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Strategies for Children’s statement responding to House Ways & Means Committee’s FY16 state budget proposal for early education and care.

Chris Martes, President and CEO of Strategies for Children:

“We are encouraged by today’s House Ways and Means proposal for early education funding in fiscal year 2016. The targeted funding increase for early education, made amid a challenging fiscal climate, signals the overarching commitment by the House to close the achievement gap and give all children a level playing field for success in school.

Earlier this year, House Speaker DeLeo spoke about the importance of providing more children with access to high-quality early education, and listed this as a priority issue for the House.

The proposed funding increases, including $5 million to serve children on the state’s subsidy waiting list and $5 million for early educator quality supports and salaries, are steps in the right direction. However, many more children remain on the state’s waiting list. To serve all young children through high-quality Pre-K, the state needs a long-term funding plan. Given the state’s ongoing fiscal challenges, new Pre-K funding should be phased in over multiple years, and initial preference should be given to the highest-needs communities to level the playing field.”

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