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INVESTING IN EARLY EDUCATION: PATHS TO IMPROVING CHILDREN'S SUCCESS

HEARING

BEFORE THE

COMMITTEE ON
EDUCATION AND LABOR

U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

ONE HUNDRED TENTH CONGRESS

SECOND SESSION

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INVESTING IN EARLY EDUCATION: PATHS TO IMPROVING CHILDREN'S SUCCESS

Wednesday, January 23, 2008
U.S. House of Representatives
Committee on Education and Labor
Washington, DC

The committee met, pursuant to call, at 10:04 a.m., in room 2175, Rayburn House Office Building, Hon. Mazie Hirono presiding.

Present: Representatives Kildee, Payne, Kucinich, Holt, Bishop of New York, Sarbanes, Sestak, Hirono, Hare, Clarke, Shea-Porter, McKeon, Petri, Castle, Platts, Keller, Kline, Foxx, and Davis of Tennessee.

Staff present: Tylease Alli, Hearing Clerk; Lynne Campbell, Legislative Fellow for Education; Denise Forte, Director of Education Policy; Ruth Friedman, Senior Education Policy Advisor (Early Childhood); Lloyd Horwich, Policy Advisor, Subcommittee on Early Childhood Education and Secondary Education; Lamont Ivey, Staff Assistant, Education; Thomas Kiley, Communications Director; Danielle Lee, Press/Outreach Assistant; Stephanie Moore, General Counsel; Alex Nock, Deputy Staff Director; Joe Novotny, Chief Clerk; Rachel Racusen, Deputy Communications Director; Margaret Young, Staff Assistant, Education; Mark Zuckerman, Staff Director; Stephanie Arras, Minority Legislative Assistant; James Bergeron, Minority Deputy Director of Education and Human Services Policy; Robert Borden, Minority General Counsel; Cameron Coursen, Minority Assistant Communications Director; Kirsten Duncan, Minority Professional Staff Member; Rob Gregg, Minority Legislative Assistant; Victor Klatt, Minority Staff Director; Chad Miller, Minority Professional Staff; Susan Ross, Minority Director of Education and Human Services Policy; Linda Stevens, Minority Chief Clerk/Assistant to the General Counsel; and Hannah Snoke, Minority Receptionist/Administrative Assistant.

Ms. HIRONO [presiding]. A quorum being present, the committee will come to order.

Good morning. On behalf of Chairman Miller, I would like to welcome everyone to our hearing, "Investing in Early Education: Paths to Improving Children's Success."

I cannot think of a more critical issue for us to explore in our first full committee hearing of 2008 than the need for expanding quality early education opportunities for our nation's children.

As we will hear from our panel of experts today, providing a good educational foundation for our children during their earliest years of life not only improves student success down the road, but is vital to building a stronger, more innovative, and competitive future for our country.

Over the past decade, there has been groundbreaking research on brain and child development that underscores the importance of the first 5 years of a child's life. In combination with their genes, children's experiences in these critical early years influence brain chemistry, architecture, and growth in ways that can have lasting effects on their health, learning, and behavior.

Families are children's first and most important teachers throughout life, but with nearly 12 million children under the age of 5, or nearly two-thirds of all American children under 5, in some type of regular child care arrangement, early care and education providers also play a great role in children's development and growth.

As a nation, we simply cannot afford to ignore the types and quality of early care and education settings that are available to our children. Research shows that the achievement gap we see in elementary school and beyond exists before children enter kindergarten. The Early Childhood Longitudinal Study overseen by the Department of Education, for example, found twice as many 4-year-olds from upper-income family households were proficient in early math skills when compared to 4-year-olds from the lowest-income households. What this means is that if education reform begins in elementary school, we are starting 5 years too late.

But the quality of early education is not just an issue for low-income families. Finding high-quality, affordable care and education can be difficult for all families. The average cost of child care averages between $4,000 and $10,000 a year and usually ranks as the second highest expense for families after housing.

Federal, state, and local programs have shown us that investments in high-quality early education can make a tremendous difference in children's futures both in and outside the classroom. High-quality early education can improve children's reading, math, and language skills, strengthen parenting practices, and help increase school readiness and lead to better health and behavior.

But we also have a long way to go to ensure that all children can get a high-quality early education foundation. Pre-K and child care standards and oversight vary greatly across states. A vast majority of states have no training requirements for child care providers prior to working in a classroom, and 13 state pre-K programs meet five or fewer of 10 key quality criteria.

The first 5 years of life provide us with an incredible opportunity to ensure that all children have the tools they need to achieve in elementary school and beyond. Investments in these programs must be made wisely, and we must ensure that we target resources to what works.

But it is clear that new and greater investments must also be made. If we are to succeed at reforming our education system and ensuring success for all children, then improving the early care and education settings for our youngest children must be one of our top priorities, and if we are to maintain our leadership in this global

economy, we must focus on investing in our children during their most formative years.

I want to thank all of the witnesses for being here today and look forward to hearing from each of you on what the science tells us about what is working and what challenges lay ahead.

Thank you.

Pursuant to Rule 12(a), all members may submit an opening statement in writing which will be made part of the permanent record.

I now recognize the senior Republican member, Mr. McKeon, for an opening statement.

[The statement of Mr. Miller follows:]

Prepared Statement of Hon. George Miller, Chairman, Committee on Education and Labor

Good morning. I'd like to welcome everyone to our hearing: "Investing in Early Education: Paths to Improving Children's Success."

I can't think of a more critical issue for us to explore in our first full committee hearing of 2008 than the need for expanding quality early education opportunities for our nation's children.

As we will hear from our panel of experts today, providing a good educational foundation for our children during their earliest years of life not only improves student success down the road, but is vital to building a stronger, more innovative, and competitive future for our country.

Over the past decade, there has been groundbreaking research on brain and child development that underscores the importance of the first five years of a child's life.

In combination with their genes, children's experiences in these critical early years influence brain chemistry, architecture, and growth in ways that can have lasting effects on their health, learning, and behavior.

Families are children's first and most important teachers throughout life.

But with nearly 12 million children under the age of five—or nearly two-thirds of all American children under five—in some type of regular child care arrangement, early care and education providers also play a great role in children's development and growth.

As a nation, we simply cannot afford to ignore the types and quality of early care and education settings that are available to our children.

Research shows that the achievement gap we see in elementary school and beyond exists before children enter kindergarten.

The Early Childhood Longitudinal Study overseen by the Department of Education, for example, found twice as many 4-year-olds from upper-income family households were proficient in early math skills when compared to 4-year-olds from the lowest income households.

What this means is that if education reform begins in elementary school—we're starting 5 years too late.

But the quality of early education is not just an issue for low-income families. Finding high-quality, affordable care and education can be difficult for all families.

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High quality early education can improve children's reading, math, and language skills, strengthen parenting practices that help increase school readiness, and lead to better health and behavior.

But we also have a long way to go to ensure that all children can get a high-quality early education foundation.

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The first five years of life provide us with an incredible opportunity to ensure that all children have the tools they need to achieve in elementary school and beyond.

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But it is clear that new and greater investments must also be made.

If we are to succeed at reforming our education system and ensuring success for all children, then improving the early care and education settings for our youngest children must be one of our top priorities.

And if we are to maintain our leadership in this global economy, we must focus on investing in our children during their most formative years.

I want to thank all the witnesses for being here today and look forward to hearing from each of you about what the science tells us about what is working and what challenges lay ahead.

Thank you.

[The statement of Mr. Altmire follows:]

Prepared Statement of Hon. Jason Altmire, a Representative in Congress From the State of Pennsylvania

Thank you, Chairman Miller, for holding this important hearing on early childhood education.

As the member of the board of an early childhood education program in Braddock, Pennsylvania I have been able to see first hand the incredible benefits that early childhood education provides to children, families, and communities. Students that participate in high-quality early childhood education do better in school, are less likely to commit crimes, and are more likely to attend college or become gainfully employed after high school, than their peers. In fact, studies of high-quality early childhood education programs show that for every dollar invested in these programs they provide an economic benefit to society of between $1.25 and $17.

Earlier this year, this committee reauthorized the Head Start Program. I believe that the Improving Head Start for School Readiness Act of 2007 will significantly enhance what is already a very good federal program. Today, I look forward to learning more about how the federal government can help to improve early childhood education and to hearing where our investment is having the most impact.

Thank you again, Mr. Chairman, for holding this hearing. I yield back the balance of my time.

[The statement of Mr. Courtney follows:]

Prepared Statement of Hon. Joe Courtney, a Representative in Congress From the State of Connecticut

Chairman Miller, thank you for convening a hearing today on one of the most important investments that we can make in our public education system: early education services. As members of the Committee on Education and Labor, few things are more important to us than the success of our children. In light of overwhelming evidence supporting investments in early education services, it is critical that we act expeditiously in delivering these services to our Nation's children.

The success of our education system directly relates to the potential health and prosperity of our Nation. In order for our education systems to be successful, we must remain vigilant of effective academic programs and improve and expand investment until these systems reflect our highest aspirations. In the past decade, education research has consistently concluded the same message: investments in quality early education services provide substantial, sustainable, and cost-effective benefits.

Early education service investments, specifically during the initial years of life, facilitate mentally, physically, emotionally, and academically prepared students in the future. This in turn, provides opportunity for success in institutions of higher education and ultimately expanded opportunity for professional success in latter years. These investments reduce the need for disciplinary programs in primary and secondary school as well as reduce the need for future social services by expanding potential for professional success.

Early education service investments are especially important for children from low-income families as the potential for academic failure is disproportionately higher for this demographic: high school dropout rates are high and higher education matriculation rates are low. Federal programs, like Head Start, address the nutrition, emotional, social, and academic needs of young children from low-income families and will ultimately prepare the most susceptible children for academic and professional success.

As we look to further integrate and improve early education programs in national education priorities, we must reflect on the successes of public and private programs at the state and local levels. I am proud to represent a state that has continued to set high standards for early education funding and quality of programs. According to the National Institute for Early Education Research (NIEER), Connecticut has one of the highest per pupil expenditure rates in the Nation. During the 2005-2006 academic year, Connecticut averaged $7,101 per pupil on early education programs. This funding is used to deliver quality programs that incorporate physical, language and literacy, cognitive and intellectual, emotional and cultural focuses in early education curriculum.

Mr. Chairman, it is clear that investments in early education are inextricably linked to potential future academic and professional success. Because these gains are aggregate, it is imperative that we act now with outreach expansion and program improvement. For these reasons, I joined with my fellow Connecticut colleagues, Representative DeLauro and Senator Dodd, in introducing legislation that will facilitate these efforts.

The Early Childhood Investment Act (H.R. 2616) will establish a grant program to reward public and private entities that strengthen collaborative efforts with early education services. Additional health and education services will be used when the time is most critical in a child's life: from birth through the age of five. These investments will produce healthier, happier and better prepared children in both the short and long term, while sharing federal costs with the local, state and private entities.

In order to create a mentally, physically, emotionally and academically prepared student body and in turn, professional workforce, we must prioritize investments in quality early education services.

[The statement of Ms. DeLauro follows:]

Prepared Statement of Hon. Rosa L. DeLauro, a Representative in Congress From the State of Connecticut

Chairman Miller, Members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify today. I was glad to join you last year as co-chair of the Speaker's National Children Summit and I am delighted to see your committee addressing one of its central issues: early childhood education. This is one of the most important issues facing the future of our country and I am glad the committee is investing the time and energy to examine it closely.

Each of us believes that children should grow up healthy and safe—they should have the opportunity to learn and participate fully in society. That is why investing in early childhood education, whether through pre-k programs or child care, is so critical. With a Majority in Congress committed to the well-being of our children, I know we can make that vision a reality.

Today, the parents of more than 55 million school-age children work outside the home. A third of those children either live in low-income households or would be poor if their mother did not work. That means millions of parents are out of the house, and we know that their children are likely to be cared for in a setting outside the home.

So for many working women, child care and early childhood programs are the only source of peace of mind that comes with knowing that their child will be safe and sound during the time they cannot be with their children. Parents can focus on their jobs, confident that their children are in safe, responsible hands. Yet, early childhood programs are critical not only because they keep our children safe, but also because they provide them the opportunity to learn and be productive during those hours.

We now know that 80 percent of brain development occurs by age three, with up to 90 percent of its capacity in the first five years. Prominent scientists all agreed—the first year is critical in laying a foundation for future development, with neuroscience pointing the way to how positive relationships and experiences play a large role in the development of the child's brain. And while early abuse, neglect, or trauma can have a profound negative impact on a child's development, we also know he or she will recover far more quickly with the right care in the right environment.

We know that the time children spend in a child care or pre-k programs help to influence lifelong learning patterns. Quality early care can make a big difference in children's cognitive development and positively affect children's performance well into their school careers.

In this area, we must look to states that are leading the way. For example, Connecticut established school readiness funding in 1997 to serve three and four year-

old children and is now looking at pre-natal through grade three services with their long-term initiative "Ready by 5 & Fine by 9." They are working on a comprehensive early childhood investment plan which will coordinate and leverage resources in a strategic manner.

Yet, despite the work in states like Connecticut, quality early childhood programs simply are not readily available to the families that need them most. Three out of five young children are in child care every day—nearly 12 million children—but only 1 out of 7 children who are eligible for federal child care assistance receive any benefits under the Child Care Development Block Grant. Further, the cost is often extremely high—reaching up to $14, 647 a year for center-based infant care and $10,920 annually for a 4-year-old in a center.

In the case of early-learning programs, the situation is dire. For over 4 decades, Head Start, the federal early childhood development program has provided comprehensive child development, literacy, and family services to more than 18 million infants, toddlers, and 3- and 4-year-olds from low-income and working-poor families. But today, only about 45 percent of those eligible receive Head Start services.

We clearly need new thinking in this area. That is why I am proud to have worked with my colleagues Senator Christopher Dodd and Representative Joe Courtney, in introducing legislation to create and enhance public-private-partnerships that will strengthen investment in early childhood development programs. "The Early Childhood Investment Act of 2007" would establish a grant program to award funding to a public-private partnership in a state which will then leverage additional resources to supplement existing state and federal funds in local community initiatives. It would also improve access to and quality of early childhood development for children from birth through age five and their families.

Partnerships can be effective in leveraging funding from nonprofit or for-profit organizations, private entities and state government to increase investment in high quality early childhood development programs including: parent development and support (such as home visiting), child care, Head Start, preschool and other related early childhood development activities.

We must recognize the value of engaging the private sector. Public funding is vital—it must continue and we need to expand it. But the fact is public investment alone has not been enough to reach all of our nation's young children and make a lasting difference in their earliest years. If we want to ensure our children have every opportunity to succeed, we need to establish public-private partnerships and leverage resources to begin opening new doors.

Ultimately, Mr. Chairman, we need to confront the chasm that exists between what we know is good for America's children and what we actually do as a country to make it happen. We must fashion a public policy agenda that focuses on the earliest years of life and increases the quality of care for our children.

Thank you.

[The statement of Mr. Kucinich follows:]

Prepared Statement of Hon. Dennis J. Kucinich, a Representative in Congress From the State of Ohio

I would like to thank the Chairman for holding this hearing, and for continuing the discussion about the importance of early childhood education. Over the last decade, research has repeatedly shown that early childhood education has immense benefit for the social and emotional development of a child, as well as his or her educational and vocational attainment later in life. These individual benefits translate to large-scale societal benefits in the form of a healthier and better-educated workforce and decreased demand on social service networks, just to name a few.

I am eager to hear the testimony presented today. The Chairman has assembled an impressive group with decades of experience and "practice wisdom" in the early education field. I am confident that today's proceedings will bring us significantly closer toward the goal of ensuring that every child in America has access to high-quality, full-day, full-calendar-year prekindergarten education.

I am excited that this endeavor is well under way in my congressional district. Through a year-long planning process, the Cuyahoga County Board of County Commissioners developed a universal prekindergarten model. The program addresses all the components of high-quality early education programming: low child to staff ratios; a research-driven, proven curriculum; professional and workforce development; wraparound health and social services; family engagement; and monitoring and evaluation. I am particularly proud of the fact that this program was the product of a process that engaged over 200 stakeholders, from researchers and policy experts

to program managers and direct service workers. So often, in our zeal to create effective programming, we neglect the bounty of research available in the wisdom of front line staff. I firmly believe that any early education endeavor must have the input of the direct service staff and others who face the lived reality of the programs we offer.

Thank you again, Chairman, and thank you to our panel, for all of your efforts in furtherance of early education. I stand ready and willing to do whatever it takes to ensure that every child in America has access to high-quality, full-day, full-calendar-year prekindergarten education.

Mr. MCKEON. Thank you very much.

I am pleased to be here examining early childhood education, an issue this committee knows well.

Last year, we worked together to write and pass a bipartisan Head Start reform bill that significantly strengthens early childhood education opportunities for disadvantaged children. I was extremely proud to be a part of crafting that legislation which reaffirmed our commitment to target the federal investment in early childhood education to serve disadvantaged children, those who are already at risk of falling behind even before they enroll in school.

Research has shown that early childhood education pays significant dividends in preparing children for success in school and in life. Several studies have shown that children enrolled in early childhood education programs enter elementary school better prepared than their peers. It is for this reason that I am a strong proponent of federal programs, such as the Child Care and Development Block Grant, Head Start, Early Reading First, and many others which ensure that children are ready to learn effectively when they enter kindergarten.

At the same time, there is much we do not know about the long-term effects of early childhood education programs on student academic performance and whether these educational benefits continue into middle and high school.

In addition, much more work needs to be done to increase coordination of the various federal early childhood education programs at the state and local level.

Before Congress and this committee even consider efforts to expand the federal role in early childhood education, I believe we need to focus on the following three principles.

First, any federal program, existing or otherwise, must preserve and promote the role of parents to choose an education provider. Children enrolled in early childhood education programs are benefiting from a diverse group of public and private providers.

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, through local school districts and private providers, administers the Head Start program and ensures that its services are meeting the unique needs of disadvantaged children. States have established pre-kindergarten programs aligned with their K-12 systems, and faith-based and private providers offer programs tailored towards parents' specific goals.

