



August 24, 2010

His Excellency Deval L. Patrick
Office of the Governor
State House, Room 360
Boston, MA 02133

RE: PENDING FEDERAL FMAP FUNDING/HIGH-QUALITY EARLY EDUCATION AND CARE

Dear Governor Patrick:

We are delighted that President Obama signed legislation passed by the United States Congress to provide additional Medicaid (FMAP) funding to states, including \$450 million for Massachusetts.

As representatives of the Early Education for All Campaign, we respectfully urge you to restore funding for high-quality early education and care as indicated in the FY11 Conference Committee appropriations. Your administration has consistently identified children's earliest learning experiences as critical investments in human capital necessary for sustaining our state's economic growth and development. The passage of FMAP provides an opportunity, in a time of economic crisis, to strengthen support for young children and families and restore funding for programs known to improve school readiness and later academic achievement (see enclosed document).

Action is needed! In Massachusetts, 43% of third graders – including almost two-thirds of low-income students – do not read at grade level. Research indicates that 74% of children who are not proficient readers by the end of third grade will continue to struggle in school. They are significantly less likely to graduate from high school, attend college and help sustain our state's knowledge-based economy. High-quality early education and care is one of the few educational strategies with a quantifiable impact on children's learning outcomes. W. Steven Barnett, co-director of the National Institute for Early Education Research at Rutgers University, estimates that high-quality early education closes the achievement gap by as much as 33% by the end of third grade. To help ensure that children are proficient readers by the end of third grade and poised to achieve greater life success, we must build an education system that begins at birth. **Investments in high-quality early education are critical to closing the achievement gap, ensuring reading proficiency and providing all Massachusetts children with the strong start they deserve.**

If you need further information, please contact Amy O'Leary, at aoleary@strategiesforchildren.org or 617-330-7384.

Thank you for your leadership and commitment to our young children and families.

Sincerely,

Margaret A. Blood
Strategies for Children, Inc.

Mary Ann Anthony
Catholic Charities

Amy O'Leary
Early Education for All

Roy Belson
MA Association of School Superintendents

Barbara Black
Northampton Public Schools

Dianne Bruce
Together for Kids

Mike Cahill
YMCAs of Massachusetts

Helen Charlupski
MA Association of School Committees

Cathy Dwyer
American Federation of Teachers

Asa Fanelli
Horizons for Homeless Children

Marcia Farris
MA Association for the Education of Young Children

Jill Flanders
MA Elementary School Principals Association

Ann Flynn
Together for Kids

Sally Fuller
Irene E. & George A. Davis Foundation

Joan Kagan
SquareONE

Fred Kalisz
Parents Alliance for Catholic Education

Susan Leger-Ferraro
Little Sprouts

Pam Kuechler
MA Child Care Resource & Referral Network

Charlene Mara
Quinsigamond Community College

Kathy Modigliani
Family Child Care Project

Gwen Morgan
Wheelock College

Ada Rosmarin
MA Community Partnerships for Children

Evelyn Tobin
YMCAs of Massachusetts

Nancy Topping-Tailby
MA Head Start Association

Kathy Treglia
Greater Springfield YMCA

Paul Toner
Massachusetts Teachers Association

James Ward
Early Childhood Centers of Greater Springfield

Pat Xavier
Boston Alliance for Early Education

Wayne Ysaguirre
Associated Early Care and Education

cc: Secretary Paul Reville, Executive Office of Education
Commissioner Sherri Killins, Department of Early Education and Care
Commissioner Mitchell Chester, Department of Elementary and Secondary Education
J.D. Chesloff, Chair, Board of Department of Early Education and Care
Maura Banta, Chair, Board of Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

Enclosure: FMAP and Impact on Massachusetts Early Education and Care