, and collaboration among early childhood and child welfare systems at the Federal, State, and local levels. This partnership promotes increased access, participation, and attendance in high quality early learning and development programs and maximizes program continuity for young children, especially those first being placed in foster care, changing placements, and/or reunifying with their families.

#### EFFORTS TO IMPROVE QUALITY TO BETTER ACHIEVE RESULTS

Across all of our programs, our goal has been to assure young children are healthy, happy and successful from their earliest years and as they transition into school. Nothing is more important to achieving this goal than our efforts to improve the quality of the services provided.

There is much that we already know about what makes for high quality early childhood programs. For example, research indicates that better child outcomes are associated with high quality adult-child interactions. Specifically children need teachers and caregivers who are sensitive and responsive and who provide language rich, stimulating environments and opportunities. Relatedly, evidence increasingly demonstrates the connection between the quality of implementation of evidence-based practices and the outcomes that are obtained highlighting the necessity of ongoing professional development.

Within our new interagency structure, the Office of Head Start and the Office of Child Care have been working together to better align their programs. This has included regular meetings with the leadership of both offices, as well as targeted meetings across policy divisions and training and technical assistance divisions. This has resulted in a plan for a more coordinated technical assistance system, better alignment of policies and a special project to use Early Head Start as a hub of comprehensive services for family child care. In addition, efforts have been made to better integrate ACF's research agenda and projects across early childhood.

#### *Head Start*

Ongoing quality improvement of every Head Start program is a key element of the Administration's education agenda, which is designed to help every child meet his or her full potential and make our country more competitive. Almost 1 million children depend on the Head Start program, and they all deserve to be in settings where program activities are engaging and developmentally appropriate, and promote increased vocabulary, early literacy, early math, problem solving, and healthy social, emotional and physical development. The challenge is ensuring that more programs are of the highest quality and produce the results we know are possible. Head Start children and families deserve the best services we have to offer, and we are taking aggressive steps to meet our commitments to them.

As the Department laid out in *Roadmap to Excellence in Head Start*, we have designed quality improvement initiatives that use the latest evidence on promoting positive, sustained child outcomes. These comprehensive quality initiatives build on those called for in the December 2007 Head Start Reauthorization Act, and include:

- raising the standards to which Head Start programs are held;

- fully engaging families in their child’s development and learning;
- raising teacher qualification requirements;
- providing better training to teachers and other Head Start professionals, focused on bringing current research and the best available evidence-driven strategies for early child development and education directly into Head Start programs;
- improving monitoring of Head Start programs to ensure that evidence-based methods are being implemented; and
- requiring low-performing grantees to compete for Head Start funds.

In all of these efforts we are using research to focus on what matters most to children’s development. One example of how we are using evidence to improve quality is our use of the Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS), a research-based observational instrument to assess classroom quality that was developed by researchers at the University of Virginia. The CLASS focuses on the multiple dimensions of teacher-child interaction that are linked to positive child development and later achievement. Since teacher-child interactions are such an important measure of quality, HHS has provided CLASS training to every Head Start program across the country and is utilizing CLASS in Training and Technical Assistance and in the monitoring of Head Start programs.

OHS also is enacting stronger accountability provisions to ensure that grantees meet expectations. We expect to move forward with the implementation of the Designation Renewal System this year when we issue a final rule. For the first time, Head Start programs that do not provide high-quality services will be forced to compete for continued funding. Under the proposed rule, grantees will be evaluated based on criteria that look at measures of classroom quality, health and safety, financial management, and program management. Programs that fail to meet any one of the standards will be required to compete for continued funding. We have proposed that the lowest performing 25 percent of programs reviewed, at a minimum, have to compete.

Requiring low-performing Head Start grantees to compete for funding will represent a historic step towards accountability and quality control in Head Start. We understand that some are concerned about this change and the number of grantees that could be impacted. However, the Administration is deeply committed to funding only high performing grantees and conducting effective and rigorous competitions to provide quality services for all Head Start children and families.

Head Start has strengthened its Training and Technical Assistance system to provide enhanced evidence-based support to programs in their delivery of quality services to children and families. The new system consists of six National Centers functioning as a team to provide consistent information across service areas, a network of State technical assistance providers, and direct funding to grantees. The Centers will communicate “best practices” and provide content-rich, usable, practical resources and information to grantees. The Office of Head Start also has funded 10 Centers of Excellence to showcase promising models of high quality early childhood service delivery across the country.

Finally, we have taken strong steps to ensure program integrity. Specifically, we have enhanced current monitoring procedures by partnering with the HHS Office of Inspector General and conducting 174 unannounced monitoring visits to Head Start and Early Head Start programs, setting up a fraud hotline, and proposing new regulations to strengthen the eligibility verification processes.

#### *Child Care*

Our focus in the child care program is on raising the quality of care across the country. A large body of research has linked the quality of child care and early education programs to children’s developmental outcomes, especially for children from low-income households and with multiple risk factors. The most recent findings from the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development study of child care found that the quality of child care that children received in their preschool years had modest but detectable effects on their academic success and behavior into adolescence.

In addition, new research findings indicate that the quality of interactions between children and adults in child care and early education programs, especially those interactions focused on supporting children’s progress in specific developmental domains, are most predictive of children’s developmental outcomes at the end of preschool (Zaslow, et al., 2011).

Despite the importance of quality, the research and data available indicate that the quality of our Nation’s child care, on average, is inadequate to support children’s learning and development to help them succeed in school and in life, and in the worst cases is harmful to children’s basic health and safety. Too often State-established standards are not high enough to ensure the health and safety of children;

they do not apply to many settings in which young children are cared for; and monitoring to ensure compliance with standards is not adequate.

We are addressing this inadequacy by improving the Child Care Program in the following ways:

First, the Child Care and Development Block Grant is long overdue for reauthorization and the Administration has put forward principles to reform the program and promote quality as envisioned in the following core principles:

- **Improving Quality**—Reauthorization should establish a foundation that will assure health and safety in child care and a systemic framework through which States can improve the quality of child care by increasing the share of dollars dedicated to quality improvement. Increased quality funding will support stronger State health and safety standards, the implementation of Quality Rating Improvement Systems that set standards of excellence and help programs meet higher standards, and professional development systems to improve the qualifications of child care teachers.

- **Expanding Access**—Increased funding will support services to 1.7 million children, approximately 220,000 more than could be served without additional funds.

- **Promoting Continuity of Care**—Our reforms would establish longer eligibility periods for families receiving child care to minimize disruptions for children and to support parent employment and reemployment.

- **Ensuring Program Integrity**—We propose to invest in regional and State capacity to improve program integrity and provide technical assistance to States on reducing waste, fraud, and abuse.

- **Streamlining Resources for Early Childhood Development Programs**—We will facilitate coordination of funding streams at the State and local level and remove barriers to collaboration so that States and communities can better address the comprehensive needs of children from 0 to 5.

Second, we are moving forward on several administrative reforms by developing mechanisms to measure and report on efforts to raise quality. We have proposed a revision to the Child Care and Development Fund Plan application that would redesign the child care quality section to focus on the components of a strong child care system: health and safety requirements, early learning guidelines, quality improvement systems for programs, and professional development and workforce initiatives. The new Plan application will, for the first time, require an annual progress report—the Quality Performance Report—which will collect data on child care quality activities and quality outcomes.

Third, we are redesigning and improving the child care technical assistance network to specialize in core areas, including three new National Centers which are focused on child care quality improvement systems, professional development systems and workforce initiatives, and subsidy administration and program integrity. The Office of Child Care's redesigned technical assistance (TA) network will align with TA efforts of the Office of Head Start in order to support quality improvement at the State systems level that links with enhancements at the local program level.

In coordination with overall HHS efforts, ACF technical assistance has also extended to incorporate emergency preparedness and response activities, with a key focus on child care. In February of this year, the Office of Child Care published the first comprehensive Federal guidance to States on how to plan for the continuity of services during a disaster and work with child care providers to prepare for emergencies. ACF has worked closely with FEMA, the National Commission on Children and Disasters, and non-governmental and voluntary organizations to widely distribute this guidance and other best practices. These efforts have begun to pay off—ACF is one of several partners to establish a child care task force to help respond to the tornado disaster in Joplin, MO. Through this partnership we are working to ensure the State and community are able to access the assistance they need to ensure children are in safe and protective environments as parents make efforts to rebuild their lives.

Finally, we are working with CCDF grantees to ensure that all program funds are used to the benefit of eligible children and families. Our efforts to strengthen program integrity focus on reducing administrative errors and preventing, detecting, and eliminating fraud. Recently, we issued stronger policy guidance to grantees advising them of how to prevent waste, fraud and abuse without creating access barriers for eligible children. We are working with States to conduct triennial case record reviews to identify and reduce administrative errors in the CCDF program. We will be providing States with a self-assessment instrument that will help them better analyze risk and strengthen internal controls to prevent improper payments. Further, we will be issuing a revised version of a guide for child care administrators

which covers key considerations that program officials should take into account when building automated systems to reduce improper payments.

Taken together, these reforms would help transform the Nation's child care system into one that provides safe, nurturing care that fosters healthy child development, promotes future academic success, is focused on quality improvement, ensures integrity of funds, and supports parental employment.

These efforts are key elements of the Administration's broader education agenda designed to help every child reach his or her potential and improve our Nation's competitiveness.

#### CONCLUSION

Our Nation's competitiveness depends on ensuring that every child is able to reach his or her full potential. And, early childhood programs have a critical role to play in this effort.

We are excited about the agenda I have shared with you today and are convinced it will lead to real results in healthy child development, school readiness, school achievement, and adult success. This subcommittee plays a critical role in our reform efforts and we look forward to continuing to working with you on the reform agenda outlined in the President's fiscal year 2012 budget, including on the reauthorization of the Child Care and Development Block Grant Act, which celebrated its 20th anniversary last year.

I appreciate the subcommittee's support for early childhood programs and the opportunity to address you today. I would be happy to answer any questions.

Senator MIKULSKI. Thank you, Dr. Lombardi, for the testimony and also staying within the limits of your testimony. I mean this is great.

[Laughter.]

Let me get right to the question. The President and Secretary Sebelius and your leadership call for reform. What would you say are the top three to five recommendations you would see in reform in the Childcare Development Block Grant?

I know we are all pretty clear on Head Start. Head Start has been around for 40 years, it is a program that is very clear in the way it functions. Childcare Development Block Grant goes over a lot of providers, a lot of unseen, though regulated but unevenly regulated providers, that Senator Burr has raised and so on. So what do you see as the reforms in the Childcare Development Block Grant?

Ms. LOMBARDI. Actually, as Senator Burr said, I think they are common sense changes. First of all, we really have to focus on the quality of the program, including promoting better health and safety standards.

Senator MIKULSKI. What does that mean?

Ms. LOMBARDI. It means that—

Senator MIKULSKI. In other words, let me tell you, every time we have meetings and hearings we get abstractions. This is not about you nor is it a tart commentary, but we heard, "let's have quality." I want criteria, methodologies. What are we talking about when we say we want reform and improved safety standards?

Senator Burr has one on criminal background checks.

Ms. LOMBARDI. I think if we start with health and safety, as Senator Burr and you both know, the law now has very minimum health and safety protections. It says control of infectious diseases, building and physical premise safety and minimum health and safety training. It is not enough. That might have been enough in 1990, but we know so much more now.

We also have wide variability in what States are doing around those standards. Who is covered? What are the provisions across

those health and safety categories? When are programs inspected? We need to look at that and we need to improve.

Senator MIKULSKI. If I hold a hearing on that are you ready to come in and talk—

Ms. LOMBARDI. Sure.

Senator MIKULSKI [continuing]. Very specifically?

Ms. LOMBARDI. We are.

Senator MIKULSKI. OK. Now, tell me the other reform recommendations.

Ms. LOMBARDI. I think if you think about what is the chord of quality, it is the interaction of the provider with the child and with the child's family. But we have not, over the years, provided enough support to the workforce, we have not required training and credentialing the way we have in the Head Start program and so it is time for us to more systematically move to support a workforce that every day is caring for millions and millions of children, often without any training or professional development requirements. So I think that is a key area of reform.

We are also very concerned about the continuity of care for children. So right now children have to cycle in and out of programs, depending on the work status of their family. Sometimes that eligibility is determined every few months. We think there should be more continuity of care for children. It is like a loss for children when they have to leave their program because of their parent's work status changes. There should be much more continuity, especially for babies. And we are talking about very young children here. So we are very much—one of our principles is to promote continuity so the redetermination has longer periods.

So those are just three examples.

Senator MIKULSKI. I think those are three excellent ones. We will look forward to hearing greater amplification when you and others appropriate to the administration come back to testify.

One of the questions we will ask is, does reform cost more money? And if it does, how much are we talking about? Also, what will reform mean for States, in terms of cost and responsibility. But today is to get an overview, we are getting an overview.

My time is up but how does the reform initiatives go to what I have been reading about Race to the Top for early childcare development?

Ms. LOMBARDI. I think what Race to the Top is going to do is amplify those reforms, give us models of reform. The States have been laboratories—your State Senator Mikulski, Maryland, and your State Senator Burr, North Carolina—have been laboratories of innovation. But in many cases other States have not innovated as much or they need to take the next step on developing a quality rating improvement system or many of the other initiatives that are going on out there.

I think Race to the Top will amplify those, it will give States an opportunity to compete, to expand upon those. Hopefully we will be able to use that knowledge to inform the rest of the States through the Childcare and Development Fund.

Senator MIKULSKI. So it is like an innovation grant?

Ms. LOMBARDI. It is.

Senator MIKULSKI. My time is up and I am going to practice what I preach to others.

Senator Burr.

Senator BURR. Thank you, Madam Chairman.

Dr. Lombardi, thank you for what you do. I am going to be a little more direct than my partner in crime, Senator Mikulski, was. Would the Administration support my criminal background check bill?

Ms. LOMBARDI. Yes, we are very much interested in encouraging criminal background checks along with comprehensive health and safety standards, including CPR and prevention of SIDS and health and safety training. So we are very much looking forward to working with you, Senator Burr, on this and other issues. And are ready to meet with you and your staff to talk further about this.

Senator BURR. Great. Let me focus in on one word.

Ms. LOMBARDI. Sure.

Senator BURR. Quality. I think that is a word that we can all buy off on. Share with me, if you can, how do we measure quality in a birth to 5-year-old setting?

Ms. LOMBARDI. It is a very good question and we have struggled a lot with that question. I will give you the example of Head Start. We are using—and this builds again on the reauthorization—an instrument to look at teacher/child interactions. So what is going on, what instructional supports are being provided, what is the social, emotional climate in that classroom, because that is critical, especially for infants and toddlers and how is the classroom organized.

So we are looking at those things. I think that, from a common sense approach, you walk into a program—I was in a program yesterday and you could just feel it, it was full of activity, it was full of language, they were eating healthy foods, the parents were involved. I think that the quality of a program is pretty evident, sometimes, but when you are developing policies you have to be specific about training requirements and about standards and I think that is the direction that we want to go in.

Senator BURR. I couldn't disagree with you and I think you could probably make the same statement if we walked into a classroom in K-12—

Ms. LOMBARDI. Yes.

Senator BURR [continuing]. And you saw the scenario you just painted, the outcome of the student population would be extremely different.

Last thing, we all have this quest for quality and I am very supportive of most, if not all of what you have talked about, the safety, the security, the surroundings, we continually have to balance what we put in place, as far as requirements with what that does to the cost of care.

Ms. LOMBARDI. Yes.

Senator BURR. I think there is a tendency up here to potentially overlook some of those things because when we adversely affect the cost then we potentially decrease the number of slots available. How do we find that balance?

Ms. LOMBARDI. It is a question that everyone is debating across the country. I think we have, for years, talked about quality versus

access. I think we are in a new era where we are trying to think about parents having choices of quality programs and putting those two concepts together and really trying to get people to understand that childcare is an educational setting for children and that is why it has to be quality.

I think that States are struggling with how to balance it, particularly as the recovery funds are being expended and as State budgets tighten up. States have three choices that they are faced with. They invest in quality when budgets tighten. They can lower eligibility, who gets in, fewer people get in. They can decrease reimbursement rates, providers get less. They can increase co-payments to parents so parents have to pay more. And they stop investing in quality. So these factors struggle against each other as budgets get tight. I think what we have to do is continue to invest in quality childcare so that States can make the decisions that have that balance that you are calling for.

Senator BURR. I look forward to working with you——

Ms. LOMBARDI. Me too.

Senator BURR [continuing]. And with the chairwoman. It has been 15 years since we have reauthorized CCDBG——

Ms. LOMBARDI. A long time.

Senator BURR [continuing]. It is way past over due.

Ms. LOMBARDI. Long time.

Senator BURR. I thank the chair.

Senator MIKULSKI. I think what you hear is that the phrase quality is a phrase we all want to embrace, we don't know what it means.

Ms. LOMBARDI. Right.

Senator MIKULSKI. It is often nothing but a cliché. Who doesn't want quality? I don't know of any mother in America that says, "Oh my kid is going to go to an unquality childcare thing."

Ms. LOMBARDI. Right.

Senator MIKULSKI. This is why we are looking for clarity, specificity. But we are also looking for Senator Franken to ask his questions.

[Laughter.]

Senator Franken, I want to thank you for being one of the prime movers for recommending this hearing and recommending the nature and structure of this.

#### STATEMENT OF SENATOR FRANKEN

Senator FRANKEN. Thank you, Madam Chair. I want to thank you for calling this hearing and you are truly a leader on this subject and on so many other issues and I am honored to serve under your leadership in this subcommittee and honored to be working with Senator Burr as well.

I can't think of a better topic for your first hearing as chair of the subcommittee than the one that the chair has chosen, "Getting the Most Bang for our Buck" by investing in quality early education and care. I bring up this "bang for our buck" for a reason. I want to focus a lot of my questions on this, because we are at a time now when we are looking at our long-term sustainability of our budget, of our deficit, long-term sustainability. We are going to be around here for a long time, we are all going to be around for

a long time. America is going to be around for a long time. The human race is going to be around for a long time. So we are talking about long-term sustainability and what is a smart way to spend our dollars.

I would love to hear more about the study—the longitudinal study that Senator Burr talked about in North Carolina. He said birth to 5.

Ms. LOMBARDI. Five.

Senator FRANKEN. And talked about all the data that came out of that. That is what we know. We know that kids with quality early childhood education, and we are talking, I think prenatal—

Ms. LOMBARDI. Yes.

Senator FRANKEN [continuing]. To five. We know that they have better outcomes in so many different ways. We know that they have less repeating of grades. We know that they are less likely to be in special ed. We know they have better health outcomes. We know that there is less teen pregnancy. We know that they graduate from high school more frequently and they go to college more frequently. That they get better jobs and pay more tax dollars. And we also know they end up in prison far less.

Think of the savings of all of that that I just rattled off. Think about that. When you think about our budget and what we are spending on, let's consider that. I think there can't be a more important discussion that we are having in how we invest our dollars.

I want to talk about this, because we hear things like \$3 per dollar to \$16 per dollar. That is a wide range, and the chair wants us to be precise. So I want to talk about some of the data on this and we are probably going to have to—Art Rolnick is here from my State of Minnesota, he is an economist and I want to talk about that.

I have some very good friends who talk about Head Start fade out. This happened, I believe, early on. Early on there was this assumption that Head Start would increase IQ and it did increase IQ at a certain point, then it stopped increasing IQ and then it settled—it went back down. Then everyone stopped there and said, "Oh Head Start isn't really worth it." But then they kept doing the longitudinal study and they found out all these much better outcomes.

Today, I want to get into what the actual science is, what the economic science is on the return on investment of early childhood education. Obviously we are going to get into issues of quality and obviously we are going to get into issues of what works and what techniques work, whether it is home visits and, you know, whether it is prenatal, then home visits and then schooling, etc.

But can you speak to specifically what we know about the studies of Head Start?

Ms. LOMBARDI. Sure. Let me mention the study that you referred to, from North Carolina, the Abecedarian Study. I know that Art will give us the investment angle on this, but one of the interesting things about that study is that it focused on zero to five, the whole continuum, the program did. It was full day. It had qualified staff. And the provisions that that program had I think would be important to look at to get to Senator Mikulski's point about being specific. So one of the things we should do is go back to that program

and think about what did it look like, in detail to see—now times have changed, it was a very different time, but I think there were some core elements of that study that we should look at in thinking about where we go next.

But let me come back to the Head Start story. We know that Head Start has a positive impact on school readiness. If we look at the Head Start impact study, 4-year-olds, the benefits were concentrated in language and literacy, parenting and health. For the 3-year-old group we had positive impacts in all four areas of studies, cognitive development, social, emotional, parenting and health. Looking across the entire group, at the end of first grade, the positive gains were not sustained in this particular study. However, there were positive subgroup findings for the 3-year-olds, children in nonurban settings, special needs children for the 4-year-olds, dual language learners. We think that there were positive impacts of Head Start and that what the literature is telling us is that we need to think about the continuum of services. It is critically important.

Two things we took out of that study, one that we had to intensify our impacts, in other words we had to improve our services—to make stronger we get stronger outcomes.

Senator FRANKEN. It feels like we get more bang for the buck, the more comprehensive it is and the—and that is when we talk—getting into specifics, if we invest in the right way and get the biggest outcome I think it is obvious that is what we have to do. I am running out of time so I want to follow the chair on this, look it is just that the other side of this is what percentage of our high needs kids and low-income kids in this country are being served?

Ms. LOMBARDI. I will tell you the Head Start statistics of children, infants and toddlers in the United States in poverty—less than 5 percent are in Early Head Start. In Head Start it is a little less than half of the children in poverty. So we have a long way to go.

Senator FRANKEN. Yes. OK, thank you.

Madam Chair.

Senator MIKULSKI. That was excellent.

We want to turn to Senator Bennet who comes to us as a former school superintendent in Colorado. We have quite a panel here. Senator Murray was a childcare worker, I was a social worker in a Head Start program, Bennet was superintendent of education, I am sure Senator Franken would have been one of our visitors at these programs.

[Laughter.]

And Senator Sanders was the mayor of a town in Vermont. And Senator Burr—

Senator FRANKEN. I was a visitor?

Senator MIKULSKI [continuing]. Would have been doing all of those background checks on all of us.

[Laughter.]

You have people who know what we are talking about.

Ms. LOMBARDI. I guess so.

Senator MIKULSKI. Pretty much.

Senator Bennet.

## STATEMENT OF SENATOR BENNET

Senator BENNET. Madam Chair, I want to thank you—I really do want to thank you, from the bottom of my heart, for holding this hearing here. Over the last 2½ years there have been weeks when I have left my three little girls, who by the way, did have access to high quality preschool at home in Denver, I would come here for a week, I would spend a week, and I would feel we haven't talked about anything of any relevance to the moms and dads and kids in my State. Then I fly home to see them again and apologize for being gone.

I can't think of a topic over the last 2½ years at a hearing that has more relevance to our moms and dads and kids and to my State than this topic. So thank you for holding this.

Just to jump off from where Senator Franken was at the end, and your answer, if people think this doesn't matter, what we know is that kids living in poverty show up, if they don't have high quality preschool, show up having heard 5 million words by the time they get to kindergarten. Affluent kids show up having heard 15 million words. If you talk to any third grade teacher or eighth grade teacher, twelfth grade teacher, they will tell you that that makes a huge difference all the way through their career.

If I were given the choice of somebody saying to me, "Well you can spend the money on twelfth grade or you can spend the money zero to five," I know which I would pick. We are locked into a system that is not going to deliver the results that we need for kids. And that is why I think this hearing is so important. It is also why I wanted to flag, for you, work that has been done in Denver.

When I was superintendent the voters made a very smart investment in passing groundbreaking public policy initiative which was designed to increase Denver's children's access for 4-year-olds in particular. The voters came and said, "We are going to dedicate sales tax revenue to this question," even though the school district is actually funded by property tax, not by sales tax. Our mayor saw this as something important enough to support. This is a program that focuses as much on quality as it does on access.

And just in a few years of its existence, the Denver Preschool Program has made good on its mandate, growing quickly to become one of the highest enrolled preschool programs in the entire country, serving nearly 6,000 children annually, or about 60 percent of Denver's eligible population. It has also increased the overall level of high quality preschool programming available to Denver's children.

I have a map that you can't see, I mean you can see it but you can't—

[Laughter.]

But Madam Chair, what it shows is that this program has distributed quality throughout Denver's neighborhoods, affluent and low income. That really is an extraordinary change from where we were just 4 or 5 years ago.

Just in the Denver Public Schools alone this year, there are 1,500 more 4-year-olds in full-day programs, a 300 percent increase over what we had. People told me, Madam Chair, they said, "There is no way, Michael, that people are going to want to send their 4-

year-olds to full-day early childhood education,” and boy were they wrong. Every single slot. We went from 500 kids in 1 year to 2,000 kids in the next year.

For the first time, by the way, it allowed us as a school district, to have over 90 percent of our 5-year-olds in full-day kindergarten, because of the way we thought about these funding streams.

I believe we have to go back earlier than that. I think this is a zero to five issue, but we are moving, I think, in the right direction. And we are seeing results. We are seeing results at the third-grade level now. We had a record increase in our reading scores this year, with the first kids to come out of—

Ms. LOMBARDI. That is great.

Senator BENNET [continuing]. The preschool program. So, I would encourage you to look at that program if you haven’t. But I would ask you to talk a little bit more specifically about how working with Race to the Top, to jump off an earlier question, we really can drive quality as we are doing this because it is so very important. I think there are some very good models out there, including the one in St. Paul that we are going to hear about later.

Ms. LOMBARDI. I couldn’t agree more. I have been following some of the things that are going on in Colorado. It is very exciting in that State to see local councils that are very involved in this issue across the State and the Denver Preschool Program. So I think you, like everyone on this panel, have States that are really doing innovative work. It is particularly great to hear about those third-grade reading scores.

