



first 5 years fund

www.ffyf.org

Start here and you'll finish with a better US.

Early childhood education builds a smarter US. It drives school readiness, prevents the achievement gap, and delivers college and career success. It is instrumental in reducing the need for special education and remediation—and key to producing highly capable adults.

Early childhood education builds a prosperous US. Nobel Prize Laureate economist James Heckman has shown that every dollar invested in quality early childhood education for at-risk children delivers economic gains of 10% per year through increased achievement and adult productivity.

Early childhood education builds a healthier US. It sets children on the right path—giving them the ability to understand what it takes to live a healthy life and the will power to act upon it, skills that are critical to eating right, exercising and refraining from unhealthy behaviors like smoking and drug use.

Early childhood education builds a stronger US. It fuses knowledge with character—giving children the backbone they need to work hard, work together, and walk tall through life.

Three legislative opportunities this year present smart, cost-effective investments:

Establish the Early Learning Challenge Fund. The Early Learning Challenge Fund is a proposed federal program that would provide competitive grants to states to connect disparate early learning programs into a more cost-effective, coherent, and high-quality system. The U.S. House approved the Challenge Fund in a bipartisan vote in 2009.

Maintain funding for Head Start, Early Head Start, and the Child Care and Development Block Grant. Head Start (for preschoolers), Early Head Start (for infants and toddlers), and the Child Care and Development Block Grant play a critical role in helping children learn and their families work. American Recovery and Reinvestment Act funds provided for the programs have been crucial in enabling them to help children and families in states and communities across the country and must be sustained.

Integrate early childhood education in Elementary and Secondary Education Act Reauthorization. ESEA is slated for reauthorization, and early learning must be fully incorporated into all pillars of the Act to yield better long-term educational outcomes for children. Reauthorization must include a birth to five component within all the Act's provisions – including development of longitudinal data systems, teacher quality, work with struggling and at-risk children, standards and assessments, and family engagement.