



May 24, 2017

The Honorable Patrick Leahy  
United States Senate  
437 Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Ranking Member Leahy,

On behalf of the First Five Years Fund (FFYF), I would like to thank you for your continued commitment to increasing and maintaining funding for early learning programs in the Fiscal Year (FY) 2017 Omnibus Appropriations bill.

I applaud you and the other members of the Subcommittee for coming together to recognize the critical importance of high-quality early childhood education programs for America's youngest children and their families. Increased funding for Child Care and Development Block Grants, Head Start, and Early Head Start-Child Care Partnerships, along with sustained funding for Preschool Development Grants, builds upon previous bipartisan efforts to make high-quality care more accessible for the kids who need it most. Access to high-quality early learning programs helps children from low-income families enter kindergarten prepared to learn, closes achievement gaps, and offers families greater opportunities and a pathway out of poverty.

Now, as the attention turns to FY2018, I look forward to working with you to ensure investments in high-quality early childhood education programs continue to grow. Increased investments directly benefit disadvantaged children and families, and research shows that every dollar invested in quality birth-to-five early learning and care programs provides taxpayers with a 13 percent return on that investment, per year through improved health, education, social, and employment outcomes.

Thank you again for your hard work and commitment to ensuring America's greatest resource – our children – have an opportunity to benefit from quality early learning opportunities so they enter the K-12 system adequately prepared and ready to learn.

Sincerely,

Kris Perry  
Executive Director  
First Five Years Fund