I think that if you look at the goal of the Race to the Top—Early Learning Challenge, it is to get a higher percentage of children in—a higher percentage of low-income children in higher quality programs. It is also to bring systemic reform to the early childhood system.

Senator BENNET. I might say on that point, just so my colleagues know how that works, in Denver every family that is eligible gets a subsidy. Now everybody is eligible, from the highest poverty person to the wealthiest person in the city. But the poorer you are the larger your subsidy and the higher quality the program is the larger your subsidy. So if you are high poverty and you are applying to a high quality program, you get the largest subsidy. If you are very affluent and you apply to a low-quality program you get the smallest subsidy. Which is how we are driving quality in the city.

Ms. LOMBARDI. That is an extremely important point, because I think sometimes we create quality programs but then if a State’s childcare reimbursement rates doesn’t allow parents to access those programs, because the rate is so low, it doesn’t really do the parent or the child very much good. So that kind of policies to drive additional resources into programs so low-income families can access quality services, they don’t have to choose between what their child needs and what they need and that is really the goal.

So we are also, in the Race to the Top—Early Learning Challenge, going to be looking at systemic reform of the early childhood system, how do we bring these pieces together, we have been siloed too long. That is the reason for my too long title, Senator Mikulski, it is to try to bring these pieces together. We think we have a lot to learn from the States.

Senator BENNET. I would like to see your title shortened—  
[Laughter.]

Senator BENNET [continuing]. As it reflects the consolidation of some of the siloed programs, I think that is great because we don't live in siloes in Colorado.

The last 30 seconds, the only other thing I would urge is that where people are working hard to align the early childhood curriculum with the K-12 curriculum, that—those are also efforts that I think need to be supported by Race to the Top and the other work here because that alignment is critical, not only to making sure kids are prepared when they get to kindergarten, which is really important, but it also drives quality in the preschool program.

Ms. LOMBARDI. Absolutely. I think that is what this joint effort—this is historic what we are doing, we are co-administering this program. This is my third term in the government, this is my third time back. I have never seen this level of collaboration across the departments. It allows us this opportunity to put these pieces together, zero to five, and K-3 and that is the only way we are going to get results.

Senator BENNET. Thank you, Madam Chair.

Senator MIKULSKI. That was good. That was very good. Very good exchange.

Senator Murray who really began her career as an early childcare worker—

Senator MURRAY. I believe I am the only person in the Congress that is a former preschool teacher.

Senator MIKULSKI. Which qualifies.

Senator MURRAY. It does. I use those skills all the time.

Senator BENNET. You are still dealing with children.

[Laughter.]

#### STATEMENT OF SENATOR MURRAY

Senator MURRAY. It is absolutely clear. Thank you very much and I too want to thank you for having this hearing on a very, very important topic. I believe that these kinds of investments really are some of the most important that we can make. We know that the research has been mentioned many times regarding early childhood learning as really critical to the life long success of an individual.

In my home State of Washington we have really embraced these investments in early childhood education, in fact in 2006 our governor and legislature created the State Department of Early Learning. The first cabinet level position in the entire country focused on this. And we have seen some great successes.

In my State there is a community, Bremerton, which is fairly rural on the Kitsap Peninsula, where their district has been working to really focus on early learning and I think their success really illustrates what we can see nationwide, if we focus on this, because 6 years ago only 4 percent of the kids who were entering kindergarten in Bremerton had early reading schools, those are the basic skills of being able to recognize letters and sounds or writing their name. This year 66 percent of the new kindergartners are at that level. They have gone from 4 percent to 66 percent. They are seeing the percentage of kindergartners needing special education services dropping, from 12 percent to 2 percent. The share of the district's

first graders reading on grade level, has risen from 52 percent to 73 percent.

So Madam Chairman, if we do this nationwide we are going to see costs reduced in special education and remediation and that is an incredible savings to our country.

What are they doing right? They are partnering their school district with Head Start to expand their offerings and the district is working hand in hand with private childcare facilities to make sure they have great curriculum for their students and professional development for their educators.

We are seeing the real need. In Yakima, which is another rural community in my State, 37 percent of the young kids there live in poverty and 70 percent of their kindergartners enter school with low literacy rates. The school superintendent told me that they are doing all the right things, they are using State and Federal title I funding to provide preschool, but their budget is strapped, like so many of our communities and they have a waiting list of over 200 families, and that is unacceptable.

That is why I think this hearing is so important and this focus is so important and why later today, in fact, I am going to be introducing my Ready to Learn Act which creates a new grant program in ESEA to fund high quality pre-kindergarten opportunities to make sure that our kids are coming to school being able to be successful.

Dr. Lombardi, I am very glad you are here and really appreciate your testimony today and your answers.

I wanted to ask you particularly, because I recently introduced the LEARN Act which is a program to provide Federal support for comprehensive State and local literacy programs to make sure that kids from birth all the way through high school get those literacy skills that they need. I am often asked why I believe literacy skills begin at birth. I want to ask you today what your thoughts are on ensuring that childhood educators understand that language and literacy development starts from a very early age.

Ms. LOMBARDI. First of all, thank you and it is—I really feel proud that a former preschool teacher is sitting where you are. I am a former preschool teacher myself and we are proud of that. I know you bring that experience with you to your role here.

Also to say, I have been very impressed with Bremerton. I think the relationships they made there between the schools and the childcare community, to promote reading and literacy really obviously have made a difference in the figures that you gave.

Why we start at birth, I think we heard of the studies—the Hart and Risley results—about the amount of language, to the differences in the language and vocabulary of children at different income levels, it is absolutely critical. What all the panels around reading and literacy tell us, is that vocabulary development, oral comprehension, exposure to print, all of those things are precursors to reading. You can't just jump into that without those essential early investments of time into their language development, starting when they are first born.

I am a new grandma. I am living this all over again. I just spent some time with my grandson who is just turning one. And when I think of the day I spent with him and how much language I gave

him, I know that that is what I want for all children and that we have to help parents understand how to do that and then we have to help providers make sure that their early learning environments are rich in language and it is as important as their social/emotional climate. So, I think it is terrific.

Senator MURRAY. Great. I absolutely agree with that. We need to make sure that we invest at an early age for all students in this country.

Madam Chairman, I heard the story yesterday of a man named Robb, he is from Kalama, WA, a very small community in my State. From the age of 13 to 37 he was in a revolving door of corrections programs and he spent some time in the State prison. He is a recovering drug addict and he is also a dad. In 2005 he became clean, got off drugs and got full custody of his son and he wanted to turn his life around and he turned to the Head Start Program. There he got the help he needed for his son Jason who is getting the skills he needs, to succeed in kindergarten where he's doing great. But it also taught Robb how to be a great father.

He took on some leadership roles at the Head Start program, which gave him the courage to go back to school. He is now in the second year of college and he is a computer science major. He told me he wants to work with at-risk kids and teach them about computers and technology. He is turning them away from the rough life that he grew up with. And he has started a dad's group for his Head Start as well.

This is a program that really works. Robb is here in the audience today. And I just want to thank him for his courage.

Senator MIKULSKI. Where is Robb?

Senator MURRAY. Robb, do you want to stand up?

[Applause.]

I think Robb and Jason are kind of the picture of why we do these kinds of things, because it really does make a difference for the young kids in the Head Start program, it turns people's lives around and they give back to all of us and become great members of our societies and communities and we need them. Thank you very much.

Ms. LOMBARDI. Thank you.

Senator MIKULSKI. Senator Murray, those were not only powerful questions, but a very powerful story.

We now turn to Senator Casey. Senator Casey has made the advocacy of children one of his signature focuses in the Senate and just introduced two—oh wait, a minute. No, I'm sorry, Senator Sanders. Oh, I don't want to overlook Senator Sanders.

[Laughter.]

Senator Sanders, a really strong advocate and persistent advocate.

#### STATEMENT OF SENATOR SANDERS

Senator SANDERS. Madam Chair, thank you very much and I concur with what Senator Franken, Senator Bennet and Senator Murray said about congratulating you for holding this hearing.

The truth of the matter is, this issue is one of the issues in our country of enormous consequence and yet it doesn't get the discus-

sion that it needs. So you are raising the level of discussion today by holding this hearing and that is very, very important.

It seems to me that as a nation and as a government we want to focus on at least two important issues. No. 1, we want to do well by our people. We want to make sure, and I don't think there is any disagreement, regardless of one's political philosophy, that we want all of our kids to grow up strong and healthy and smart and do the best that they can in their lives. No one disagrees with that.

The second thing that we want to do is be cost-effective. Senator Franken made the point, we have a huge deficit, when we invest money we want to make sure that our money is invested well.

I think, having said that, that as a nation we should be extremely embarrassed and ashamed, that in our country today we have, by far, the highest rate of childhood poverty of any major country on earth. More than one out of five kids in this country are living in poverty. Some people may say, "Well, that is too bad," but I would suggest that that is stupid economics, because the other side of the equation of having the highest rate of childhood poverty in the industrialized world is we have more people in jail than any other country on earth, including the communist, authoritarian country of China, which is much larger than we are. And if there is anybody in this room who does not think that there is a correlation between high poverty rates among children and jail, I think you are sorely mistaken.

So my point is, even if you don't care about kids, and I know everybody here does care about kids, if you just want to worry about the deficit and how we spend money in this country, it is smart economics to invest in our children.

All of the studies tell us that if a kid, and there are God knows how many of them today, right this moment, sitting home in a house or an apartment, watching television for 8 hours a day eating junk food. I don't need all kinds of longitudinal studies to tell me that another kid sitting in a room with a well-qualified teacher, interacting with intelligent adults and with other children is going to do better. That children will be less likely to drop out of school, do drugs, end up in jail, etc, etc.

The fact of the matter is that we have to start this discussion by saying, we are failing our children. Period. Bad for the kids, bad for the parents, bad for our economy. Right? We need, in a competitive world to be having well-trained, well-educated workers. We are not doing that. I won't bore anybody with all of the statistics out there, but we are falling behind many, many other countries.

Let me just start off, Dr. Lombardi, by asking you this. Give me an overview here. If I am an average parent in an average State, what is the likelihood, a working class person, I am making \$20,000-\$25,000 a year, what is the likelihood of me finding high quality childcare in my community?

Ms. LOMBARDI. First of all you are going to have to pay a big chunk of your income to access it. I mean that because probably you are out of the range for eligibility for childcare assistance in your State.

Senator SANDERS. Right.

Ms. LOMBARDI. Because we know the majority of funding, even for CCDBG which can go up to 85 percent of median income in a

State, but most often it does not, so that we are serving mostly families that are well below the level that you just—so even if you can find it, you can't often pay for it.

Senator SANDERS. Let me ask you this. I don't want to put you on the spot, I know you represent the Administration. How are we doing compared to other major countries in the world, in terms of understanding that most women now are in the workforce? So if you are a single mom, or you are a married family, husband and wife are working, you are middle class, lower middle class, how do we do compared to other major countries around the world in making sure that our young children get the quality childcare that they need?

Ms. LOMBARDI. There has been several studies looking at how we compare to the OECD countries and we don't come out favorably often. I think it is hard for many of us, and you will hear from some others this morning that have been working on this issue of childcare and early education, for some 30 years we have watched the number of women in the workforce increase over the years but we haven't seen that shift to support the childcare and early education system the way we think it should, given the numbers of two-parent working families and single-parent working families. We just haven't seen it.

Senator SANDERS. In some ways I think there are people who think we are back in the 1950's where Dad went to work and Mommy stayed home with the kids. And that certainly is not the reality.

Now, talk for a moment about the quality of the workforce in childcare. For some strange reason, we have requirements for teachers in elementary school, high school, you have to have a Ph.D. in many instances to teach in college and yet the wages and the benefits that we provide to our early childhood education workers, it seems to me, in many parts of this country, is very low. Can you comment on that?

Ms. LOMBARDI. Sure. I think that what we see across the country, it is an amazingly dedicated workforce.

Senator SANDERS. Right.

Ms. LOMBARDI. People that get up every day and care for children and work on behalf of families that are also trying to work. We see a tremendous range. We think that you need some qualifications and some training if you are—

Senator SANDERS. And pay, as a matter of fact.

Ms. LOMBARDI. And pay to—

Senator SANDERS. Do you know off-hand—I'm sorry to interrupt you, but do you know off hand what the average salary is?

Ms. LOMBARDI. It certainly is a huge range, but it is not uncommon for childcare providers to just make the absolute minimum.

Senator SANDERS. We have experienced this in Vermont—here you have people giving them the responsibility of nurturing children in the most impressionable years of their lives and we are paying them minimum wage. They leave that to get a job at McDonald's.

Let me just say this, because my time is expiring. As I understand that we are spending about \$8 billion a year on Head Start.

We are spending \$100 billion a year fighting the war in Afghanistan. I think it is time for us to get our priorities right.

Thank you, Madam Chair.

Ms. LOMBARDI. Thank you.

Senator MIKULSKI. Now we turn to Senator Casey. As I said, he is a very strong advocate and introduced some important bills yesterday that the subcommittee will consider.

#### STATEMENT OF SENATOR CASEY

Senator CASEY. Madam Chair, thank you very much for having this hearing. It is critically important that we have this and I appreciate Senator Mikulski's ongoing determined leadership on a whole range of issues that relate to our children and our families, in this subcommittee and long before that over many years. And Ranking Member Burr, we appreciate you being with us today as well and calling this hearing.

I am not going to use my whole allotment of time because I will submit a statement for the record, but Doctor, we appreciate your testimony and your witness here today—

Ms. LOMBARDI. Thank you.

Senator CASEY. [continuing]. To these important issues, but also your public service.

We have heard today from Senators and I think a number of folks in the audience who have been laboring in this vineyard a long time, about the challenges we face. I think we come together for at least two basic reasons: we are summoned by our conscience that this is a critically important priority for the country, what happens to our children, how we care for them, what kind of education do they have, nutrition, healthcare, a whole range of concerns that we have.

We are also concerned about our jobs and our economy. This is the best way to prepare for the economy of the future. It is not just a good thing to do for our kids it is also very smart in terms of building a stronger workforce. It is essential, I should say, for building a stronger workforce.

We have seen a lot of good efforts at the State level. I come from the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and our recently retired governor, Governor Rendell, made this a major priority and especially as it relates to early learning and also made a lot of progress on childcare.

The concern that I have is that we have a patchwork. We have some States doing a lot, some States being very successful, but we don't have kind of a national strategy. That doesn't mean that all the good ideas will come from Washington; we should have partnerships with States and make sure that States do their part and have the opportunity to do their part. The broad question that I would ask you to address as best you can, and maybe supplement it for the record, is this: in light of both that patchwork of strategies at the State level and a very difficult budget situation here where there is not going to be a flood of new investment any time soon, how do you develop a strategy to encourage positive change? How do you manage that in the context of having a strategy to move forward? Senator Mikulski was working with us yesterday on two bills that I have, one on early learning, one on childcare—and

here is the grim reality for childcare: 13.5 million kids in the country are eligible but not enrolled.

Ms. LOMBARDI. Yes.

Senator CASEY. Just stunning when you think about that number. So how do you chart a course for improvement, with limited resources in the near term in light of the imperative of providing quality care for all children enrolled in early learning or childcare programs that receive Federal funding?

Ms. LOMBARDI. First of all, thank you so much for the leadership on these issues. I think when you think about the fact that only one out of six families that are eligible for childcare assistance even have access to it, before we even begin to talk about the quality issues, it is of great concern. I think as the Administration continues to put forward budgets that continue to invest in this, but not just invest in it, but also have a strategy, and I think one of the strategies that is emerging is we really want to make sure that we are supporting working families and we are addressing the readiness gap.

We really want to get more children prepared to be successful in school and that has got to drive our agenda. It is driving our agenda. It doesn't mean you have an education program over here and a childcare program over here, you use every environment, like they did in Pennsylvania, to improve quality.

I think we do have a strategy, we have a set of recommendations for continued investment. It has been clear throughout this hearing, they are investments and we have to start thinking of them that way.

Senator CASEY. I am glad you are taking a strategic approach to it and we will talk more when we have more time. Thank you very much.

Ms. LOMBARDI. OK. Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Senator Casey follows:]

#### PREPARED STATEMENT SENATOR CASEY

Thank you, Senator Mikulski, for chairing this important hearing on quality early education and care. You are a tremendous advocate for early learning, and I thank you for your dedication and passion about this issue.

I am grateful for the opportunity to be here today, and I would like to thank the witnesses for taking the time to share their insights with the subcommittee.

I know that I'm preaching to the choir when I say what this: investing in high-quality early learning opportunities such as child care and pre-K sets children on the path to success.

High-quality learning opportunities pay off in reduced need for remedial or special education, reduced crime, and eventually higher high school graduation and college matriculation rates. Investing in early learning will also have a significant impact on our economy. When children learn more, they earn more. Taking steps to invest in early education now will grow GDP and help families find good paying jobs in the future.

Senator Mikulski and I were joined at a press conference yesterday by Jennifer Garner, the actress, who is also the celebrity ambassador for Save the Children. As a mother, she understands the

importance of early education in preparing children for school, and she did a great job of explaining how early education does that: it prepares children so that when they first step into a kindergarten classroom, they are ready and eager to learn.

The need for these early learning opportunities is great. Over 13 million American children are eligible for, but not receiving, federal child care assistance. Clearly, we are failing our children if there is such a large unmet need.

Yesterday, I introduced two bills that will help make quality early learning opportunities available to every child in America.

*The Prepare All Kids Act* (S.1156) will provide at least 1 year of voluntary high quality prekindergarten, with a focus on children from low income families and children with special needs.

The *Starting Early, Starting Right Act* (S.1155) will address the enormous unmet need for quality child care by increasing funding for child care, with the dual goals of helping more families afford child care and improving the quality of early care.

Earlier this year, I introduced legislation—the *State Systems of Early Learning Act* (S.470)—to support State investments in early childhood education and care. I was gratified by the Administration’s recent announcement that \$500 million in new funding will go to an Early Learning Challenge Fund. I hope that we can hear more about what the Administration intends for those grant awards from you today, Dr. Lombardi.

Business leaders get this “bang for the buck” argument. I am encouraged by Pennsylvania’s progress in early childhood education and the support of the Pennsylvania business community, in particular, has been instrumental. I particularly look forward to the testimony of Ms. Blum and learning more about how the public and private sector can work together to make a difference on this issue.

Thank you.

Senator MIKULSKI. Thank you, Senator Casey and I know you will be back for our panel.

Dr. Lombardi, we are going to say thank you—

Ms. LOMBARDI. Thank you.

Senator MIKULSKI [continuing]. And excuse you now from this rather extensive participation. We want to thank you for your service. We are glad you returned back to government.

Ms. LOMBARDI. Thanks.

Senator MIKULSKI. And we will be happy to have you back for the committee.

What I hope to be able to do is on this area of early childhood education and whatever the bills, whatever the approach is, to build a bipartisan consensus—

Ms. LOMBARDI. Absolutely.

Senator MIKULSKI [continuing]. Both for the reauthorization of the bill, what needs to be put in ESEA and then also what needs to be put in the 2012 appropriations, hoping that we get to one.

I believe that there would be consensus within the committee and within the Senate. If we can’t agree on a lot of things, there are some very often prickly, social issues, but I think there could be a consensus in this area so let’s see if we can build it. We will look forward to seeing you again. Thank you very much.

Ms. LOMBARDI. It is wonderful to hear bipartisan support on this issue. Thank you for your leadership.

Senator MIKULSKI. OK. So we are going to excuse you.

Now we are going to ask our panel to come forward, Mr. Hillian, Miss Smith, Dr. Rolnick, Miss Eva Blum and Mr. Chuck Mills.

The clock is ticking and I know that Senator Burr also has some other responsibilities. So I am going to kind of zip through the recommendations and I am going to introduce everybody now at one time, rather than as each one speaks. I know that Senator Franken will introduce Dr. Rolnick. Then we are going to go right to the panel.

We want to welcome the panel. First I want to recognize and introduce Mr. Dennis Hillian who works with a program in Maryland called The Judy Center, which I can't wait for you to hear about. We met him in one of our field hearings and roundtables and he is going to bring us some important information.

We have Miss Linda Smith, a former Department of Defense staffer who now currently works at the National Association of Childcare Resources and Referral Agencies and they want to ensure that every child has access to this affordable education and actually has ideas and metrics and so on, on how we can do this in a prudent, fiscally achievable, robust way for the children, which we're looking forward to.

Senator Franken, do you want to introduce Mr. Rolnick?

Senator FRANKEN. Thank you, Madam Chair.

I am very pleased that Art Rolnick is here today to give us some straight talk on the economics of early childhood education. Art is currently a senior fellow and co-director of the Human Capital Research Collaborative at the University of Minnesota's Humphrey School of Public Affairs where he is working on multidisciplinary research on child development and social policy.

When Art was senior vice president and director of research at the Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis his research on the economics of early childhood education gained national attention. In Minnesota he is well-known as a key figure in just about any local organization or effort related to early childhood development.

Personally I have found my conversations with Art over the years to be incredibly enlightening and I am very grateful to the chairwoman for extending the invitation to him today. Thank you, Madam Chair.

Senator MIKULSKI. It is really the economics of this.

Now we want to turn to Miss Eva Blum, vice president at the PNC Bank. What is impressive to me is both in my own local State, Maryland, as well as nationwide, this bank has chosen, as one of its focus of philanthropic activity, early childhood education. A bank investing in kids rather than kids investing in the bank. Who knows if there is a link.

[Laughter.]

But as I understand it, the corporation has invested already \$100 million of philanthropic dollars and you lead that endeavor, Miss Blum. So we will look forward to hearing why you picked that and what you hope the private sector gets out of it.

Then last but not at all least, we want to welcome Mr. Chuck Mills who is an alumnus of the Head Start Program, so we can

hear what Head Start means to families. We have longitudinal studies and ya-da da-da and with the statistics and the data, but Mr. Mills, who has been active in promoting Head Start is the founder and CEO of a successful financial service and business consulting firm and, he says Head Start had a lot to do with the man he is today and the successful businessman he is today.

A lot of times we talk about early childhood education and it is kind of gooshy and it is good for the kids and then we make moral statements, but I think we now know this country is in a tight spot and we want to be able to use our money wisely and continue, really, American exceptionalism. We want to know the right ways to do it, so we look forward to that testimony.

With having said that, Mr. Hillian, we are going to kick off the testimony with you, sir. Then we will just go right down and Mr. Mills you will be our wrap up hitter. OK?

**STATEMENT OF DENNIS HILLIAN, FAMILY SERVICE COORDINATOR, THE CHARLES COUNTY JUDY CENTER, WALDORF, MD**

Mr. HILLIAN. Thank you for the opportunity to speak before the U.S. Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pension Committee, Subcommittee on Children and Families. I am Dennis Hillian, a family service coordinator for the Charles County, MD, Judy Center.

Judy Centers are named for the late Judith P. Hoyer, a lifelong advocate for quality early education and comprehensive family support services. There are 25 Judy Centers in the State of Maryland. Two are in Charles County. We work with children age birth through kindergarten, and their low-income families to ensure they enter school ready to learn.

Much of our work is accomplished through a collaborative community partnership of agencies, local organizations, and businesses. There is no issue a child or family may have that we cannot address through our partnership.

We assist with ensuring children are enrolled in high-quality accredited early education programs, including child care, we offer mental health and behavior services, dental services, hearing and vision screenings, and tutorial for children. Additionally, we equip our families with the tools they need to be effective and engaged as their child's first teacher.

Families participate in family nights that always include an educational component, parenting workshops, and Adult Education classes.

Our data shows that children with the Judy Center experience enter kindergarten better prepared than children who did not have the experience. I would like to share with you a couple of personal success stories. There are many.

Back in 2008, we discovered a dad who had lost his job and mom who was only working part-time. They couldn't make ends meet. They couldn't look for jobs or go on interviews because they had no childcare for their 2- and 3-year-old children. I went on a home visit to get to know the family. The Judy Center enrolled them with KinderCare, our childcare partner, and provided tuition assistance.

Since they lost their health insurance when dad became unemployed, I helped them apply for the Maryland Children Health Insurance Program.

The 3-year-old had behavior issues and was referred to the Judy Center behavior specialist who worked with her extensively. She also received tutoring services.

Dad is now employed full-time. After much encouragement on our part, mom enrolled in adult educational classes and received her GED. She also completed a medical assistant's program and is now preparing to enroll in the College of Southern Maryland to pursue an associates degree. The children are entering kindergarten and second grade this Fall and are doing well in school.

The family still actively participates in many Judy Center events. They frequently update me on their accomplishments and successes.

Jaquon came to us as a 3-year-old autistic child. He was in half-day pre-K and spent the other half-day in the Judy Center childcare. He could not speak any words and continuously whined and was inconsolable. Our teachers were trained to work with Jaquon and the Judy Center spent many hours helping his mom understand autism.

They took part in the Judy Center services and activities. The summer before he entered the second grade, he and his mom came to the school, she was moving and was going to withdraw Jaquon. I walked up to him and said, I missed you this summer. He hugged me around my legs and said, "I have missed you, too." A child who just a short time ago could not speak any words was now going to brave the world without the Judy Center. We are confident that he will be a contributing member of society. It may have played out quite differently if this family had not had the support of the Judy Center.

When we met Khalil, he was in kindergarten and had a multitude of issues, toileting accidents, frequent absences from school, tooth pain and little appetite. He was lagging behind his peers and he failed the vision screening. His mom is a single parent with three older sons. Grandmother kept the children while mom worked as a housekeeper in a local motel.