This diversity of programs and providers in which parents have control over their children's education and choose what program works best for them is one of the great strengths of our early childhood education system. Because of that diversity, we have avoided many of the criticisms of our K-12 education system.

Second, the federal investment should be narrowly targeted to those students who need it and those parents who can least afford it. Before enacting any new or duplicative initiatives, we must focus on serving those children not presently being served by the Head Start program. Since 1965, our federal education programs have been focused on ensuring that low-income and disadvantaged students and parents have access to those programs that will help them succeed in life. I strongly believe that any federal childhood education program must continue this focus.

And, third, the federal investment in early childhood education must be focused on ensuring that public and private providers are running high-quality programs. Over the last few months, a number of legislative proposals have been introduced that seem to focus on increasing the number of students enrolled in federally funded early childhood education programs.

These legislative efforts overlook the fact that the percentage of 3-to 5-year-olds in the United States enrolled in some kind of early childhood education program has skyrocketed over the last decade, even without one-size-fits-all federal mandates. They also ignore the tremendous effort of the states in taking a leadership role to create and fund early childhood education programs.

From Alabama to Florida to Virginia, states are leading the way in increasing access to pre-kindergarten programs. The federal role should recognize that fact and focus on ensuring the quality of these existing programs so that children are ready to learn when they enter kindergarten.

Five years ago, when we first began the process of reforming and strengthening the Head Start program, this committee examined a limited proposal to move administration of the program to the states in order to better align the federal program with what is happening at the state and local level. Ultimately, we did not follow that approach, mainly because of concerns that doing so would divert federal early childhood support to state-based systems focusing on educating children.

Given those concerns about moving Head Start to a state-structured system, I think that it is ironic that most of the early childhood education initiatives that have been proposed would mandate federal services administered by the U.S. Department of Education and provided at the state or local level. Nonetheless, today's hearing presents us with an important opportunity to consider how early childhood education helps put children on the path to success.

I look forward to hearing about the latest research into how children learn, and I am pleased to have program providers here with us to share their insight and experience with successful program operation.

Once again, I would like to commend the chairman for convening this hearing and thank the witnesses for offering their considerate expertise.

Our nation's flexible, dynamic, and diverse system of early childhood education providers helps ensure a strong foundation for our children's future educational success. I look forward to hearing more about that system today.

Thank you.

And I yield back.

[The statement of Mr. McKeon follows:]

Prepared Statement of Hon. Howard P. "Buck" McKeon, Senior Republican, Committee on Education and Labor

Good morning and thank you, Chairman Miller. I'm pleased to be here examining early childhood education, an issue this committee knows well.

Last year, we worked together to write and pass a bipartisan Head Start reform bill that significantly strengthens early childhood education opportunities for disadvantaged children.

I was extremely proud to be a part of crafting that legislation, which reaffirmed our commitment to target the federal investment in early childhood education to serve disadvantaged children—those who are already at risk of falling behind, even before they enroll in school.

Research has shown that early childhood education pays significant dividends in preparing children for success in school and in life. Several studies have shown that children enrolled in early childhood education programs enter elementary school better prepared than their peers. It is for this reason that I am a strong proponent of federal programs, such as the Child Care and Development Block Grant, Head Start, Early Reading First, and many others, which ensure that children are ready to learn effectively when they enter kindergarten.

At the same time, there is much we do not know about the long-term effects of early childhood education programs on student academic performance and whether these educational benefits continue into middle and high school. In addition, much more work needs to be done to increase coordination of the various federal early childhood education programs at the state and local level.

Before Congress and this Committee even consider efforts to expand the federal role in early childhood education, I believe we need to focus on the following three principles.

First, any federal program, existing or otherwise, must preserve and promote the role of parents to choose an education provider. Children enrolled in early childhood education programs are benefitting from a diverse group of public and private providers. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, through local school districts and private providers, administers the Head Start program and ensures that its services are meeting the unique needs of disadvantaged children. States have established pre-kindergarten programs, aligned with their K-12 systems. And faith-based and private providers offer programs tailored toward parents' specific goals. This diversity of programs and providers—in which parents have control over their children's education and choose what program works best for them—is one of the great strengths of our early childhood education system. Because of that diversity, we have avoided many of the criticisms of our K-12 education system.

Second, the federal investment should be narrowly targeted to those students who need it and those parents who can least afford it. Before enacting any new or duplicative initiatives, we must focus on serving those children not presently being served by the Head Start program. Since 1965, our federal education programs have been focused on ensuring that low-income and disadvantaged students and parents have access to those programs that will help them succeed in life. I strongly believe that any federal early childhood education program must continue this focus.

And, third, the federal investment in early childhood education must be focused on ensuring that public and private providers are running high-quality programs.

Over the last few months, a number of legislative proposals have been introduced that seem to focus on increasing the number of students enrolled in federally-funded early childhood education programs. These legislative efforts overlook the fact that the percentage of 3 to 5 year olds in the United States enrolled in some kind of early childhood education program has skyrocketed over the last decade, even without one-size-fits-all federal mandates.

They also ignore the tremendous effort of the states in taking a leadership role to create and fund early childhood education programs. From Alabama to Florida to Virginia, states are leading the way in increasing access to pre-kindergarten programs. The federal role should recognize this fact, and focus on ensuring the quality of these existing programs so that children are ready to learn when they enter kindergarten.

Five years ago, when we first began the process of reforming and strengthening the Head Start program, this Committee examined a limited proposal to move administration of the program to the states in order to better align the federal program with what is happening at the state and local level. Ultimately, we did not follow that approach mainly because of concerns that doing so would divert federal early childhood support to state-based systems focused on educating children. Given

those concerns about moving Head Start to a state-structured system, I think that it's ironic that most of the early childhood education initiatives that have been proposed would mandate federal services administered by the U.S. Department of Education and provided at the state or local level.

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Once again I'd like to commend the Chairman for convening this hearing and thank the witnesses for offering their considerable expertise. Our nation's flexible, dynamic, and diverse system of early childhood education providers helps ensure a strong foundation for our children's future educational success. I look forward to hearing more about that system today. Thank you, and I yield back.

Ms. HIRONO. Thank you, Mr. McKeon.

Now I would like to introduce our panel of witnesses, all of whom have very impressive backgrounds. More extensive bios will be made part of the record.

The first witness is Deborah Phillips. Dr. Phillips is currently professor of psychology and associated faculty in the Public Policy Institute at Georgetown University. She is also co-director of the university's research center on children in the U.S. Prior to this, she was the first executive director of the Board of Children, Youth and Families of the National Research Council's Commission on Social and Behavioral Sciences and the Institute of Medicine.

She co-edited "From Neurons to Neighborhoods: The Science of Early Child Development" and is now a member of two organizations that were created to continue the work of "Neurons to Neighborhoods," the National Scientific Council on the Developing Child and the Forum on Early Childhood Program Evaluation based at Harvard University. Her research focuses on the developmental effects of early childhood programs, including both child care and pre-K settings.

Current studies are focusing on how children who vary in temperament are differentially affected by child care experiences and on an evaluation of the Tulsa, Oklahoma, pre-K program as it affects both cognitive and social-emotional development. Dr. Phillips has also served on numerous task forces and advisory groups.

Kathleen Priestly will be introduced by Congressman Payne.

Mr. Payne?

Mr. PAYNE. Thank you very much.

It is really an honor for me to introduce someone from my congressional district, Kathleen Priestly, who is the supervisor for early childhood education in Orange, New Jersey.

As supervisor, Ms. Priestly has the opportunity to supervise not only preschool and kindergarten teachers and teaching assistants, but also to support a team of early childhood master teachers, social workers, nurses, preschool intervention specialists, inclusion teachers, and fiscal administrative assistants. She also collaborates with principals, Head Start, and center directors, and other district administrators.

Prior to her current position, she has worked for the New Jersey Department of Education in the Office of Early Childhood Education focusing on professional development and technical assistance for district administrators expanding preschool education

throughout New Jersey. Before that, Kathleen was a teacher of young children for more than 25 years. After graduating from Boston College, she came to New Jersey and attended Rutgers University where she pursued her master's and other advanced graduate degrees.

Currently, she is an advocate for early childhood education through her work and outside committee and organization work. She has been committed to the implementation and expansion of preschool education in New Jersey and continues to lead and participate in local and national committees and organizations.

So we are so pleased to have you with us today.

Thank you.

Ms. HIRONO. Thank you.

It gives me great pleasure to introduce my friend from Hawaii.

And thank you for this beautiful lei, Elisabeth.

Elisabeth Chun is the executive director of the Good Beginnings Alliance, Hawaii's statewide 501(c)3 intermediary organization, legislatively named to spearhead efforts to create a coordinated early childhood education and care system. Ms. Chun received a BA in history from Carleton College and a master's of education in educational psychology with a special education focus from the University of Hawaii.

Prior to joining Good Beginnings in 1997, Ms. Chun was in the governor's Office of Children and Youth as a program manager for Hawaii's Federal Child Care and Development Block Grant. In early 1996, she transferred to the Department of Human Services, the new lead agency for the Child Care and Development Block Grant, the Child Care Development Fund. From 1997 to 1998, Ms. Chun served as president of the Junior League of Honolulu and was involved in coordinating various volunteer efforts centered on positive parenting.

She currently serves on the Samuel N. and Mary Castle Advisory Board as well as the Hawaii Children's Trust Fund Advisory Council and the Hookakoo Corporation supporting conversions, charter schools, and early education in Hawaii. In 2007, Ms. Chun was recognized for her work in Hawaii's early childhood movement by both the Hawaii Pacific Business News and the University of Hawaii College of Education.

Charles Kolb. Since September 1997, Charles Kolb has served as president of the Committee for Economic Development, CED, with offices in New York City and Washington, D.C. Prior to joining CED, he served as general counsel and secretary of United Way of America from 1992 to 1997.

During nearly 10 years of government service, he held several senior-level positions, including high-ranking positions with the U.S. Department of Education. Prior to government service, Mr. Kolb practiced law at two Washington, D.C., law firms, Covington & Burling and Foreman & Dyess.

He holds an undergraduate degree from Princeton University, a master's degree in philosophy, politics, and economics from Oxford, and a law degree from the University of Virginia School of Law where he was editor-in-chief of the Virginia Journal of International Law. He is also the author of a book on policymaking in

the Bush White House and numerous law review and op ed articles.

Eric Karolak—am I pronouncing your name correctly? Karolak—thank you.

Dr. Karolak directs the efforts of the Early Care and Education Consortium, ECEC, an alliance of more than 7,600 early learning programs providing care and education for nearly 800,000 children in 49 states and the District of Columbia.

From 2001 to 2006, Dr. Karolak led the National Childcare Information Center, the largest federal clearinghouse and technical assistance center, focused on child care and early education for low-income families. He has worked closely with states developing the technical aspects of child care assistance programs, quality rating systems, and partnerships across early education programs.

He has conducted policy research and fiscal analysis in the areas of child welfare, child care, and public housing. Dr. Karolak also has served on the boards of a national policy initiative, a nonprofit child care center, a local government agency, and a metropolitan United Way. He is a graduate of the Ohio State University.

Last but not least, Ron Haskins. Dr. Haskins is a senior fellow in the economic studies program and co-director of the Center on Children and Families at the Brookings Institution and is senior consultant at the Annie E. Casey Foundation in Baltimore. He is the author of "Work Over Welfare: The Inside Story of the 1996 Welfare Reform Law," Brookings, 2006.

Prior to joining Brookings and Casey, he spent 14 years on the staff of the House Ways and Means Human Resources Subcommittee, first as welfare counsel to the Republican staff, then as the subcommittee staff director. From 1981 to 1985, he was a senior researcher at the Frank Porter Graham Child Development Center at the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill. He also taught and lectured on history and education at UNC-Charlotte and developmental psychology at Duke University.

Dr. Haskins has edited and co-edited several books and is a contributor to numerous books and scholarly journals on children's development and social policy issues. He holds a bachelor's degree in history, a master's in education, and a Ph.D. in developmental psychology from UNC-Chapel Hill.

Thank you all for being here.

Before we begin, let me briefly explain our lighting system. The light is green when you begin to speak. When you see the yellow light, it means that you have 1 minute remaining. And when the light turns red, your time has expired, and you need to conclude your testimony.

Please be certain as you testify to turn on and speak into the microphone in front of you.

We will now hear from our first witness, Dr. Phillips.

STATEMENT OF DEBORAH PHILLIPS, PH.D., PROFESSOR, PSYCHOLOGY, GEORGETOWN UNIVERSITY

Ms. PHILLIPS. Thank you very much. Those were wonderful supportive opening statements. Thank you so much.

And I am really delighted to be here this morning to talk with you about this topic that I have been studying for 35 years and is very near and dear to my heart, as well as to yours.

In my written testimony, I have three sections where I talk about brain development, trajectories of early achievement, and investments that work. But in my spoken comments, I am going to really focus on brain development and early education, focusing on what we did not know or know very firmly when I last testified for you 7 years ago.

With regard to early brain development, brains are built over time, neural circuits are wired in a bottom-up sequence with simple circuits and skills providing the scaffolding for more advanced circuits and skills, and the capacity for change decreases with age.

From the moment that we are conceived, our brains greedily recruit information from their surrounding environment like a sponge to shape their underlying architecture and neurochemistry. But like a sponge, they are not at all discriminating about what they soak up. If what surrounds them is toxic—prenatal alcohol exposure, child abuse, maternal depression, so on—they will soak this up. If that environment is responsive and stimulating, the brain will absorb this. And no mistake about it, these two brains will look and respond very differently.

This is not a random process. Brain circuits that process basic information, like differentiating the sounds of your native language, are wired earlier than those that process more complex information like learning to read and to write.

Once a circuit is up and operating, it participates in the construction of later developing circuits. A sturdy early foundation leads to a well-functioning efficient brain. A weak early foundation leads to a fragile over or underreactive neural system.

The developing chemistry of the brain also matters greatly. During the infancy, toddler, and preschool years, the brain's stress response system gets calibrated, just like you calibrate the thermostat for your home heating system. Under most circumstances, these systems learn to ramp up very quickly in response to threat and then to ramp back down and return to baseline levels of functioning when the threat has passed.

But under conditions of what we have come to call toxic stress, the architecture and chemistry of the developing brain are disrupted. Not only does the stress system get activated at a lower threshold of stress—in effect, a kitten becomes a tiger—but it has a much harder time calming back down to baseline levels of functioning.

What we see in the short term are children who are highly reactive to stressful events, who have trouble reading social cues, and who interpret social interactions that are otherwise innocent, like a bump in the hallway, in suspicious ways, like a taunt, and they have substantial learning and memory difficulties.

In the longer term, we see greater susceptibility to physical illness and mental health problems.

This is all quite recent work. What is very new and relevant to today's hearing is that child care experiences, especially during the toddler years, appear to affect this developing stress response system.

I am going to jump ahead to early investments, in the interest of time.

The question of whether we can intervene successfully to foster early learning of both cognitive and social skills has been answered in the affirmative and should be put to rest. Evidence from the small modeled, tightly controlled Abecedarian and preschool programs that I am sure you know well has been widely cited. It tells us importantly what is possible.

But this evidence begs the question of whether and how more typical early childhood environments affect important developmental outcomes. Can the levers that can reasonably be pulled by public policy make a meaningful difference in the life chances of young children across the nation? Absolutely. This goes to what is feasible and effective.

Significant variations in the quality of more typical early care and education programs have the potential to produce lasting repercussions for both children and society as a whole. Evidence repeatedly points to beneficial impacts at the highest end of the quality spectrum and to detrimental impacts at the lowest end.

Very recent evidence from research on typical child care settings has linked the healthy or unhealthy development of the stress response system in toddlers and young preschoolers to the amount of attention and stimulation they receive from their child care provider, to the nature of the peer interactions they encounter in child care, and to child-adult ratios.

Combined with children's extensive exposure to child care in the United States, typically starting around 4 months of age, developmental and neuroscientists alike approach child care as a massive sustained intervention in the lives of young children. The U.S. military has figured this out and has supported extensive ongoing training and accreditation of all of its child care programs as pivotal to military preparedness and ensuring a next generation of effective soldiers.

Pre-kindergarten programs represent another form of increasingly typical early childhood education programming. I have been involved in a 5-year-long evaluation of the Tulsa pre-K program which is universal. Seventy percent of 4-year-olds in Oklahoma and in Tulsa go to this program. In brief, three findings that are important to you, and then I will stop if that is all right with you.

Ms. HIRONO. Thank you.

Ms. PHILLIPS. First, students who participated in this Tulsa pre-K program experienced an 8-month gain in their letter-word identification scores, an 8-month gain in their spelling scores, and a 5-month gain in their applied problems or pre-math skills.

Tulsa public schools contracts with Head Start. Head Start has to comply with all of the same quality standards. The children in Head Start experience a 5-month gain in prereading, a 3-month gain in prewriting, a 5-month gain, just like the public school kids, in pre-math. These gains place Tulsa Head Start programs on a par with other states' pre-K programs that have been evaluated.

Why? We cannot say for sure, but they all employ BA-level early childhood credentialed teachers who are paid the same wages as the elementary and secondary teachers in Tulsa.

[The statement of Dr. Phillips follows:]

Prepared Statement of Deborah A. Phillips, Ph.D., Professor, Department of Psychology, Georgetown University

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee, I am delighted to be here this morning to talk with you about Investing in Early Education: Paths to Improving Children's Success. I have had the opportunity to testify for you in the past and it's nice to be back. I also had the opportunity to help plan the Speaker's Summit on America's Children held last May, which addressed many of the issues that are likely to arise here today. I am especially encouraged that both the Summit and your discussion today start with scientific knowledge as your departure point for considering the next policy steps.

