



First Five Years Fund

July 14, 2015

The Honorable Lamar Alexander
Chairman
Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions
428 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Patty Murray
Ranking Member
Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions
428 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Alexander and Ranking Member Murray:

I am writing to express the First Five Years Fund's (FFYF) strong support for the Every Child Achieves Act – S. 1177 (ECAA). We commend you for developing a bipartisan bill to reauthorize the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, which recognizes the vital role of high quality early learning in preparing students for success in school, work, and life.

The ECAA harnesses the potential of early learning to provide more meaningful and impactful educational opportunities for the nation's economically disadvantaged families. As you know, numerous peer-reviewed, high-quality research studies demonstrate early learning's powerful impact on kindergarten readiness rates, academic outcomes, and later life success. The ECAA appropriately recognizes these advantages by: (1) supporting state and school district efforts to improve early learning program quality; (2) permitting more flexible state and local use of federal resources and clarifying eligible ESEA uses for early childhood initiatives; and (3) encouraging better coordination and alignment of early learning initiatives with elementary school.

In particular, FFYF supports the ECAA's Early Learning Alignment and Improvement Grants program, which will help states more efficiently and effectively use existing Federal resources to improve, strengthen, and expand existing high-quality early childhood education, strengthen program quality, and expand access to high quality early learning opportunities. This well designed initiative, and the ECAA's other early learning provisions, will make an important, life-long difference for the nation's students and their families.

Thank you again for your leadership on behalf of the nation's youngest, and most economically disadvantaged, learners. FFYF deeply appreciates that high quality early learning is included among the ECAA's core components, and we hope the full Senate will pass this important and needed legislation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kris Perry". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looped "P" at the end.

Kris Perry
Executive Director