Many interventions in place for Khalil and his family occurred. Our pediatric dental partner examined his teeth and referred him to Kernan Hospital in Baltimore for dental surgery for severe tooth decay. The Judy Center staff transported the family to Baltimore. The Lion's Club arranged for Lens Crafters to examine Khalil's eyes and subsequently provided him with glasses. The Judy Center arranged for him to be tutored at school. With his health issues under control and the academic assistance in place, this young man is now thriving.

Just a few weeks ago, I stopped at a local McDonald's through the drive-thru. A young lady gave me my food and said, "Hey Mr. Dennis. Do you remember me?" I said, "I don't remember your name but I do remember you. I met you when you were in second grade and you had a little brother and a little sister in the Judy Center. You also had three or four older brothers and sisters." She told me her name and I said, "You used to talk to me when you were having a bad day. You would talk back to the teachers, argue

with your classmates. You were real smart and had a lot of talent, but stayed in trouble.” She said, “Yes, you used to get me focused again. I was a little hard-headed, but you would listen to my side and calm me down.” I was thinking, she had graduated from high school and her job was now working at McDonald’s. But then she said, “I graduate from high school in 3 weeks, I have a 3.9 GPA, and a full scholarship to Morgan State University.” So you can see, the work of the Judy Center has long-term positive effect. Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Hillian follows:]

#### PREPARED STATEMENT OF DENNIS HILLIAN

##### SUMMARY

Thank you for the opportunity to speak before the U.S. Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee, Subcommittee on Children and Families. I am Dennis Hillian, a Family Service coordinator at the Charles County, MD, Judy Center.

Judy Centers are named for the late Judith P. Hoyer, a life-long advocate for quality early education and comprehensive family support services. There are 25 Judy Centers in the State of Maryland. Two are in Charles County.

We work with children age birth through kindergarten, and their low-income families to ensure they enter school ready to learn. Much of our work is accomplished through a collaborative community partnership of agencies, local organizations, and businesses. There is no issue a child or family may have that we cannot address through our partnership.

We assist with ensuring children are enrolled in high-quality accredited early education programs, including child care; we offer mental health and behavior services; dental services; hearing and vision screenings; and tutoring for children. Additionally, we equip our families with the tools they need to be effective and engaged as their child’s first teacher. Families participate in family nights that always include educational components; parenting workshops; and Adult Education classes.

Our data shows that children with the Judy Center experience enter kindergarten better prepared than children who did not have the experience.

I would like to share with you a couple of personal success stories:

1. A jobless family in need of child care, health insurance, behavior and tutoring services for one of two children, and high school diploma for mom.
2. Three-year-old autistic child who could not speak. Was at the Judy Center until 2d grade.
3. Kindergartner with toileting accidents and frequently absent from school. Also with tooth pain, failed vision screening, and trailing behind his peers academically. Many interventions for the family occurred.
4. Reunited with a former Judy Center family. Girl now graduating from high school with a 3.9 GPA and full scholarship to Morgan State University.

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Our data shows that children with the Judy Center experience enter kindergarten better prepared than children who did not have the experience.

I would like to share with you a couple of personal success stories.

1. Back in 2008, we discovered a dad who had lost his job and mom who was only working part-time. They couldn't make ends meet. They couldn't look for jobs or go on interviews because they had no child care for their 2- and 3-year-old children. I went on a home visit to get to know the family. The Judy Center enrolled them with KinderCare, our child care partner and provided tuition assistance. Since they had lost their health insurance when the dad became unemployed, I gave them an application for the Maryland Children's Health Insurance Program. The 3-year-old had behavior issues and was referred to the Judy Center behavior specialist who worked with her extensively. She also received tutoring services. Dad is now employed full-time. After much encouragement on our part, mom enrolled in Adult Education classes and received her GED. She also completed a Medical Assistants Program and is now preparing to enroll in the College of Southern Maryland to pursue an Associate's Degree. The children are entering kindergarten and 2d grade this Fall and are doing well in school. The family still actively participates in many Judy Center events. They frequently update me on their accomplishments and successes.

2. Jaquon came to us as a 3-year-old autistic child. He was in half-day Pre-K and spent the other half-day in the Judy Center child care. He could not speak any words and continuously whined and was inconsolable. Our teachers were trained to work with Jaquon and the Judy Center spent many hours helping his mom understand autism. They took part in Judy Center services and activities. The summer before he entered 2nd grade, he and his mom came to the school. She was moving and was withdrawing Jaquon. I walked up to him and told him how much I had missed him this summer. He hugged me around my legs and said, "I've missed you, too." A child who just a short time ago could not speak any words was now going to brave the world without the Judy Center. We are confident that he will be a contributing member of our society. It may have played out quite differently if this family had not had the support of the Judy Center.

3. When we met Khalil, he was in kindergarten and had a multitude of issues—toileting accidents, frequent absences from school, tooth pain and little appetite, he was lagging behind his peers and he failed the vision screening. His mom is a single parent with three older sons. Grandmother kept the children while mom worked as a housekeeper at a local motel. Many interventions for Khalil and his family occurred. Our pediatric dental partner examined his teeth and referred us to Kernan's Hospital in Baltimore for dental surgery for severe tooth decay. The Judy Center staff transported the family to Baltimore. The Lions Club arranged for LensCrafters to examine Khalil's eyes and subsequently provided him with glasses. The Judy Center arranged for him to be tutored at school. With his health issues under control and the academic assistance in place, this young man is now thriving.

4. Just a few weeks ago, I stopped at a McDonald's. A young lady gave me my food and said, "Hey Mr. Dennis, do you remember me?" I said,

"I don't remember your name but I remember you. I met you when you were in 2d Grade and you had a little brother and sister in the Judy Center. You also had three or four older brothers and sisters."

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#### ATTACHMENT.—MARYLAND STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION, JUDITH P. HOYER EARLY CHILD CARE AND EDUCATION ENHANCEMENT (JUDY CENTERS)

##### PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

Judy Centers are named for the late Judith P. Hoyer, the former Early Childhood Supervisor for Prince George's County Public Schools and a lifelong early childhood advocate. Judy believed that the key to school readiness was quality early education programs, as well as support services for the entire family in one location. Judy Centers have been established to continue her life's work.

There are 25 Judy Centers in 22 (out of 24) local school systems throughout Maryland. Services are provided to children and their families who live in 39 title I school

zones. Nearly 12,000 children, age birth through kindergarten are impacted by the Judy Center partnership.

The goal of the Judy Centers is to ensure that young children, especially those who are disadvantaged by poverty, limited English proficiency, or special educational needs, are fully ready to learn when they enter school. Judy Centers provide year-round early care and educational programs for young children. All Judy Centers must include pre-kindergarten, kindergarten, preschool special education, local Maryland Infants and Toddlers Programs, and before and after school early childhood programs provided by child care partners.

Much of the work of the Judy Centers is accomplished through a collaborative community partnership and must also include at least five of the following agencies or programs:

- Head Start Programs;
- Family Support Centers;
- Child Care Providers;
- Health Services for children in accordance with State and Federal guidelines;
- Family literacy programs and services;
- Early childhood programs associated with institutions of higher education;
- Local Public Libraries;
- Parent involvement programs;
- Healthy Families; and
- Other home visiting, community health, family support services, and Regional Child Care Resource Centers.

Most Judy Centers have established broad-based partnerships that include over 20 agencies, organizations, and businesses to help them carry out their work.

#### FUNDING

Judy Centers are funded by the State of Maryland. The Maryland State Department of Education disburses the funds to the local school systems and monitors the program's success. The funding level in fiscal year 2011 is \$8,096,984.

#### MONITORING

• MSDE meets quarterly with the Judy Centers to provide technical assistance and offer problem-solving ideas for the day-to-day operation of Judy Centers. An on-site visit is conducted annually by a team of professionals organized by MSDE. There are 12 Component Standards that reflect the requirements of the grant. These 12 Components are the unifying elements of the Judy Centers. The standards are used by Judy Center partnerships and MSDE to rate their yearly progress on the required elements of the grant. The Component Standards include:

- Full-day/Full-Year Services;
- Provision for Breakfast/Lunch;
- Service Coordination among Partners;
- Integration of all Early Education Programs;
- Family Involvement;
- Early Identification and Intervention;
- Inclusion of Young Children with Disabilities;
- Provision of Health Related Services;
- Professional Development;
- Adult Education and Family Literacy Services;
- Early Childhood Program Accreditation; and
- Partnership/Community Leadership.

#### EVALUATIVE INFORMATION

Judy Centers provide evaluation reports to the MSDE's Division of Early Childhood Development, at the end of each fiscal year. The scope of the annual Judy Center evaluation is limited to the specific conditions of each Judy Center Partnership. The Results Based Accountability (RBA) process is used. The process is designed to provide information about the implementation of the 12 Components at each Judy Center, as well as account for specified outcomes as set out in each Judy Center's annual grant renewal application. Evaluation reports include the results of the Maryland Model for School Readiness (MMSR) Kindergarten Assessment data collected during the fall and spring of each year. Judy Centers may also use local school system benchmark data and other information (e.g., parent surveys, focus groups) as part of their evaluation reports. The annual evaluations also point out that children with Judy Center experiences sustain their gains through third grade as measured by the Maryland School Assessment (MSA).

An external evaluation of Judy Center services released in 2004 by MGT America concluded that Judy Centers have provided:

- Improved access to programs and services for children, ages birth through 5.
- Increased family access to mental health and dental screenings and other interventions.
- A substantial increase in access to family support services.
- Increased parent participation in their child's education as well as the number of adults participating in Adult Education programs.
- Accredited early care and education programs.
- Increased professional levels of early childhood program staff and public school teachers.
- Programs that close the achievement gap with English Language Learners and low-income children.

A report entitled, *An Analysis of Influence of Judy Center Services on the Maryland Model for School Readiness Kindergarten Assessment Outcomes for School Year 2008–2009* documents the positive impact that participation in Judy Centers has on school readiness. In summary, while serving a much larger proportion of children who are of low-income families, English Language Learners and receive special education services than the State (65 percent vs. 47 percent), 71 percent of those children with prior Judy Center experience were fully ready for kindergarten vs. 63 percent of at-risk children who did not have prior Judy Center experience.

THE CHARLES COUNTY JUDY CENTER, SERVING DR. SAMUEL A. MUDD, EVA TURNER  
AND C. PAUL BARNHART ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

**Charles County Judy Center Service Area**—The Judy Center serves three title I schools in the Charles County Public Schools: Dr. Samuel A. Mudd, C. Paul Barnhart, and Eva Turner Elementary Schools. The Judy Center is early childhood education and comprehensive family support services programs for children birth through Kindergarten and their families. The Judy Center also serves children with special needs age birth through Kindergarten and their families that reside in Charles County. We currently have 36 community agencies, organizations, businesses and individuals helping us achieve our goal of school readiness (See attached listing). We are currently serving 336 children from full-day Kindergarten, full-day Pre-K, full-day 3's program, Head Start, Healthy Families, Infants & Toddlers, Playgroups, and other children identified that are not in formal programs.

**Charles County Judy Center Funding**—The Judy Center is funded through the Judith P. Hoyer Early Care and Education Grant. The grant is administered by Maryland State Department of Education. The total grant amount received by the Charles County Judy Center is \$645,333.00. Our in-kind funding for this years grant is \$474,553.00.

**Charles County Judy Center Staff**—Coordinator: Leigh Stalter; Early Childhood Family Liaison: D. Mia Gray; Health Service Coordinator: Theresa Osborne; Family Service Coordinator Barnhart Elementary School: Dennis Hillian; Family Service Coordinator Eva Turner Elementary School: Amanda Pheulpin; Family Service Coordinator Dr. Mudd Elementary School: Earnay Truman; Secretary: Terry Smith; Mental Health & Behavior Specialist—Treeci Bond; and Tutors—Melissa Garner and Edie Kans.

**Charles County Judy Center History**—Charles County received its first Judith P. Hoyer grant and opened at Dr. Mudd Elementary School in January 2001. A second grant was received in 2002 and a Judy Center opened at Eva Turner Elementary School. In 2004, the Judy Center expanded services to C. Paul Barnhart but with the same level of funding.

#### Free and Reduced Lunch

School	Total FARM (In percent)
Dr. Mudd Judy Center .....	63.9
Eva Turner Judy Center .....	59.8
C. Paul Barnhart Judy Center .....	61.4

Total Number of Charles County Judy Center Children Receiving FARM: 231.

## CHARLES COUNTY JUDY CENTER PROGRAMS

**Head Start**—The Judy Center participates and assists Head Start with their activities and events. The Charles County Judy Center and Head Start collaborate in providing referrals to one another. The Charles County's Judy Center Coordinator is on the Head Start Tri-County Advisory Council, Head Start Tri-County Health Advisory Council and the Head Start Self-Assessment Team. Charles County's Judy Center Health Service Coordinator serves on the Head Start Healthy Advisory Council.

**Charles County Infants & Toddlers**—Our Judy Center assists the Charles County Infant & Toddlers in activities and events. Infants & Toddlers have children that attend all three of the Judy Center Schools. Through this partnership we have established playgroups for children with special needs so that they can interact with typically developing peers. The Charles County Judy Center and Infant & Toddlers collaborate in providing referrals to one another. The Charles County's Judy Center Coordinator is on the Charles County Infants & Toddlers Advisory Council.

**Healthy Families of Charles County**—The Charles County Judy Center and Healthy Families collaborate in providing referrals to one another. The Charles County's Judy Center Coordinator is on the Healthy Families of Charles County Advisory Council. Our Judy Center assists the Healthy Families of Charles County with activities and events.

**Dental Services**—Our goal for our families each year is that every Judy Center child from 18 months of age has a dental home. Identification of children with no dental home is done through our parent surveys and screenings. Our Judy Center dental application is sent home to all our families and assessed by our Health Service Coordinator. Children in need of dental care are referred to the Department of Health, local dentists, or our partner Dr. Auguto and Associates. Dr. Auguto's office sees our Judy Center families at a 50 percent discount from non-Judy Center children and the Judy Center uses grant funds to pay most of the remaining balance. The families are responsible to pay 10 percent or less. Our partnership with Dr. Auguto's office allows us to have children seen in a short period of time. Dr. Auguto will see our children identified during screenings with urgent care needs or tooth pain immediately.

The Charles County Department of Health in partnership with the Judy Center provides yearly dental screenings and fluoride treatments for Judy Center Families. The Charles County Judy Center Health Service Coordinator works with the families of children who fail these screenings to assure services are obtained.

We distribute dental health bags annually four times a year. The dental packets contain a tooth brush, tooth paste, and dental hygiene information.

**Vision and Hearing Screenings**—The Charles County Department of Health in partnership with the Judy Center provide vision and hearing screenings for Judy Center children. The Charles County Judy Center Health Service Coordinator works with the families of children who fail these screenings to assure services are obtained.

**Amblyopia Screenings**—The Charles County Judy Center arranges for the Lions Club to provide Amblyopia (Lazy Eye) screenings for all our Judy Center children. The Charles County Judy Center Health Service Coordinator works with the families of children who fail these screenings to assure services are obtained.

**Mental Health & Behavior Services**—The Charles County Judy Center contracts for a Mental Health and Behavior Therapist from Center for Children. Our Mental Health and Behavior Therapist works with whole classrooms to provide positive behavior activities or one on one/small groups for children needing more intense services.

**Tutoring**—Our Judy Center has an academic tutoring and mentoring program. We work closely with teachers, school staff, and parents/guardians to identify children in need of tutoring. Permission slips are signed by parents/guardians for tutoring/mentoring to seek parent involvement that will help bridge the gap between school and home.

**Accreditation/Validation**—All Head Start, Three's, Pre-Kindergarten and Kindergarten programs at the three Judy Center locations are validated by MSDE. KinderCare, our child care partner, has two locations that are both NAEYC accredited. We are working with additional childcare facilities in the area with the process of becoming accredited.

**Adult Education**—The adults in our Judy Center families are offered many opportunities for continuing their educational advancement through programs in Charles County i.e.; Adult Education at the Lifelong Learning Center, transition programs at the College of Southern MD, parent workshops and other educational programs in Charles County.

**Parent and Child Activities**—Throughout the year, we provide a variety of parent and child activities. Some of our activities include: National Literacy Day, Borders Story Time, Harvest Festival, Literacy and Math Nights, Fitness Nights, Game Night, Transition Activities, and Month of the Young Child Activities. We acknowledge that some of our parents are unable to attend events at school so we send take home activities for the parents and children to do together. Our partners are actively engaged in the planning of activities and events for the Judy Centers.

**Tuition Assistance**—Funds are budgeted in our grant for child care assistance for Judy Center families. Tuition Assistance is available to families that do not qualify for Purchase of Care Vouchers through the Department of Social Service but do not earn enough to provide their children with quality child care. All child care centers that partner with the Charles County Judy Center are NAEYC (National Association of the Education of Young Children) or MSDE (Maryland State Department of Education) accredited.

**Jump Bunch**—As part of our grant the Judy Center contracts services with Jump Bunch to provide a physical education activity once a week for Judy Center classrooms at Dr. Mudd and Barnhart.

**Story Time at Border's Books & Cafe**—Story Time occurs once a month and is open to the Waldorf community for children birth to Kindergarten and their families. This activity is available to childcare programs in Waldorf and families with children with special needs birth to Kindergarten in Charles County. Charles County Public Library's Children's Outreach Librarians use stories, songs, and activities that model good literacy practices for families and child care providers.

**Spanish/English Story Time**—The Charles County Judy Center in partnership with the Charles County Public Library is able to provide all Judy Center classrooms and Adult Education classrooms with once a month Spanish/English Story Time.

**Daytime Playgroups**—The Charles County Judy Center conducts playgroups for children birth to age four in the Waldorf community and for children birth to Kindergarten with special needs. We currently have eight playgroups occurring at our three Judy Center schools. Several of the playgroups are in partnership with Infants & Toddlers.

**Stroller Walks**—The Charles County Judy Center implements "Families on the Move" stroller walks in the spring. Stroller walks are for families and their children birth through age four, and childcare providers in the Waldorf community. Families gather for a walk around the neighborhood and are provided a snack and drink. The parents/providers are given educational materials and books for their children each week.

**Special Education Services**—All of our programs are fully inclusive. The Family Service Coordinators work closely with families and school staff during the IEP process and with IEP services. We work closely with Infants & Toddlers with children with IFSP services.

**Parent/Provider Workshops**—We have done extensive outreach and offer free training for the local child care provider community. Participants receive clock hours for participating in the workshops.

The Judy Center offers parents opportunities throughout the school year to increase their educational knowledge and parenting skills. Most of these training opportunities are sponsored by our Judy Center partners, i.e., Priority Partners, Charles County Public Library, MD Cooperative Extension, College of Southern Maryland, Lifelong Learning Center, Healthy Families, and Center for Children and the Promise Center.

**Title I**—The Charles County Judy Center works with the title I parent liaisons at each of the Charles County Judy Center schools to coordinate services, family nights, workshops, and parent groups for our families. The Charles County Judy Center helps with title I family nights at the schools and the county wide title I night each year.

**Parent and Sibling Surveys**—Quarterly, the Charles County Judy Center surveys its families. The survey helps us determine our family's needs for health, and dental care, child care, behavior and mental health, adult education, and other services. The sibling survey identifies children, birth through age four in the Judy Center catchment area not yet attending school.

**Marketing of Materials**—The Charles County Judy Center distributes marketing materials to our partners, local Obstetricians and Gynecology offices, Pediatric Dental offices, and child care centers to promote the Judy Center. Distribution of these materials helps us to identify children that are not yet school age that may be able to benefit from our services.

**Donation from the Community**—We have received several donations from community partners as well as from families thru their place of employment. The Lions

Club has donated eye exams and glasses for children in our programs. We have received donations of toys, clothing, and food from the community that we pass on to our families in need. In addition we have received monetary donations from B.K. Miller. During the holiday, the Charles County Judy Center with the help of our partners collects toys and clothing to distribute to our neediest families.

**Family Field Trips**—The Charles County Judy Center through the grant provides funds for family field trip transportation and admission throughout the school year.

**In-school Assemblies**—The Charles County Judy Center provides in-school assemblies for all Judy Center families. A few examples of in-school assemblies that we have provided are Reptile Wonders, Blue Sky Puppet Theater, Interact Story Theater, Carol's Critters, Sheriff's Department, and the Humane Society.

**Student Involvement**—The Charles County Judy Center arranges for North Point High School and College of Southern Maryland Early Childhood students to volunteer at our Judy Center family events. This enables the students to receive service hours needed for their programs. North Point High School Cosmetology students provide hair cuts, hair styling, and manicures to Head Start/Judy Center children each year.

**Community Readers**—We arrange for community readers such as Kiwanis, PNC bank, and local businesses to read in our classrooms.

**Professional Development**—We work closely with the Charles County Public School Specialist in Early Childhood Education to maintain and support the highest quality of instruction for the Judy Center children. This includes Maryland Model for School Readiness training, new teacher orientation, teacher conference days, workshops, and other professional development. The Judy Center Staff participates in the Judy Center Annual Conference, general conferences, as well as partner and community professional development.

**Materials of Instruction**—We purchase supplemental Materials of Instruction for our 19 classrooms and child care partners that further aide in the validation process. This year the focus of the supplemental Materials of Instruction is in Mathematical Thinking and Scientific Thinking.

**Summer Program**—The summer program served approximately 95 Judy Center children which is 20 percent of our total enrollment in Head Start, Pre-K and Kindergarten. Children were selected for the summer program based on Working Samples Systems, Individual Language Assessment scores and Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills, as well as children being tutored by the Judy Center and family situations. Children received free breakfast, lunch, snacks, and free transportation. Once the summer program ends home visits by our Early Childhood/Family Liaison and Judy Center Family Service Coordinators continued to provide enrichment activities.

**Coordinated Calendars**—We coordinate calendars with our partners and community agencies to help prevent any scheduling conflicts. Calendar coordination alerts our families of events and programs throughout the local southern Maryland area.

**Charles County Early Care and Education Team (CCECET)**—The Charles County Judy Center facilitates CCECET. The CCECET plans a countywide Early Childhood Day each year. This years Early Childhood Day was May 21, 2011 and was attended by 780 children and their families.

For further information contact: Leigh Stalter lstalter@ccboe.com 301-934-7493.

#### STEERING COMMITTEE MEETINGS AND PARTNERS

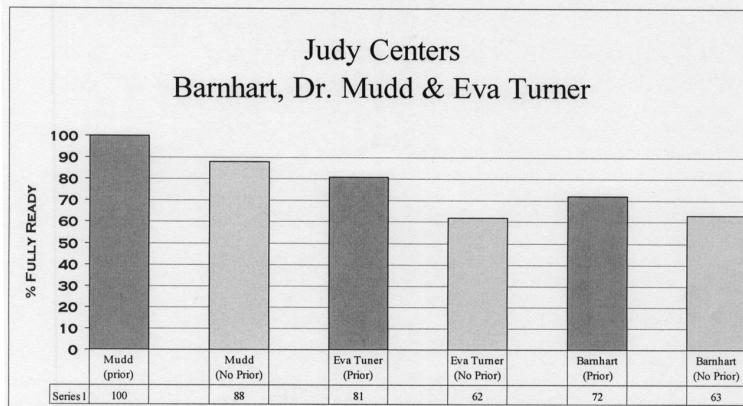
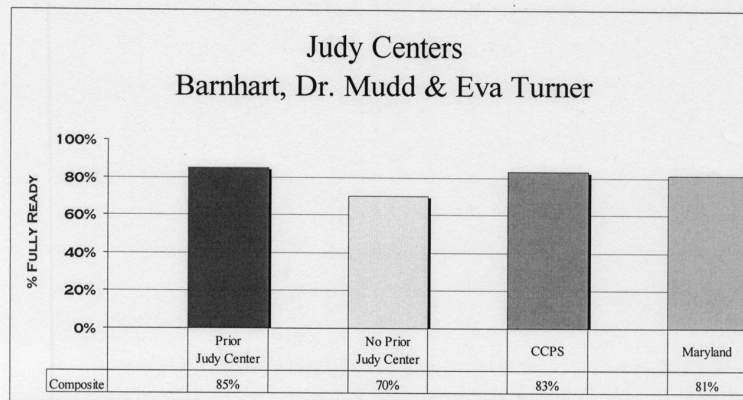
The Charles County Judy Center Steering Committee meetings are held once a month with our 36 community partners to guide the direction of our Judy Centers. Our Judy Center has many partners here in Charles County who are working together to make sure our children are safe, healthy and ready to learn. Our community partners include:

Charles County Public Schools; Center for Children; Healthy Families Charles County; College of Southern Maryland; American Community Properties Trust; Borders Books, Music & Cafe; Dr. Felix J. Aguto, DDS; Charles County Sheriff's Office; Maternal Child Health; Charles County Local Management Board; Charles County Infants and Toddlers; Maryland Cooperative Extension; The College of Southern Maryland; Charles County Department of Social Services; Charles County Public Library; Department of Health Charles County; Department of Community Services; KinderCare Learning Centers, Inc.; Lifelong Learning Center; Promise Center; So. MD Tri-County Community Action Committee-Head Start; The Arc of Southern Maryland; Greater Baden Medical Services; PNC Bank; Health Partners, Inc.; Parent Resource Center; Southern Maryland Dirt Riders; Alphabest; Priority Partners;

Gwynn Center; Parent Center; Tri-County Youth Services Bureau; My Gym; Kiwanis; St. Charles Early Learning Center; Good Shepherd Education Center.