I am a developmental psychologist who has studied the effects of early environments on young children for the past 35 years. My central focus has been on early educational settings and their effects on children's well-being and development, including child care, Head Start, and pre-kindergarten programs. Before joining the faculty at Georgetown University in September 2000, I spent seven years at the National Academy of Sciences, the last three of which were devoted to writing the comprehensive report on early development titled, From Neurons to Neighborhoods: The Science of Early Childhood Development. I am now involved with the follow-on to this work under the banner of the National Scientific Council on the Developing Child, which is continuously updating the knowledge base and policy recommendations that we synthesized in Neurons to Neighborhoods. My remarks today will draw heavily upon the work of the Council, as well as upon my own NICHD-funded research on child care, longstanding work with Head Start, and recent multi-year evaluation of the Tulsa, Oklahoma Pre-K program.

There has been a virtual explosion of research in neurobiology and the behavioral and social sciences that bears directly on this hearing. What we now know about the conditions that start children along promising or worrisome pathways is leaps and bounds ahead of where we were even a decade ago. I will focus my remarks on what is new * * * what didn't we know or know firmly when I testified in 2001.

They are directed to three points: (1) Brain Development: Brains soak up the environments around them like a sponge and what they absorb makes the difference between a sturdy or fragile foundation for subsequent development. What is new is that we now understand, in great detail, how this works and what neurological systems and thus which aspects of development are most profoundly affected. (2) Trajectories of Achievement: Income-linked disparities in what children know and can do are clearly evident well before they enter kindergarten and are predictive of later school success and life achievements. The evidence linking a child's location on the early learning curve to his or her trajectory through school and beyond is firmer than ever before, and (3) Investing in Early Education: Children's experiences in early education settings display astonishing variation with significant implications for development. What is new is that we now have documented impacts on early brain development and we know more about the active ingredients of these experiences.

Early Brain Development

Brains are built over time, neural circuits are wired in a bottom-up sequence with simple circuits and skills providing the scaffolding for more advanced circuits and skills over time, and the capacity for change decreases with age.

In the first few years of life, our brains are creating 700 new synapses every second. Synapses are the life-line of our neural systems, supporting communication from one neuron to the next, just like phone lines used to connect one home to another. They determine which neurons are activated (thus, what our brain knows and can do) and how efficiently our brain processes information. From the moment we are conceived, our brains—guided by the instructions provided by our genes—greedily recruit information from their surrounding environment in order to know which synapses to keep and which to discard. The synapses that get activated a lot, whether they are those that establish a well-working or compromised visual system or that tell us to speak English rather than Ukranian or that prime us to be fearful or trusting of others, create the underlying architecture of the developing brain. Those that don't get used, whither away through a process called "pruning".

This is not a random process. Brain circuits that process basic information (like the visual and auditory and motor systems) are wired earlier than those that process more complex information (like reading emotions, or doing algebra, or running a marathon). Once a circuit is up and operating, it participates in the construction of later-developing circuits. The shaping of higher-level circuits thus depends on the successful, strong wiring of the lower-level circuits. A sturdy early foundation leads

to a well-functioning, efficient brain; a weak early foundation leads to a fragile, over- or under-reactive neural system.

The developing chemistry of the brain also matters greatly. Notably, during the infancy, toddler, and preschool years, the brain's stress response system gets calibrated, just like you would calibrate the thermostat for your home heating system. In the first five years of life, these systems learn to ramp up rapidly in the face of stress, and to ramp back down and return to baseline when they have done their job. But, under conditions of what we have come to call toxic stress, such as child abuse or neglect, severe maternal depression, parental substance abuse, or family violence, persistent elevations of stress hormones and altered levels of key brain chemical produce an internal physiological state that disrupts the architecture and chemistry of the developing brain. Not only does the stress system get activated at a lower threshold of stress (e.g., a kitten becomes a tiger), but it has a much harder time calming down to baseline levels of functioning.

Over time, associated disruptions of the immune system and metabolic regulatory functions lead to a lifetime of greater susceptibility to physical illnesses and mental health problems. What we see in the short term are children who are highly reactive to stressful events (that would not bother other children), who have trouble reading social cues and interpret social interactions in "suspicious" ways (e.g., an innocent bump in the hallway becomes a taunt), and who have learning and memory difficulties. This is all quite recent work. What is very new and relevant to today's hearing is that child care experiences, especially during the toddler years, appear to affect this developing system.

Today, we also have a much more nuanced understanding of why early experiences hold a special place in the equation of brain and skills development:

1) When neural circuits are first forming, the molecular and cellular mechanisms that guide neural plasticity are highly active, enabling circuits to undergo substantial changes in architecture, chemistry, and gene expression in response to experience. The information-processing circuits of our young brains are eager to be customized * * * to react to the lessons—both positive and negative—that early life experiences have to teach.

2) It is far easier to form a pattern of connections in a neural circuit that does not already have an established configuration. When a circuit first develops, our genes dictate the blueprint of what goes where, but in a relatively imprecise and weak way. It is the brain activity set in motion by experience that sharpens and strengthens these innate patterns of connection. One these connections stabilize, it is more difficult for subsequence experience to change the initial formation. Early experience trumps later experience.

By the same token, skills beget skills. All capabilities are built on a foundation of capacities that are developed earlier. It follows that:

- Early learning confers value on acquired skills, which lead to self-reinforcing motivation to learn more.
- Early mastery of a range of cognitive, social, and emotional competencies makes learning at later ages more efficient and, therefore, easier and more likely to continue.
- Early intervention, in effect, lowers the cost of later investment.

This is true for the brain and it is true for society. This explains both smart rats and the cost-benefit ratios that are linked to strong early childhood programs. This is why both neuroscientists and economists (and business leaders) have singled out high-quality early education as their best bet for an early investment of public dollars.

Trajectories of Achievement

One of the most significant insights about educational attainment in recent years is that educational outcomes in adolescence and young adulthood can be traced back to capabilities seen during the preschool years and the experiences in and out of the home that foster their development. For example, reading scores in 10th grade can be predicted with surprising accuracy from knowledge of the alphabet at kindergarten entry. Differences in high school completion can be traced back to preschool achievement test scores. Children thus embark on successful or unsuccessful pathways through school during the preschool years. Moving a child who has embarked on a pathway towards failure onto one that guides him or her toward success becomes increasingly difficult and costly over time.

By the preschool years, however, the gap in what children living in impoverished environments and those who escape these environments know and can do has already emerged. Low- and higher-income children are already moving along different trajectories well before school entry, not because their brains are different or because they have different capabilities, but because their early environments in and

out of home do not constitute a level playing field. This is not new knowledge. But, today, we have yet more evidence documenting this troubling fact, we have documented specific deficits not only for early literacy development, but also for early numeracy development, and there are exciting new efforts to develop curricula that address these specific deficits in early learning.

We know, for example, that children living in poverty hear, on average, 300 fewer words per hour than do children in professional families, and these differences predict 3rd grade vocabulary and reading comprehension scores. Children whose mothers have less than a high school degree test, on average, at the 38th percentile in kindergarten-level letter recognition, while those with college-educated mothers test at the 69th percentile. Differences in vocabulary growth between children in low socio-economic households and high socio-economic households begin to appear as early as 18 months, the age at which the "word-learning explosion" (when children learn, on average, 9 words a day) begins.

Low-income children are also not exposed to the board games and other math-related experiences (e.g., Which is bigger? Which pairs of socks go together?) that foster early understanding of numerical concepts. We see the impact in the fact that low-income 5-6 year olds show the same knowledge of numbers as do middle-income 3-4 year olds.

Exacerbating these trends is the fact that children living in poverty who cannot avail themselves of programs such as Head Start are in some of the nation's poorest quality child care settings in which ample and rich language, let alone counting games, are rare to non-existent. Children growing up in working poor and modest income families, who fall between the cracks of eligibility for programs like Head Start and affordability of high-quality child care also experience developmentally stunting early childhood settings.

By age 4 or 5, children all over the world have mastered the fundamental grammatical system of their native language, including verb declensions, gender agreement, embedded clauses, and the like. They can understand other people's points of view, experience emotions that are important to the development of conscience (e.g., shame and guilt), and can sit quietly with a group of children and pay attention for at least brief periods of time. Many preschoolers have also learned amazingly sophisticated numerical and scientific concepts, and love the sense of discovery that comes from acquiring this knowledge. Having entered the crucible of peer groups, on average, by 1½ to 2 years of age, they have also acquired a large repertoire of early social skills * * * or deficits. This fact has led experts in the development of aggressive behavior and delinquency to refer to early childhood experiences as the headwaters of susceptibility to health and mental health problems, aggression, and enduring victimization. There is a great deal at stake here.

Investing in Early Education

The question of whether we can intervene successfully to foster early learning of both cognitive and social skills has been answered in the affirmative and should be put to rest. Evidence from the small, tightly-controlled Abecedarian and Perry Preschool programs has been widely cited. It tells us, importantly, what is possible. But, this evidence begs the question of whether and how more typical early childhood environments affect important developmental outcomes. Can the levers that can reasonably be pulled by public policy make a meaningful difference in the life chances of young children across the nation? Absolutely. This goes to what is feasible and effective.

Significant variations in the quality of more typical early care and education programs have the potential to produce lasting repercussions for both children and society as a whole. Evidence points to beneficial impacts at the highest end of the quality spectrum and to detrimental impacts at the lowest end.

We do, however, have firmer evidence than ever that, for children whose life circumstances lead to greater vulnerability, the nature of their out-of-home experiences is particularly important and the impacts of variation in quality are greater. Combined with children's extensive exposure to child care in the U.S. (starting around 4 months of age on average) and our growing knowledge of environmental influences on early brain development, it is critical to approach child care as a massive, sustained intervention in the lives of young children. From the child's point of view, child care is no less an early intervention program than is the Abecedarian or Perry Preschool program or Head Start program, although most child care settings are not designed or funded with this in mind.

For example, from the NICHD Study of Early Child Care, we have learned that:

• Children in center-based classrooms that were in compliance with American Academy of Pediatrics and American Public Health Association guidelines for ratios, group size, and caregiver training, and whose teachers had a college education per-

formed at age level on a school readiness test, while children from classrooms that did not meet these guidelines performed 14 percentiles below this norm—not an inconsequential gap. This translates into children who know substantially more words, who can correctly identify the letters of the alphabet, can count and can understand instructions on a par with their age group versus children who cannot.

• Not only did higher quality child care—defined by the more proximal indicator of sensitive and stimulating adult-child interaction—predict higher levels of pre-academic skills and language performance during the infant, toddler, and preschool years, but in third grade, higher quality early childhood care continued to be linked to higher scores on standardized tests of math, memory, and vocabulary skills and, the effects on vocabulary endured through sixth grade.

From other child care research, we have recently documented that:

• Quality of child care affects the developing stress response system. Specifically, during the toddler and young preschool years, when the anterior cortical regions of the young brain are undergoing rapid development, exposure to long days in child care with peers can disrupt normal patterns of cortisol (e.g., a stress hormone) metabolism for some children, notably those with more immature social skills and those who experience peer rejection. Importantly, these effects were reduced for children who received high levels of attention and stimulation from their child care providers and who were in programs with smaller peer groups and child-adult ratios. We do not yet know if these findings have long-term consequences or whether they are a blip on the long path to maturity.

Thus, variation in the quality of typical early child care has important and enduring effects on child development. The military has figured this out and has supported extensive, on-going training and accreditation of all of its child care programs as pivotal to military preparedness and ensuring a next generation of effective soldiers.

Pre-Kindergarten programs represent another form of increasingly typical early childhood education programming. I have been involved in a 5-year long evaluation of the universal, school-based pre-kindergarten program in Tulsa, Oklahoma with several colleagues from the Georgetown Public Policy Institute (Professors William Gormley, Ted Gayer, and Carolyn Hill). Oklahoma has the largest pre-kindergarten program in the country, with the highest penetration rates among 4-year olds (currently hovering around 70%), and Tulsa is the largest school district in Oklahoma. Here are some of our latest findings:

• Students who participated in the Tulsa Public Schools (TPS) pre-K program in 2005-06 experienced an 8-month gain in their letter-word identification scores, an 8-month gain in their spelling scores, and a 5-month gain in their applied problems (pre-math) scores, relative to students who had not attended the program. This is the third time we have found significant gains for pre-K students.

• These substantial positive effects characterize Hispanic, African American, White, and Native American children. Similarly, we are documenting sizeable gains for disadvantaged, near-poor, and middle-class children. We have further discovered bigger effects on Spanish-speaking Hispanic students (and children who have a Mexican-born parent) than on English-speaking Hispanic students (and children who have a U.S.-born parent).

• The Tulsa Head Start program, which contracts with the Tulsa Public Schools and must comply with all of their pre-K standards (including a BA-level, credentialed classroom teacher whose wage matches the TPS wage), is also producing substantial learning gains for four-year-olds, though effects are less dramatic than for TPS students. For Head Start, pre-reading skills are boosted by 5 months, pre-writing skills by 3 months and pre-math skills by 5 months. (Note that our research was not designed to make a direct comparison across these two programs (e.g., children were not randomly assigned to TPS and Head Start classrooms) and it is likely that the populations of children served by these two programs differ in meaningful ways.)

• Our data also speak to the issue of universal versus targeted preschool. Specifically, the presence of middle-class peers has positive effects on the cognitive development of disadvantaged children. Effects are much more noticeable in half-day classrooms, where students are more heterogeneous socio-economically.

Why do we get these powerful effects, which are surprisingly comparable to those found for the Abecedarian and Perry Preschool programs? We have begun to address this question and can point to a few clues:

First, the Tulsa pre-K program's classroom quality is superior to other school-based pre-kindergarten programs on multiple measures and the Tulsa Head Start program's classroom quality is superior to other Head Start programs on multiple measures. It is probably not coincidental that every pre-K program—whether TPS or Head Start—must employ a BA-level teacher with an early childhood credential,

sustain a classroom size of no more than 20 students, and employ an assistant teacher to establish a 1:10 teacher:student ratio. It is a mixed delivery system (although the vast share of pre-K classrooms are in the public schools), but not with mixed quality standards. Every child is guaranteed a floor of quality below which his or her classroom will not fall, and it is a relatively high floor.

Second, Tulsa pre-K teachers (in TPS and Head Start classrooms) are paid at the same level, with the same benefits, as elementary school teachers in Tulsa, so there is no incentive for the best teachers to migrate to elementary classrooms if they don't want to. As in elementary education, wages and working conditions affect our ability to attract and retain the very best teachers. I strong suggest that these incentives be a centerpiece of your policy discussions.

Third, as we've begun to look at what predicts higher quality interactions and more time on instruction in the pre-K classrooms, cutting across TPS and Head Start programs, the important elements that are emerging are: (a) the teacher's classroom experience, (b) the teacher's Grade Point Average in college, (c) and reliance on a relatively structured, clearly paced curriculum (perhaps especially for children who have not been exposed to early learning opportunities at home). As a next step, we will be examining which elements of classroom experience and teacher qualifications predict the students' test scores.

Conclusions and Implications

What can we conclude from this work on typical early childhood programs about the wisest investments in early education? Neuroscience and economic evidence point to investments in high-quality early childhood programs as a promising avenue for fostering healthy development, a strong start in school, and, ultimately a productive citizenry. Developmental and education science point to specific avenues for ensuring that these investments fulfill their promise.

First, what happens inside the classroom door, whether it is called child care or Head Start or pre-K, is where the action is. Mixed delivery systems are fine, they are the norm, and they offer working parents the range of options they need. The challenge is one of ensuring equity of access to developmentally-supportive educational and social experiences for all children across these systems. This is an especially compelling message having just celebrated Martin Luther King's birthday. Today, poor children, who are disproportionately children of color, are not treated equitably in our early childhood system. This involves looking across child care, early education, and Head Start legislation to begin the task of ensuring that each strand of funding supports the healthy development and early education of young children—not in a cookie-cutter way, but to the same extent. In this context, the disparity between the 4% set-aside for quality improvements in the Child Care and Development Block Grant and the 40% set-aside in Head Start is impossible to justify. Young children and notably young children's brains are blind to these distinctions. They have the same needs whether they walk through a door labeled Head Start, Pre-Kindergarten, or Sally's Super child care center or Hannah's Happy child care home.

Second, classrooms that work depend on well-designed curricula based on the latest knowledge about how children learn and develop, and on a qualified and stable workforce of early childhood teachers who know how to bring these curricula to life to foster early learning and development. Programs that show promising evidence of success with low-income preschoolers, in particular, blend age-appropriate content tied to what children are ready to learn with forms of instruction that transmit this content in ways that excite and motivate young children. A curriculum is only worth the paper it is printed on unless it penetrates the classroom and affects the quality of teaching that children receive every day. National concern has galvanized around teacher shortages, large class sizes, and poor teaching quality at the elementary level. Comparable concerns need to be directed at the preschool level.

Third, teaching quality depends on the teacher and his or her working conditions. This is precisely why we require elementary school teachers to have Bachelor's degrees, specialized training, and a teaching credential. Yet, the vast majority of preschool children are in programs and settings with adults who have little more than a high school education and a fingerprint that clears them of a criminal record. You have addressed this in the Head Start program and I applaud your efforts. While there is no magic in a B.A. or a credential, they do increase the odds that children in Head Start will be exposed to the kinds of early learning environments that will get them ready for both the cognitive and behavioral demands of school. But, there is large variation among teachers with all of these qualification and so the next step is to ensure that the best teachers who want to teach young children are drawn into and retained in early child classrooms. As Oklahoma discovered, this involves minimizing the separation between preschool and elementary education policies, perhaps

especially with regard to wages, benefits, and working conditions. I hope you will keep this in mind as you embark on re-authorizing No Child Left Behind. You have a rare opportunity, in this legislation, to support state efforts and research aimed at building effective early childhood programs and to ensure that these mostly-fledgling programs, like the brain, are built on a sturdy—rather than a fragile—foundation of effective and committed teachers, age-appropriate instruction that instills knowledge and excitement in young children, and equity of access to these opportunities.

Thank you very much for this opportunity to testify. I'd be happy to answer any questions today and in the crucial months that lie ahead.

[Additional submission from Dr. Phillips follows:]

January 30, 2008.

