

For Immediate Release
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Contact: Tom Weber
617-330-7389 (Work)
617-669-3678 (Cell)

THE EARLY EDUCATION FOR ALL CAMPAIGN STATEMENT ON THE SENATE WAYS AND MEANS BUDGET

Boston – The Early Education for All Campaign (EEA) commends Senate President Therese Murray, Senate Ways and Means Chairman Steven Panagiotakos, and Senate leaders for including increases in early education and care programs in the Senate Ways and Means Fiscal Year 2009 (FY09) state budget. Specifically, the Senate Ways and Means budget includes a \$5 million increase to the Massachusetts Universal Pre-Kindergarten (UPK) Program and a \$548,000 increase for professional development for early education and care providers.

Amy O'Leary, EEA Campaign Director, commented, "The Early Education for All Campaign applauds President Murray, Chairman Panagiotakos, and Senate leaders for prioritizing young children and families during this challenging fiscal time. Research shows that high-quality early education produces positive outcomes for our children and our economy, while yielding a substantial return on the taxpayer's investment. We look forward to continuing our work with state leaders to ensure that critical investments in high-quality early education are included in the final FY09 state budget."

High-quality early education has a lifetime impact on young learners in terms of greater academic readiness, higher test scores, and improved social skills. Low-income children who participate in two years of high-quality early education programs are 40% less likely to need special education or be held back a grade, 30% more likely to graduate from high school, and twice as likely to go to college. The Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis estimates a 16% return for every dollar invested in high-quality pre-kindergarten. Currently three states have universal pre-kindergarten, while 14 states and the District of Columbia are moving toward universal pre-kindergarten. Last year, 36 states increased investments in pre-kindergarten.

The Early Education for All Campaign is a growing coalition of leaders from business, early childhood, labor, religion, health care, education, and philanthropy, working in partnership with families, grassroots leaders, and state policymakers to make high-quality pre-kindergarten education and full-day public school kindergarten available to every Massachusetts child. The specific goals of the Campaign are to ensure:

- Voluntary, universally accessible, high-quality pre-kindergarten for every child delivered through a mix of public and private programs;
- Voluntary, universally accessible, high-quality full school-day public kindergarten for every child; and
- A statewide system to improve the training, education and compensation of the early childhood workforce.

The Early Education for All Campaign is an initiative of Strategies for Children, Inc., a non profit organization based in Boston. Its mission is to improve the well being of children and their families through public policy, advocacy, constituency building, and public awareness. For more information, visit www.earlyeducationforall.org.