## PROGRAM DATA

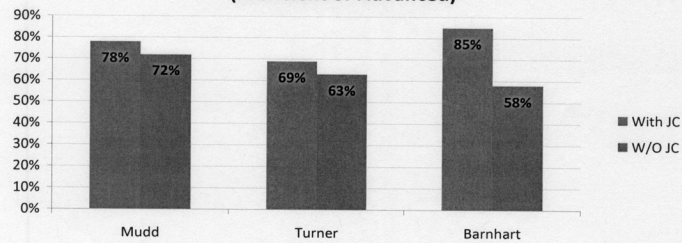
### Kindergarten Readiness Assessment Fall 2009



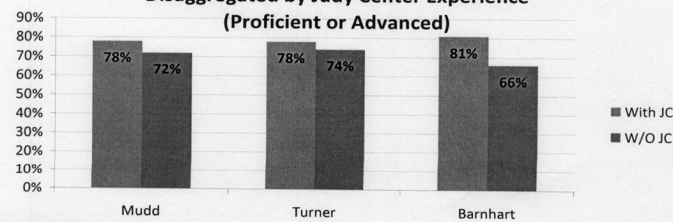
### Maryland School Assessment Spring 2010

3rd Grade MSA Scores		
	Reading (Proficient or Advanced)	Mathematics (Proficient or Advanced)
MD	85%	84%
Chas. Co.	81%	81%
Dr. Samuel A. Mudd	75%	74%
Eva Turner	68%	76%
C. Paul Barnhart	67%	72%

**3rd Grade Maryland School Assessment Reading Scores  
Disaggregated by Judy Center Experience  
(Proficient or Advanced)**



**3rd Grade Maryland School Assessment Mathematics  
Scores  
Disaggregated by Judy Center Experience  
(Proficient or Advanced)**



Senator MIKULSKI. Miss Smith.

**STATEMENT OF LINDA K. SMITH, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR,  
NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF CHILD CARE RESOURCES &  
REFERRAL AGENCIES, ARLINGTON, VA**

Ms. SMITH. Good morning and thank you for inviting me here today to testify. My name is Linda Smith and I am the executive director of NACCRRA. Prior to joining NACCRRA I did work for the Department of Defense and helped to develop the military's childcare system.

You asked me here today to speak about three things, the importance of early care and education programs, recommendations to improve the quality of them and lessons learned from the military experience.

Every week in this country over 11 million children under the age of 5 are in some form of childcare. They spend an average of 35 hours a week in this care and those caring for them are mostly untrained, poorly paid, by the way, they average \$10 an hour and they turn over at roughly 30 percent annually. Given the number of children in care and the amount of time they spend there, to say that childcare isn't the primary early learning program in this country is simply denying the facts.

My first recommendation is easy, stop treating care and education as separate issues. Children learn 24/7. The more important question is, what are the 11 million children in childcare learning.

Recommendation two, define childcare for which public funds can be used. In my view anyone caring for children not related to themselves, on a regular basis, for a fee, are in the childcare business. They should be licensed, trained, inspected and background checked. Forty years of research has consistently shown that quality childcare makes a difference, especially for low-income children. It also shows that better trained staff leads to higher quality care and more positive outcomes for children.

Recommendation two, require basic training of all adults working in childcare. The Military Childcare Act of 1989 required a uniform training program for the workforce. As a result DOD requires 40 hours of initial training and 24 hours of annual training leading to a child development associate credential. In contrast, under the CCDBG, only 13 States require caregivers and childcare centers to have any training in child development before starting work. Just like the military, we have to start with basic training for all.

Recommendation three, require background checks for all childcare workers. Congress required this of DOD in 1990. In contrast, as Senator Burr stated, only 10 States require a comprehensive check for childcare center workers and fewer for family childcare homes. Consider the following. In Illinois an audit found that 90 family childcare addresses matched those of registered sex offenders and in Kentucky there were 30 matches.

Senator Burr has introduced Senate bill 581, the Childcare Protection Act. It requires background checks for licensed childcare providers and those receiving CCDBG subsidies. I urge Congress to pass this legislation this year.

Recommendation four, require health and safety protections for children and require accountability for them. Congress required

quarterly unannounced inspections for all military programs. In contrast, State inspections vary greatly. California inspects centers once every 5 years and Michigan inspects family childcare homes once every 10 year. Congress requires DOD to ensure compliance with quality standards, in contrast, under CCDBG, there is little emphasis on quality. State oversight is weak and HHS has little authority to hold States accountable.

Here is my final recommendation. Public funds should support parent choice, but only when choice meets a basic threshold for quality. For many parents choices are limited to what is affordable, which is often unlicensed and low quality care. In Michigan over 60 percent of the children receiving CCDBG subsidies are in unlicensed care. And in nine other States over one-third of all subsidized children are in unlicensed settings.

DOD has a system of care that is widely viewed as a model, with 100 percent of their centers having achieved national accreditation. Parents have choices that are both high quality and affordable. In short, as the title for this hearing suggests, DOD is getting their bang for the buck. In contrast, CCDBG has led to a patchwork of childcare programs that vary widely in cost and quality. There are no core protections for children and little accountability, not much bang for the buck.

Can the military lessons translate into the civilian sector? NACCRRRA is working with the Army to improve care in 16 civilian communities. We use the same training and inspections, participation is voluntary and still 87 percent of providers have achieved their CBA credential and 93 percent of centers have achieved national accreditation. This shows that with basic supports all childcare providers can achieve quality.

In closing, let me say that there are many outstanding programs in this country and many people that are working hard to do the best they can for children. It is time to support them and to strengthen CCDBG. We believe that by enacting the low-cost recommendations described here, that we can improve the quality of childcare for all children.

I ask that NACCRRRA's "We Can Do Better Report"<sup>1</sup> and "Leaving Children to Chance Report"<sup>2</sup> be included in the record. In addition I ask the table comparing the Military Childcare Act and the Childcare and Development Block Grant<sup>3</sup> also be included in the record. I look forward to any questions. Thank you for having me.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Smith follows:]

#### PREPARED STATEMENT OF LINDA K. SMITH

##### SUMMARY

**Personal Background:** Linda K. Smith is the executive director of the National Association of Child Care Resource & Referral Agencies (NACCRRRA). She also spent 25 years at the Department of Defense (DOD) helping to develop the military child care system.

**Testimony Summary:** Every week, more than 11 million children under age 5 with working mothers are in some type of child care arrangement—on average for 35 hours per week. Over half (55 percent), return to the workforce within 6 months

<sup>1</sup>The report referred to may be found at [www.naccrra.org/node/2153](http://www.naccrra.org/node/2153).

<sup>2</sup>The report referred to may be found at [www.naccrra.org/node/1745](http://www.naccrra.org/node/1745).

<sup>3</sup>The report referred to may be found at [www.naccrra.org/node/1234](http://www.naccrra.org/node/1234).

of giving birth. The child care workforce is largely untrained. They are poorly paid—the average pay is \$10.07/hour—and the turnover rate is about 30 percent a year.

**Given the number of children in care and the amount of time they spend there, to say that child care isn't the primary early learning experience for them, is simply denying the facts.**

The Military Child Care Act (MCCA) was enacted in 1989 and the Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG) was enacted in 1990. Both had as a centerpiece of the law parental choice. Both were enacted to respond to an increase in working women and a greater need to make child care more affordable for working families. But, the approach to assisting families and the objective with regard to child development were quite different. The testimony compares and contrasts MCCA with CCDBG.

DOD through the MCCA has developed a system of quality child care. In contrast, CCDBG has led to a patchwork array of child care settings under different laws in every State.

First, DOD requires comprehensive background checks, including a fingerprint check against State and Federal records, for child care providers. In contrast, CCDBG has no background check requirement. As a result, State laws vary greatly.

Second, the MCCA requires minimum training for child care providers. While quality child care is important for all families, higher quality care has an even greater impact on children from low-income families. In contrast, CCDBG has no minimum training requirement. State requirements vary greatly.

Third, the MCCA requires at least quarterly inspections for child care programs. In contrast, CCDBG has no inspection requirement. State laws vary greatly.

At its core, DOD sets a minimum quality bar for child care—background checks, training in the basics like CPR, first aid, basic health and safety, child abuse prevention and detection, and child development. There's attention to quality, not just access. There is accountability through regular unannounced inspections. And, DOD has the authority to enforce compliance. In contrast, there is no core minimum quality piece to CCDBG. State standards are weak. State oversight is weaker. And, HHS has no authority to improve it.

Nearly \$10 billion in government money is spent on child care today. A few simple steps at no or little cost could be taken to improve the quality of care for millions of children and help set a quality framework.

1. Require a minimum core set of protections for children that apply to all programs receiving Federal funds of any kind and require inspections similar to DOD. Inspection reports should be posted on the Internet so that parents can make informed choices.

2. Require comprehensive background screening of workers in order to ensure children are safe.

3. Require comprehensive training programs for the workforce that are linked to higher levels of competency and incentives.

4. Give HHS more authority to enforce the provisions of CCDBG and hold them accountable for Federal funds invested. Link funding to quality not just quantity.

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Good morning Madam Chairwoman and Ranking Member Senator Burr. I am pleased to be here today to testify before the Subcommittee on Children and Families. My name is Linda K. Smith and I am the executive director of the National Association of Child Care Resource & Referral Agencies (NACCRRA). We work with 600 State and local Child Care Resource and Referral agencies throughout the country training 650,000 child care providers and serving 7 million parents every year. About 40 percent of our agencies administer State child care subsidies to low-income families. I have been at NACCRRA for nearly 10 years but prior to that time, I worked at the Department of Defense for 25 years helping to develop the military child care system.

While at the Pentagon, I held a number of positions as a career employee. I was director of Family Policy for the Secretary of Defense, the director of Child Care and Youth Policy, and I played a leading role in implementing the Military Child Care Act of 1989. I welcome an opportunity today to compare and contrast the Military Child Care Act (MCCA) and the Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG). And, to talk about the importance of quality child care for all children.

Every week, more than 11 million children under age 5 with working mothers are in some type of child care arrangement. On average, these children are in care for 35 hours per week. Over half (55 percent), return to the workforce within 6 months of giving birth. These children are cared for in settings that range from the more formal child development centers and preschools to informal family child care homes.

The majority of adults working in these programs are untrained and lack the resources to do the job expected. They are poorly paid—the average pay is \$10.07/hour—and they turnover at approximately 30 percent a year. Few States require comprehensive background checks of the workforce, have solid health and safety standards, and fewer do comprehensive routine inspections.

**Given the number of children in care and the amount of time they spend there, to say that child care isn't the primary early learning experience for them, is simply denying the facts.**

What is most interesting is that the Military Child Care Act and the Child Care and Development Block Grant were enacted around the same time. The MCCA was enacted in 1989 and CCDBG was enacted in 1990. Both had as a centerpiece of the law parental choice. Both were enacted to respond to an increase in working women and a greater need to make child care more affordable for working families. But, that is about all the two laws had in common. The approach to assisting families and the objective with regard to child development were quite different.

The structure of the military is often a mystery to those who have not served in it. But, actually, there are many similarities in that structure that correspond to civilian government.

The Department of Defense (DOD), like the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), is charged with implementing the laws passed by Congress. The military services (the Army, Navy, Air Force, and Marines) function like States. The major commands are akin to county governments. And, installations act like city and local governments.

Child care policy is written at DOD, just as Federal policy on civilian child care is written by HHS. Policies from both agencies stem from requirements put in place through laws.

When DOD writes policies, regulations are put into place by the four military services. The military services have latitude to exceed the minimum policies, but not relax them. These regulations are passed onto the major commands, who in turn, issue guidance to military installations. Again, the major commands can exceed minimum policies, but not relax them. The installations implement the regulations and in some cases, they may add further requirements, but they are not allowed to relax the basic requirements. In this way, there are minimum protections for the children of military families.

The Department of Defense through the Military Child Care Act has developed a system of quality child care. The proof of this can be seen in national accreditation rates: 100 percent are accredited within the military child care system compared to 8 percent of child care programs in the civilian world. The system has minimum protections for children, parents can choose among an array of settings that all meet these minimum protections, and there is accountability for how DOD child care funds are spent.

In contrast, the Child Care and Development Block Grant has led to a patchwork array of child care settings under different laws in every State. There is no system. There are no minimum protections for children. Parents can choose either licensed or unlicensed care. Accountability for spending public dollars is weak at best. NACCRRA's parent polling shows that parents neither understand nor demand quality because they simply don't know what questions to ask. Most make logical assumptions about licensed care (such as assuming programs that are licensed include providers who have had a background check, minimum training, CPR, and other basic health and safety training). Unfortunately, there is a large gap between logical assumptions made by parents and State child care policies.

At the core of the Military Child Care Act are some key provisions that help set a framework for a system of quality care.

First, there are comprehensive background checks, including a fingerprint check against State and Federal records. Child abuse records are checked for substantiated claims. The intent is that children should be safe in child care. Convicted felons, sex offenders, and those with a history of child abuse should not receive DOD money to care for children. This was a congressional mandate in 1990.

In contrast, CCDBG has no background check requirement. As a result, State laws vary greatly. Only 10 States require a comprehensive background check for those working in child care centers. Only eight States require a comprehensive background check for family child care home providers. Between the two, only five States require a comprehensive check for both centers and family child care homes.

A comprehensive background check means a fingerprint check against State and Federal records, and a check of the sex offender and child abuse registries. Just over half the States require fingerprint checks for child care center employees (30 States for Federal records; 28 States for State records) and fewer than half (22 States for

Federal records; 24 States for State records) require fingerprint checks for family child care home providers.

A fingerprint check makes a difference. Providers can evade the system by using an alias that a name check simply won't pick up. That's why a fingerprint check is more effective. For family child care homes, all adults in the household need to have a background check, not just the individual applying for a license. Consider the following:

- In Illinois, an audit found that 90 providers' addresses matched those listed for sex offenders.
- In California, an audit found 49 matches for sex offenders.
- In Kentucky, an audit found 30 sex offender matches.

NACCRRA's polling of parents shows that overwhelmingly they support comprehensive background checks for child care providers. In fact, most parents logically assume that licensed care means that providers have had a background check. But, the reality is far different.

Senator Burr has introduced legislation, S. 581, the Child Care Protection Act, to require a comprehensive background check for licensed care and those receiving CCDBG subsidies. Madam Chairwoman, I am hopeful you and the other members of the HELP Committee will cosponsor the bill and that it will pass either by itself or as part of CCDBG reauthorization.

Second, the Military Child Care Act requires the Secretary of Defense to establish a uniform training program for child care providers. The act requires, at a minimum, that training shall cover:

- Early childhood development;
- Activities and disciplinary techniques appropriate to children of different ages;
- Child abuse prevention and detection; and
- CPR and other emergency medical procedures.

As a result, the Department of Defense policy establishes a minimum requirement of 40 hours of initial training either before a provider cares for children or early on in their caregiving responsibilities. Also, DOD requires 24 hours of annual training as follow-up and to reinforce initial learning.

Research shows that better trained providers lead to higher quality care and more positive outcomes for children. Higher quality care is linked to increased school readiness, reduced use of special education, reduced use of public assistance, and reduced juvenile crime. While quality child care is important for all families, higher quality care has an even greater impact on children from low-income families.

Just last year the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD) found that high quality child care for those under age 5 had a long-lasting impact on children's future development.

Specifically, NICHD found that those children who had received high quality child care scored higher at age 15 on measures of academic and cognitive achievement and were less likely to misbehave than those who were enrolled in lower quality child care.

After 40 years of research, the results are consistent: quality child care makes a difference. Unfortunately, studies show that less than 10 percent of child care is of high quality.

But, in contrast, the CCDBG has no minimum training requirement. State requirements vary greatly. Only 13 States require child care providers in centers to have initial training in child development. While State requirements are improving on health and safety requirements, only 34 States require all 10 basic health and safety practices that experts recommend (such as requiring babies to be placed on their backs to sleep as recommended by the American Academy of Pediatrics).

Safe sleeping practices can save lives. It's related to training because health and safety requirements often lead to training to promote better daily practices for children. It's not theoretical. It's practical. We can't teach common sense, but what we can do is ensure that child care providers have been exposed to practices that can make a difference in the health and safety of the children for which they provide care.

Third, the Military Child Care Act requires at least quarterly inspections for child care programs. Regular inspections are a means of ensuring that children are cared for in settings that meet minimum health and safety requirements. Onsite guidance during inspections can help providers to improve the level of care they offer.

- Unannounced inspections help prevent providers from covering up violations, particularly when there is a history of violations or sanctions.
- Unannounced inspections can help reduce fraud by ensuring that providers are actually caring for the children they claim subsidies for and to promote safety by ensuring that providers are not caring for more children than a license allows.

In contrast, the Child Care and Development Block Grant has no inspection requirement. State laws vary greatly. Only eight States conduct inspections at least quarterly for centers (Florida, New Mexico, North Carolina, Oklahoma, Oregon, Tennessee, Virginia, and Wyoming). The reality is:

- 20 States (including DC) conduct inspections of centers once a year or less frequently.
- California inspects child care centers once every 5 years.
- Iowa and Montana inspect family child care homes once every 5 years.
- Michigan inspects family child care homes once every 10 years.
- 8 States issue a license to family child care home providers without conducting an inspection first (Georgia, Kansas, Michigan, Montana, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Texas and West Virginia).

Inspections are about promoting child safety. They are about promoting accountability for the expenditure of Federal money. The standards a State has are important. But, they won't matter if inspection policies are weak. The two go hand-in-hand: quality standards to ensure children are safe in child care and oversight to ensure that programs comply with State standards.

At its core, DOD sets a minimum quality bar for child care. Background checks, training in the basics like CPR, first aid, basic health and safety, child abuse prevention and detection, and child development. Added to that are inspections. There's attention to quality, not just access. There is accountability. DOD has the authority to enforce compliance.

In contrast, there is no core minimum quality piece to CCDBG. State standards are weak. State oversight is weaker. HHS has no authority to improve it.

NACCRRA has conducted several national polls of parents with children over the last several years. While affordability is a top concern, quality is the top concern. Our most recent polling (June 2010) found:

- 94 percent of parents support requiring child care providers to have some basic training in health and safety practices, and child development, before working with children;
- 94 percent of parents support quality standards for all child care programs to ensure the health and safety of children;
- 92 percent of parents support a background check using fingerprints of every child care provider caring for unrelated children on a regular basis; and,
- 89 percent of parents support requiring child care program inspections at least once a year.

So, what are the lessons from the Military experience that can help establish a framework for quality care nationwide? NACCRRA has been working with the branches of the military, especially the Army, to use the requirements of the military to improve care in civilian programs where there are large concentrations of soldiers.

Called Army Child Care in Your Neighborhood, we have used the same training and inspection process used on the installation. To show that this can be done, we have worked with providers to achieve the national CDA credential and centers to achieve national accreditation. These projects demonstrate that civilian child care providers can, given support, achieve the same levels of quality.

Child care is a complex program that supports many—parents, businesses, government and providers all have a role to play.

While I have mentioned several of the shortcomings of CCDBG, it is not all doom and gloom on the CCDBG front. There are many outstanding programs in this country and many people working hard to do the best they can for children. CCDBG has played an important role in helping low-income families better afford access to child care.

But, since 1990 when CCDBG was enacted, we have learned a lot:

- Research has found that 80 percent of brain development occurs between birth and age 3, and 90 percent before age 5.
- Research has found that more than half of kindergarten children are considered not ready when they arrive at school.
- NACCRRA's own studies have documented the child care laws and policies that States have pursued with Federal money.

While 20 years ago, the focus through CCDBG was to expand access to child care, it is time to focus on the quality of care to which families have access. The pendulum is swinging in many States. Nearly half have created Quality Rating Improvement Systems (or QRIS), which are designed to give parents greater awareness about the quality of child care in their community and provide an incentive to child

care providers to offer higher quality care by offering greater subsidy payments to higher quality programs.

Quality rating systems are a good start, but not the total answer. The most recent CCDBG subsidy data (fiscal year 2009) shows that in 22 States, at least one-fifth (20 percent) of the children whose care is paid for by Federal subsidies are in license-exempt care.

- In two States (Hawaii and Michigan), over 60 percent of the children whose care is paid for through CCDBG are in license-exempt care.
- In 9 States (Connecticut, Hawaii, Illinois, Michigan, Missouri, New York, North Dakota, Oregon and Utah), 35 percent or more of children whose care is paid for with a subsidy are in license-exempt care.

Therefore, there are really two issues related to the quality of care:

- First, what licensing means and the protections for children in licensed care; and
- Second, the quality of care in which Federal subsidies can be used.

While DOD funds are restricted to settings meeting minimum requirements, there is no similar requirement under CCDBG. Quality rating systems are part of the answer, but some apply to centers only, some apply only to licensed care, and few States restrict subsidy receipt to licensed care (which is the only threshold that brings with it some minimum protections for children and oversight).

Nearly \$10 billion in government money is spent on child care today. We can't fix child care in America overnight. But, we can take a few simple steps at no or little cost that would improve the quality of care for millions of children and help set a quality framework through which a child care system could be built.

1. Require a minimum core set of protections for children that apply to all programs receiving Federal funds of any kind and require inspections similar to DOD. Inspection reports should be posted on the Internet so that parents can make informed choices.
2. Require comprehensive background screening of workers in order to ensure children are safe.
3. Require comprehensive training programs for the workforce that are linked to higher levels of competency and incentives.
4. Give HHS more authority to enforce the provisions of CCDBG and hold them accountable for Federal funds invested. Link funding to quality not just quantity.

These are simple steps. Most would have little cost. It is NACCRRA's position that background checks and training can and should be personal responsibilities of those self-selecting to care for unrelated children or could be paid for through CCDBG or by providers. Quite frankly, if a provider wants to take thousands (or more) from the government to care for children, it is not unreasonable to ask that they take some personal responsibility to show that children will be safe in their care.

CCDBG reauthorization represents an opportunity to strengthen the quality of care for all children. The last time the law was reauthorized was in 1996. It is far past time that Congress takes a close look at CCDBG and the State laws that have emanated from it. We can do better for children. Quality care matters to their safety and development and it is time for more accountability in the way in which government dollars are spent. I look forward to working with the committee and to respond to any questions that you may have.

I ask that NACCRRA's *We Can Do Better* Report with regard to State child care center policies and *Leaving Children to Chance* Report with regard to State family child care home policies be included in the record. In addition, I ask that the table comparing the Military Child Care Act and the Child Care and Development Block Grant be included in the record.

Thank you.

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#### PNC GROW UP GREAT INITIATIVE FACT SHEET

##### **What: PNC Grow Up Great, a 10-year, \$100 million early childhood education initiative**

- Founded by The PNC Financial Services Group, *PNC Grow Up Great* and *PNC Crezca con Exito* form a comprehensive, bilingual program designed to help prepare children—particularly underserved children—from birth to age 5 for success in school and life. Through *Grow Up Great*, PNC provides the leadership, advocacy, funding, resources and volunteers to help parents, caregivers and communities in their efforts to increase the potential for young children to succeed.

### **Why: An Investment in the Future**

- Extensive research indicates that the returns on investments in high-quality early education and school readiness initiatives are significant and long lasting—impacting our children, our society and the health of our economy for generations to come.
- Research shows that children who participate in high-quality preschool programs are far more likely to experience greater educational achievements, strive toward higher vocational aspirations and contribute to society later in life.

### **Who: Expert Partners Help Guide the Initiative**

*PNC Grow Up Great* has partnered with some of the Nation's most highly respected early childhood experts and nonprofit organizations to help guide this initiative.

#### **Sesame Workshop**

Sesame Workshop is the nonprofit educational organization behind Sesame Street™ and so much more.

#### **The Fred Rogers Company**

The Fred Rogers Company, producer of *Mister Rogers' Neighborhood*, creates a wide range of multi-media materials dedicated to young children, their families and those who support them.

#### **National Head Start Association (NHSA)**

NHSA is a private, national association that supports Head Start programs. It offers a wide variety of services and provides a number of programs designed to directly enhance the operations of Head Start and Childhood Education communities and enrich the lives of Head Start students, parents, and staff.

### **How: A Comprehensive Approach—Grants**

- More than \$30 million in grants have been distributed to Head Start and other organizations that support early childhood education. Funding through *PNC Grow Up Great* has established innovative school readiness programs for preschoolers in math, science and the arts.

### **Volunteerism**

- PNC encourages employee involvement in *Grow Up Great* through a progressive policy that permits 40 hours a year of paid time off for volunteerism. Employees have volunteered more than 210,000 hours.

### **Advocacy**

- PNC is leveraging its influence with the corporate community, policymakers and other key influencers to elevate public/private discussions about the importance of access to quality early childhood education.

### **Awareness**

- *PNC Grow Up Great* has an ongoing campaign to communicate the importance of school readiness. These efforts have garnered more than 2.5 billion media impressions since the program's inception.

**For More Information:** Visit [www.pncgrowupgreat.com](http://www.pncgrowupgreat.com) or contact Eva Blum, program director, at [eva.blum@pnc.com](mailto:eva.blum@pnc.com).

Senator MIKULSKI. Thank you very much. That was an excellent testimony. We want to note Miss Smith was recommended by Senator Burr, not only because of her advocacy of his legislation, but also to offer a comparison on what one hand of the government is doing on child care and what the other is doing.

Mr. Rolnick, let's hear now from you. That was excellent. Mr. Hillian, the human interest.

**ARTHUR J. ROLNICK, SENIOR FELLOW AND CO-DIRECTOR OF  
THE HUMAN CAPITAL RESEARCH COLLABORATIVE, HUM-  
PHREY SCHOOL OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS, THE UNIVERSITY OF  
MINNESOTA, MINNEAPOLIS, MN**

Mr. ROLNICK. Madam Chair, Senator Burr, committee members, it is an honor to be here. I have been all over the country, indeed all over the world on the economics of early childhood education and I have never run into a committee that has been this well informed on this issue. I congratulate the committee and the staff.

In comments to business leaders in Omaha, NE, February 6, 2007 regarding income inequality in the U.S. Federal Reserve Chairman Ben Bernanke said,

“Although education and the acquisition of skills is a lifelong process, starting early in life is crucial. Recent research, some sponsored by the Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis, in collaboration with the University of Minnesota has documented the high returns that early childhood programs can pay in terms of subsequent educational attainment and lower rates of social problems such as teenage pregnancy and welfare dependency.”