Hon. GEORGE MILLER, *Chairman,*
Committee on Education and Labor, U.S. House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRMAN MILLER: I am writing to clarify comments I made at the hearing on Investing in Early Education: Paths to Improving Children's Success regarding financing for early education. In response to a question, I noted that we are spending billions of dollars on child care and early education in this country ($24.8 billion of federal and state dollars according to the testimony provided by Dr. Haskins—and this does not include the Dependent Care Tax Credit or Dependent Care Assistance Plans) and posed a hypothetical question regarding the return on investment these dollars are reaping. In this context, I noted that "* * * the challenge is not spending more money; it is spending what we have wisely."

To clarify, this statement expresses my concern about existing federal and state early childhood programs that all too often do not put children first; that do not invest in early education in ways that have been proven repeatedly to foster early learning and development. Consider the Child Care and Development Block Grant that requires only that funded providers have a fingerprint that clears them of a criminal record. This stands in start contrast to the Head Start program, in which your reauthorizing legislation supports enhanced teacher education, training, compensation, and career ladders.

These disparities fly in the face of what we now know about both early brain development and the ingredients of early education programs that promote school readiness, as described in my testimony. This is the context in which I expressed my concern about adding funding to these programs as presently configured, rather than using what we are spending to ensure that all children receive developmentally beneficial, effective care and education, whether funded via the CCDBG or Head Start or any other public "early education" program. From the child's standpoint, the funding stream is irrelevant. What matters is what happens once he or she walks through the door. This mirrors the recommendation made in Neurons to Neighborhoods regarding child care and early education, which involved "reviewing the entire portfolio of public investments in child care and early education" to "ensure the following priorities: (a) that young children's needs are met through sustained relationships with qualified caregivers, (b) that the special needs of children with developmental disabilities or chronic health conditions are addressed, and (c) that the settings in which children spent their time are safe, stimulating, and compatible with the values and priorities of their families."

There is no question that your goal of supporting the kinds of preschool education that will ensure that all children are ready for school will require an infusion of new funding. The Committee on Economic Development has estimated that full-day, full-year universal high-quality preschool (not including infants and toddlers) will require $38.7 billion in new funding (Committee on Economic Development, 2006). I cannot imagine a more credible estimate of necessary new funding. And, I cannot imagine a more proven, cost-effective vehicle for ensuring that young children receive a solid foundation for early learning, a firm hand hold toward this nation's promise of equal opportunity, and the start they need to help America compete in a global market as they grow up.

I am very grateful to have had this opportunity to testify before you. I would be happy to address any questions you have as you continue the remarkably important work of the Committee.

Sincerely yours,

DEBORAH A. PHILLIPS, PH.D.,
Professor of Psychology and Public Policy, Georgetown University.

Ms. HIRONO. Thank you.
Ms. Priestly?

STATEMENT OF KATHLEEN PRIESTLY, EARLY EDUCATION COORDINATOR, ORANGE CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT

Ms. PRIESTLY. Thank you, Ms. Hirono and members of the committee.

I am proud to represent the New Jersey educators who have passionately worked for universal access to high-quality preschool education programs. As we have all said, we know that children who attend preschool education programs that meet high standards will experience greater success in elementary school and well beyond.

In my 30 years of work as a teacher of young children in general and special education, as a staff developer, and in my work at the Office of Early Childhood Education, my primary responsibilities there included the coordination and delivery of professional development for preschool teacher leaders, which had a big impact on all of our children, and I also provided implementation support to local district professionals.

I experienced the growing pains of our preschool movement from all angles, but I truly have seen the remarkable benefits from high-quality preschool. The 33,000 residents in my district include 75 percent African-American children, 13 percent white, and 12 percent Hispanic, the vast majority from low-income families. I oversee the education of 765 3-and 4-year-olds in multiage inclusive classrooms at 10 different sites.

The Orange Board of Education offers preschool education through a mixed delivery system that includes classrooms in public school buildings, at Head Start facilities, and private child care centers. We contract with Head Start and child care providers partly because of space constraints, but more importantly because we appreciated the experience of the existing local Head Start and child care providers. Our district applies the same high standards to classrooms at all of these sites.

Preschool education in Orange is now looked upon as part of a continuum of early childhood education, preschool to grade 3, and part of the larger whole school reform plan for preschool to grade 12.

Since the initiatives have been put into place, Orange has experienced remarkable growth and achievement. Five years ago in 2002, only 55 percent of our fourth-graders scored proficient on New Jersey's state test of literacy. Now, in 2007, 83 percent scored proficient, a 50 percent increase overall. Similarly, in math in 2002, 37 percent were proficient, while in 2007, this increased to 86 percent, a 70 percent increase.

This improvement in test scores corresponds to improvements in access and quality of preschool education for our children. These scores are comparable to districts throughout the state, many serving more advantaged families and some right in our neighboring communities.

In addition to the evidence of this progress, we have results of a statewide evaluation on the effects of providing increased access to high-quality preschool and children's achievement in kindergarten and first grade in districts similar to ours across New Jer-

sey. The National Institute for Early Education Research at Rutgers University has found that the pre-K group made substantially larger gains in language, literacy, and math than did children who did not attend pre-K, and gains from 2 years of pre-K beginning at age 3 were nearly double for language and 70 percent larger for math.

In addition, parents tell me stories regularly about what their children have learned, and kindergarten teachers and principals marvel at the difference between the children who have attended and those who have not.

But how are we achieving these results? Recently, on visits to some of my preschool classrooms, I was extremely proud to see children engaged with materials and interacting with their peers in well-organized learning environments. I saw teachers supporting and stimulating children throughout their group times and individual work.

The children were learning about the physical properties of liquids and solids, talking about sounds that were in the nursery rhyme they read, graphing how many children were in class and how many were absent, discussing how many blocks they would need to carry out their plan to build a castle, and signing in to work at the computer.

This learning went way beyond the traditional academics and included learning to think ahead, negotiate play with others, take turns, and solve conflicts with the help of their teachers.

We did not achieve this, though, without some critical components, the most important of which is that the child comes first in every decision. Our preschool teachers are college educated and hold state licenses in early childhood education, and they receive the same pay as any public school teacher, regardless of where they work. They understand child development and the components of high-quality preschool education.

We implement a comprehensive research-based curriculum that emphasizes teaching to the whole child—cognitive, social, physical, and emotional. We have small class sizes of 15 with a teacher and an assistant. We provide mentoring to new teachers to support their success as they learn to individualize strategies to maximize children's learning. We involve parents and help parents receive social services when needed.

We engage in systematic planning and evaluation at every level—the child, the classroom, the center, the district, and the state—to strengthen what works best and improve what did not. In addition to adequate financial support from the state, we benefit from regular implementation support from the Department of Education both of which are crucial to our success.

Given the clear and impressive success of this and other preschools throughout the nation, I would recommend that NCLB reauthorization recognize the benefits of a high-quality education for young children and include a preschool education component.

Further, I recommend that the committee immediately take steps to help states increase preschool education access and quality.

I applaud all three pieces of legislation currently being considered for their strong provisions to help states implement high-qual-

ity programs and their rigorous attention to the elements that make these programs so beneficial for young children. Pre-K legislation would mark a major accomplishment for this committee as states across the country struggle to raise or maintain the quality of their programs in spite of impending deficits and as several governors have put their administrations on the line on behalf of pre-K.

This investment can literally change children's lives. I have spent my entire career in the field of early childhood education, and I cannot think of any other better use of our tax dollars.

Thank you.

[The statement of Ms. Priestly follows:]

Testimony of Kathleen Dunn Priestley

Before the

Committee on Education and Labor

U.S. House of Representatives

January 23, 2008

Mr. Chairman, members of the Committee…

I am Kathleen Priestley, Supervisor of Early Childhood Education for the Orange, NJ Public Schools. I am proud to represent the New Jersey educators who have passionately worked for universal access to high-quality preschool education programs.

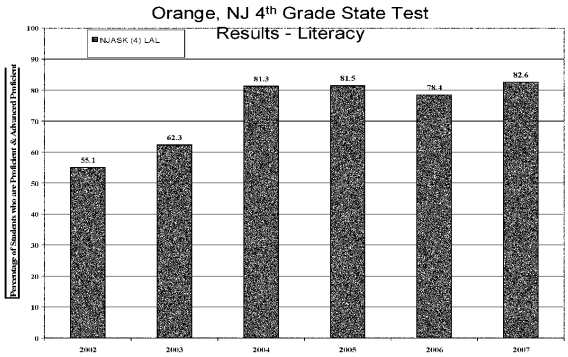
We know that children who attend preschool education programs that meet high standards will experience greater success in elementary school and well-beyond.

For more than 30 years I've worked as a teacher of young children in both general and special education, as a staff developer/ teacher trainer in a large urban public school district in NJ and at the state Office of Early Childhood Education. My primary responsibilities at the New Jersey Department of Education included the coordination and delivery of Professional Development for preschool teacher leaders; and implementation support to local district professionals. I experienced the growing pains but I truly have seen the remarkable benefits from high quality preschool!

The City of Orange's 33,000 people includes 75% African American children; 13%White and 12% Hispanic, the vast majority from low-income families. I oversee the education of 765 3- and 4-year- old children in multi-age inclusive classrooms in ten

different sites. The Orange Board Of Education offers preschool education through a mixed-delivery system that includes classrooms at public school buildings, at Head Start facilities and private child care centers. We contract with Head Start and child care providers partly because of space constraints, but more importantly because we appreciated the experience of the existing local Head Start, and child care providers. Our district applies the same high standards to classrooms at all the sites. Preschool education in Orange is now looked upon as part of a continuum of Early Childhood Education Preschool to Grade 3 and part of the larger Whole School Reform plan for Preschool to Grade 12.

Since the initiatives have been put into place, Orange has experienced remarkable growth in achievement. Five years ago, in 2002, only 55% of our 4th Graders scored "proficient" on New Jersey's Statewide Test of literacy. Now, in 2007, 83% scored proficient- a 50% increase overall. Similarly, in Math in 2002, 37% were proficient, while in 2007, this increased to 86%- a 70% increase. This improvement in test scores corresponds to improvements in access and quality of preschool education for our children. These scores are comparable to districts throughout the state, many serving more advantaged families and some right in our neighboring communities.


Orange, NJ 4th Grade State Test Results - Literacy
NJASK (4) LAL
Percentage of Students who are Proficient & Advanced Proficient
100
90
80
70
60
50
40
30
20
10
0
55.1
62.3
81.3
81.5
78.4
82.6
2002
2003
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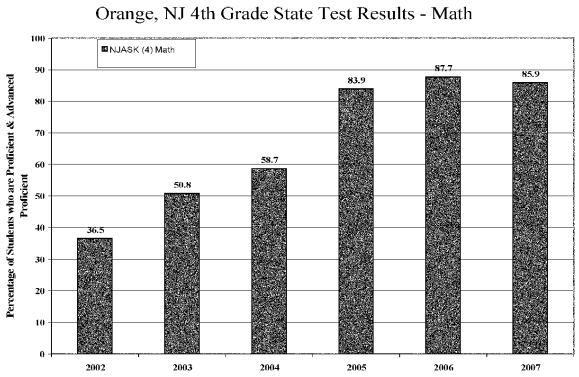
2007


Orange, NJ 4th Grade State Test Results - Math
NJASK (4) Math
Percentage of Students who are Proficient & Advanced Proficient
100
90
80
70
60
50
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30
20
10
0
36.5
50.8
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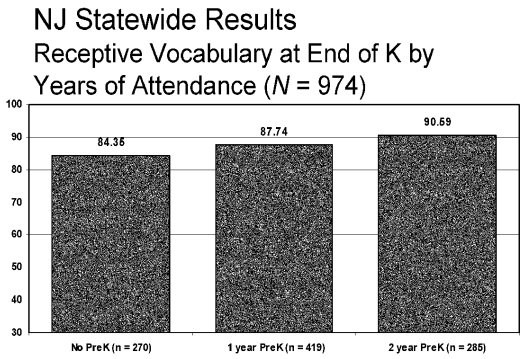
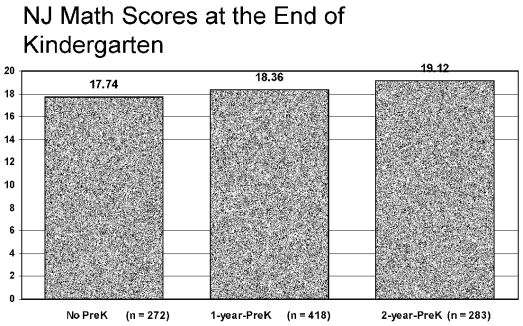
85.9
2002
2003
2004
2005
2006
2007

In addition to the evidence of this remarkable progress, we have results of a statewide evaluation of the effects of providing increased access to high quality preschool education on children's achievement in kindergarten and first grade in districts similar to ours across New Jersey. The National Institute for Early Education Research at Rutgers University has found that

- The pre-K group made substantially larger gains in language, literacy, and math than did children who did not attend pre-K and
- Gains from two years of pre-K beginning at age 3 were nearly double for language and 70% larger for math.



Frede, et al, 2007 NIEER.ORG



Frede, et al, 2007 NIEER.ORG

In addition, parents regularly tell me stories about what their children have learned and kindergarten teachers and principals marvel at the difference between children who have attended preschool and those who have not.

How are we achieving these remarkable results? Recently, on visits to preschool classrooms in my district, I was extremely proud to see children engaged with materials and interacting with their peers in well-organized learning environments. I saw teachers supporting and stimulating children throughout their group times and individual work. The children were learning about the physical properties of liquids and solids; talking about which sounds were the same in the nursery rhyme that they read; graphing how many children were in class and how many were absent; discussing how many blocks they would need to carry out their plan to build a castle and signing in to work at the

computer. This learning went beyond the traditional academics and included learning to think ahead, negotiate play with others, taking turns, and solving conflicts with help from the teacher.

We didn't achieve this without some critical components. The most important of which is that the child comes first in every decision.

- Our preschool teachers are college-educated and hold state licenses in early child education AND they receive the same pay as any public school teacher regardless of where they work.
- They understand child development and the components of high quality preschool education.
- We implement a comprehensive research-based curriculum that emphasizes teaching to the whole child-cognitive, social, physical and emotional.
- We have small class sizes of only 15 with a teacher and an assistant.
- We provide mentoring to new teachers to support their success as they learn to individualize strategies to maximize children's learning.
- We involve parents and help parents receive social services if needed,
- We engage in systematic planning and evaluation at every level- the child, the classroom, the center, the district, the state- to strengthen what worked best and improve what didn't.
- In addition to adequate financial support from the state, we benefit from regular implementation support from the Department of Education both of which are crucial to our success.

Given the clear and impressive success of this and other preschools throughout the nation, I would recommend that NCLB reauthorization recognize the benefits of a high quality education for young children and include a preschool education component. Further, I recommend that the Committee immediately take steps to help states increase preschool education access and quality. I applaud all three pieces of legislation currently being considered for their strong provisions to help states implement high quality programs and their rigorous attention to the elements that make these programs so beneficial for young children. Pre-K legislation would mark a major accomplishment for this committee as states across the country struggle to raise or maintain the quality of their programs in spite of impending deficits, and as several governors have put their administrations on the line on behalf of pre-K.

This investment can literally change children's lives. I have spent my entire career in the field of early childhood education and I can think of no better use of tax dollars.

Thank you.

7

Ms. HIRONO. Thank you.
Ms. Chun?

STATEMENT OF ELISABETH CHUN, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, GOOD BEGINNINGS ALLIANCE

Ms. CHUN. Aloha. It is a pleasure and an honor to be here today to present to this committee on the importance of early education. I will give Hawaii's perspective on an issue, and I come with a strong belief that there is a great potential for our nation when we focus our resources on our youngest children.

The Good Beginnings Alliance was created in 1997 to provide leadership in our state and our communities around early child-

hood education because we believe we need to have an integrated early childhood system, first to five, that supports parent choice and also supports quality early education programs from family child care, from center-based, and on to something called family-child interaction, which happens in our communities where parents come with their children and learn at the same time.

I was just on the Island of Kona last weekend, and I was driving down to a beach community where there, I could see, were no preschools, and I was wondering what happens to the young children in these communities before they come to kindergarten, and as I was leaving that road, I looked up and there was a sign that said, "Come register for Keiki Steps." That is one of our major programs that invites parents of young children to come with a quality early education educator to learn how they can best support their children's learning. This is what this is all about.

As states strive to implement quality early education programs, the results of this investment are apparent, but few states and communities have the resources necessary to deliver high-quality programs. They need support to increase the quality of programs as well as making programs affordable to our families.

Right now, I would like to encourage and support and thank Congresswoman Hirono for the Pre-K Now Act, which provides incentives for states to ensure that, as they rush to increase capacity, they also address the quality of early childhood programs.

We also know that states face specific challenges in developing early childhood educators. We have a lack of early childhood teachers, and we are very pleased at the recent loan forgiveness fund for early educators, and we encourage them also to focus on expanding access to early childhood courses.

From the Hawaii perspective again, we have been a leader in early education. In 1943, we were among the first states to implement statewide public free kindergarten for all 5-year-old children. That came with the acknowledgement that education must begin early and that our economy depended upon a strong future workforce, and our current workforce depended upon families who knew that their children were in strong early learning environments while they were working.

We are now grappling with how do we support children under the age of 5. Forty percent of our current families with young children cannot afford preschool attendance, and we know that those programs that receive federal and state subsidies now have long waiting lists. If our families are to work and to support their families, they need safe, quality places for their children in order to make sure that they lift themselves out of poverty.

We are also so concerned about Gap Group families, those families which do not qualify for early education programs with federal or state subsidies, but yet cannot afford preschool tuition. They often have to make choices of programs that are not always stable or in places that are not stable and of unknown quality.

We have made progress in Hawaii. In 2001, the Pre Plus program, which was envisioned by our then Lieutenant Governor Mazie Hirono, implemented state-funded preschool facilities on elementary school campuses. This program, now known as Pre Plus, built 16 programs on elementary school sites. This is a public-pri-

vate partnership; private programs run the programs that are located on elementary schools. Over 300 children are now served by these programs.

