



October 13, 2011

The Honorable Harry Reid
Majority Leader, United States Senate

The Honorable John Boehner
Speaker of the House of Representatives

Dear Leader Reid and Speaker Boehner:

America's greatest asset has always been its people. As business leaders, we recognize that investing in human capital leads to improved performance—for the employees we manage, for the organizations we lead, and for the country in which we live. Taxpayers see a \$7 return on every dollar when that dollar is invested in effective early learning programs that target at-risk children from birth to age five.

Our economy is less likely to be burdened by heavy deficits, and businesses like ours are more likely to thrive, when today's public leaders make wise investments in Head Start, Early Head Start, the Child Care and Development Block Grant, and the Early Learning Challenge. These are the programs that develop our national human capital, reduce costly downstream interventions, and focus on quality as a cornerstone to generating positive rates of return. Early learning investments result in significant short-term economic benefits as well, including the generation of sales of local goods and services, decreased employee absenteeism which costs U.S. businesses billions every year, and increased retention and productivity.

That is why we urge your leadership as critical budget priorities and specific funding levels are set for FY12 and beyond, in order to assure that such funding:

- allows all children to continue to participate in these programs and
- includes a focus on quality improvement, which is critical to the effectiveness and efficiency of public investment.

When resources are limited, we as business leaders invest in areas where we can expect to see the greatest impact per dollar. We urge you to do the same. We support public investment in quality early learning that will help to reduce deficits, ensure the competitiveness of our workforce, and contribute to the long-term growth of our economy.

Sincerely,

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