What I would like to do this morning is talk about some of that research, and some of it has already been discussed here, that the chairman has cited. In trying to leave you with the impression, although I think you are already on board here, is that early childhood development is economic development and it is economic development with a very high public return. In fact, we have asserted now, for over 10 years, that you won't find a better public investment and it hasn't been challenged.

But I am not going to leave you there with just the research. I am going to talk about implementation. How do you take the research ideas and make it happen in the real world, if you will. I am going to talk about an organization called The Minnesota Early Learning Foundation (MELF), that has taken our ideas and implemented a pilot that I think you will find very interesting that will help yield the kind of results that we saw in the research.

So let me begin with the research itself. A lot of people have asked me, I spent 40 years—I started very young at the Federal Reserve system—at the Federal Reserve system and studying inflation and unemployment. In fact, my expertise is pre-Civil War banking and I have never been asked to testify on that yet.

[Laughter.]

Mr. ROLNICK. How I got started on the economics of early childhood education, it goes back to a former governor of Minnesota, Republican Al Quie and former mayor of Minneapolis, Democrat Don Fraser, who had an organization on advocating for early childhood education. They were making a moral argument and I said to them, at a lunch, when they were presenting their results, that I don't think a moral argument is going to work. I think you can make moral arguments for lots of investments, I think you should look behind the moral argument and look at the economics. That is how I got started. I didn't realize that what we said was going to be that revolutionary.

As I said, I have been doing this for 10 years and since we presented that report, my colleague and I, Robb Grunewald, we have been to virtually every State and numerous countries on this issue.

So what is the research and what did we say? There are actually four longitudinal studies, Abecedarian study that Senator Burr mentioned, there is the Perry Preschool, there is the Chicago Child-Parent Project and then there is a study in Syracuse on home visiting nurses all basically, I am going to argue, come to the same conclusion.

I want to focus, quickly, on the Perry Preschool because that is a study that Robb and I looked at very carefully. There was 123 families, randomly divided up into two groups. So the methodology doesn't get much better than this. The benefits for the kids that were in a very high quality program, you have already noted: Less likely to be retained in the first grade, less likely to need special ed., more likely to be literate by the sixth grade, graduate high school, get a job, pay taxes, stay off welfare. And the crime rate, compared to the control group, goes down 50 percent.

We had dollar values on all this. Economists can put dollar values on anything, OK? So we have the benefits. We know the cost in today's dollars were about \$10,000, \$11,000, it was a 2-year-program for 3- and 4-year-olds. We asked a simple question that most economists would ask, "What was the return on that investment?" In that 40-year study we got up an 18 percent, inflation adjusted, return. Stock market, post-World War II annual return is 5.8 percent, so we can beat the stock market by a lot, we can beat most economic development dollars by a lot that are spent on trying to lure each other's companies across State lines. We have dubbed that the economic bidding war, that is a zero public return. So I can take economic development dollars that are currently being used and I can get you an 18 percent return.

Now there is some debate about these rates of return. They range—not an exact science, but in all of the studies the ranges are extraordinary returns compared to the stock market and compared to most economic development.

So I promised you I would talk about—OK, now you've got the research, the results that show it, how do you make it happen in practice. I am going to argue there is a number of hurdles. First, it should start early. Why do I say that? The amazing amount of research that has been done on brain development says that it begins at the very beginning, literally prenatal. If you don't get the kids that early, by age 3 that brain isn't developing properly. We have research to show that home visiting nurses work quite well in intervention. So it has got to start early.

It's got to be quality. You have talked about that. Parent engagement. If you are going to do this you better be able to bring it to scale. Whatever policy presents you being able to bring it to scale, because if you are only doing it for 20 percent of the kids, on an economic grounds, forget moral grounds, you are failing.

So what is our idea? It is a very simple one. Two economists, not surprising. We are going to use the market, we call it a market-based approach. We empower our parents with scholarships. We call it Scholarship Plus. Home visiting nurse starts prenatal. When the child turns 3 they get a 2-year scholarship to go to a high qual-

ity program. It has got to be high quality. A pilot has been funded by the Minnesota Early Learning Foundation, it consists of the top CEOs in our State, CEO from General Mills, Best Buy, EcoLab, the president of the University of Minnesota, a man by the name of Charlie Weaver who heads the Business Partnership which represents 110 of our top corporations. We raised \$20 million privately. We actually have a pilot going in St. Paul, 650 families.

The parents get to choose the high quality program. We have a rating system. They have got to go to a three- or four-star rated program and the parents choose. Again a third choose Head Start, but some choose Montessori, some choose faith-based, some choose the public schools. I am going to argue that is how you get quality. Get that competition, have the parents empowered and you can take that to scale very easily.

This program, we are already getting—outside consultant already shows our kids are doing great, much better than kids that aren't in the program. Shouldn't surprise you. We think we can close the achievement gap by the third grade. We have a variety of other pilots going on in Minnesota and a variety of other States that are looking at this program.

Thank you for this opportunity.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Rolnick follows:]

#### PREPARED STATEMENT OF ARTHUR J. ROLNICK

Investments in human capital prior to kindergarten provide a high public return. Such investments—especially for at-risk children—can have a substantial impact on the success of children's futures as students, workers, and citizens in democratic society. The high returns to investments in early childhood education (ECE) accrue not only by boosting labor productivity, but also by reducing costs to society, such as remedial education and crime. Cost-benefit analyses of four long-term evaluations of ECE programs showed annual rates of return, adjusted for inflation, ranging between 7 percent and as high as 20 percent.

These findings, promising though they are, pose a challenge: Small-scale ECE programs for at-risk children have been shown to work, but can their success be reproduced on a much larger scale? Based on a careful review of past and current programs, we believe that large-scale efforts can succeed if they are market-based and incorporate four key features: focus on at-risk children, start as early as prenatal, provide access to high-quality resources, and effectively engage the parents.

Achieving these characteristics at scale requires the flexibility, innovation, and incentives that are inherent in markets. For some, this is a radical idea, but for many families the ECE market works just fine. Many middle- and upper-class families have long benefited from the power of ECE markets by choosing programs and expecting a high-quality experience for children.

In January 2008, the Minnesota Early Learning Foundation began a pilot project based on this model, which has now served about 650 children and their families with parent mentoring and/or scholarships. The scholarships, which can only be used at high-quality programs, reached especially poor children: 71 percent of the families had household income below the poverty level. The number of high-quality programs in and near the pilot area increased more than 55 percent over a 2-year period. Parents consider the scholarship program to be user-friendly and are engaged in their children's education and development. Finally, children showed significant increases in language and early math skills across the first year of enrollment.

As Congress considers how best to invest in ECE, lessons learned from the St. Paul pilot are applicable. More openings in high-quality programs have become available in part because the programs are paid at a higher rate than if they provided more typical child care. In addition, programs and families noted that the scholarship program required less paperwork, was easier to navigate, and made payments to ECE programs more timely than the child care subsidy system. In a scholarship system, the focus is on the child's education, not on the employment status of parents. Nevertheless, a number of parents noted that the scholarship program made it possible for them to obtain work and education opportunities.

Findings from the St. Paul pilot suggest that the Federal Government would benefit from providing incentives to States to implement scholarship programs. For example, a portion of the State-level grant competition, Race to the Top—Early Learning Challenge, could be used to fund scholarship pilots. As also demonstrated in the St. Paul pilot, scholarship pilots could operate with private sector contributions and involvement. Lessons learned from such pilots could guide policy to achieve the largest bang for the buck from ECE investments.

In comments to business leaders in Omaha, NE, regarding income inequality in the United States, Federal Reserve Chairman Ben Bernanke said,

“Although education and the acquisition of skills is a lifelong process, starting early in life is crucial. Recent research—some sponsored by the Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis in collaboration with the University of Minnesota—has documented the high returns that early childhood programs can pay in terms of subsequent educational attainment and in lower rates of social problems, such as teenage pregnancy and welfare dependency.”<sup>1</sup>

The research cited by the chairman is contained in several papers we have written over the past 8 years on the economic benefits of investments in early childhood education (ECE). We have argued that investments in human capital prior to kindergarten provide a high public return. Such investments—especially for at-risk children—can have a substantial impact on the success of children’s futures as students, workers, and citizens in democratic society. That is, the most efficient means to boost the productivity of the workforce 15 to 20 years down the road is to invest in today’s youngest children. According to James Heckman, Nobel laureate economist at the University of Chicago, “Enriching the early years will promote the productivity of schools by giving teachers better-quality students. Improving the schools will in turn improve the quality of the workforce.”<sup>2</sup>

The high returns to investments in ECE accrue not only by boosting labor productivity, but also by reducing costs to society, such as remedial education and crime. The cost of crime in the United States is estimated at about \$1.3 trillion per year, or almost \$5,000 per person. Research shows that investments in high-quality ECE appear to reduce future crime and are more cost-effective than additional spending on police or incarceration.<sup>3</sup>

The promise of ECE programs is based on fundamental facts about early human development. A child’s quality of life and the contributions that child makes to society as an adult can be traced to his or her first years of life. From birth until about the age of 5, a child undergoes tremendous development. If this period of life includes support for growth in language, motor skills, adaptive abilities, and social-emotional functioning, the child is more likely to succeed in school and to later contribute to society.<sup>4</sup> Conversely, without support during these early years, a child is more likely to drop out of school, depend on welfare benefits, and commit crime—thereby imposing significant costs on society.<sup>5</sup> ECE programs recognize this potential—and this risk—and seek to nurture healthy development from the earliest years.

Aside from comparing returns on investment with other types of crime prevention and education spending, we contend that investing in ECE yields a much higher return than most government-funded economic development initiatives.

For well over 20 years, government leaders at the State and local levels have invested in economic development schemes with public dollars that are at best a zero-sum game. In the name of economic development and creating new jobs, virtually every State in the union has tried to lure companies with public subsidies. Previous studies have shown that the case for these so-called bidding wars is shortsighted and fundamentally flawed.<sup>6</sup> From a national perspective, jobs are not created—they are only relocated. The public return is at most zero. And the economic gains that seem apparent at State and local levels are also suspect because they would likely have been realized without the subsidies. In other words, what often passes for economic development and sound public investment is neither.

We don’t pretend to have all the answers to economic development, but we’re quite certain that investing in ECE is more likely to create a vibrant economy than

<sup>1</sup>Chairman Ben S. Bernanke, “The Level and Distribution of Economic Well-Being,” Remarks before the Greater Omaha Chamber of Commerce, Omaha, NE, February 6, 2007.

<sup>2</sup>See Heckman and Masterov.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>See Erickson and Kurz-Riemer.

<sup>5</sup>See National Scientific Council on the Developing Child.

<sup>6</sup>See Burstein and Rolnick.

using public funds to lure a sports team by building a new stadium or attracting an automaker by providing tax breaks.

Several longitudinal evaluations all reach essentially the same conclusion: The return on ECE programs that focus on at-risk families far exceeds the return on other projects that are funded as economic development. Cost-benefit analyses of the Perry Preschool Program, the Abecedarian Project, the Chicago Child-Parent Centers, and the Elmira Prenatal/Early Infancy Project showed annual rates of return, adjusted for inflation, ranging between 7 percent and as high as 20 percent.<sup>7</sup> The Perry Preschool Program and Chicago Child-Parent Centers provided preschool at ages 3 and 4, Abecedarian provided full-day care and education for children a few months old through age 4, and the Elmira Prenatal/Early Infancy Project provided home visits by a nurse to high-risk mothers during pregnancy until the child turned age 2.

The benefits attributed to these ECE programs include reductions in special education and crime, and increases in tax revenue. Reductions in the cost of crime played a large role in boosting overall rates of return, particularly for the Perry Preschool Program. Only the Abecedarian Project did not include cost reductions due to decreases in crime because differences in crime rates between the treatment and control groups were not statistically significant.<sup>8</sup>

The study of the Perry Preschool Program showed a decrease in the percentage of adults at age 40 who were arrested five or more times from 55 percent for the control group to 36 percent for the treatment group, a drop of 35 percent.<sup>9</sup> In the Chicago Child-Parent Center study, the percentage of juveniles arrested decreased from 25 percent for the comparison group to 17 percent for the treatment group, a reduction of 33 percent.<sup>10</sup> The Elmira Prenatal/Early Infancy Project study showed the mean number of child arrests by age 15 dropped by 50 percent; meanwhile, the mean number of mother arrests decreased by 69 percent.<sup>11</sup>

In each study, the drop in crime led to reduced costs for incarceration, police protection, and courts. Furthermore, the costs to the victims of crime decreased, including loss of property and suffering. Added together across all four longitudinal studies, the savings to crime alone could justify increased investment in high-quality ECE.

In addition to the longitudinal studies, a meta-analysis by Washington State Institute for Public Policy creates an average composite of 53 ECE programs to compare the return on investment with other intervention programs for youth. The results for ECE for 3- and 4-year-old children, the Nurse Family Partnership, and home visiting programs for at-risk mothers and children compared favorably with other intervention program types reviewed by the authors, including several parole supervision programs for juvenile offenders.<sup>12</sup>

#### MARKET-ORIENTED APPROACH

These findings, promising though they are, pose a challenge: Small-scale ECE programs for at-risk children have been shown to work, but can their success be reproduced on a much larger scale? There are reasons to be skeptical; some recent attempts at scaling up ECE programs have been disappointing. However, it's our view that those programs failed in large part because they were based on old models that were ill-suited to get results. It's time to seriously reconsider how to effectively help at-risk children and their families. Based on a careful review of past and current programs, we believe that large-scale efforts can succeed if they are market-based and incorporate four key features: focus on at-risk children, start as early as prenatal, provide access to high-quality resources, and effectively engage the parents.

Achieving these characteristics at scale requires the flexibility, innovation, and incentives that are inherent in markets. For some, this is a radical idea, but for many families the ECE market works just fine. Many middle- and upper-class families have long benefited from the power of ECE markets by choosing programs and expecting a high-quality experience for children.

Our idea is to use the strength of the market by empowering at-risk parents with resources to access high-quality ECE. Qualified programs would compete for the scholarship children; parents would make the decision about where to enroll their children. In order to enroll children with scholarships, programs would have to

<sup>7</sup> See Heckman, Grunewald, and Reynolds.

<sup>8</sup> The lack of a crime effect is likely due to relatively low crime rates in the study area compared with other parts of the country. See Burr and Grunewald.

<sup>9</sup> See Schweinhart, et al.

<sup>10</sup> See Reynolds, Temple, Robertson, and Mann.

<sup>11</sup> See Karoly, et al.

<sup>12</sup> See Washington State Public Policy Institute.

achieve a set level of quality, such as a particular rating on a State quality rating scale. The scholarships would cover child tuition to qualified programs plus the cost of parent mentoring to ensure parental involvement. Scholarships would be outcome-based, meaning that they would include incentives for achieving measurable progress toward the life and learning skills needed to succeed in school.

Parent mentoring would include parent education; information about available financial, health, and human-services resources; and guidance on selecting an ECE program. Research shows that reaching children with multiple risk factors as early as possible is essential; even age 3 may be too late. So we suggest that while scholarships would pay tuition for a child to attend an ECE program beginning at age 3, the parent-mentoring program could start as early as prenatal.<sup>13</sup>

This market-based approach is in contrast to the more conventional approach of either increasing funding for existing programs or adding early childhood programs to the public school curriculum.

#### A MINNESOTA PILOT

In January 2008, a pilot project based on this model was begun in St. Paul with about \$6 million raised by the Minnesota Early Learning Foundation (MELF). The foundation was established with the help of business leaders in 2005; its mission is to sponsor demonstration projects that explore how Minnesota can cost-effectively invest in ECE with an emphasis on market-oriented solutions.<sup>14</sup>

The St. Paul Early Childhood Scholarship Program has served about 650 children and their families with parent mentoring and/or scholarships in two neighborhoods in St. Paul. In December 2010, the 3-year point of the pilot, the program evaluator noted that the scholarships were reaching especially poor children: 71 percent of the families had household income below the poverty level, which is about \$22,000 for a family of four. Prior to the availability of scholarships, only about one-third of children in the pilot program attended a licensed early childhood program. After the availability of the scholarships, children were attending a variety of high-quality ECE programs, including nonprofit and for-profit child care and preschools, Head Start, family-based child care, and public school-based preschool programs. About three-quarters attended full-day programs; the rest attended half-day programs.<sup>15</sup>

The report also shows the number of high-quality programs in and near the pilot area increased more than 55 percent, from 22 programs to 34 over a 2-year period, as existing programs improved their quality and a couple of new programs opened in the area. In order to enroll children with scholarships, programs needed to achieve at least a 3-star rating on a 4-star rating scale called Parent Aware, Minnesota's pilot quality rating and improvement system.

Not only did the number of high-quality programs increase, but parents considered the scholarship program to be user-friendly and had strong positive opinions about the parent mentors and scholarships.<sup>16</sup> Over 80 percent of parents interviewed over the phone indicated they talk with their child's teacher about behavior and accomplishments, classroom rules and expectations, and activities to practice at home. Parents also commented they noticed how the ECE program was preparing their children for kindergarten, such as learning English and developing stronger social skills.

Child outcome data also provided promising initial signals. Children participating in the pilot showed significant increases in language and early math skills across the first year of enrollment. The evaluators noted that children's developmental trajectories were improved from what they would have been without participating in the scholarship program and attending a high-quality ECE program. Children also showed significant improvements in social skills between baseline and 1 year later, but there weren't significant changes on average after 1 year for scores on behavior problems (i.e., anger-aggression) or attention and task persistence.

#### LESSONS IN PROGRESS

The Federal Government funds child care subsidies and Head Start, while 40 States fund pre-kindergarten programs.<sup>17</sup> As Congress considers how best to invest in ECE, lessons learned so far from the St. Paul pilot are applicable, particularly

<sup>13</sup> See Rolnick and Grunewald for additional details of the market-based proposal.

<sup>14</sup> More information about MELF, including a list of board members, is available at [www.melf.us](http://www.melf.us).

<sup>15</sup> See Gaylor, et al.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> See Barnett, et al.

in reaching low-income children, engaging parents, and providing incentives to increase openings at high-quality programs.

As discovered in the St. Paul pilot, recruiting low-income families can be challenging, particularly since these families tend to be highly mobile. On the ground, person-to-person recruitment and word of mouth were more effective than passive outreach efforts. However, once parents enrolled in the program, they noted it was relatively easy to use and were enthusiastic about the scholarships, particularly when compared with child care subsidized and administered by the government.<sup>18</sup> Combining parent mentors with the resources to choose a high-quality program for their child seems to have helped engage parents in the education of their children.

On the program side, more openings in high-quality programs have become available in part because the programs are paid at a higher rate than if they provided more typical child care. In addition, programs and families noted that the scholarship program required less paperwork, was easier to navigate, and made payments to ECE programs more timely than the child care subsidy system. In a scholarship system, the focus is on the child's education, not on the employment status of parents. Nevertheless, a number of parents noted that the scholarship program made it possible for them to obtain work and education opportunities.

Findings from the St. Paul pilot suggest that the Federal Government would benefit from providing incentives to States to implement scholarship programs. For example, a portion of the State-level grant competition, Race to the Top—Early Learning Challenge, could be used to fund scholarship pilots. As also demonstrated in the St. Paul pilot, scholarship pilots could operate with private sector contributions and involvement. Lessons learned from such pilots could guide the policy to achieve the largest bang for the buck from ECE investments.

Compared with the billions of dollars spent each year on high-risk, low-return economic development schemes, this type of an investment in ECE programs is a far better and more secure economic development venture. We are confident that ECE investments driven by a market-based approach that focuses on at-risk children, starts as early as prenatal, provides access to high-quality resources, and empowered parents will lower crime, create a stronger workforce, and yield a high public return.

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<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

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- Senator MIKULSKI. Excellent. Excellent.
- Miss Blum.

**EVA TANSKY BLUM, SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT AND DIRECTOR  
OF COMMUNICATION AFFAIRS, PNC BANK, PITTSBURGH, PA**

Ms. BLUM. Thank you. Madam Chairwoman, Ranking Member Burr and the other members of the subcommittee, thank you for inviting me to participate in this panel discussion. As president of the PNC Foundation I have the honor to direct PNC Grow Up Great. We at PNC are passionate about our youngest citizens. We believe that an investment in the workforce of tomorrow makes economic sense today.

The PNC Financial Group is one of the Nation's largest diversified financial services organizations with assets of \$259 billion. We operate primarily in 15 States and the District of Columbia.

Approximately 8 years ago we introduced a program called PNC Grow Up Great that has become our signature philanthropic endeavor. It is a 10-year, \$100 million bilingual program designed to help prepare children, from birth to age 5, for success in school and in life.

Why this cause? First, our employees wanted us to concentrate on children and education. As we studied the emerging issues in education we became convinced that the availability of quality early childhood education, particularly for at-risk children, is critical to the future of our communities. These young children are our future workforce. Research shows, as you've heard, that many at-risk 5-year-olds enter kindergarten with a large vocabulary gap and that gap continues to grow, which affects their reading and math progress. We cannot continue to lose these children at such a young age. They are not only our future workforce, but they are also our future clients.

Our program is comprehensive involving our entire company and great partners, including a blue ribbon advisory council, Sesame Workshop, The Fred Rogers Company and Head Start.

PNC has just entered the 8th year of the Grow Up Great program. We focus on four key areas: volunteerism, advocacy, awareness and grants. In the interest of time I will only speak about two of these, but the others are detailed in our written submission.

*Volunteerism.* Research shows that in children's early years opportunities to interact with caring, responsible adults are so important. Our employees are eligible for 40 hours of paid time off each year and more than 20,000 employees have volunteered and have logged more than 210,000 hour. Our employees are in the classrooms, providing hugs, wiping noses and tying shoes. They also

teach the staff and parents how to budget, repair bad credit and buy their first home.

*Grants.* We are distributing \$40 million to support early education initiatives that reach low- and moderate-income children, their teachers and families. We fund programs with some of the country's most well-known institutions that bring science, math, opera, ballet, symphonies and art to preschool classrooms in at-risk communities. I wish you could see these 3-, 4- and 5-year-olds, practicing their plies, signing opera, talking about impressionist paintings, experiences that these children would generally not have. They are mesmerized and they are learning.

Independent evaluations tell us that we are making progress. Teachers are more comfortable teaching these subjects. Parents report that they are spending more time with their children engaged in science, math and art activities. The classrooms are coming alive.

The Grow Up Great journey has been extraordinary for PNC. Our employees and partners are engaged and 64,000 trained teachers are putting their new tools to work in the classroom. But most of all, over 1 million at-risk children are better prepared for school, their parents and siblings are learning with them and they are having fun.

We are trying hard to close that vocabulary gap and we are confident that these children have the potential to be productive citizens who will be able to work for us and bank with us.

Senators, we ask you to support all of our efforts to provide these children, our children, with a great chance to reach their full potential so that they will not only grow up but they will grow up great. Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Blum follows:]

#### PREPARED STATEMENT OF EVA TANSKY BLUM

Chairwoman Mikulski, Ranking Member Burr and the other Senators on the subcommittee, thank you for inviting me to participate in this hearing. I am Eva Blum, senior vice president and director of Community Affairs for PNC Bank, and President of the PNC Foundation. I have the honor to direct PNC Grow Up Great. We at PNC are passionate about our youngest citizens and believe that it is imperative that all children have the opportunity to enter kindergarten ready to learn. We believe that an investment in the workforce of tomorrow makes economic sense today. For these reasons, we commend you for holding this hearing, and appreciate the opportunity to offer our perspectives as a corporate citizen.

The PNC Financial Services Group, Inc. is one of the Nation's largest diversified financial services organizations with assets of \$259 billion. The company has nearly doubled in size during the past decade and operates primarily in 15 States and the District of Columbia with other national and international business operations. PNC measures its success against the yardstick of each of our four key stakeholders: employees, customers, shareholders and communities. We care about helping our customers achieve, and we contribute to our communities in ways that make PNC an important part of the regions where we live and work.

Approximately 8 years ago, PNC introduced a program in the company called PNC Grow Up Great. We announced it as a 10-year, \$100 million program to raise awareness of the importance of the first 5 years of life and to support access to quality early childhood education. PNC Grow Up Great and PNC Crezca con Exito form a comprehensive, bilingual program designed to help prepare children for success in school and life. Through PNC Grow Up Great, PNC provides the leadership, advocacy, funding, resources and volunteers to help parents, caregivers and communities in their efforts to increase the potential for young children to succeed. This is the first time that PNC adopted a corporate-wide philanthropic program since our giving is generally locally driven within the corporation's mission.

Why this cause? First, our employees wanted us to concentrate on children and education. As we studied the emerging issues in education, we became convinced that the availability of quality early childhood education, particularly for at-risk children, is critical to the future of the communities where we live and work. Extensive research indicates that the return on investments in high quality early education and school readiness initiatives are significant and long lasting, impacting our children, our society and the health of our economy for generations to come. Research also shows that children who participate in high quality early education programs are far more likely to experience greater educational achievements, strive toward higher vocational aspirations and contribute to society later in life.

These young children are our future workforce. The gap in academic success between children in low and high socio-economic households begins as early as 18 months old.<sup>1</sup> Furthermore, research shows that many at-risk 5-year-olds enter kindergarten with the vocabulary of an average 3½-year-old. They start school 18 months behind, and this gap gets bigger as they progress through elementary school. By the time these children reach third and fourth grade, many cannot read or do math at grade level. If they do not have education and jobs, they cannot contribute to the economic prosperity of their communities. We are convinced that if our communities and neighborhoods do not prosper, we cannot prosper as a company. Our executive leaders have always said that a bank is only as strong as the communities in which it does business.