We know more investment is needed. In my testimony, you will see that in our outlying areas especially, over half the children of low-income do not have access to programs, and if we would develop those programs, we do not have capacity yet to fund places for those children.

We also know, as we are developing right now our Keiki First Early Childhood Program, that when we look to expand our early childhood programs, we need more teachers. If we are to serve 80 percent of our 4-year-old children, we know we need to double our current workforce. We need 370 new early education teachers, and 310 of our existing teachers will require more education, and 200 need to go from an associate's degree to a bachelor's degree.

So I will end where I began, in that we do need federal support for early education in our state. We need to help our teachers maintain scholarships and loan forgiveness. We need to help our universities create incentives for early education programs, and we need to help our early education programs maintain quality.

Our Keiki First program estimates that $170 million will be needed annually in order to support a 4-year-old program. That is for direct services and other programs. I urge you to consider your ability to support the state's expansion of quality.

Thank you.

[The statement of Ms. Chun follows:]

Prepared Statement of Elisabeth Chun, Executive Director, Hawaii Good Beginnings Alliance

As Executive Director of Hawaii's Good Beginnings Alliance I am honored to present testimony as to the importance of investing in early education as a critical path to improving children's success. I bring Hawaii's perspective on this issue and a strong belief that there is a great potential benefit to our nation when we focus our resources on children.

The Good Beginnings Alliance (GBA) is a statewide, non-profit, community organization created in 1997 by the Hawaii State Legislature (Act 77) to provide state and community leadership for the development of an integrated early childhood system in Hawaii.

Since 1997, Good Beginnings Alliance as Hawaii's designated early childhood intermediary organization has followed its mission to ensure that all of Hawaii's children are safe, healthy and ready to succeed by shaping public will and public policy; mobilizing action; and maximizing resources. Our goal is to improve results for young children birth through the first eight years of life—the most critical time of a child's life.

GBA as an organization has 14-member Board of Directors representing each county (Big Island, Kauai, Maui, and Oahu), business, philanthropy, early childhood and early care (ECEC) professionals, consumer of ECEC services, health, resource and referrals, the University of Hawaii, early intervention, Head Start, and the Interdepartmental Council.

The board's composition encourages a public-private partnership in order to collaborate and pool local resources to meet defined needs. The partnership works together to support local community planning efforts, develop policy, build a sustainable resource base, coordinate the early childhood education system, and advocate for comprehensive services for children and families.

Why Quality is Important

Brain research now tells us that children begin their learning even before they are born and that nearly 85% of a child's intellect, personality and social skills are developed by the time a child is five years of age.

It is evident that by age six years there are large and preventable gaps between the development and academic abilities of high and low income children. Research

has shown that high quality early childhood education programs make a difference in the educational, social, emotional, and physical outcomes, especially for high-risk, low-income children. As researchers and noted economics have demonstrated, investing in our youngest children's quality early experiences has short and long term savings for us as a society.

As more states strive to implement quality early learning programs, the results of this investment are apparent. High quality child care, Head Start and Early Head Start, and other early childhood learning experiences exist, but few states and communities have a large supply of high quality programs because resources remain hugely inadequate both for quality of the program and to keep programs affordable for families.

What do we mean by quality? There is no single component, just as children do not develop in silos of cognitive, social, emotional and physical development. What we do know from research on programs such as the child care in Abecedarian, the preschool programs of High Scope, and high quality state prekindergarten programs is that there must be in place standards for programs, such as accreditation and Head Start program performance standards, and standards for children's learning and development, such as state early learning standards and the Head Start Child Outcomes Framework, the model for many states' standards. Specifically in a program we know there must be:

- Teachers with education, including ongoing professional development, that allows them to select and use appropriate curriculum to individualize instruction to support children meeting the state's early learning standards and to support children's social and emotional development;
- Learning environments with appropriate teacher-child ratios and groups size, health and safety conditions met, and developmentally appropriate materials for important play and instruction; and
- For those children who need more services, the availability and collaboration with health, social services, and other supports for them and their families;

We also know from the research of programs that had long-term outcomes for the participating children that quality does not come cheaply, regardless of the setting of the program. If we care enough to invest in the education of our young children it will make a life-long difference for them and for all of us.

Critical Role of Federal Support

The federal investment in early childhood education is critical. The federal Child Care & Development Block Grant provides most of the funding for child care assistance as well as quality initiatives for all programs regardless of the family's income, such as licensing, professional development and education scholarships, and resource and referral. Head Start and Early Head Start are key programs in our states, and yet many eligible children are unable to attend for lack of funding. Special education for infants, toddlers and preschoolers has had its funding cut at the federal level. These programs provide the foundation for early childhood education in Hawaii as in every state, and yet none have had a significant increase in funds for six years. Given what we know from the research on the value of the investment in high quality early childhood programs, they should be made Congress' first priority for increased investment starting now.

While increased federal funding is a top priority, I know that this is not the appropriations committee. It is also important to look for new ways to encourage states to focus on quality. This is especially crucial right now, as state policy makers are feeling political pressure to serve more children. Legislation such as Congresswoman Hirono's PRE-K Act would provide incentives for states to ensure that as they rush to expand capacity, they do not do it at the expense of quality.

One of the specific challenges states are facing around the country (including Hawaii) is a lack of qualified early education teachers. I am encouraged by the actions this Committee has already taken this year to provide loan forgiveness for early educators, and encourage you to continue to focus on increasing access to training in the field of Early Childhood Education.

Hawaii's Progress and Challenges

I'd like to take a moment now to talk from a state perspective. Hawaii was an early leader in the promotion of early education. Led by advocacy from our philanthropic leaders, Hawaii in 1943 was one of the first states to implement a full day public kindergarten program for all five year old children. This action was prompted by the acknowledgement that children's educational journey must begin early and that our Hawaii economy depended upon an educated future workforce and a current workforce that could be confident that its youngest children were in the best nurturing environment while the parents worked.

Today we, like many states, are grappling with how to best serve our children in the years before kindergarten. Almost 40% of our young children live in families who cannot afford to send their children to early education programs. The early childhood programs that do receive federal and state subsidies—such as Head Start—are filled to capacity and have waiting lists. This is troubling because low-income families require this support for their youngest children if they are to seek employment and lift themselves out of poverty.

We also recognize an increase in the number of "gap group" families. These parents earn too much to qualify for federal or state need-based subsidies or programs such as Head Start, and yet do not earn enough to pay for preschool tuition. Their choices of placements for young children are limited, often not stable, and of unknown quality.

We have made some progress in increasing capacity. The 2001 Legislature with the support of then Lieutenant Governor Mazie Hirono allocated $5 million dollars for the biennium to build preschool facilities on elementary school campuses. This program known as Pre Plus is now a very successful public/private partnership. Private agencies are contracted to operate the preschool programs on public school land. PrePlus resulted in the construction of 16 new preschool sites allowing over 300 preschool children to be served.

Hawaii is also envisioning its four year old program to be available in three different types of settings: center-based preschool; family child care; and family child interaction learning programs in which the adult caregiver remains with the child and also receives education as how best to support the child's learning.

But even with the three options, more investment is needed if we are to accommodate the growing demand for early education. We must increase the capacity of the current system to address the expanded need for early education programs, as the graphs attached show. One illustrates the number of low-income four year olds now receiving subsidized preschool or tuition payments as well as the estimated percentage of four year olds that could be served in 2009 given Hawaii's current capacity by school district. Both of these graphs demonstrate the lack of enrollment for our low-income children as well as the lack of capacity to increase enrollment.

Of course, preschool is about more than just providing a safe place for children while parents work. In Hawaii, as in states across the country, we are constantly struggling to improve academic achievement. We know that young children are entering kindergarten not prepared for success in school. The 2007 Hawai'i State School Readiness Assessment report reflects that only one out of every five children entering kindergarten classes possessed adequate early literacy skills. And, in 70% of these classes the majority of entering kindergarteners did not possess skills in critical pre-math concepts.

While 61% of entering kindergarten children attended some preschool or formal early learning experiences before kindergarten, a significant percentage of children had no such experience. In Hawaii, we estimate that 5,530 four year old children are currently not being served in any type of program.

Even for those children lucky enough to attend preschool, the quality of their early education programs is not even. In Hawaii we estimate that 6950 children are currently in programs that need quality improvements to instruction and program. Approximately 22% of our preschool programs are nationally accredited mostly by the National Association for the Education of Young Children. Hawaii has been fortunate to have an ongoing mentoring program for early childhood programs seeking National Association for the Education of Young Children accreditation. However, Hawaii needs new investment to encourage programs to seek such accreditation and to gradually address program improvements leading to higher quality.

Hawaii, like other states, recognizes that we need early childhood teachers who are well-prepared and qualified to teach and inspire others to follow their path. I do not want to imply that we have not made progress in this area—we have. But there is still substantial room for improvement. In order to deliver quality early education services to the over 83,000 children under six years of age in Hawaii, our current teacher resources are woefully lacking. .

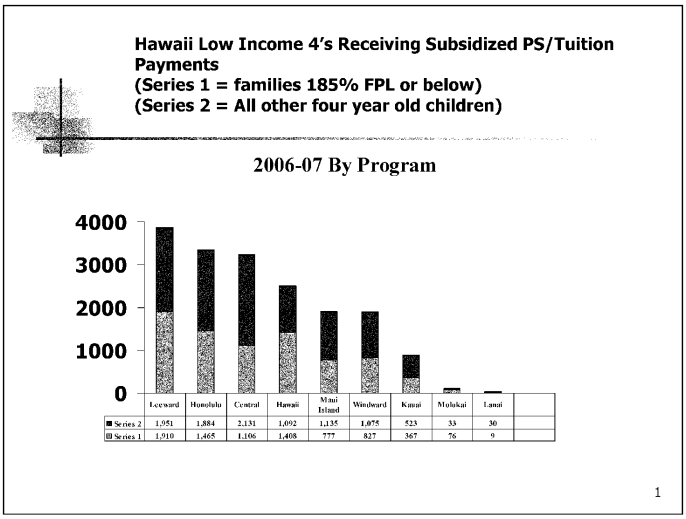
In order for Hawaii to serve 80% of its four year old children in an early education experience with a teacher who has a bachelor's degree and training in early education, 370 new early education teachers need to be recruited and trained with an additional 470 new recruits for associate teachers. Furthermore, 310 of our existing teachers will require more early childhood education courses, and 200 existing teachers will need to attain a bachelor's degree. These numbers may sound small to those of you from larger states, but consider this: we essentially need to double our early childhood educator workforce immediately if we are to provide universal, voluntary four year old program.

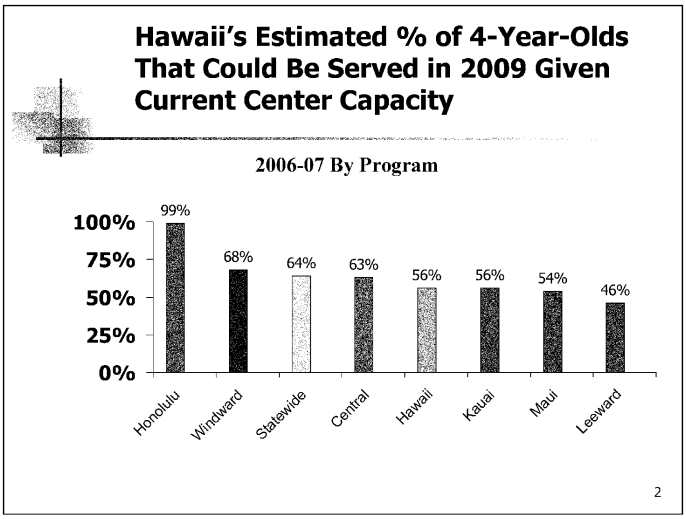
This brings me back to where I began my testimony: the need for new federal support. Our teachers will need scholarships and loan forgiveness. Our public universities will need incentives to provide expanded access to early childhood education courses. Our early childhood programs will need quality improvement funding.

Hawaii's early learning community, plus business and state and county departments have come together in a legislatively created Early Learning Task Force to describe the needs and recommend solutions for Hawaii's early education system. This Task Force's plan "Keiki First" estimates that Hawaii will need $170 million annually to deliver a quality early learning program to approximately 12,640 four year olds. This figure includes funds for direct services, infrastructure, and capitol investment for facilities. Every state is working to make these large scale investments—some are further along than others—but as we—the advocates—push the states to fund these crucial programs, we need federal support as well.

Our children, and ultimately our communities and our country, will benefit greatly from a visionary and holistic approach to expanded federal support for quality early education.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify, and I look forward to answering any questions you might have.





Ms. HIRONO. Thank you.
Mr. Kolb?

STATEMENT OF CHARLES KOLB, PRESIDENT, COMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Mr. KOLB. Thank you very much, Madam Chairman.

I would like to thank you and the fellow members of your committee for focusing on the importance of early education.

' First, a little bit about the Committee for Economic Development. We are a business-led public policy organization with over 200 senior business leaders from across the country and about 25 university presidents who make up our board of trustees, and it is our trustees who decide to get engaged in issues, such as campaign finance reform, health care, globalization and trade and, of course, education, which has been one of our major projects really for much of our now 66-year history.

Some of you will remember that in 1989, the first President Bush convened a summit in Charlottesville with just about all of the nation's governors, and out of that Charlottesville education summit, with bipartisan leadership from then Governor Bill Clinton, Governor Roy Romer, and others, came a series of six national education goals, and these arose in the first Bush administration, and they were continued through the entire Clinton administration, and one of those goals—I believe the first goal—was that, by the year 2000, all of our children—not some, but all of our children—would arrive at school ready to learn. It did not happen. You have to ask yourself why it did not happen.

Well, when CED 6 years ago went into the issue of early education reform, we began with that question, why didn't it happen and what would it take to make it happen, and beginning in 2002, we produced two reports.

The first was called "Preschool for All: Investing in a Productive and Just Society," and I believe that the day we released this report, we came up to the Congress and met with Senator Kennedy and also with Congressman Castle to talk about the importance of investing in early education.

In 2006, we released our second report, "The Economic Promise of Investing in High-Quality Preschool." Now we are a business group, and we chose that word "investing" for a reason, because business leaders understand that if you make the right investments at the front end, you tend to get better results in the future. Or to put it differently, a business leader who has a problem with his or her product or service does not fix it at the end, does not fix it in the middle. They fix it up front, and there is a reason for doing that.

We have tried over the last several years to explain, really to explore deeply, the issue of the economic returns to these front-end investments in early education. Now, you know, we often like to tease the French for a variety of reasons—and they are teasable—but they get it right. If you look at how France as a country invests in early education, they get it right. The British get it right.

But when you look at where the United States of America, the richest country ever in the history of the world, if you look at where we stand in the OECD rankings, we are not first. We are

not fifth. We are not 10th. We are near the bottom. Why is that? You get out what you put in.

And so our effort over the last several years has really been to try and influence the debate so that more and more people in this country, including leaders in the Congress, will focus on the importance of these front-end investments.

We have a problem in this country when it comes to making investment decisions. We have triple deficits, trade, budget, savings. We do not invest enough in our infrastructure. We do not invest enough in foreign languages. Oddly, we overinvest when it comes to caloric consumption. That is why we have an obesity epidemic.

But we do not seem to be able to get these investment issues right from the start, and I would hope that one of the things that your committee can do—and your fellow colleagues in the country—is to demonstrate the leadership that we need to make these investments in early education a national priority. In my view, if you want the No Child Left Behind Act to succeed, whatever you think of it, if you want it to succeed, it is not going to get there unless you get it right up front. I mean, when you go to test the fourth-graders and the eighth-graders, if these young people have not gotten what they need up front, you are not going to be getting 100 percent proficiency.

So let me conclude by asking you to help this country make early childhood education the number one domestic priority. Investing in our children is not only the right thing to do, it is investing in our future and it is investing in our democracy. CED, as a group of business and academic leaders, is ready to help.

Thank you very much.

[The statement of Mr. Kolb follows:]

Prepared Statement of Charles E.M. Kolb, President, Committee for Economic Development

Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee, thank you for this opportunity to present the views of the Committee for Economic Development on the importance of early education to ensure our country's economic competitiveness and growth.

CED was founded in 1942 by a group of business leaders and university presidents who were deeply concerned about the postwar economy. Our founding Trustees were worried about the ability of the U.S. economy to evolve from a wartime to a peacetime footing without experiencing another major recession or depression. They were also concerned about the strength of various postwar international institutions and began galvanizing business community support for what became the Bretton Woods System, the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, and the Marshall Plan. One of our founders, Paul Hoffman, then the CEO of Studebaker, was asked by President Truman to serve as the first Marshall Plan administrator.

For more than 65 years, CED has been an important voice in the American business community in supporting sound economic and fiscal policy. We now have some 200 Trustees—Democrats, Republicans, and Independents—on our board. Most of them are senior corporate executives and presidents of some of this country's greatest colleges and universities. Our policy work, which ranges from campaign finance reform, health care reform, and education reform to global trade and macroeconomic policy, is strictly nonpartisan. We begin each of our projects with no ideological axe to grind and no political leanings. Each year our Trustees decide the issues we study, and it is the CED Trustees who actually determine our findings and recommendations.

Our mission has been to propose policies that ensure steady economic growth at high employment and reasonably stable prices, increased productivity and living standards, greater and more equal opportunity for every citizen and an improved quality of life for all. In short, I think of CED as representing the best of business thinking in the nation's interest.

It was with that background that CED trustees have addressed the issue of early childhood care and education. Since the 2002 release of our groundbreaking early education report, Preschool for All: Investing in a Productive and Just Society, CED has been engaged in a national campaign to build momentum surrounding investments in early education. The Committee for Economic Development followed that report with several issue briefs and the 2006 policy statement, The Economic Promise of Investing in High-Quality Preschool.

Early learning programs have long prepared children for early educational success, but investing in high-quality early education also offers promising ways to strengthen the future economic and fiscal position of states and the nation. High-quality early education programs have long-lasting effects, improving students' outcomes well into their adolescent and adult years. Economically, the long-term impacts of high-quality early learning programs translate into significant public and private benefits, with returns far exceeding the costs.

