

SUPPORT THE BIPARTISAN STRONG START FOR AMERICA'S CHILDREN LEGISLATION

A child's experiences in his or her earliest years can set the course for success in school and in life. As a nation, we all benefit when families can work and children can learn. High-quality early childhood education, starting from birth, meets both of those objectives and benefits everyone. Please join Senator Tom Harkin, Representative George Miller and Representative Richard Hanna to move this agenda and investment forward with your support of S. 1697/H.R.3461, Strong Start for America's Children Act.

The Strong Start for America's Children legislation recognizes the importance of starting high-quality early childhood education from birth. It has three parts:

- Provides grants to states to accelerate their work, expanding access and improving quality for pre-kindergarten programs;
- Provides grants to create Early Head Start-child care partnerships to raise the quality of child care and expand access for infants and toddlers in programs meeting Early Head Start standards; and
- Calls for expanded voluntary support for families through home visiting that promotes positive parent-child interaction, healthy child development and family self-sufficiency.

NAEYC is particularly pleased to see the emphasis on:

- Using high-quality, research-based and developmentally appropriate standards and assessments in all settings and avoiding inappropriate use of testing;
- Building on existing state systems of prekindergarten and using high-quality child care, Head Start and schools to deliver preschool programs;
- Ensuring that programs engage families and support children's comprehensive needs;
- Attracting and retaining teachers by helping them to gain the specialized knowledge required and earn degrees in early childhood education, including improved compensation;
- Improving and expanding access to infant and toddler care through Early Head Start/child care partnerships; and
- Strengthening families by providing access to voluntary home visiting in the critical infant and toddler years.

For more information on NAEYC's standards for high-quality early childhood programs and for professional preparation go to <http://www.naeyc.org/academy/> and <http://www.naeyc.org/ncate/standards>