As we studied the work of Art Rolnick and Jim Heckman, a Nobel laureate economist, and talked to other experts in the field, we knew that this was an important investment for our company—one that had the potential to pay off in many ways. Research indicates that for every dollar spent on quality early education programs for at-risk children, there is as much as a \$16 return on investment to society in the form of less remedial education, less repeat grades, and savings in the criminal justice and welfare systems.<sup>2</sup> These children have better jobs, more savings, and are more likely to own a home and car.

Our program is unique for a corporate philanthropy program because it is comprehensive, involving our entire company. PNC has partnered with some of the Nation's most highly respected early childhood experts and nonprofit organizations to help guide this initiative. We have an Advisory Council made up of experts in this field who advise us on policy direction for the program. We have also partnered with Sesame Workshop, the parent company of the world renowned television program, Sesame Street®. They have developed materials for us to distribute to raise awareness of the importance of the first 5 years of life and to help parents, teachers and caregivers understand how to use everyday moments as learning opportunities for their children. Another important partner in the program is The Fred Rogers Company, producer of Mister Rogers Neighborhood, who has helped us with training our employee volunteers. They have also developed tips for parents and caregivers that are on our Web site and in printed materials. Our final program partner is Head Start, a key conduit to at-risk children and families, which has facilities in all of our locations, and an excellent program for volunteers.

PNC has just entered the 8th year of the *Grow Up Great* program, which is a multi-faceted initiative focused on four key areas—volunteerism, advocacy, awareness, and grants. The following outlines these four components, the comprehensive approach we have taken to highlight the issue, some examples of successful programs, and results we have obtained through independent evaluations of these PNC-funded efforts.

#### VOLUNTEERISM

Research shows that in children's early years, opportunities to interact with caring, responsive adults are of utmost importance.<sup>3</sup> It has also been shown that young children acquire knowledge about literacy, math and science through conversations with adults and by being read to from information-rich books.<sup>4</sup> We believe that the *Grow Up Great* volunteerism program provides at-risk children with additional op-

<sup>1</sup> Heckman, J.J. (2008). *Schools, Skills and Synapses*, National Bureau of Economic Research.

<sup>2</sup> Schweinhart, L.J., Montie, J., Xiang, Z., Barnett, W.S., Belfield, C.R., & Nores, M. (2005). *Lifetime effects: The High Scope/Perry Preschool Study through age 40*, Ypsilanti, MI: High Scope Press.

<sup>3</sup> Freiberg, J. (2009) *Environmental Factors Affecting Language from Birth to Five*, Commissioned by National Academies of Science.

<sup>4</sup> Beatty, Alix (2005). *Mathematical and Scientific Development in Early Childhood: A Workshop Summary*, National Academies of Science.

portunities for the type of individual attention that has been shown to be so important to their development.

Through the *Grow Up Great* program, over 51,000 employees are eligible for 40 hours of paid time off each year. The volunteerism program is focused so that we reach the children that will benefit most from PNC's support. PNC employees volunteer at early education centers that serve low- and moderate-income children.

We have worked very closely with our partners at Head Start and other non-profit early education centers to create a broad range of volunteer opportunities, from traditional in-class volunteering to manual labor such as painting classrooms and planting gardens. We also offer skills-based volunteerism, so that employees are able to put their special skills to use to help provide the services that early education program administrators need. For example, through a request from a Head Start partner we have had human resource employees provide customer service training to Head Start office staff so that they could better serve the parents of the children in the program. Our employees are experts in providing financial education and these services have been very well received by Head Start programs. Centers have often asked that we first deliver the classes to the staff and then offer the classes to the parents.

Because clearances are required to be able to work with young children, PNC has worked with our Employee Assistance Program provider to develop an internal Web site that houses all of the information employees need to go through the process. The clearance process varies by State, so as the company has grown, we have continually updated and enhanced our internal system to better assist employees. We reimburse employees for the costs associated with the clearance process including criminal background checks and tuberculosis testing. PNC also provides on-site tuberculosis testing to make the process easier for employees.

Since the program's inception, the internal volunteerism system has provided more than 8,000 volunteer opportunities for PNC employees at nearly 3,000 early education centers and community education partners across PNC's service area. Our partners at The Fred Rogers Company created an on-line training program for volunteers that provides information about best practices for volunteering with young children. To date, more than 20,000 employees have volunteered for the *Grow Up Great* program and have logged more than 210,000 hours. Through the volunteerism program, we have also organized collection drives based on the various needs of our early education partners. Over 270,000 items, such as science and arts supplies, hats and mittens, and children's books have been collected for early childhood centers through donation drives.

#### ADVOCACY

Grow Up Great is a \$100 million program, and a significant initiative for PNC. However, we understand that given the importance of increasing access to quality early education for all children and the need in PNC's service area, our corporate voice is important to encourage others to support this cause.

Before the program was announced, we convened an Advisory Council of 12 nationally renowned experts on various aspects of early childhood education. This interdisciplinary body has been made up of researchers, not-for-profit leaders, medical professionals and government officials who continue to help us shape the program's strategy, including our advocacy efforts. In addition to this group, through our work in Grow Up Great, we have created a broad coalition of organizations that are now as passionate as we are about preparing our youngest citizens for school and life.

PNC's chairman and chief executive officer, James E. Rohr, has been actively involved in early childhood advocacy efforts even before the program's inception. Mr. Rohr serves as the honorary chair of the Pennsylvania Early Learning Investment Commission. Comprised of business leaders from across the State, the commission seeks support for public investment in early learning. A key success of this organization's work was Pennsylvania's provision of \$75 million to "Pre-K Counts," which resulted in an additional 12,000 children receiving access to preschool education. Following Mr. Rohr's example, executives across PNC's service area have become active advocates and supporters of increased investment in early childhood education. In Greater Maryland, for instance, PNC's Regional President, Lou Cestello, serves as the chairman of Ready at Five, a statewide, public/private partnership that is committed to ensuring that all of Maryland's children enter school ready to succeed.

#### AWARENESS

From the beginning of the program, our Advisory Council told us that they believe one of the biggest differences PNC can make is to raise awareness of the importance

of early childhood education and to shine a spotlight on the issue. As a corporation, they felt we had the power to open doors that traditional early education advocates have been unable to open. We have taken this advice very seriously and have created a multi-media campaign that has generated over 2.5 billion impressions over the last 8 years.

During the first stage of the program, the awareness campaign highlighted what it means to be ready for school and connected PNC to the issue of school readiness. As the program has evolved, our messaging has as well. Today's awareness campaign focuses on providing tips and resources to parents and caregivers on how to turn everyday moments into learning opportunities.

Our partners at Sesame Workshop and The Fred Rogers Company have developed high quality materials for parents and caregivers to help prepare their children for school. We highlight the availability of these materials through various media outlets and distribute the resources through our network of 2,600 PNC Bank branches. Sesame Workshop has created a series of four bilingual (English/Spanish) school readiness kits that include an original Sesame Street® DVD, a children's activity book and a parent and caregiver guide. To date we have distributed more than 2 million school readiness kits at no cost. The most recent addition to the series is the, "For Me, for You, for Later: First Steps to Spending, Sharing, and Saving"™. The materials follow Elmo, Cookie Monster and their Sesame Street® Friends as Elmo learns the financial basics of spending, sharing, and saving. One million copies of the kit will be distributed for free. In addition, the materials are available online at [pncgrowupgreat.com](http://pncgrowupgreat.com) and [sesamestreet.org/save](http://sesamestreet.org/save). An Educator's Guide has also been created so that teachers can easily use these materials in the classroom.

As with all of the large initiatives that are part of Grow Up Great, independent evaluations have been completed to judge the effectiveness of the school readiness kits. A recent evaluation of the third kit created by Sesame Workshop, "Happy, Healthy, Ready for School: Math Is Everywhere," which focuses on how to use everyday moments to introduce basic math concepts, showed the following results:

- 97 percent of parents indicated that the program increased the amount of time their child spent in math-related activities;
- Over 90 percent of parents indicated some or a lot of change in children's interest in counting, sorting and matching;
- Over half of the teachers indicated that they will be teaching math differently; and
- Teachers and their students became more comfortable with math and reported increases in the use of math in everyday moments.

#### GRANTS

Since 2005, \$40 million has been distributed through the grants component of Grow Up Great to support early education initiatives that reach low- and moderate-income children (from birth to age 5), their teachers and families. Programming through these grants provides quality outcomes that are considered "best practices" and transferrable to other early childhood education programs. During the first 3 years of Grow Up Great, PNC supported 17 demonstration projects at Head Start centers. We asked that centers develop a program that would focus on any one of the eight Head Start domains to enhance the curriculum they were already using to bring that subject area alive in the classroom. Through the original projects, we funded a broad range of programs, and our hope was that we would seed some best practices that could then be taken to scale across PNC's service areas.

We were pleased that after the initial 3 years, exciting progress was seen through a number of projects, mainly in the subject areas of science, math and the arts. One project that was particularly successful was through the Council of Three Rivers American Indian Center Head Start program in Pittsburgh, PA. The Head Start program focused on science and partnered with the Carnegie Science Center to provide professional development to teachers, direct services for the children through in-classroom activities and field trips, as well as family engagement opportunities, so that parents could continue their children's science learning at home, through simple, everyday activities. Over the 3 years of the program, we saw the Head Start classrooms explode with science. Planets and stars hung from the ceiling, and tadpoles were growing while children and teachers charted their growth and development. Through self-evaluations, the Head Start program reported an increase in teachers' confidence teaching science as well as an increase in children's and parents' interest in the subject. We felt that this was an important model for a program that could be further refined and brought to a larger audience.

After meeting with science education centers across PNC's footprint and through an RFP process, we launched *Grow Up Great with Science* in April 2009. Through

this \$6 million, 3-year initiative, PNC continues to fund 14 regional science centers in seven States and the District of Columbia. The science centers have partnered with early education programs to help foster a foundation in science for pre-K children. The projects focus on enhancing inquiry-based science learning, the basis for all critical thinking, in an intentional way, through activities which encourage gathering data, forming a hypothesis, testing a hypothesis and evaluating results. When you think about it, these are all things that children do naturally through their innate sense of curiosity; through *Grow Up Great with Science*, we help that natural sense of curiosity flourish.

Through researching the accepted principles of what constitutes quality early childhood education and through our own experience with the initial grant projects, we have found that the most effective grant programs are comprehensive in nature and serve not only the children, but their teachers and families. The *Grow Up Great with Science* program and other major grant initiatives include the following components:

- Professional development for teachers;
- Direct services for children;
- Family engagement opportunities;
- Volunteer opportunities for PNC employees; and a
- Continuous independent evaluation of the program.

The *Grow Up Great with Science* projects are now completing the second year and second-year evaluation results will soon be available. At the beginning of the program, teachers in the project classrooms reported feeling uncomfortable teaching basic science concepts and were not satisfied with the science tools and resources that were available to them. First-year evaluation results showed that the quality of science materials and resources in the classrooms improved. Teachers reported feeling more comfortable teaching science and also felt comfortable accessing free and low-cost science materials in their community. A review of lesson plans and in-class observations showed that overall, the quality of science teaching significantly improved. Finally, parents reported that they were engaging in more science activities at home with their children.

I have spoken in detail about the science initiative to give you a sense of the breadth of our large grant initiatives. We have a similar program in Cleveland, OH which focuses on enhancing arts education for pre-K children. Through that project, we have partnered with four iconic arts organizations: Playhouse Square, the Cleveland Orchestra, The Rock and Roll Hall of Fame, and the Cleveland Museum of Art. The grant includes components similar to the science initiative. Watching these four organizations collaborate to enhance arts education for at-risk pre-K children has truly been amazing. One of the aspects of the *Grow Up Great* program that we are most proud is the broad network of cultural organizations and other non-profits we are able to support to bring a broad range of experiences to at-risk children. Through our grant projects, we have reached over 1 million children and provided professional development to more than 64,000 teachers. We know that without the hard work of our partner organizations these children would not have the opportunity to have these experiences that will better prepare them for success in school and life.

#### CONCLUSION

The *Grow Up Great* journey has been extraordinary for PNC. It has helped to shape our corporate culture and provided a platform to engage PNC leadership and employees locally. Our partners in science, math and the arts have responded enthusiastically, our education partners are eager to put their new tools to work in the classroom. Most of all, over 1 million disadvantaged children are learning more, being exposed to exciting, new things like ballet, opera, art, performing arts, science. Their parents and siblings are more passionate about education and creative interaction. We are trying hard to close the vocabulary gap so that all children have the opportunity to reach their full potential. The investment that we are making today will come back to our company and to our communities in many significant ways. We are confident that these children have the potential to be productive citizens who will be able to work for us and bank with us. They will not only grow up, but grow up great.

**CHARLIE MILLS, III, FOUNDER AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER, SALERA CAPITAL MANAGEMENT, POTOMAC FALLS, VA**

Mr. MILLS. Chairman Mikulski, Ranking Member Burr, members of the committee, I am honored and humbled to testify before you today. I am honored because who would have believed a kid from my neighborhood, located in a lower income area of Joliet, IL, affectionately known as The Hill, and from my childhood experiences, would ever have the opportunity to come before our country's most senior legislators, in these hallowed halls and describe the impact that the Head Start program has had in my life.

In order to describe to you my Head Start story and the benefits I have gained, I will start by first providing you a glimpse into my personal and professional achievements, then share with you how Head Start helped me achieve those successes.

I am a graduate of the U.S. Naval Academy with a degree in mathematics and I joined the Marine Corp after graduation. The highlights of my career included becoming a Cobra gun ship helicopter pilot, being one of the first Americans on the ground during the First Gulf War conflict and being selected to fly Marine One Helicopter Squadron for Presidents George H.W. Bush and William Clinton.

After nearly 10 years of active duty I made a decision to broaden my professional horizon and became a bond trader for Bear Stearns in New York City. My family and I subsequently moved to northern Virginia which is why I became an entrepreneur. I have since started two successful small businesses, both working with government contractors within the financial services sector. I also sit on a number of boards including the governing board of George Mason University and a community bank. In addition, I am a subject matter expert on small businesses and an international speaker on this topic for the U.S. State Department.

While I consider these significant milestones, my most important accomplishment is being dad to my three children and my marriage to my wife of 22 years. Having never had a father nor what is considered a traditional family experience, I consider my role as a dad and husband as paramount and the ultimate way to give back to society.

To put these accomplishments in context and how Head Start fits, I want to briefly tell you about my mother. She was instrumental in providing my love, support and encouragement. Her foresight resulted in my Head Start experience. This may sound obvious, but it was not always easy for her and my family because by the time my mother was 22 years old she had six children, all under the age of eight, she was a high school dropout and she was a single mom. These circumstances were not something my mother sought, she was raised by a single, alcoholic mother who had a boyfriend that molested my mother when she was a child. Since her mother looked the other way, my mother saw the only way out of this dreadful situation was to marry my father at the ripe age of 15.

My father, however, did not provide her the protection she was looking for, as he physically abused her and us, the children. In an effort to protect us, when I was 3 months old, she made the courageous decision to leave my father. Determined not to be another

welfare mother and to ensure that her children had the opportunity to breakout of the cycle of poverty, my mother worked two full-time, menial jobs all the while attempting to maintain a stable home for her children.

Despite not having a high school diploma, my mother recognized that education is a great equalizer, and that is why as soon as Head Start came into existence in 1965, she immediately put her two youngest children, that were eligible, into the program. My mother was extremely grateful for Head Start as it provided me and my sister with our first introduction to reading, writing and arithmetic.

I attended my first year in Head Start in St. Louis, MO and my second year in Shreveport, LA. It is difficult to remember much about my Head Start experience, however my most vivid memory of Head Start includes the lunches and singing time.

[Laughter.]

I always looked forward to delicious brown bag lunches that Head Start provided. Little did I know that those yummy lunches were critical to providing me with the sustenance I needed to learn as well as a foundation to eat healthy, something I have tried to maintain throughout my life.

I also recall the educational songs that we learned during singing time. According to my mother, it was during my time in Head Start that I became an avid reader and gained a penchant for numbers and arithmetic, traits that are still with me today.

I am certain that my academic foundation I received from Head Start is a key component to my success as a student. My sister, having benefited from Head Start's Early Childhood Education Program also excelled in school.

So, what really is the impact of Head Start? I have told you about my mother, her six children and the fact that only the two youngest had exposure to Head Start. The four oldest, who did not get to experience Head Start, unfortunately traveled tough and sometimes tragic paths. Both my oldest brother and oldest sister led lives of drug addiction and crime. Both of them passed away prior to their 35th birthdays and within 4 months of each other. Of my two middle siblings, one leads a life of drug abuse and has depended on government support for the last 25 years. The other has had some success but struggles to maintain a consistent job.

However, my sister that attended Head Start has been a court reporter for the past 25 years and is one of the most successful and foremost court reporters in Houston, TX.

So, if you were to use my family as a control group, so to speak, you can see how these six children who were raised by the same mother and with the same family values did not end up in the same place. What was the only discriminating factor? I would contend that Head Start was a positive variable. No doubt Head Start is important to the country to be able to support underprivileged families by providing much-needed early childhood development education, but the value of Head Start goes beyond the obvious and immediate social and educational impact.

Head Start also has a long-term economic impact. As a successful entrepreneur who has hired employees, as well as sustained other small businesses, as board member on public and private organiza-

tions and as a parent, volunteers for my children's schools and sports activities, I have been able to contribute to the social and economic strength of my country and community. There is no doubt that the amount that was invested in my Head Start experience has been returned by a significant multiplier, to use an economic development term.

I am certain that return is similar for my sister, through her contribution to our country's judicial system and her private investments.

So in our class of approximately 20 children, at least two graduates who are contributing members of society are not dependent on the system and are a good measure of Head Start's impact. In addition, over the last 8 years I have met great people, to include authors, mayors, entrepreneurs, college professors and more, all former Head Start students, all contributing to keep our country competitive and innovative. This return on investment continues to provide dividends as each Head Start alumni molds the next generation.

In conclusion, I for one know that I will instill in my children, and God willing my grandchildren and my great grandchildren, the same values I gained through Head Start, to give back as they have been given. I attribute much of who I am today to the Head Start program.

Thank you for allowing me to be here today to tell you my personal Head Start story.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Mills follows:]

#### PREPARED STATEMENT OF CHARLIE MILLS, III

##### SUMMARY

Having had the opportunity to serve my country as a military officer, a State agency head, and now speaker for the U.S. State Department, I believe my return on the Head Start investment of 44 years ago is clear. Having spent the last 17 years working within the finance and economic development arena, I personally value the economic impact Head Start has provided, which has included more than the clear social and early educational impact the program provides. My experiences as a military member, a successful entrepreneur, who has hired employees, a board member on public and private organizations, and as a parent volunteer show that I've been able to contribute to the social and economic strength of my country and community. There is no doubt that the amount that was invested in my Head Start experience has been returned by a significant multiplier. I'd bet that return on investment is similar for my sister, a former head start student, through her work as a court reporter in our country's judicial system and through her private investments.

So what really is the impact of Head Start? Allow us to take a closer look. Within my family, which includes a single mom and my five siblings, only the two youngest children, me and my sister, attended Head Start. The four oldest, who did not have the Head Start experience, unfortunately traveled tough and sometimes tragic paths. My brother, the oldest, led a life of crime and spent much of his adult life incarcerated. My oldest sister led a very difficult life, struggling with drug addiction and passed away to a massive stroke prior to her 35th birthday.

Four months after my oldest sister passed away, my oldest brother also passed away prior to his 35th birthday and while in jail. His official cause of death has never been uncovered. Of the two middle siblings, one had led a life of drugs and a dependence on government support for the last 25 years. The other one has had some success however struggles to maintain a consistent job. However, my one sister that attended Head Start is one of the most successful and foremost court reporters in Houston, TX. She has been a court reporter for over 25 years, owns numerous properties, and without a doubt has made the most of her Head Start experience. I have provided you with my experiences above to include how Head Start has opened doors for me even at an early age. If one were to use my family as a

“control group” so to speak, it is clear that of the six children that were ultimately raised by the same mother, and with the same family values, ended up in different places. What was the discriminating factor? I would contend that it was Head Start. Arguably there are other conditions that contributed to my sister’s and my accomplishments, but there is no denying that we were the only ones that attended Head Start. Of course not every Head Start student will have the opportunities that me and my sister have had, however in my class of approximately 20 children, at least two graduates, who are contributing members of society and not dependent on the system, are arguably a measure of Head Start’s success. Who knew I would one day fly for President’s or the fact that my sister would become one of the foremost court reporters. Over the last 8 years, I’ve met authors, mayors, entrepreneurs, Harvard professors, etc., all of whom are former Head Start students and making contribution to our society. The return on investment is clear as my contribution will only be greater as, God willing, my children, grand children, and great grand children will also make contributions to our society. In fact my oldest child, who is in the 8th grade, has his sights on attending Annapolis and becoming a U.S. Marine Corp pilot. I attribute much of who I am to the Head Start program and my life mission to be the father to my children that I never had in part is a result of the life-lessons I learned while in Head Start.

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Chairwoman Mikulski, Ranking Member Burr, I am honored and humbled to testify before you today. I’m honored because who would have believed a kid from my neighborhood, located in the lower income area of Joliet, IL, affectionately known as “The Hill”, and from my childhood experiences would ever have the opportunity to come before our country’s most senior legislators, in these hallowed halls and describe the impact that the Head Start program has had on my life.

I would like to detail my personal Head Start story by first providing you a quick glimpse into where I am today personally and professionally, then give you how my childhood experiences and Head Start helped me achieve these successes. While my detailed bio has already been included for the record, please allow me to share a few highlights. I am a graduate of the U.S. Naval Academy with a degree in mathematics. I joined the U.S. Marine Corps after graduation and became a helicopter pilot. I flew Cobra Helicopters and participated in the build-up to the first Gulf Conflict of 1990. I was subsequently selected to fly for Marine Helicopter Squadron One for Presidents George H.W. Bush and William J. Clinton. After nearly 10 years of active military service, I made the decision to broaden my professional horizon and became a bond trader for Bear Stearns in New York City. After 4 hectic years working in New York City and having had my first child, my wife and I decided to return to northern Virginia in 1999. This is when I started my first company, which provided short-term lending to small government contractors. Early in my company’s growth, I took a hiatus in 2001 and joined VA Governor, Mark Warner’s administration as the director of The Virginia Department of Business Assistance (VDBA), which is Virginia’s equivalent to the Federal Small Business Administration (SBA). After 3 years at the helm of VDBA, I returned to my entrepreneurial roots and have since started a second successful company which provides employee benefits services to government contractors. I am also a subject matter expert on matters involving economic development and small business growth and I am a regular speaker for the U.S. State Department’s international speaker’s program. In addition, I sit on a number of important boards including George Mason University, and a community bank. While these are significant milestones, I consider my most important accomplishment is being Dad to my three children and my marriage to my wife of 22 years. Having never had a father or father figure and not having the conventional nuclear family experience, I consider my role as Dad and husband as paramount and my ultimate contribution to my family and community.

Having shared with you my adult successes, please allow me to now share with you my childhood experiences and the impact of Head Start on my life. First and foremost, it is important to know that my success could not have been possible without the one person that continues today to provide me the love, support and encouragement to be successful; that person is my wonderful mother. Having a mother that is always there for you sounds simple, but it was not always easy for her because by the time my mother was 22 years old, she had six children, all under the age of 8; she did not have a high school diploma; and she was a single mother. One could certainly argue that my mother made bad decisions and was ultimately responsible for her situation, however when taking into context her specific experiences, it is easy to understand how she found herself in this dilemma. But this is not a story of a poor, black, single mother who made bad choices; it is about how

this typical woman with help from Head Start was able to raise two children who are now contributing members of our society.

My mother was an only child, raised by a single alcoholic mother who was never in a stable relationship. In fact, still today my mother does not know who her father was. When she was a child, her mother frequently had different boyfriends visiting their home. When my mother was just a child one of those boyfriends in particular started sexually molesting her. My grandmother did not believe my mother when she was told of the abuse. Having no other recourse, she took matters in her own hands and decided to marry early in order to remove herself from that awful situation. She was just 15 years old when she married my father, a Navy man.

My mother had six children, with me as the youngest, in 7 years, which coincided with my father's return from long Navy deployments. After a few years of marriage, my father left the Navy. When he began living with us on a permanent basis, he began to physically abuse my mother and us, his children. Despite leaving high school to marry and having six children, my mother made another courageous decision to leave my father and begin life as a single mother.

My mother divorced my father when I was but 3 months old and I recall seeing him only twice in my life. I saw him once when I was about 9 years old for approximately 15 minutes and the next time when I was 18 when he had passed away. Other than those two occurrences, he and I never had any contact, nor did he provide any support of any kind to our family. My mother did remarry once, however the marriage lasted for less than 2 year. There were no other male figures in my life, resulting in me having no notion of the concept of having a father. However for me that was OK because I had my mother, and I had my siblings and as far as I was concerned, that was all that I needed.

As you can probably imagine, my mother, a single black woman in the 60s, in the midst of the civil rights movement, with six kids and no support system had a very difficult road to travel. She found herself working two full-time labor intensive jobs all the while attempting to maintain a stable home to raise her children. Because of her jobs, my mother was not always at home; however she taught the six of us to work as a team. She also understood the importance of a good education and instilled in each of us that education is the key to success. Despite her lack of having a high school diploma, she recognized the fact that education is the great equalizer and that is why as soon as Head Start came into existence in 1965, she immediately put her two youngest children that were age appropriate into the program.