Today's business leaders appreciate that early childhood education is important to future U.S. economic competitiveness and a worthwhile investment. A December 2005 poll of business leaders shows that more than 80 percent agree that public funding of voluntary prekindergarten programs for all children would improve America's workforce. Business leaders see these programs as investments in human capital formation, and CED has been working with economists and others to quantify the solid economic returns associated with early care and education.

Access to early education, however remains limited and uneven. Because the United States still views financing the care and education of young children as primarily a family responsibility, many children do not have early learning opportunities available to them. Children of higher-income and better-educated parents are the most likely to have the advantage of formal early education.

Investing in children early is crucial. Learning is cumulative, and children develop skills during their early years that facilitate later learning. Currently, America is spending billions of its education dollars on remedial efforts. Gaps in student ability are already apparent by kindergarten, and those gaps are often difficult and costly to correct later. When a business has a problem, it tries to fix it at the front end, not at the back. Moreover, to guarantee positive outcomes—such as the success of the No Child Left Behind Act—America must work harder to educate our youngest citizens.

Children who participate in high-quality early education programs demonstrate higher academic achievement, are less likely to repeat a grade or require special education classes, and are more likely to graduate from high school and enroll in college. Students are also less likely to participate in criminal activity during their juvenile or adult years, or be victims of child maltreatment or neglect. Adults who have had the benefit of an early learning opportunity are also less likely to be unemployed and more likely to have higher earnings than similar students who do not participate in these programs. These adults are also less likely to depend on public assistance, become teenage parents, or endanger their health by smoking.

The positive impact of early education programs on students' lives increases the likelihood that these students will become net economic and social contributors to society. Implementing preschool programs for all students whose parents want them to attend is expected to generate significant public and private benefits, producing $2 to $4 in net present-value benefits for every dollar invested. Federal, state, and local budgets will improve significantly when governments can dedicate more resources to productive endeavors, rather than to remediation, incarceration, and welfare. For every preschool dollar spent, states are projected to recoup 50 to 85 cents in reduced crime costs and 36 to 77 cents in school savings.

Sustained investments in early education are also a cost-effective way to improve long-term economic growth and living standards. By 2080, preschool programs could boost America's gross domestic product by 3.5 percent, as well as raise long-run state employment levels by 1.3 percent.

The United States also lags other countries in early education and care investments. While the United States continues to debate about increasing its investments in young children, other industrialized countries have already done so. Many nations far surpass us in making early learning opportunities available to all. The United States has the highest child poverty rate of the 20 developed countries belonging to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. Forty-three percent of infants and toddlers in America live in low-income families with incomes below 200 percent of poverty, and a fifth live below the poverty line. High-quality early education and care can help lift these families out of poverty.

CED believes that broadening access to early care and education programs for all children is a cost-effective investment that will pay future dividends. And while early education must be an economic and educational priority, it is also part of a

continuum of necessary childhood investments, beginning in the prenatal months and spanning the infant, toddler, and later school years that together will have the greatest impact on children's development, and ultimately, America's economic well-being.

CED recommends that communities, states, and the nation make access to publicly funded, high-quality early education programs an economic and educational priority. The economic benefits of early learning will be greatest when all states implement high-quality, publicly funded early education programs and make them available to all three- and four-year-old children whose parents want them to attend. Early learning programs should provide adequate classroom hours to ensure improvements in student learning that will translate into economic benefits. States should embrace diverse providers that meet quality standards and the needs of the communities they serve. Maximizing program access and efficiency will require federal and state governments to coordinate publicly funded prekindergarten, Head Start, and child-care programs. Business should support early education programs and other complementary childhood programs and services, emphasizing the strong returns on investment and the leveraging of current expenditures.

Furthermore, CED recommends that publicly funded early education programs meet the quality standards necessary to deliver their potential economic benefits. To provide the greatest economic benefits possible, state prekindergarten programs and the federal Head Start program should assess their existing program standards and realign them with the factors known to contribute to improved early childhood learning and development. Early learning programs should adopt an age-appropriate, research-based curriculum that embraces whole-child development and is aligned with content standards in kindergarten and elementary education. All publicly funded early learning programs should employ high-caliber teachers with bachelor's degrees and specialized early-education training. A national board should be created to review and report on state early education and care standards.

Finally, CED recommends that federal, state, and local governments consider the broad economic benefits of early care and education when deciding how to allocate resources in the face of competing uses and demands. Funding provided for early learning programs should be commensurate with the cost of providing a high-quality education to fully capture the economic benefits of these programs.

CED believes that the implementation of these recommendations in all our states and the nation will strengthen our democracy and ensure U.S. economic competitiveness and growth through a highly-educated and skilled workforce.

The Committee for Economic Development's early care and education policy statements are available online at *www.ced.org*.

Preschool for All: Investing in a Productive and Just Society (2002): *http://www.ced.org/docs/report/report—preschool.pdf*

The Economic Promise of Investing in High-Quality Preschool (2006) *http://www.ced.org/docs/report/report—prek—econpromise.pdf*

Ms. HIRONO. Thank you.

Dr. Karolak?

STATEMENT OF ERIC KAROLAK, PH.D., EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, EARLY CARE AND EDUCATION CONSORTIUM

Mr. KAROLAK. Thank you for the opportunity to speak to you today.

I am Eric Karolak, the executive director of the Early Care and Education Consortium, an alliance of America's leading providers of quality early learning programs. As Representative Hirono mentioned, we reach more than 800,000 children every day in almost every state in the union. Increasing national investments and improving outcomes for young children are essential for America's continued wellbeing and our national competitiveness.

Now, based on our experiences educating young children, I have four points I would like to make today. First, investing in young children is cost effective and it makes sense. Second, there is no single program or investment that works, no one right answer. Third, investing early is key. We cannot wait until just the third

and fourth year of life to improve a child's chances in life and in school readiness. And, fourth, quality counts and quality costs.

In the interest of not repeating testimony—Mr. Kolb and Dr. Phillips have done quiet well on several of these points—I would like to skip to my second point, if you are following, in the written testimony, and that is that there is no single program or type of investment that works, no one right answer to this issue. Rather, there are multiple programs, multiple pathways to achieving outcomes for children.

America cannot afford to view child care as just a way to get parents to work and early education as something altogether different. In reality, as parents and children experience this, there is s a continuum of early care and education. It spans a range of settings—child care, Head Start, public school pre-K, family child care—and levels of quality, dependent in large part on locality, on what parents can afford, and what public support is available. We should be investing in multiple programs and at all age levels.

But when investing, rather than adopt a one-size-fits-all institutional framework, leveraging community-based providers and their existing resources is the most cost-effective way to do this. Millions of children are already in these programs, often in facilities designed for young children. We have a long history and expertise, as my colleague from New Jersey referenced, in delivering programs to young children. Working parents especially look to our centers for something they cannot find elsewhere, and that is full-day, full-year programs that serve children birth to school age.

States are seeing the value of this community-based approach, especially in delivering state-funded pre-K, although not without challenges for providers, and most recent research has emphasized the benefits that accrue both to local and state education agencies and to early learning centers when this kind of collaboration occurs.

My third point is that investing early is key. Dr. Phillips has referenced that brain development begins from inception and that really no moment is too early. I would like to simply emphasize that. As Nobel Laureate economist James Heckman concluded, "The longer we wait to intervene in the lifecycle of the child, the more costly it is to remediate or to restore the child to its full potential." That means the return on investment that Mr. Kolb spoke of begins to decline.

Still, infants and toddlers are everywhere—everywhere—the most expensive age group to provide with quality services and typically the most difficult kind of care for parents to find and afford. The situation in California is dire, as I am sure Mr. McKeon and Mr. Miller knew, with annual costs approaching $11,000. Nationwide, we in our centers have infant-toddler waiting lists in many communities, both suburban and inner city low-income. America cannot afford to keep these kids waiting.

Lastly, I want to emphasize that quality counts and quality costs. Research that you have heard referenced today is predicated on program quality. No one is coming here asking for money for nothing. It is money for quality. Yet investing responsibly then means supporting effective programs that are well implemented, well funded, and continuously improved.

We invest in our centers in curriculum, in facilities, in educational materials, and especially in our workforce. But these and other elements of quality are costly, more expensive than what most parents alone can afford. Recognizing that high-quality standards must be backed by sufficient public resources is essential to making sure these investments in young children are successful.

Take workforce qualifications. Now, while the consensus in research has been elusive concerning the necessity of a bachelor's degree for producing quality outcomes, we understand that expectations around the early childhood workforce are in flux. In our experience, we have qualified, effective, and committed early childhood teachers who have bachelor's degrees, and we have qualified, effective, and committed early childhood teachers who do not.

In either case, recruiting and retaining such qualified, effective, and committed staff is a challenge. I hear this from my nonprofit members, from for-profit corporate and proprietary child care providers, from Head Start agency directors. This is a universal issue. It affects schools as well because they, indeed, hire away from many of our centers.

So teacher qualification requirements must consider the significant resources necessary to competitively recruit and retain qualified teachers, to support the current workforce in its rich diversity in obtaining bachelor's degrees or other credentials, and in building the capacity of higher education to produce more graduates in education.

The federal government's interest in America's global competitiveness and future wellbeing of our citizens warrants a greater investment in early childhood, one that is sufficient to reach the quality standards our youngest children deserve.

Thank you.

[The statement of Mr. Karolak follows:]

Prepared Statement of Eric Karolak, Executive Director, Early Care and Education Consortium

Good morning, Chairman Miller, Representative McKeon, and members of the Committee on Education and Labor. Thank you for inviting me to testify today on investing in young children.

I am Eric Karolak, Executive Director of the Early Care and Education Consortium, an alliance of America's leading national, regional, and independent providers of quality early learning programs. Consortium members operate more than 7,600 centers enrolling more than 800,000 children in 49 states and the District of Columbia. Our members include private non-profit organizations and for-profit companies who offer full-day/full-year programs for children birth through age 12, state-funded prekindergarten, before- and afterschool programs, extended day, and summer programs with enrollments that reflect the rich diversity of our communities and nation.

Increasing national investments and improving outcomes for young children are essential for America's continued well-being and our national competitiveness.

Based on our experiences educating children—recruiting teachers, meeting parent needs, collaborating with community partners, and managing budgets—I have four points to make today:

1. Investing in young children is cost effective and makes sense.
2. There's no single program or type of investment that works alone to the exclusion of others; rather there are multiple pathways to achieving outcomes for children.
3. Investing early is key. We can't wait until children are age 3 or 4 to improve their chances for school and life success.
4. Quality counts and costs. Policymakers must recognize the connection between standards and financing when developing programs.

First, investing in young children is cost effective and makes sense. Research by Nobel laureates and Federal Reserve economists, drawing on 40 years of longitudinal studies on early learning programs, has demonstrated conclusively that investing in early childhood development especially for at-risk children yields extraordinary annual rates of return—ranging in real terms between 7 and 18 percent—far exceeding the return on most investments, private or public. If early childhood education was a stock, many are fond of saying now, it would be wildly undervalued.[1]

And the benefits don't just flow from focusing on cognitive development: the "ABCs". Researchers emphasize that a balanced approach to emotional, social, cognitive, and language development will best prepare children for success in school and later in the workplace.[2]

We see these benefits and their promise daily, in the achievements of young children as they become literate, numerically adept, socially competent, and responsible through experientially rich, active learning environments. And we see it in the faces of parents, knowing that their children are safe and receiving stimulating experiences from committed teachers that prepare them for school and life.

Second, it's important to remember that there's no single program or type of investment that works alone to the exclusion of others; rather there are multiple pathways to achieving outcomes for children, and the devil really is in the details.

America can't afford to view "child care" as just a way to get parents working and unrelated to "early education." There is a continuum of early care and education from birth. It includes learning centers like those of the Consortium, Head Start agencies, school-based early childhood programs, and family child care homes, and it spans a range of settings and levels of quality, dependent in large part on what parents can afford and what public support is available. We should be investing in multiple programs and at every age level.

Rather than adopt a one-size-fits-all institutional framework, leveraging community-based providers and their existing resources produces the greatest and most cost effective benefits. Millions of children are already in community-based programs, in facilities designed for young children. We have a long history and expertise in working with young children. Parents look to our centers to meet diverse needs and in turn we are responsive: our centers provide full-day and full-year programs; parents are always welcome; they're considered full partners in their child's learning and development; parents talk with their child's teachers every day, and often participate in parent activities and on advisory boards.

States are seeing the value of this community approach as well. All but three state prekindergarten initiatives allow preK to be offered in community-based centers, and one-third of children enrolled in state-funded preK are served in settings outside schools.[3] We find that local school administrators are more likely to prioritize collaboration with community-based organizations when states require a percentage of funds be used for community-based delivery.

State-funded preK programs are not typically structured around the schedules of parents. Taking advantage of existing community-based providers is less disruptive for children who do not have to be moved from one location to another each day, and allows their parents to focus on work and parenting rather than carpooling or worrying about their very young children being bussed about. Recent reports have documented additional benefits including efficiencies from investing in existing centers with experience working with young children, more stable sources of funding for participating community-based early learning centers, and spillover beneficial effects beyond the preK-aged classroom or program hours.[4] It is now accepted that the best way to accomplish preK is through a mixed delivery model that taps the existing capacity and expertise of early care and education providers.[5]

Early Care and Education Consortium members participate in more than 20 state-funded prekindergarten programs, in many cases contracting directly with school districts or state education agencies to provide these services. Our members also have informal partnerships with many public schools and in some cases kindergarten teachers come to our centers for school readiness training, and we are then able to send our staff to local public schools for in-service training for K-3 or other related issues. Our centers also work in many states to link students to services at the public schools, but still receive education and care in our centers.

This brings me to my third point, investing early is key. If we wait until age 3 or 4, it may be too late for some children and in general the public investment will be less rewarding.

"The basic principles of neuroscience and human capital formation," researchers at Harvard's Center on the Developing Child tell us, "indicate that later remediation will produce less favorable outcomes than preventive intervention."[6] As a result, the return on later intervention is much lower. Nobel laureate economist James Heck-

man concludes, "Life cycle skill formation is dynamic in nature. Skill begets skill; motivation begets motivation. * * * The longer we wait to intervene in the life cycle of the child the more costly it is to remediate to restore the child to its full potential."

We know this from working with the children, especially from our experience with infants and toddlers and their families. Babies are growing and learning all of the time. The first two years of life are a critical period for language and the development of self. Providing rich learning experiences, supportive learning environments, and positive relationships with children during the first three years is crucial to creating a foundation for learning. Failing to do so is to miss opportunities for improving school readiness and life success.

Despite the importance of investing early, there is a dramatic need for funding for infants and toddlers. It is everywhere the most expensive age-group to provide with quality services, and typically the most difficult kind of care for parents to find and afford. In California, for example, average costs statewide run nearly $11,000 for an infant in a licensed center.[7] Nationwide, we have waiting lists for infant and toddler programs in many communities, both suburban and inner city low-income.

Lastly, we can't underemphasize that quality counts and quality costs. The research on the benefits of investing in young children is predicated on program quality. Investing responsibly means supporting effective programs that are well-implemented, well-funded and continuously improved.

We constantly strive to build in better quality in our centers. We invest in curricula and the research to demonstrate its effectiveness, in facilities and educational materials and, most importantly, in the workforce. We all have programs to invest in staff, often linked to public-funded efforts like T.E.A.C.H.(r), and with the goal of helping the existing workforce obtain credentials and degrees.

These and other elements of quality are costly. The cost of quality care and education is more expensive than most parents alone can afford. More federal investment is needed.

For many early learning centers, Child Care and Development Block Grant funding is a foundation for quality. But current funding levels are inadequate and over time many states have increased income eligibility levels, raised parent copayments, and/or reimbursed providers at lower rates. In 2007, only 9 states set child care assistance reimbursement rates at the federally-recommended level.[8]

As a result, we've seen families receiving child care assistance forced to leave our programs and seek cheaper, lower quality arrangements when income eligibility levels were raised or copayments increased. And we've been forced to make difficult decisions regarding whether to continue enrolling families receiving child care subsidies and even whether to keep centers open in certain areas. In 2007, one of the nation's largest providers had to close 20 percent of its centers in Texas.

States are addressing quality with limited funding. Recognizing that community-based providers reach the largest number of young children, states like Pennsylvania have invested in voluntary, quality improvement strategies that include financial supports for reaching higher quality levels, and program ratings for parents.[9] Others like Minnesota are piloting an innovative endowed fund that finances the cost of quality preschool through outcomes-based scholarships to families of at-risk children.[10]

Recognizing that high quality standards must be backed by sufficient resources is essential to making successful investments in young children. Take the issue of workforce qualifications. While a consensus in research has been elusive concerning the necessity of a Bachelor's degree for quality outcomes, we understand that expectations concerning the qualifications of the early childhood workforce are in flux.[11] Our experience is that there are qualified, effective, and committed early childhood teachers who have Bachelor's degrees, and there are qualified, effective, and committed teachers who do not have Bachelor's degrees. In either case, recruiting and retaining qualified staff is a challenge. The range of qualified teachers reflects regional labor market conditions, what parents are able and willing to afford, and the infrastructure of state and community programs for developing a pool of early childhood educators. Teacher qualification requirements must consider the resources necessary to competitively recruit and retain teachers, support the current workforce in obtaining a degree or other credential, and build the capacity of higher education to produce graduates in early childhood education.

In conclusion, the federal government's interest in America's global competitiveness and future well being warrants a greater investment in early childhood, one that is sufficient to reaching the quality standards our youngest children deserve.

Thank you for the opportunity to brief you today.

ENDNOTES

[1] Art Rolnick and Rob Grunewald, "Early Childhood Development: Economic Development with a High Public Return," Fedgazette (December 2003), p. 7; James Heckman, "Catch 'em Young: Investing in Disadvantaged Young Children is Both Fair and Efficient," Wall Street Journal, January 10, 2006, p. A14;; and Rolnick and Grunewald, "The Economics of Early Childhood Development as Seen by Two Fed Economists," Community Investments (Fall 2007), pp. 13-14.