My mother was extremely grateful for Head Start as it provided me and my sister with our first introduction to reading, writing, and arithmetic. We moved around when I was a child and my sister and I attended Head Start in St. Louis, MO, my city of birth. The following year we moved to Shreveport, LA, my mother's place of birth, which is where I attended my second year of Head Start. I was extremely young so it is difficult to remember much about my Head Start experiences; however, my most vivid memory of my Head Start experiences includes the lunches and singing time. Even as my mother worked hard to ensure that our family always had food and clothing, despite our low-income status, I always looked forward to the delicious brown bag lunches that Head Start provided. Little did I know then that those "yummy" lunches were critical in providing me with the nutritional foundation to learn and live a healthy life as an adult. In addition, I strongly recollect the "circle times" and the many educational songs that we sang. According to my mother, I also became an avid reader, and gained a penchant for numbers and arithmetic during my Head Start experience, both traits which stick with me today.

I'm certain that the academic foundation that I received from Head Start is a key component to my success as a student. With the foundation I received at Head Start, academics came fairly easy to me throughout my K-12 years. It is interesting to note my sister, who also attended Head Start, also excelled in her studies. While academics for me was not terribly difficult, living in "The Hill" was a little bit tougher. I'll never forget when I was in 5th grade on a gloomy Saturday morning when my mother came into my and my brother's room to tell me that my very best friend and fellow 5th grader, Anthony Townsend, had been shot and killed in his home the night before. For a typical 5th grader, such an experience would be difficult to understand; however in my neighborhood, and typical of many inner city neighborhoods, this was a normal occurrence within which children become immune to such tragedies. In fact and not uncommon with many families within the inner city, with my single mother working two jobs and being gone often, her two oldest children found ways to fill the void by making bad choices with regard to their friends and activities.

Growing up in "The Hill" also meant that I was bounded by the bigotry of low expectations. I recall as a child, my greatest enjoyment was to go to Chicago O'Hare Airport to watch aircrafts take off and land. I was simply amazed by the sheer no-

tion of watching tons of steel and metal and all of those people actually fly through the air like a bird. By the time I was 9-years old, my dream was to become a pilot and learn how to fly. When I was in middle school, I shared my dream to become a pilot with one of my favorite teachers, who had taught virtually every sibling of my family. This particular teacher loved our family and we equally loved her. She loved the fact that all of us took our studies seriously—a trait that my mother instilled and demanded of us. Like so many of our wonderful teachers, she found it her mission to both teach as well as protect the kids that parents had entrusted her with. So when I told her I wanted to be a pilot, she must have thought she was protecting me by telling me that aspiring to become a pilot while admirable, was probably not realistic. This teacher was taking into account where I lived and the fact that at that time in Joliet, IL there was literally a set of train tracks that ran through the city that separated the “haves” from the “have nots”. Assuming that she was protecting me, this teacher that I simply loved, recommended that I set my sights on becoming a manager at the GE plant across the tracks because very few people from my neighborhood worked at the plant, let alone became a manager.

This was a significant blow to my young impressionable mind. However true to form, my mother made sure I did not lose my dreams. She reminded me of my Head Start experience and of the maturity, hard-work, never give up attitude, and leadership examples that my two different Head Start teachers provided me. My mother reminded me that becoming a pilot was not going to be easy but with hard work, a little bit of luck, and having others around you that share in your dream, all things are possible. It was clear at that moment in time, that Head Start had provided me with the foundation to not only succeed in life, but to also give back to my community and country as I was given in Head Start.

So what really is the impact of Head Start? I have told you about my mother and my five siblings and the fact that only the two youngest children had exposure to Head Start. The four oldest who did not get to experience Head Start unfortunately traveled tough and sometimes tragic paths. My brother, the oldest, led a life of crime and spent much of his adult life incarcerated. My oldest sister led a very difficult life, which included struggling with drug addiction. Despite being in the midst of turning her life around, she passed away to a massive stroke prior to her 35th birthday. Four months after my oldest sister passed away, my oldest brother also passed away prior to his 35th birthday and while in jail. His official cause of death has never been uncovered. Of the two middle siblings, one has led a life of drugs and a dependence on government support for last 25 years. The other one has had some success, however struggles to maintain a consistent job. However, my one sister that attended Head Start is one of the most successful and foremost court reporters in Houston, TX. She has been a court reporter for over 25 years, owns numerous properties, and without a doubt has made the most of her Head Start experience.

I have provided you with my experiences to include how Head Start has opened doors for me even at an early age. If one were to use my family as a “control group” so to speak, it is clear that of the six children that were ultimately raised by the same mother, and with the same family values, they ended up in different places. What was the discriminating factor? I would contend that it is Head Start. Arguably there are other conditions that contributed to my sister’s and my accomplishments, but there is no denying that we were the only ones that attended Head Start and have progressed to our current station in life.

As a person that has served my country as a military officer, a State agency head, and now as a speaker for the U.S. State Department, I believe my return on the Head Start investment of 44 years ago is clear. Having spent the last 17 years working within the finance and economic development arena, I personally value the economic impact Head Start has provided, which has included more than the clear social and early educational impact. My experiences as a military member; a successful entrepreneur who has hired employees; a board member on public and private organizations; and as a parent volunteer for my children’s schools and sports activities show that I’ve been able to contribute to the social and economic strength of my country and community. There is no doubt that the amount that was invested in my Head Start experience has been returned by a significant multiplier. I’d bet that return is similar for my sister through her contribution to our country’s judicial system and her private investments. Of course not every Head Start student will have the opportunities that me and my sister have had, however in my class of approximately 20 children, at least two graduates, who are contributing members of society and not dependent on the system, are arguably a measure of Head Start’s success. Over the last 8 years I’ve met authors, mayors, entrepreneurs, Harvard professors, etc., all of whom are former Head Start students—again making great contributions to our society. The return on investment is clear, as my contribution

will only be greater as, God willing, my children, grand children, and great grand children will also make contributions to our society. In fact my oldest child, who is in 8th grade, has his sights on attending Annapolis and becoming a U.S. Marine Corp pilot. I attribute much of who I am to the Head Start program and my life mission to be the father to my children that I never had in part is a result of the life-lessons I learned while in Head Start.

Thank you for allowing me to be here today and allowing me to tell you my personal Head Start story.

Senator MIKULSKI. That was excellent, Mr. Mills.

We are going to practice a little Senate courtesy here, which is kind of new and refreshing.

Senator Burr has made a major contribution to selecting the witnesses for today. He has a meeting, so I am going to turn to Senator Burr, then I am going to go to Senator Franken and Senator Casey. I will be the wrap up.

And I have worked with these guys, I really do believe in ladies first, so, but——

[Laughter.]

Senator MIKULSKI [continuing]. With this panel, I am going to turn to Senator Burr for his questions.

I am going to step out for a minute, I will be right back in. But after he is done, Senator Franken you go and Senator Casey. I will be right back.

Senator BURR. Thank you, Chairman Mikulski. I must say before she leaves the room, in 17 years of service in the U.S. Congress I am not sure that I have had a panel that brought more value to a topic than the panel that we have before us. I think the chairman deserves a tremendous amount of credit for that.

I am going to only ask one question and be brief. Linda, you and I have talked a lot of times about childhood challenges. One complaint that I know some will raise as it relates to my criminal background check legislation is, well it is going to cost a lot of money. You have, not just opinions, you have experience in this. Can you share with me and my colleagues whether that is a legitimate concern and if not, why?

Ms. SMITH. Let me start by saying that one of the things that we think is essential, when it comes to background checks, is the fingerprint. I always give myself as the best example. With a name like Linda Smith, try and find me in a name check. Especially living in northern Virginia, Maryland and DC.

So the cost is going to be in the FBI check, which is generally somewhere between \$16 and \$24. That being said, States do add on other fees to this, and those are discretionary at the State level.

I would tell you that my opinion and the opinion of the people that work with me is that if at the end of the day the choice is between making sure a child is safe, and that means a background check, go back to those 90 places where there are sex offenders living in homes in Illinois, I will always opt on the side of the child. If that means that the adults need to pay \$24 to get a background check, and take personal responsibility for that, then I am fine with that.

I do think it is a State decision and the States can use some of their funding to pay those, if they want to. But I think the critical piece is that they get done and that we just take this on and get it over with.

Senator BURR. I appreciate, you have now brought a value to, I think myself and my colleagues. And as one individual I think it is a minimal amount of cost to—or a maximum amount of assurance of security.

I want to reiterate what I said earlier to each and every one of you. I apologize that I can't stay here to engage you on some areas that you have stimulated with me, but you have all brought important facts and witness to this topic and we are grateful for that. Thank you very much.

Who was next? Senator Franken?

Senator FRANKEN. Yes, thank you.

Senator BURR. You're just visiting, but I will yield the floor to you.

[Laughter.]

Senator FRANKEN. Yes. I still am resenting that remark from earlier.

Mr. Rolnick, thank you for your years studying this. I want to go back to this because you talked about economic development and we talk about return on investment, and we are talking about right now making budget decisions. Isn't this something we need to be investing in? Can you just speak to the 10 years or however many years you have been doing research on this.

Mr. ROLNICK. Sure. Actually I have been doing research for about 25 years on economic development, State and local in particular. I have been arguing, for a number of years, that the way we conventionally do economic development in this country is seriously flawed. We allow cities and States to try to lure each other's jobs, companies from one State to another, with all kinds of subsidies. And the professional sports teams are the best at doing this, they play the game very well. We have argued that it is a zero sum game, that these—all you are doing with these subsidies, and we are talking billions of dollars over the years, you are moving jobs around, you are not creating one new job.

Nevertheless, it is very difficult for a State or a county or a city to opt out of that bidding war. For example, let me make it very concrete. What is going on in Minnesota, it is regularly acknowledged by the political system, by the populous, by educators that the best investment we could have is making sure all of our at-risk kids start school healthy and ready to learn. There is no debate on that. If you were to survey the public you would get over 70 percent agreement we should be funding this.

And yet, at the same time we have a \$5 billion deficit in our State, they are going to find a way to fund a \$1 billion stadium for the Minnesota Vikings, \$1 billion. And why is that? Because the Vikings are threatening that if they don't get their stadium, they are going to go to another State.

So when we allow, when Congress allows this bidding war, and we have argued it is zero sum, it violates the commerce clause, it interferes with interstate commerce, but Congress is allowing this, you are putting State and local politicians in a very tough position.

And as a result, you ask our priorities, for \$1 billion we could provide an endowed fund so in Hennepin and Ramsey, and this is the Twin Cities, every poverty child could have a scholarship and a mentor starting prenatal, in perpetuity because we could set that

up as an endowed fund. And yet, if I was a betting man, the Vikings will get their \$1 billion and we will not get a dime.

So it isn't that the information isn't there, but we have some problems, I think serious flaws, in the way we, as a country invest money to create jobs. This is the best way to create jobs, by far the best stimulus money.

I am from Detroit, my hometown. I don't care how much money the government gives to General Motors, 75 percent—it is estimated that 75 percent of the children in the Detroit Public School System do not graduate high school. That economy will remain a third world economy now and for the next 20, 30 years if that continues, no matter how much money you give to General Motors. You have to educate your kids. That is the proven way to create sustainable economic growth.

I think that is fairly well known and yet our policies are very skewed.

Detroit has two brand new stadiums, they have three casinos, that is not going to change that economy.

Senator FRANKEN. Not even the casinos?

Mr. ROLNICK. Not even the casinos.

[Laughter.]

I would bet on that.

Senator FRANKEN. We are in a global competition, right? And OECD countries now are moving ahead of us in all of these measures, percentage of students graduating from college, they are ahead of us in reading, I mean we are falling and falling and falling. If we are going to compete in a global economy, it just seems to me that this is where we need to invest our money.

A lot of you are talking about the State to State, I mean Vikings are—that talks about this identity of the State and there it is competing against Los Angeles or wherever it is competing, but a lot of this is just moving a business—one State competing against another by giving a tax break, right—

Mr. ROLNICK. Correct.

Senator FRANKEN [continuing]. To a business. And it doesn't help the United States, it helps a State and to the detriment of another State. So that is a zero sum game, right?

Mr. ROLNICK. Correct.

Senator FRANKEN. By definition. I am not an economist, but you are and that is the zero sum game.

Mr. ROLNICK. That is the zero sum.

Senator FRANKEN. But, early childhood is win/win. Right?

Mr. ROLNICK. Absolutely.

Senator FRANKEN. OK, well I prefer win/win to zero sum. There. Thank you, Madam Chair.

Senator SANDERS. Thank you, Madam Chair. I want to thank all of the panelists. I apologize to Mr. Mills, I had to run out for a second. But every one of the testimony has been really great and I appreciate that.

I want to get to Miss Smith and talk a little bit about the DOD early childhood program. We had a hearing on this in Vermont. We invited somebody from the DOD and I was very impressed. My recollection, Miss Smith, is that Department of Defense instituted their program because previous to that they had some real prob-

lems in terms of wanting to have a strong military but, a lot of people in the military were worried about what was happening to their kids.

Could you talk a little bit about the history of why the DOD did what it did? And give us some specifics. If I am an average member of the military, or low-ranking officer, what benefits do I get? What does it do for me, really?

Ms. SMITH. Absolutely. In fact I lived through many of those years. I will tell you that I started my career out running a childcare center for the military out in Phoenix, AZ. I would say one of the things that started early on—and this was in the late 1970s, early 1980s—was a lot of women going into the military as soon as the draft went away and the military really had to get serious about recruitment.

What I saw happen in the years that I ran that program was going from about 10 children out of 150 being full-time to all of them being full-time within 3 years, during the time that the military transitioned to the all volunteer force. So that was one of the things.

So the advent of women in the workforce. And you heard Dr. Lombardi say earlier that we have not, in other areas of this country, taken that seriously but the military had to. I would say that we actually had people showing up on the flight line for recalls, with their kids in the car. So the commander came to me and he said, “You are going to be the second person called in a recall from now on, because we don’t want little kids, at 4 a.m. in the back seat of a car here.” So that is how important they—or the value they placed on childcare.

That being said, we sort of bumped along and did make some significant changes to the military. I always try to give credit to Federal programs, where they are due. One of the big Federal programs that mattered to the military was The Child and Adult Care Food program, because we used it as a vehicle to require inspections of the military centers.

Then the next thing that happened is we had widespread child sexual abuse go on in the 1980s. Several big, highly visible cases at the Presidio in California, West Point and Scott Air Force Base in Illinois. So that got Congress involved and Congress said, “We need to clean this up.” And that was essentially the next piece.

Senator SANDERS. Yes, I wish I could hear from you for a longer period of time, but tell me now, I am an average member and I have one person here who is in the military, one person who is not in the military, what do I get? What does it mean if I have just had a baby, maybe 6 months old, a year old, what happens to me? What are you offering me in the military?

Ms. SMITH. Actually the military takes children into the childcare program as young as 6 weeks, because mothers go back to work then.

Senator SANDERS. And how much is it going to cost me?

Ms. SMITH. It depends on your rank. All military families pay for childcare, they pay it based on total family income. I believe the lowest fee right now is \$44 a week and it goes up to over \$100, depending on the rank and the total family—

Senator SANDERS. Which is pretty good?

Ms. SMITH. Which is very good. Very.

Senator SANDERS. Compared to the—

Ms. SMITH. Compared—

Senator SANDERS [continuing]. And now, is it available to me 5 days a week, 7 days a week?

Ms. SMITH. The centers generally operate during the normal business day, 6 a.m. to 6 p.m., 6 a.m. to 7 p.m. maybe. The military tends to, at least—and I think this is still the case over there—rely on in-home family childcare for the irregular duty care and for support of those families.

Senator SANDERS. Madam Chair, I would just point out, here is an example where our military, a sore, serious problem, they responded intelligently and by and large what they did has worked. There is something that we can learn from their example. The Federal Government has done the right thing.

I want somebody, Mr. Rolnick or anybody else, to answer this question. I worry about, and Miss Smith made a point a little bit in her earlier testimony, about the training and wages that we are paying childcare workers. We heard testimony that the first 3 years are perhaps the most important years of a child's life and in many instances the people who are dealing with those kids don't have the training, don't have the background. And turnover is very high because the wages and benefits they get are very low.

Who wants to talk about it? Mr. Rolnick, do you want to say a word about that?

Mr. ROLNICK. I will give you some of the data from our pilot in St. Paul, because we are demanding high quality from these programs and they could be Montessori, they can be faith-based, they can be St. Paul Public Schools. We pay anywhere from \$10,000 to \$13,000 a year for our scholarships and so we are demanding quality, we are demanding that our kids actually start school healthy and ready to learn.

What has happened is the wages have gone up because they have gone out and started to recruit high quality teachers. They realize, in order to get the results—which is all these kids start healthy and ready to learn—they have got to improve their staff. So one way to get the quality up—not the only way—but one way, and it is happening—is to incent the system by empowering the parents.

Senator SANDERS. Is there any reason, in anybody on the panel's judgment—why a childcare worker should be paid substantially less than a first grade teacher or a high school teacher? Can somebody comment on that? Ms. Blum?

Ms. BLUM. No. We really have been appalled at some of that and what we have found is when we surveyed the teachers, the preschool teachers and ask them questions like, do you think it is important to teach science and math to preschoolers and have arts in your curriculum, they all say yes. When we ask them if they actually do teach it they say they don't have the training to teach it.

In every one of our large grants there is a teacher training component. When we survey the teachers a year later or 2 years later, what we find is they say nobody has ever given us this support before. Now we know, we feel so much more comfortable about taking the curriculum that we have and really making it come alive.

Senator SANDERS. Miss Smith threw a figure out a little while earlier where she thought that the average, as I understand it, childcare worker was making about \$10 an hour?

Ms. SMITH. That's correct.

Senator SANDERS. I mean it is a little bit over \$20,000 a year. And given the enormous responsibility we are entrusting with these people, that seems to me to be totally absurd.

Miss Smith, did you want to maybe wrap up?

Ms. SMITH. Yes, I do think there is one problem and that is that, as I kept saying in my testimony, I don't think we have really defined the field very well and what is a teacher is yet to be defined. So I think, when you say a teacher compared to a high school teacher, an elementary teacher, many of the people coming into the field come in, as I said, with no training, no background and some without a high school education.

Senator SANDERS. Babysitters, I suspect.

Ms. SMITH. That is right. So I think what we have to do is figure out how to define the field and then what are the requirements for the various levels. I would point out that one of the features of the military program that has been successful is that they use a combination of training and education to make it work. It is not an either/or. And as I said, we have to stop looking at things as either/or, black and white, but looking at what is the combination we need.

Senator SANDERS. Thank you very much, Madam Chair.

Senator MIKULSKI. Senator Sanders, before you go, one of the points that I would want to make, is that there is limited career path for these workers as compared to say coming to work in the healthcare field. If you come as a certified nursing assistant in either a nursing home or a hospital, you can see the career path. You might decide, gee I would love to be an x ray tech and begin a community college program. You see a career path.

If you are a shining star on the floor, your employer is going to invest in you and show you where else you could go for your next certification up, either a nursing degree, a tech degree, the person who takes your blood, medical records. And they also see a—it is an institutional one.

When they come in, that is it. Am I correct?

Ms. SMITH. That is correct. And I think there are some lessons to be learned here from other programs, including military and Head Start, in just what you say. Because in Head Start, if you think back over the history of it, we started with bringing people into Head Start with little or no training and we started moving them toward a CDA and then an AA and then a BA. The military has done much the same, started with basic training, moving toward a CDA credential and higher levels of education.

What we have to do is learn the lessons from those two programs, and that is part of why I say define the field, because in childcare there is no reason why we can't start moving people from basic training to higher levels of training and education in a sequential way, just as we have in Head Start. If we do it right and we get some support from Congress, to do it right.

Senator MIKULSKI. Workforce and workforce development would be a total issue here. But thank you.

I am going to go to my questions. And Senator Franken, I want to thank you also for being one of the spear headers in recommending Mr. Rolnick. The participants have been excellent.

I am going to go right to Mr. Mills and Mr. Hillian. One of the things often that education is being accused of is feminizing education, all school programs are made for girls, boys are inhibited. There is a lot being written and talked about it. One of the things we know, there is a big gap, particularly with African-American males. Now, I am wondering in both of your programs, Mr. Hillian, because you are the family coordinator, and Mr. Mills, you were the family, what do you think was the most important thing that got you engaged and kept you engaged and helped your mother? Do you believe it was the education? Do you think it was the family coordinator?

I am going to turn to Mr. Hillian. Mr. Hillian, why is the family coordinator job important and what impact does that have on boys?

Mr. HILLIAN. It is interesting. At my school—I am the only male in the Judy Center, I mean and I am a black male, I am the only one in the Judy Center. And at my school it is important because we have a lot of young boys who need a role model, so I try to be their friend, I try to make them happy. So it is not enough for me. It is frustrating because I have four kindergarten classes, two pre-K classes, two to three classes and an umbrella. So I have 175 kids.

In the morning I am watching the kids when they come there, getting out of their cars and vehicles, being let out of school, try and get a feel for how they are feeling, try to pump them up, making them feel good about school and things like that. But it is hard for me to get in all the classes, because that is what I try to do. My day starts outside.

Senator MIKULSKI. Now I understand how your day starts, tell me what you think needs to be done with the family coordinator. How important do you think that is in terms of reaching boys, reaching the mothers? I mean I appreciate the description of your day, and the fact that in most of the Judy Centers, which are outstanding, outstanding programs—and really, we want to compliment our colleague, Congressman Hoyer in really getting it started and our governors, Republican and Democrat funding it. But you are the gateway, aren't you?

Mr. HILLIAN. Yes.

Senator MIKULSKI. So how do you think that plays out? You said you are going to be friendly and I understand that. Is that what the family coordinator does?

Mr. HILLIAN. No. The most important thing I do is build relationships with the families, to the kids, to the school, to the principal, to everybody. Most of my referrals come from other referrals.

Senator MIKULSKI. What does that mean?

Mr. HILLIAN. I have been there so long, I have been at my school 8 years. I may go to work and a teacher will tell me that this kid needs a coat or something like that, so I will make sure he gets his coat, or this kid doesn't have his ADHD medicine, so I talk to his mom. I just do whatever it takes to make it happen.

But I think the families coordinator is the link from the school to the community to the families. It is about building relationships and making it all happen together. I am dealing with the guidance

counselors, the principal, the families, the kids, the teachers. It is like one big snowball.

Senator MIKULSKI. I think that is very interesting. For the boys it must be impactful to have a male family coordinator—because let's be candid about the workforce. Isn't it primarily female?

Mr. HILLIAN. Yes.

Senator MIKULSKI. I mean nothing wrong with that.

But, Mr. Mills?

Mr. MILLS. Yes, I would agree with you. In my mother's case Head Start had just started. I don't know if it was such a thing as a family coordinator at that time. However, my mother was a fantastic student and she—and while she didn't graduate from high school she knew the importance of education and she sought that. But in my experience today, as I look at, in fact the middle school that my children go to is a school that has kids that come from all different communities and the school struggles to meet their SOLs primarily because of the English As, A Second Language population. Those kids and those families who are really struggling to make ends meet absolutely need someone to frankly go and help train those parents on not only the importance of education, but on some of the programs that exist, such as Head Start, to have allowed those kids to get a better start at life.

Senator MIKULSKI. When Head Start began every Head Start Program had to have a family coordinator and that would have been the first person your mother talked to. It might have been the first person in her life she had been able to talk to, because having been a social worker in the Welfare Department, as it was called, carrying the little black book checking up on people, that wasn't a warm and fuzzy relationship, it was often a school marmish relationship to move people off of welfare and it was an eligibility audit.

But the Head Start coordinator was a different kind of audit. It wasn't eligibility for a government subsidy program, it was an audit about where you are in your life and how we could help you get on with your life. That was the first person your mom spoke to. I don't know if you're aware of this. Is your mom still with you?

Mr. MILLS. Yes, she is and she is looking forward to my call after this.

[Laughter.]

I will make sure that—

Senator MIKULSKI. We should have had her come too.

Mr. MILLS. I would have loved—she doesn't fly anymore, she is in Houston, TX. I would have loved to have had her here. But, I am sure you are correct and I will go back and ask her who that person was that was probably instrumental allowing me and my sister to get into Head Start.

Senator MIKULSKI. But when she came, she got you into this program, right?

Mr. MILLS. Yes. Yes, ma'am.

Senator MIKULSKI. Then she insisted you stay in the program?

Mr. MILLS. Absolutely.

Senator MIKULSKI. And through your program, you then found a home in Head Start.

Mr. MILLS. No question.

Senator MIKULSKI. I don't want to overstate it.

Mr. MILLS. No, no it—

Senator MIKULSKI. As a young boy with a mother who was under so much stress, was Head Start like your home with the music and the games and the other kids, but that it also had activities that engaged, obviously, that very able and agile mind of yours?

Mr. MILLS. My earliest memories are of Head Start. I mean my earliest memories as a human being are of Head Start and it was primarily just because my mom wasn't around and neither were my—I am the youngest—neither were my older siblings. And so the course of my day, from age 3, 4, 5, there was really nothing to do other than to perhaps just sit in front of the TV. So the fact that I had the opportunity to go to Head Start, and it wasn't just an 8- or 9-hour day, I mean she dropped me off early and picked me up very, very late. So my earliest memories of my entire life were of my participation in some Head Start activity, primarily the lunches and singing.

[Laughter.]

Senator MIKULSKI. I kind of like them myself.

[Laughter.]

But really, your story is quite compelling. All the way through the Naval Academy, your service to the Marine Corp, your work with Governor Warner, our colleague and so on and we want to thank you for your service at all levels.

I want to shift gears now and go to Miss Smith. In terms of comparing the military program to the civilian program. Did the military program also serve civilian employees?

Ms. SMITH. Yes, it does, ma'am.

Senator MIKULSKI. So for the Federal Government we have inconsistency, incredible inconsistency. So I know that a lot of people—the Senators, I think thought that the military program was for the military personnel solely, but it is for DOD people. Am I correct?

Ms. SMITH. Yes.

Senator MIKULSKI. Which in many ways they work 24/7, it is a lot of stress, they themselves deploy, there is a variety of things.

Would it be your recommendation that when we reauthorize or look at the reauthorization of the childcare development grant that we just simply replicate the military program?

Ms. SMITH. I think that there are a lot of things. In fact, I was going to say I would pass this out to you and the members here, that we have done the comparison between the two laws and what we continue to say is that very simple changes to this Childcare and Development Block Grant will produce significant results in our civilian care, basic, basic things. As I said in my testimony, like basic training, just requiring basic training. So yes, I do think there are a lot of things that would translate right across.

Senator MIKULSKI. But would you do it wholesale or do you think we have to be more retail?

Ms. SMITH. I don't think that wholesale it would work. I find myself wanting to add one thing because I think there is always a misconception about DOD and I want to dispel one myth. Because if you recall when the Military Childcare Act was passed, and some of you might—

Senator MIKULSKI. I do.

Ms. SMITH [continuing]. In 1989, 1990.

Senator MIKULSKI. I do and it was because quite frankly the women of the House were now on the Armed Services Committee and hearing——

[Laughter.]

Senator MIKULSKI [continuing]. No, seriously. I mean it was people like Pat Schroeder and others.

Ms. SMITH. Yes, that's right.

Senator MIKULSKI. They were on the Armed Services Committee, it was a big breakthrough, women on the Armed Services Committee. Then, here in the Senate, we of course had the support of Senator Kennedy, who was himself on the Armed Services Committee. Our able people like Bob Dole, Sam Nunn and you had Senator Nancy Kassebaum and I. I remember it well and I remember the scandals. As a former child abuse worker it was chilling.

Ms. SMITH. Yes. It was. The point I was going to make is that—and I think people think that what happened in the military was fairly simple because it is DOD and they have all that money. I want to just make the point that the Military Childcare Act passed in the biggest draw down in the history of the Department of Defense since World War II. It was an unfunded mandate to the military, there was not a line item and you can't see childcare as a line item, I don't know, to this day in DOD——

Senator MIKULSKI. You can't see it for war either.

Ms. SMITH [continuing]. Because it is a bottom up build in the budget and the commanders have to budget for childcare based on the policies written by the Defense Department.

So during that year of implementing the Military Childcare Act, commanders had to re-allocate money out of existing funds in order to do what was required in that law. I make that point because I think at some point, as everyone on this committee has said, it becomes a matter of priorities, and it is priorities with the help of Congress, because Congress said, "You need to clean this up, you need to do this right." With that support we were able to work with commanders and reprogram money.

Senator MIKULSKI. OK. I am going to have to jump in. I have a mandatory phone call I have to do at 12:30 p.m..

This panel has been so meaty and I think, as you have heard from my colleagues, so content-rich, as was Dr. Lombardi, we kind of went maybe about an hour over, but I think it was time well spent.

And before we wrap up, Miss Blum, in terms of your four pillars that the PNC program stands on, where do you think you get more bang for the buck in terms of the overall foundation goals?

Ms. BLUM. I would say there are two areas that I would prioritize.

Senator MIKULSKI. Knowing that they all have value.

Ms. BLUM. They all have value. They all have a lot of value.

Senator MIKULSKI. But lessons learned. Yes.

Ms. BLUM. Certainly the grant piece of it, where we get direct services to the children, that is really the most important thing we do. We have to get services to the children, the teachers and their families.

Senator MIKULSKI. Do you have significant demand?

Ms. BLUM. Huge.

Senator MIKULSKI. More than you can fund?

Ms. BLUM. More than we can fund. Yes. Absolutely.

Senator MIKULSKI. We would like to know the bottom line. Here you are, you are a grant-making program, and we would love to know what is the demand that you get and then what is it that you can fund?

Because, it just shows, I think this incredible pent-up demand. But one is the grant program. What is the other?

Ms. BLUM. The other part I would say is something that I actually did not talk about but it is in my written testimony and that is raising awareness. What the experts told us when we started this program was that as a corporation, as a nontraditional voice in this arena, it was very important for us to shine a spotlight on this issue and to really try to raise awareness in the country about the importance of the first 5 years of life.

We buy so much media that we are able to really persuade some of our media partners to look more into this issue. We also purchase a lot of media around this. We have actually created 2½ billion impressions. And that is important because I think what we are helping to do is spark a dialogue among nontraditional thinkers in this arena.

Senator MIKULSKI. I think that is excellent. I would say to my colleagues, because I know PNC is in Maryland, because it bought one of our older banks, Mercantile, but it came to us from Pittsburgh.

Ms. BLUM. Yes.

Senator MIKULSKI. Isn't that your home base?

Ms. BLUM. That is our headquarters. Yes.

Senator MIKULSKI. Is that where you are Miss Blum?

Ms. BLUM. It is. Yes.

Senator MIKULSKI. Yes. And we know that there were some other business representatives, but I would encourage my colleagues that where they have the PNC, to help meet and raise awareness.

I am going to recess the committee now. I think a lot of us would like to take one of those lunch breaks, go sing a song and come back.

[Laughter.]

But you have certainly been the high note of this kickoff of this first hearing. I hope this really sets the framework for the way this subcommittee will focus, very content-rich and I think you can see an atmosphere for civility and bipartisanship.

So we really want to thank you for making a pretty big effort to be here today. You have made a major contribution on how we are going to think about this.

We will be back to you for additional ideas. Each one of you could have been a solo act by themselves, we want to thank you.

We are going to leave the record open for 10 business days, until June 23d, for Senators to put any additional written questions in or opening statements.

This subcommittee is adjourned, subject to the chair, with the chair saying that before the summer ends we want to hold more hearings in this area because we think this could be the germina-

tion of where we could get some good bipartisan support and either pass some comprehensive legislation or even aspects of it, like Senator Burr's and Senator Casey's and so on.

So really, thanks a lot. I am off to sing a song and thank you very much.

[Additional material follows.]

## ADDITIONAL MATERIAL

### PREPARED STATEMENT OF THE AMERICAN PUBLIC HUMAN SERVICES ASSOCIATION (APHSa)

Chairman Mikulski, Ranking Member Burr and Honorable Members of the Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Subcommittee on Children and Families, on behalf of the American Public Human Services Association (APHSa) and the State child care administrators that it represents, we respectfully submit this statement for the record regarding the Senate hearing on “getting the most bang for the buck: quality early education and care.”

APHSa is a nonprofit, bipartisan organization representing State and local human service professionals for more than 80 years. APHSa serves State child care administrators and supports its members in developing, promoting and implementing child care and early learning policies that improve the well-being of children and the quality of child care. We bring the State child care administrators’ perspective on issues facing the Nation’s low-income children and families to the forefront of Congress and the Obama administration.

As you know, child care is an essential resource for America’s families to obtain and secure employment while simultaneously ensuring that today’s children are prepared to be tomorrow’s leaders. The Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG) is the primary funding source that State child care administrators use to provide low-income families with subsidized child care so they can attain or maintain employment, and at the same time, support the investment of quality care and early education for children from birth to age 5.

Quality child care supports children’s learning and development to help them be school ready and prepared for pre-kindergarten and early elementary and secondary education programs and beyond. High-quality means enhancing professional development opportunities and providing specialized training and technical assistance for child care providers and improving the health and safety standards and of early learning settings. It also means expanding the supply of child care programs serving infants and toddlers, to name a few.

According to Federal law, States are required to set aside 4 percent of CCDBG funds to support quality child care initiatives. Currently, the CCDBG has afforded States with flexibility in their use of quality dollars, which has been essential in supporting initiatives that encourage innovation and strengthen early care and education programs. In addition to providing training and other resources for child care workers, States have been able to improve quality rating and improvement systems (QRIS) and establish compensation projects to create advancement in the workforce and improve health and safety standards in child care settings.

The Administration for Children and Families (ACF) fiscal year 2012 Budget reports that in fiscal year 2009, States spent approximately \$988 million, or 11 percent, of CCDBG funds on quality improvement activities, which exceeds the statutory quality spending requirement. This clearly demonstrates the commitment States have to improving quality and investing in our Nation’s children. Twenty-three States have developed statewide QRIS that set standards for excellence for child care providers and help create a pathway for them to continually meet and improve these standards. The fiscal year 2010–11 Child Care and Development Fund State Plans that States submit to ACF biannually indicate that 32 States and United States territories reported that they have implemented professional development plans to provide better training and preparation for early childhood providers and 17 States and territories mentioned being in the process of implementing such efforts. Thirty-eight States have implemented early learning guidelines for young children that are aligned with State K–12 standards and are matched with the education and training of caregivers, preschool teachers and administrators. States truly know the value of improving the quality of child care and have raised the bar despite the limited funds to continue this progress.

High-quality care is beneficial for securing the Nation’s workforce and developing human capital, yet it continues to be in great demand. We know through research that high-quality care can contribute not only to improving the developmental, social, emotional and educational needs of our children, but also to supporting the return on States’ investments, hence giving States and the Federal Government a bigger bang for the buck.

The CCDBG is due for reauthorization. Today, Federal child care funding levels have not aligned with program needs and the expenditures related to child care costs. This has become extremely problematic for States with the rise in inflation since the CCDBG was last reauthorized in 2002. This tough economy and decreases in State and Federal budgets have also exacerbated the situation. We urge Congress

to reauthorize this vital program to improve the quality of child care and provide families with greater access to this type of care. As a result, we expect this will produce a greater return on States' investment by preparing the future leaders of America in their early years of life.

We recommend the following:

- Reauthorize the CCDBG and preserve its funding levels;
- Maintain State flexibility to blend targeted funds to support employment for parents and promote quality care for children;
- Relax Federal requirements for matching funds;
- Support States' efforts to address the workforce development needs of child care workers that promote high-quality care and early education.

We look forward to working with Congress on these recommendations. Thank you for the opportunity to submit our comments and your interest in examining the investment of quality early education and care. If you have any questions, please contact Rashida Brown at (202) 682-0100 x225 or [rashida.brown@aphsa.org](mailto:rashida.brown@aphsa.org).

#### QUESTIONS OF SENATOR MURRAY TO JOAN LOMBARDI

*Question 1.* While we know it's important that early childhood educators understand language and literacy development, isn't it also true that supporting family literacy is also a critical element in preparing children for pre-K and kindergarten? Additionally, can you discuss the importance of providing literacy opportunities for parents of young children to ensure children are ready for early learning opportunities?

*Question 2.* Have you noticed an impact as a result of losing \$900 million in child care funding? If so, please discuss your observations.

*Question 3.* How can Federal investments in early care and education be best leveraged to ensure that more children enter kindergarten ready to learn?

*Question 4.* The early education system extends through third grade. However, little has been said about improvements to kindergarten through third grade. How do we ensure that the gains children make in early childhood programs do not fade or disappear altogether in elementary school?

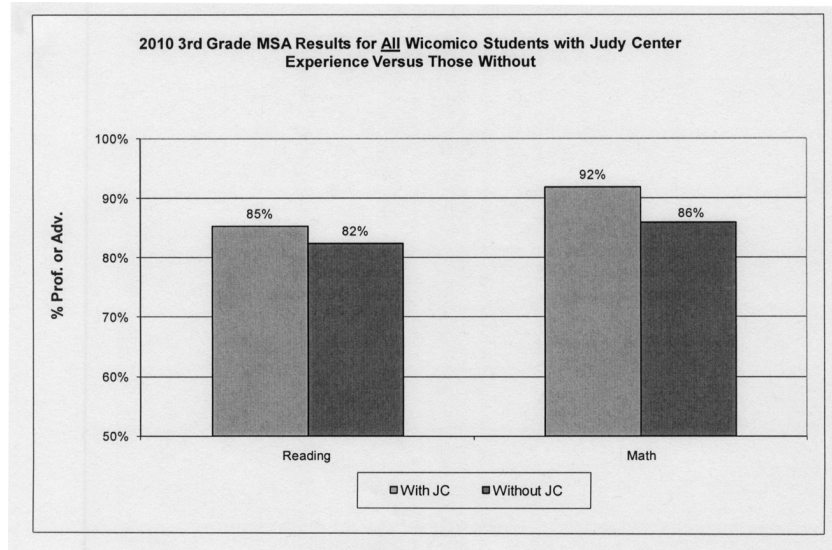
[Responses to the above questions were not available at time of print.]

#### RESPONSE TO QUESTIONS OF SENATOR MURRAY BY DENNIS HILLIAN, LINDA K. SMITH, ARTHUR J. ROLNICK, EVA TANSKY BLUM, AND CHARLIE MILLS, III

DENNIS HILLIAN

*Question.* The early education system extends through third grade. However, little has been said about improvements to kindergarten through third grade. How do we ensure that the gains children make in early childhood programs do not fade or disappear altogether in elementary school?

*Answer.* Judy Centers provide evaluation reports to the MSDE's Division of Early Childhood Development, at the end of each fiscal year. The scope of the annual Judy Center evaluation is limited to the specific conditions of each Judy Center Partnership. The Results Based Accountability (RBA) process is used. The process is designed to provide information about the implementation of the 12 Components at each Judy Center, as well as account for specified outcomes as set out in each Judy Center's annual grant renewal application. Evaluation reports include the results of the Maryland Model for School Readiness (MMSR) Kindergarten Assessment data collected during the fall and spring of each year. Judy Centers may also use local school system benchmark data and other information (e.g., parent surveys, focus groups) as part of their evaluation reports. *The annual evaluations also point out that children with Judy Center experiences sustain their gains through 3d grade as measured by the Maryland School Assessment (MSA). Below is an example of MSA data collected at the Wicomico County Judy Center. The data compares Reading and Math scores for 3d Grade students that had the Judy Center experience, at a minimum, during their kindergarten year with those students in 3d Grade who did not have the benefits of the Judy Center experience.*



LINDA K. SMITH

*Question.* The early education system extends through third grade. However, little has been said about improvements to kindergarten through third grade. How do we ensure that the gains children make in early childhood programs do not fade or disappear altogether in elementary school?

*Answer.* I will answer this from an early childhood perspective.

- First and foremost, we need to do a better job of *transitioning* children from any early childhood setting to schools. We need better cooperation and communication between the public schools and early childhood programs to prepare both children and parents for the changes and to share expectations. In many communities, early childhood programs can only guess at what is expected by the public schools. Although there have been attempts at this, much more needs to be done.

- Second, early childhood settings focus on developmentally appropriate practices which are comprehensive in nature and generally allow children more choices and control over their own learning. When children get to public schools the focus tends to shift radically towards a more academic approach. Today, even kindergartens are more focused on cognitive skills than ever before. It would help to have a more gradual shift from child-centered learning to teacher-directed instruction, especially in the kindergarten and first grade. This would ensure that children are allowed to *adjust not fail*.

- The third thing that schools need to pay attention to are parents. Early childhood programs have constant contact with parents, mostly because the ages of the children demand it, but also because parents are dropping off and picking children up from their actual classrooms. This provides for better communication. When children start to ride school busses, parents and teachers lose daily contact and the child's learning is not reinforced in the same way. All the research shows that parent involvement is an important predictor of school success. Schools need to make this a top priority, especially in the K-3 grades.

ARTHUR J. ROLNICK

*Question 1.* Many States are cutting funding for child care and pre-K programs while districts are moving from full-day to half-day kindergarten. Can you quantify the economic impact of such actions on future State and school budgets?

*Answer 1.* Research shows that children who attend high-quality preschool and child care programs are more likely to arrive at kindergarten prepared to succeed in school and life. In the long run, government saves money due to reductions in remedial education and crime costs, and society benefits due to higher participant earnings and avoided crime costs to individuals. In *Enriching Children, Enriching*

*the Nation*,<sup>1</sup> Robert Lynch calculates that spending an additional \$8.2 billion annually to provide all low-income 3- and 4-year-old children with a high-quality preschool program beginning in 2007 would result in \$315 billion in total benefits (government and society) by 2050, or 12 times the amount spent to provide preschool that year.

In 2050, government alone would save \$83 billion, or \$3.18 for every dollar invested in preschool. This means that for every dollar Federal and State government cuts today toward high-quality preschool, government will require about \$3 in additional revenue in 2050 to pay for the same budget priorities. Furthermore, society would lose the benefits of higher earnings and avoided crime costs to individuals.

A State-level analysis of Michigan's preschool program for at-risk 4-year-old children shows that the investment the State made 25 years ago now produces twice the amount of cost savings to government than the cost of providing preschool.<sup>2</sup> Conversely, for every dollar that Michigan cuts from preschool today, the State will likely need to pay twice as much annually in remedial education, crime and other costs 25 years from now.

*Question 2.* The early education system extends through third grade. However, little has been said about improvements to kindergarten through third grade. How do we ensure that the gains children make in early childhood programs do not fade or disappear altogether in elementary school?

Answer 2. Research suggests that differences in school quality (in particular, class size of no more than 20 children per teacher and individual child mentoring) can impact gains made in preschool. That is, without following up the gains made in early childhood education during the first few grades of school, benefits from preschool could erode.<sup>3</sup> Indeed, a recent study of at-risk children schooled in Chicago and tracked to age 26 demonstrated that combining high-quality preschool with high-quality early elementary grade classrooms mitigates fade-out.<sup>4</sup> In addition, supplementary literacy tutoring programs, such as AmeriCorp's Minnesota Reading Corps, demonstrates that tutoring children kindergarten to third grade can help enhance literacy skills honed during preschool.<sup>5</sup>

Moreover, research shows that early childhood programs that focus on engaging parents can foster more engaged parents once children reach school age.<sup>6</sup> And there is considerable evidence indicating that children of engaged parents (that is, parents who are involved in their children's education) are much more likely to succeed in school.<sup>7</sup>

EVA TANSKY BLUM

*Question.* The early education system extends through third grade. However, little has been said about improvements to kindergarten through third grade. How do we ensure that the gains children make in early childhood programs do not fade or disappear altogether in elementary school?

Answer. Although the PNC Grow Up Great program directs grant dollars to children from birth to age 5 so that we can focus our efforts and have a greater impact, we recognize the importance of providing quality education to children throughout their school years. Experts tell us that retaining the progress made in high-quality preschool is not a major problem, the greater challenge is to ensure that preschool is of high enough quality to ensure large gains from the start. Nevertheless, there are steps that can be taken to maximize continuing benefits as children proceed through elementary school.

A smooth transition from the early learning setting to kindergarten is very important. This must involve parents and teachers. Parents must register their children

<sup>1</sup> Lynch, R. (2007) *Enriching Children, Enriching the Nation: Public Investment in High-Quality Pre-kindergarten*. Washington, DC: Economic Policy Institute.

<sup>2</sup> Chase, R., Anton, P., Diaz, J., Martin Rogers, N., & Rausch, E. (2009) *Cost Savings Analysis of School Readiness in Michigan*. St. Paul, MN: Wilder Research.

<sup>3</sup> Currie, J. & Duncan, T. (2000) "School Quality and the Longer-Term Effects of Head Start." *Journal of Human Resources* 4(35), 755-74.

<sup>4</sup> Reynolds, A.J., Temple, J.A., White, B.A.B., Ou, S.-R., & Robertson, D.L. (2011) "Age 26 Cost-Benefit Analysis of the Child-Parent Center Early Education Program." *Child Development* 1(82), 379-404.

<sup>5</sup> Bollman, K. & Silbergitt, B. (2009) *Minnesota Reading Corps Final Evaluation 9/1/2008-6/30/2009 Statewide Report*. <http://www.minnesotareadingcorps.org/sites/default/files/2008-2009%20MRC%20Final%20Evaluation.pdf> (accessed July 2011).

<sup>6</sup> Gaylor, E., Spiker, D., Williamson, C., and Ferguson, K. (2011) *Saint Paul Early Childhood Scholarship Program Evaluation. Annual Report: Year 3*. Menlo Park, CA: SRI International.

<sup>7</sup> Cotton, K., & Wikelund, K. R. (2001) "Parent involvement in education." *School Improvement Research Series*. Portland, OR: Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory.

early so that the school can prepare for these new students. Parents need to be involved in their child's education, something we emphasize in our grant programs.

The teachers in pre-K and in kindergarten must work together as a team. They must support curriculum that continues learning in a seamless way. Curriculum must be done in sequence, and each phase of education should support the previous and future phases. Children learn best when there are no gaps in their curriculum.

It is also critical that teachers are properly trained. Teachers in K-3 should also be certified, or at least have some professional development, in early learning or pre-K. This helps them understand how very young children learn.

Finally, when expansion of high-quality preschool occurs on a large scale, teachers in kindergarten and the primary grades need to adjust their teaching to recognize the advances in children's knowledge, skills, and approaches to learning. Professional development and coaching focused on the needed changes can help teachers greatly in this process.

CHARLIE MILLS, III

*Question.* The early education system extends through third grade. However, little has been said about improvements to kindergarten through third grade. How do we ensure that the gains children make in early childhood programs do not fade or disappear altogether in elementary school?

*Answer.* I am not an educator so I don't have the practical nor academic background to qualify as an expert in this area. However, as a parent I have seen firsthand the decline in academic achievement and interest in my middle daughter—my experience informs my comments on this subject. My middle daughter is now 11 and is a rising 6th grader. We enrolled our daughter in a highly-respected private school (it is an "academy," not a day care) near our home when she was 2; this was a deliberate choice because we wanted to prepare her for school, not unlike many early childhood programs. For 3 years, she thrived at the school and consistently tested two grade levels above for reading and one grade level for math. When she was old enough to attend Kindergarten and since me and my wife are the product of a "good" public school system, we made the decision to put her in public school. Because of the excellent academics she received at the private school, our daughter was considered an "advanced" student. As the public school curriculum was designed for an "average" Kindergartener, her Kindergarten teacher had to create special lessons for her. This ad hoc arrangement was suitable at the time, but we could see that she was still not being challenged and in essence re-doing what she had done in the private preschool. We subsequently discussed with the public school administration the possibility of skipping our daughter a grade, and therefore ensuring she remained challenged. They strongly resisted this idea as they called it too unique, so we ended up leaving her in place, which in retrospect was a major mistake. While our daughter has progressed adequately through elementary school, by 2d grade, her test scores were just slightly above par with her grade level; more importantly, she no longer had the same zest and enthusiasm for learning as she did when she was in preschool and Kindergarten. Our daughter's diminished zeal for academics is what we feared most by leaving her in the public school system, and unfortunately our fears have become reality. That outlook has persisted over the last 3 years and as she enters middle school, the child who once loved every aspect of school and academics, now views school both boring and a necessary evil. In addition, her once desire to read on a daily basis, has diminished to an outright hatred to read and a continuous battle in our household—a scenario that probably plays itself out in many disadvantaged family's homes throughout America. In retrospect, we should have either pushed harder to get her moved up a grade or looked at moving her back to private school—ensuring that she would be taught on a level commensurate with her ability; using that as a lesson learned, we now have made the decision to keep our youngest daughter in private school to ensure she is continuously challenged. Just like her older sister, she has excelled in preschool and through 1st grade. She will be entering 2d grade in the fall, and while the future is not set, it appears that her appetite for learning has not diminished and her aptitude seems to correspond to her desire to learn. While our experience is nowhere near scientific, the difference in our daughters' performance and perspective certainly has been very instructive for us.

Based on our experiences, it is clear that a good early education program provides children the foundation they need as they enter the school system regardless of socioeconomic background. However, to ensure that children maintain this edge beyond the early education years, it is my opinion that we need to expand our focus beyond early childhood and look at the entire system through 12th grade. A system, by definition, is an interdependent group of items that form a unified whole; there-

fore, if we focus on just one item and neglect the others, there is bound to be an adverse effect on the whole. We have all heard about how our public schools are overcrowded and underfunded. Because of large class sizes, teachers are limited on how much time they can spend with individual students to provide them focused instructions and the lesson plans are geared to the “lowest common denominator.” While generally speaking, we have been pleased with our local school system (Loudoun County, VA), we believe the requirement for local schools to meet certain gates (e.g., Standards of Learning) has stifled creativity at these schools, as well as, reduced the tolerance for risk. When you add “English as a second language,” and other disadvantaged students to the mix, teachers are forced to focus their time improving those students’ skills, at the disadvantage to the “advanced” students. Lack of funding further compounds their ability to innovate to support the different needs of their students. These are the very same issues that affect early education programs; they do not go away since children do not cross a “magic” threshold from 3d grade to 4th and beyond. As such, we need to apply the same level of energy in addressing the problems that affect our primary and secondary schools as we apply to our early childhood programs.

In addition, studies show that without consistent reinforcements of lessons learned during the academic year, students can lose as much as 30 percent of their grade level capacity over the summer break/months. These studies go on to conclude that families with the means—like my family—provide enrichment and other intellectually stimulating activities for their children over the summer months, while families without the means are not able to provide similar activities. This continued 30 percent degradation over a number of years; let’s say from age 4 through age 14 (totaling 10 summers), has an exponential debilitating affect on the child. There is no surprise when the academic ability of high school graduating seniors from families with means far exceed those without. By providing the less fortunate family with either summer enrichment programs to continue to build on their early childhood education, and/or changing our “academic year” to a system that resembles Japan, requiring public school children to attend throughout the entire year including the summer, but with 2-week breaks throughout the year, early childhood learning can be reinforced through kindergarten and beyond.

My family is extremely fortunate in that we have the option to place our children in private school as a means of ensuring their future academic and personal success. Because it is private, class sizes are smaller and they have the flexibility to change the curriculum or instructional method to meet the needs of students. Many other families do not have that luxury and must rely on the public educational system. Strengthening our public education system, as a whole, and extending learning into the summer months will go a long way in keeping the gains derived from early education programs and keeping our future generations competitive on a global scale.

[Whereupon, at 11:55 a.m., the hearing was adjourned.]