[2] Jack P. Shonkoff, "A Science-Based Framework for Early Childhood Policy," presentation at the Council of State Governments Eastern Regional Conference, Boston, September 7, 2007.

[3] W. Steven Barnett, Jason T. Hustedt, Laura E. Hawkinson, and Kenneth B. Robin, The State of Preschool 2006: State Preschool Yearbook (National Institute for Early Education Research, 2006), pp. 196-197.

[4] Karen Schulman and Helen Blank, A Center Piece of the PreK Puzzle: Providing State Prekindergarten in Child Care Centers (National Women's Law Center, November 2007).

[5] For example, PreK Now, a leading national advocacy organization that advances high-quality, voluntary pre-kindergarten for all three and four year olds, strongly supports offering preK in diverse settings. Visit its policy position, School Choice in PreK, online at *http://www.preknow.org/policy/choice.cfm.*

[6] Shonkoff, "A Science-Based Framework for Early Childhood Policy."

[7] California Child Care Resource and Referral Network, 2007 Child Care Portfolio (December 2007).

[8] Karen Schulman and Helen Blank, State Child Care Assistance Policies 2007: Some Steps Forward, More Progress Needed (National Women's Law Center, September 2007).

[9] More than a dozen states have established quality rating and improvement systems, and many more are developing them. For an overview, consult Anne Mitchell, Stair Steps to Quality: A Guide (United Way: Success by 6, 2005). The rating system in Pennsylvania is Keystone STARS, and more information is available online at *http://www.dpw.state.pa.us/PartnersProviders/ChildCareEarlyEd/KeyStoneStarChildCare/*.

[10] The Minnesota Early Learning Foundation's pilot program is designed to reward performance and encourage high quality and innovative practices among providers by empowering at—risk parents with resources to access high-quality early education. Visit the Minnesota Early Learning Foundation website (*http://www.melf.us/*) for more information.

[11] See, for example, Diane Early et al., "Teachers' Education, Classroom Quality, and Young Children's Academic Skills: Results from Seven Studies of Preschool Programs," Child Development (March/April 2007): 558-580. Among other issues, the impact of a Bachelor's degree where an effect has been found has not been isolated from other variables like compensation.

Ms. HIRONO. Thank you.

Mr. Haskins?

STATEMENT OF RON HASKINS, PH.D., SENIOR FELLOW, ECONOMIC STUDIES, BROOKINGS INSTITUTION

Mr. HASKINS. Representative Hirono, Mr. Castle, members of the committee. Thank you for inviting me here today.

This committee, as I suspect all of you know, has been at the forefront of almost every significant development in early childhood education or child care in this country for the last half-century and, as shown by last year's Head Start reauthorization, it would be expected the committee would continue to play that role.

I just want to make three points. The first one has already been made. I think everybody on this panel agrees and, indeed, I think almost everybody who knows the research agrees that preschool packs a powerful punch. There is no question, based on the Perry Preschool, Abecedarian, Chicago Child-Parent Centers that we have all seen, that compared to almost any other intervention, the only intervention I can think of that can produce the range of benefits of preschool is adoption, but I have studied intervention programs most of my adult life, and nothing is as powerful as preschool.

Second point: Just because preschool worked in several instances, it does not follow that people who pour money into preschool necessarily get a return. Several witnesses have already made this point, but I think it bears repeating, and I think the best example of what we would get from a national program, which, of

course, is the interest of this committee, is what we are getting from Head Start.

There is a lot of room to disagree. I think we probably disagree on this panel. But I would say on the whole, Head Start has turned in a mediocre performance after more than 40 years of existence. I base that on the national random-assignment study that was ordered by this committee in 1998 that shows very modest effect sizes, much more modest, for example, than the state preschool programs and not even on the same continent with the Abecedarian program and the Perry Preschool program and also on the FACES study that has been reported to this committee in the past.

So I think, on the whole, the evidence shows that Head Start is not producing the results that we would really like to have, namely big impacts on children, powerful impacts on school performance, and powerful impacts on other developmental measures, like finishing school, going to college, avoiding teen pregnancy, avoiding crime and delinquency, all of which have been shown by one or more of the other studies to be possible.

Therefore, since we have been doing this for roughly 40 years with modest changes—and some of the changes in last year's bill I strongly support. I think they were very wise decisions about coordination and so forth—I think we need to think fairly radically.

Now, first, I would not change the Head Start statute and willy-nilly make all sorts of changes in Head Start and turn it over to states or anything like that. But I do think that we should give the states much more flexibility than they now have.

If you look at the chart in my testimony on spending on preschool, you will see that there is a host of programs and three very, very big programs—Head Start is one of them, state preschool which is a relatively new entry and growing rapidly, and then the Child Care and Development Block Grant—all of those spend billions and billions of dollars, and yet there is very little coordination around the country. There are even a number of people—we had a meeting on this at Brookings a couple of years ago. I believe you might have been there—and there were several people in the states who said it was difficult to get cooperation between these various programs.

So I think the only way that we can get cooperation and have a focused, unified strategy in some state or locality—it would not necessarily have to be a state. It could be a city. It could be a county—is to give the Secretary the authority to allow a state or locality to have the control of Head Start funds as well as the other funds, which they basically already have, and to create a unified program under several conditions.

We make a deal with them. If you will conduct this experiment, we will give you additional funds, but you must first ensure that all kids at 150 percent poverty get at least a 4-year-old program. Secondly, that there be a third-party evaluation. And, finally, that the state or locality would increase its spending by a certain amount—I said 5 percent per year over inflation in my testimony, but it could be whatever you select—to show that they are really serious about this, and if the federal government would match that and pay for the evaluation.

I think if we did something like this that we might really find out that localities can do a very good job of coordinating this money and increasing the quality to Head Start. I think that this committee and the Congress have focused too much in the past on just increasing the number of kids who are getting into preschool programs. That will not do it. If more kids get what is offered by Head Start, we will have very modest impacts. We need much bigger impacts.

So we not only need to increase coverage and increase the number of kids in the program, we also need to increase quality at the same time, and I do not think we can necessarily control that from Washington.

I would point out to the committee—I give some examples in my testimony—that there is a new program in Minnesota that is being funded by donations from business and other organizations. They intend eventually to build a $1.5 billion fund, and they are going to fund preschool programs for kids ages 3 and 4 plus a home visiting program for kids who are seriously disadvantaged, and they are going to allow parents to make the decision. It is going to be a competitive system.

That is the kind of thing that I think we need to have. We need more experiments like that in the country, and this committee and the federal government could play a role.

This is a time of permanent child care, and in preschool programs, it is the time to get the most out of what we have, and we need new ideas and new approaches at the local and state level. I hope this committee will decide to be adventurous.

Thank you.

[The statement of Mr. Haskins follows:]

Testimony
House Committee on Education and Labor
Ron Haskins
Senior Fellow, Brookings Institution
Senior Consultant, Annie E. Casey Foundation
January 23, 2008

Chairman Miller, Ranking Member McKeon, and Members of the Committee:

Thanks for inviting me to testify on the important topic of preschool programs. I consider it a great honor to be given the opportunity to speak directly with lawmakers about important policy issues.

I commend the Committee for passing the Head Start reauthorization legislation last year and look forward to further reforms from the Committee. In fact, I would like to use my testimony to suggest the outlines of legislation that I believe could prove useful.

The Promise of High-Quality Preschool Programs

As members of this Committee know well, there is good evidence from scientific research that preschool education can be an effective tool in our nation's long struggle to reduce the achievement gap between poor children and children from non-poor families.[1] Reducing the achievement gap holds great promise for reducing poverty in the long term and even for reducing inequality. Having spent many years studying social intervention programs, I think it is fair to say that there is no body of evidence on any social intervention that holds as much promise of producing as wide a range of positive effects as high-quality preschool programs.

Table 1
Effects of Early Childhood Interventions on Education

Intervention and Educational Outcomes	Effect
Special Education Placement	
Abecedarian	-48
Perry Preschool	-43
Chicago Child-Parent Centers	-32
Head Start	-28
Public School and Head Start*	-29
High School Dropout Likelihood	
Abecedarian	-32
Perry Preschool	-25
Chicago Child-Parent Centers	-24
High School Completion	
Head Start: White children	20 percentage point increase
Head Start: African American children	No clear effect

College Progression	
Abecedarian enrollment in four-year college	3 times as likely
Perry Preschool	No clear effect
Head Start: White children	28 percentage point increase
Head Start: African American children	No clear effect

Note. Table Entries are percentages unless otherwise noted.

* Nine study average

Source: W. Steven Barnett and Clive Belfield, "Early Childhood Development and Social Mobility," *Future of Children* 16, no. 2 (Fall 2006): 84.

Table 2

Effects of Selected Early Childhood Programs on Adolescent and Adult Behaviors

Intervention and Outcomes	Control or Comparison Group	Group Receiving Preschool Program
Teenage Parenting Rates:		
Abecedarian	45	26
Perry Preschool	37	26
Chicago Child-Parent Centers	27	20
Well-being:		
Health problem (Perry Preschool)	29	20
Drug User (Abecedarian)	39	18
Needed treatment for addition (Perry Preschool)	34	22
Abortion (Perry Preschool)	38	16
Abuse/neglect by age 17 (Chicago Child-Parent Centers)	9	6
Criminal Activity:		
Number of felony violent assaults (Perry Preschool)	0.37	0.17
Juvenile court petitions (Chicago Child-Parent Centers)	25	16
Booked or charged with a crime (Head Start)		12 percentage points lower
Net Earnings Gain from Participating in Early Childhood Programs:		
Abecedarian	$35,531	
Perry Preschool	$38,892	
Chicago Child-Parent Centers	$30,638	
Head Start	No effect	

Note. Table entries are percentages unless otherwise noted.

Source: W. Steven Barnett and Clive Belfield, "Early Childhood Development and Social Mobility," *Future of Children* 16, no. 2 (Fall 2006): 85.

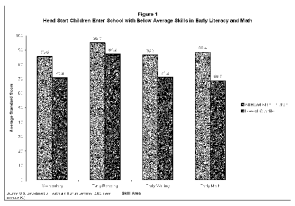
Consider the evidence summarized in Tables 1 and 2 taken from work by Steven Barnett of the National Institute for Early Education Research and Clive Belfield of New York University.[2] Table 1 shows that three of the best preschool programs ever

conducted in the U.S. – the Abecedarian program in North Carolina, the Perry Preschool program in Michigan, and the Chicago Child-Parent Centers – produced major impacts on several measures of school performance, including special education placement, high school graduation, and even in one case college enrollment. Table 2 is equally impressive, showing that these high-quality preschool programs are capable of achieving even broader impacts on the well-being of children when they grow to adolescence and young adulthood. These broader impacts include reduced rates of teen pregnancy, better health, lower drug use, lower abortion rates, reduced criminal activity, and increases in lifetime earnings.

What Head Start Actually Accomplishes

The results from these three model programs have been used to argue that investments in preschool programs pay for themselves. But this claim ignores a major problem. The problem is that we have much less evidence that other programs can produce the types of impacts shown in Tables 1 and 2. Over the years, scholars, child advocates, and even members of Congress have made extravagant claims for the impacts that would be produced by investments in preschool education. The flaw in these claims is that just because small model programs with strong accountability components produce impressive impacts, it does not follow that every preschool program in which we invest money will produce similar impacts.

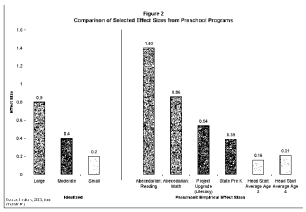
There is a huge step between creating superb model programs and successfully generalizing the results of these programs to a national program that serves millions of children. The best estimate of the returns to a national program is not Abecedarian or Perry which each served around 125 children, or even the Chicago Child-Parent Centers which served about 1,500 children. Rather, it is Head Start which now serves over 900,000 children. So let's look carefully at what Head Start is producing.



We now have very good evidence on the effects of Head Start. Figure 1, based on the FACES survey of a national sample of Head Start children, shows that children who attended Head Start entered kindergarten with skills that were substantially below average in both pre-reading and math. Even after attending Head Start, their absolute level of performance on most measures of school readiness leaves them substantially behind other children.[3]

An even more important and reliable set of evidence comes from the national random-assignment evaluation of Head Start conducted by Westat and authorized by Congress in the 1998 reauthorization of Head Start.[4] The Westat study, based on random-assignment of children to Head Start and to a control group, is the best ever conducted of

Head Start and has produced the most reliable results. Figure 2 compares the effect sizes from the Westat evaluation of Head Start with results from several other studies of preschool programs. Effect sizes are a measure of how much better (or worse) children participating in an intervention program performed as compared with control children. The Head Start effect sizes are modest, either in terms of their absolute sizes or by comparison with the effects produced by programs like Abecedarian.[5]



Here's the point. Even after more than four decades of operation, we are now spending $7 billion on a program that produces only modest impacts on students, as measured both in a national survey of several thousand Head Start students and in a nationally-representative random-assignment study. These modest results are especially unfortunate because Head Start is a major part of our national strategy to even the playing field for the nation's poor children. As President Johnson put it in his famous Howard University address in 1965, you can't bring disadvantaged children to the starting line of public school already far behind and expect them to compete effectively.[6]

Table 3
Federal and State Spending on
Child Care and Preschool Education Programs

Program	2005 Budget (billions)
Department of Education:	
Title I	0.3
Reading First	1.1
Special Programs	0.2
Special Education	1.9
Department of Health and Human Services:	
Child Care and Development Fund	4.8
Welfare block Grant	3.6
State Child Care Spending	3.3
Social Services Block Grant	0.2
Head Start	6.9
State Preschool Programs	2.4
Total:	**24.8**

Source: Brookings Calculations based on the U.S. Budget (2005) and other documents.

In addition to the modest accomplishments of Head Start, two other factors should capture the attention of this Committee. The first is that the nation now has a broad array of preschool programs that have little coordination, differing standards, and different degrees of quality. Table 3 shows that if we combine state and federal spending on this

broad array of programs, we are now spending a total of about $25 billion a year on preschool programs. It seems reasonable to inquire whether we're getting the maximum benefit out of what we are now spending before we begin spending much more.

Another point highlighted by Table 3 is that the authority to plan and deliver high-quality programs is divided. We have the ever-expanding state pre-kindergarten (pre-K) programs which spent nearly $3.5 billion of state money on preschool programs. These programs are unique to each state and are usually not coordinated with other preschool programs in any way.[7] All but about ten states now have their own preschool program. Research on some of these programs seems to show that are producing quite substantial immediate impacts, but we lack information about whether these effects last.[8] Then we have the $7 billion Head Start program, operated by local grantees with funds supplied directly by the federal government. Despite the fact that both state pre-K programs and Head Start have the primary goal of preparing children intellectually and socially to enter public schooling, the two programs operate independently in most states. Finally, we spend nearly $12 billion in state and federal money on the Child Care and Development Block grant and associated child care programs. Coordinating all this spending to create high-quality programs would be an important achievement.

The status quo is unacceptable. We are spending $25 billion and are not getting $25 billion worth of results. We know from the model programs that high-quality preschool programs can produce very substantial effects, yet we are getting modest effects from Head Start. Why would we think that simply pouring new money into the existing system would produce better outcomes than we are currently getting?

What to Do

In trying to determine what we should do to better prepare poor children for school, let's begin with the preschool market that we have today. We can divide the preschool market into four main sectors:

- Head Start
- state-sponsored pre-K programs
- child care, much of which is paid for by the Child Care and Development Block Grant
- a miscellaneous and diverse sector that includes the federal Title I program, Reading First, and special education programs paid for by the federal Individuals with Disabilities Act, and non-subsidized care paid for by parents.

A major goal of federal policy should be to work with states, counties, and cities to encourage coordination between these programs. The legislation written by this Committee and passed by Congress last year recognizes the need for coordination between Head Start and state pre-K programs, but I'm not certain that mandating cooperation will actually cause programs to work together. I hope the Committee and the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) keep a close eye on whether this provision actually improves coordination between the programs, but it will be surprising if Head Start can achieve coordination of these two programs in most states – especially

in view of the widely held opinion that many Head Start programs wish to remain autonomous and consider themselves to be in direct competition with state pre-K programs.

A second goal of federal policy should be to ensure that all children are in programs that have explicit goals based on a tested curriculum that focuses classroom work on academic skills and social behavior. Project Upgrade in Miami[9] shows that impressive effect sizes – even with regular day care teachers and children who don't speak English – are possible if teachers are carefully instructed in use of a tested curriculum and are then coached and monitored periodically to ensure they are using the curriculum properly (see Figure 2).

Federal policy should also pursue a third goal. To evaluate whether Head Start is achieving its goals, the Committee, Head Start researchers, parents, and teachers need to know whether children are progressing intellectually and socially during the Head Start program and are approaching national norms. In short, we need a system that measures the progress of every student during the year, based on a reliable and valid assessment of language, math, social behavior, and perhaps other domains.

In 2003, the Bush administration contracted with Westat to create the National Reporting System (NRS), based on an individual assessment of every student conducted by Head Start teachers who have received training in test administration.[10] The test included scores for vocabulary, letter naming, and early math, and additional assessments were under development. There were complaints about both the NRS test and about the entire idea of testing young children. I have been involved in testing children for four decades, and am unaware of evidence that testing harms children in any way. In addition, I served on the Advisory Committee on Head Start Accountability and Educational Performance Measures and had the opportunity to examine the Westat test in great detail. I think the test was developed in accord with accepted procedures, that the test was yielding an accurate picture of Head Start performance at the program, classroom, and individual level, and that Westat was responsive to criticisms by the General Accounting Office and Head Start teachers and others who appeared before the Advisory Committee. But Congress has decided to suspend the NRS and has asked the National Academies to make recommendations about future assessment programs.

I hope the National Academies will produce a timely report with specific recommendations about assessing the learning and social behavior of Head Start students. Once the National Academies reports, I hope this Committee will act quickly to encourage HHS or outside contractors to develop an assessment approach in a timely fashion. In doing so, those designing the new assessment system should take full advantage of excellent work done by Westat in developing the now defunct National Reporting System.

The important point here is that all of us interested in determining whether Head Start and other preschool programs are achieving their goals are dependent on individual assessment of student performance. Without that information, any attempt by this

Committee or others to determine whether Head Start is preparing children for school will be impossible.

A New Model for Preschool: The Minnesota Early Learning Foundation

A new and remarkable approach to preschool education is now being implemented in Minnesota.[11] Under the leadership of Art Rolnick, an economist with the Federal Reserve Board in Minneapolis, a private, non-profit organization was founded called the Minnesota Early Learning Foundation (MELF). MELF is backed by several Minnesota businesses and has an executive director who is a former legislator and a business leader. So far the organization has raised $15 million of its first-year goal of $30 million to provide scholarships – worth up to $13,000 per year – for children from families considered to be at risk and who live in selected St. Paul neighborhoods. A total of 1,200 scholarships will be funded the first year – about 400 for a nurse practitioner, pre-natal home visiting program; 400 for a preschool program for 3-year-olds; and 400 for a preschool program for 4-year-olds.

An especially compelling aspect of the Rolnick approach is that a wide variety of program operators will be eligible to accept scholarship children. These include Head Start, Montessori, several other local programs, and the St. Paul school system. In order to continue participating in the scholarship program, however, providers must demonstrate that all children in their program pass a school readiness test given to students in Minneapolis-St. Paul before they enter the schools. Thus, the Rolnick program uses the mechanism of market competition, rather than extensive regulations, to ensure quality.

Another notable feature of the approach is that MELF has already contracted with a well-known research organization to evaluate the program. The results will be made public so that parents and others know the results being produced by each program. It can be expected that there will be full coverage in the local media when program results are released each year, thereby proving a mechanism for community awareness of which programs are producing the intended results.

MELF presents a new vision for closing the achievement gap between students from poor families and those from more advantaged families. It is privately funded, based on market competition, and includes a strong system of accountability. In effect, rather than trying to coordinate the local market, MELF operates on the assumption that competition to create programs to achieve clearly stated and measured goals will create an array of excellent programs that can deliver on the promise of preschool. If they don't deliver, they no longer get the scholarship money. Another key feature of the approach is that parents are in the driver's seat. Parents select the particular facility attended by their 3- and 4-year olds, with the restriction that they must select from among programs that demonstrate they prepare all children from the public schools.

Finally, Rolnick and his colleagues intend to build a $2 billion trust so that their scholarship program will be funded in perpetuity.

Rolnick has reported that MELF has had some difficulty accepting government funds because of strings that were attached to the funds. It seems reasonable to hope that local, state, and federal officials – representing both the legislative and executive branches of government – would try to find ways to allow government funds to be used to support the scholarships with minimum requirements.

A Specific Proposal

The Head Start reauthorization enacted last year addressed all the goals of federal legislation reviewed above. My concern is that some of the mechanisms put in place may not prove effective. But why rely on one approach? So much of what we have tried has not worked well, as the outcomes now being achieved by Head Start demonstrate so clearly. We can do better. Thus, I would like to resurrect a proposal put forth several years ago by the Bush administration and present it in slightly modified form for consideration by the Committee. The proposal has several broad features.

First, Congress should create the authority for cities, counties, or states to write a competitive preschool demonstration proposal that, if selected by the Secretary, could include all the federal and state funding for preschool programs in the geographic area under its control. At minimum, funds from the state pre-K program, Head Start, and the Child Care and Development Block grant should be included in the proposal. If a city or county wanted to launch a demonstration, they would need an official sign-off from the governor or legislature of the state in which the jurisdiction is located. The most important change in federal policy represented by this feature of the proposal is that entities other than the local Head Start agency could have control over Head Start funds. It is possible, of course, that Head Start would be an active member of a consortium of preschool programs and be directly involved in the planning and implementation of the plan.

Second, the governing entity would have to make a written commitment to offering a preschool program to all 4-year-olds from families with incomes under 150 percent of the poverty level (about $30,000 for a family of four). The program could be offered to children above 150 percent of poverty, but these families would need to pay part of the preschool costs on a sliding scale. No federal subsidies would be offered to families with incomes in excess of whatever guideline the state follows in its Child Care and Development Block Grant funds, although states could use their own money to offer subsidies to children from families of any income. States could also offer the program to 3-year-olds, but only if all eligible 4-year-olds are being served. To save money and ensure the 3-year-old program was focused on the neediest children, federal subsidies could be used only for families under 100 percent of the poverty level.

In addition to these requirements, proposals would need to meet three conditions:

- Agreement to participate in a third-party evaluation paid for by the federal government

- Agreement to maintain current levels of state and local spending plus at least 5 percent above inflation for the duration of the program (the federal government would match all additional spending by states or localities on a dollar-for-dollar basis)
- Agreement that parents have the ability to select the facility attended by their child from an array of providers; states must restrict eligible providers to those who meet certain standards or who achieve specified results.

I know well that members of this Committee, members of the Head Start Community, and others are worried about making abrupt changes to the Head Start statute. I don't blame them, and agree that we should not make changes in the national Head Start program without solid evidence that the changes would produce better results than we are getting now. But in this election year when most candidates are promising change, we should not hesitate to experiment with changes in our approach to preschool. Further, the proposal outlined above would not require any changes in the Head Start statute. Rather, Congress would authorize four or five state or local demonstrations to test whether the changes recommended above in Head Start and state pre-K programs would move us closer to the outcomes we want for the nation's poor children. If the reforms are successful, then this Committee and others could consider changes in the Head Start statute.

The question of money arises. Under this proposal, additional funds would be needed to cover the additional children, to pay for additional administrative costs to pay the federal match for state spending increases, and to pay for the evaluation. To entice states and localities to participate, I also suggest giving a bonus of 5 percent or 10 percent of Head Start spending in the covered geographical entity. States would be required to spend the bonus funds on the demonstration program. Based on rough calculations, I would recommend giving the Secretary an annual budget of $1 billion to conduct these demonstration programs.

Conclusion

This is an important time in the history of preschool programs in the United States. The House Committee on Education and Labor has been at the forefront of nearly every important development in preschool education and child care since the mid-1960s, most recently with last year's reauthorization of Head Start and its many innovative provisions. Even so, there seems to be general agreement that Head Start should be producing bigger impacts on children's intellectual and social development than it does now. But because Head Start has been such an important program for so long, the goal of policy makers should be to test ways to improve all preschool education received by poor children before making major changes in Head Start or other preschool programs. If these changes result in programs that help poor children approach national norms for school readiness, then the Committee should consider major changes in the underlying Head Start statutes. The Minnesota approach of creating local scholarships for poor children and allowing all programs to compete for children is fascinating and bears close scrutiny. Another, less radical proposal, is to fund several states to mount carefully evaluated

demonstration programs that expand preschool coverage, maximize parental choice, follow tested curriculums, and coordinate the use of several sources of federal and state funding. Both of these approaches hold great promise for helping poor children close the education gap that the nation has been struggling to eliminate for at least four decades.

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[1] W. Steven Barnett, Cynthia Lamy, and Kwanghee Jung, *The Effects of State Prekindergarten Programs on Young Children's School Readiness in Five States* (Rutgers, NJ: National Institute for Early Education Research, December 2005); Ron Haskins, "Putting Education into Preschools," in *Generational Change: Closing the Test Score Gap*, ed. Paul Peterson (New York: Rowman & Littlefield, 2006), pp. 47-87; Cecilia Rouse, Jeanne Brooks-Gunn, and Sara McLanahan, "School Readiness: Closing Racial and Ethnic Gaps" *Future of Children* 15, no. 1 (Spring 2005).

[2] W. Steven Barnett and Clive Belfield, "Early Childhood Development and Social Mobility," *Future of Children* 16, no. 2 (Fall 2006): 73-98.

[3] U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, *FACES Findings: New Research on Head Start Outcomes and Program Quality* (Washington, D.C.: Author, December 2006).

[4] U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, *Head Start Impact Study: First Year Findings* (Washington, D.C.: Author, May 2005).

[5] Research by Janet Currie and her colleagues, based on survey data, has shown some long-term effects for Head Start. See Janet Currie and Duncan Thomas, "Does Head Start Make a Difference?" *American Economic Review* 85, no. 3 (1995): 341-364.

[6] "Commencement Address at Howard University, 'To Fulfill These Rights,'" June 4, 1965, *Public Papers of the Presidents, Lyndon B. Johnson, 1965, Volume II* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office), pp. 635-640.

[7] W. Steven Barnett, Jason T. Hustedt, Laura E. Hawkinson, and Kenneth B. Robin, *The State of Preschool 2006* (Rutgers, NJ: National Institute for Early Education Research, 2007).

[8] W. Steven Barnett, Cynthia Lamy, and Kwanghee Jung, *The Effects of State Prekindergarten Programs on Young Children's School Readiness in Five States* (Rutgers, NJ: National Institute for Early Education Research, December 2005).

[9] Jean Layzer, Carolyn Layzer, Barbara Goodson, and Cristofer Price, *Evaluation of Child Care Subsidy Strategies: Findings from Project Upgrade in Miami-Dade County* (Cambridge, MA: Abt, 2007).

[10] See http://www.headstartinfo.org/nrs_i&r.htm

[11] This account is based on the summary of the meeting of the Civic Caucus in Bloomington, MN, January 3, 2008.

Ms. HIRONO. Thank you all for your testimony.

I now recognize myself for 5 minutes.

For Mr. Kolb, I am very glad, representing the business community, as you do, that you say, I believe, that investing in quality early education is a number one priority for your organization and the people with whom you work. You also mentioned that other countries are doing far better than we are. Is it because they are investing much more financially in preschool programs? You mentioned France and Great Britain.

Mr. KOLB. Congresswoman, I am not sure that it is a question of absolute dollars. I think in cases like France and the U.K., there has been a national commitment.

A couple of years ago, we held a conference on early education in New York, and I remember at the time Beverley Hughes, who was the minister in Tony Blair's Cabinet in charge of early education, said that this issue had been a priority for the Blair government. Now I suspect, if you look at the numbers, they probably spend less than we do, certainly in the aggregate, and quite possibly on a per student basis.

But we are not there yet as a country. And I think Ron Haskins' point about looking at ways to coordinate all the dollars that are being spent—federal, state, local, and private—is a very interesting issue for us.

Ms. HIRONO. At the same time, though, we know that all across our country, there are various kinds of preschool programs taking place in both the public and the private sector, and I would like to ask all of you whether or not you think that the federal government's involvement in this area in supporting preschools should be more in supportive as opposed to supplanting what is going on in our various states and jurisdictions, if you can all briefly respond to where and how the federal government involvement should be.

Ms. PHILLIPS. Do you want me to start?

Ms. HIRONO. We will start with you.

Ms. PHILLIPS. I will go first.

I think, going back to the point that was just made, it is very important—we are spending billions—billions—of dollars on early childhood education in this country. Sometimes we call it the Child Care and Development Block Grant. Sometimes we call it Head Start. You know, sometimes we call it pre-K. Sometimes we call it Title I. I mean, the dollars are being spent, and the question is how to make sure we are getting the return on investment that we are hoping to get and that we know we can get.

And so the challenge is not spending more money; it is spending what we have wisely. We know so much more now about how to direct those dollars. You have heard it from every single one of us. I am so impressed by how consistent this panel is. It is about the quality of the teaching force. It is about keeping them in their jobs with livable wages that are on a par with elementary school teachers so that you do not have a brain drain off of pre-K into the kindergarten classroom which is often right next door.

It is about working with parents effectively. It is about making sure that those teachers are armed with knowledge about child development and about instruction in academic and social skills that really produces learning. We have curricula that work. We know how to do this at the pre-K level. We just have to arm the teachers with that information and make sure that they are qualified and know how to bring that curricula to life.

To me, those are the bottom line, and figuring out how the federal government can foster those ingredients is the key to the castle, no pun intended.

Ms. HIRONO. Ms. Priestly, would you like to add to that?

Ms. PRIESTLY. Sure. I would like to relate it to my own experience in that whether it is the State of New Jersey's $800 million—or whatever we are at right now—for investment in preschool or my $8 million in my own district, that is a big responsibility, and I take it very seriously.

I was speaking to the assistant commissioner of early childhood the other day, and, you know, she said the same thing, and we said we know now how to be effective and efficient, and it is, you know, very important.

In my own case, I have a large Head Start center that I work very closely with, and our state dollars are added to the federal dollars to help that program meet the standards that we have. So, whether it was reducing class size or hiring teachers with BA's, whatever we needed, the—Dr. Phillips said without the retention of teachers, we have seen a big difference.

Since we have been able to provide professional development and in-class support, their turnover has dropped dramatically. So it is supporting those classrooms in other ways, the adoption of the curriculum. We are using the same model throughout. So I think it is an almost independent, you know, case-by-case situation state by state as to where the money is needed.

Ms. HIRONO. My 5 minutes is ending, so if everyone else could just respond with maybe two sentences, I would appreciate it.

Ms. Chun?

Ms. CHUN. Well, very quickly, I do not believe it is supplanting. I think it is supporting what the state is trying to do and encouraging the states. Federal money can encourage the states to maintain quality in their work. We all know we need a quality workforce, and we do need new investments. Many states have not been able to invest large sums of money as yet, and the federal encouragement will help us greatly.

Thank you.

Ms. HIRONO. Mr. Karolak?

Mr. KAROLAK. You can tell Ms. Chun and I are close to the ground.

I would also say it is not just the federal government. It is the federal government and the state. Some of the solutions are extending loan forgiveness to early childhood teachers so they have the same benefit that public school pre-K teachers would have in getting a BA.

I have to say, though, to be a realist, if my bosses, all 18 of them, came to me and said, "Do this, that, and the other thing, and do it with no new money," it would be a challenge, and I think that we have to be careful in not simply saying it is a matter of reshuffling the dollars, but thinking carefully about what those dollars are going to buy and where they are going to buy it and that there may be some offsetting factors in terms of access and accountability.

You know, one of the issues that is closest to us in terms of the child care assistance program is subsidy reimbursement rates, and they are dire. They are incredibly low in some states. Last year, in Texas, the largest early learning provider in the State of Texas closed 20 percent of its locations because it could not make the subsidy reimbursement work for its budgets. That is a problem, and I think at some point resources are a part of that.

Ms. HIRONO. Thank you.

Mr. Haskins?

Mr. HASKINS. The role of the federal government is to support states, parents, and localities in developing the system that best meets their needs, and there are five ways we do it.

The first is research. We have magnificent research on preschool programs, and it is largely because of federal investments.

Accountability: The federal government should demand accountability from anybody that has its money, and that should include measures of child performance. In fact, that is the key.

We should focus our resources on the poor and try to get the states to do the same thing, make sure the poor are covered under some definition. I would go with 150 percent of poverty.

And, finally, whatever we do should involve parent choice.

Ms. HIRONO. Thank you very much.

And now I would like to yield 5 minutes to Mr. Castle.

Mr. CASTLE. Thank you very much. And I am pleased to be here. And I am pleased with the panel.

And I agree with the bottom line that all of you, as far as I can ascertain, that is the importance of early education. I do not think there is any question in our minds about that, but I also agree with what, I think, virtually all of you have said, and that is that there is some real confusion, if you will, as to exactly what works in early education.

And here is part of my confusion, my deja vu. We just spent 5 years working on Head Start and Early Head Start here in this committee, and we finally got a bill passed. It was signed about a month ago or something of that nature, and I visited a number of the Head Start operations in Delaware where I am from, you know, to see what they are doing, and I think we have done some good things in that bill. I mean, we have demanded higher credentials for the teachers and those kinds of things.

But Head Start and Early Head Start clearly conflict with pre-kindergarten in terms of age. I do not think conflict, but they run across the same populations to a great degree.

And there are other programs as well. There is a program called KinderCare—you are probably familiar with it—in Newark, Delaware, and I saw what they are doing, and they are doing some very good—that is the private enterprise—things, and I appreciate your work on that. That is something else which helps a far as kids are concerned.

But, you know, I worry about this. I worry. We just got through Head Start, and all of a sudden, we are talking about another federal expansion perhaps in doing more in terms of pre-kindergarten or whatever, and now are we doing perhaps what Dr. Haskins has asked? Are we stepping back and looking? Are we spending our money wisely? Are these the things that we should be doing? Are we coordinating well as far as our states and school districts are concerned? These issues are of great concern to me.

And I have another abiding issue, and that is the role of the parents and what longitudinal studies do we have with respect to the parenting, that is how kids do in households with both parents in the household. What are the income circumstances? Clearly, lower income is probably going to mean lower education for the parents, which means lower opportunities for the kids. Do we have studies that really show that?

Or do we have a problem here in this country right now in a lack of coordinated focus on what we are doing in all of these early education programs that we need to go back and revisit rather than just continuing to create the next best thing that seems to work in some way or another?

That is really just a very general discourse I just went off, but I would be interested in any comments you may have on the need to get a sharper focus on what we are doing in our early education programs. If there are no volunteers for that, I——

Mr. KOLB. Thank you.

Sometimes in Washington, Congressman, my sense is that there is a great tendency to focus on programs and less so on people. Now that is a broad generalization.

But when I served in the Education Department under Reagan and Bush I, I remembered when I oversaw the Budget Office, I was surprised to find that the people in the Education Department who ran—I think it was called Even Start at the time—a program called Even Start and then Chapter I, now Title I, never talked with the people two buildings over who ran Head Start, and yet if you look at the continuum, the age continuum of the children being served, there was no excuse for that, and so you had a lot of good programs, well-intentioned programs, but not so much effort, particularly on the part of the bureaucracy, to focus on serving the people.

So I would agree with you on the point that we need to think about spending wisely, better, more flexibly, but we do make a point in the CED report that—in the first one—access to early education is limited in this country, and it is uneven, and part of that has to do with the amount of resources being spent, and we also indicate that—and we believe quite strongly in this—public investment still remains inadequate.

Now that, in my view, does not take anything away from your point about spending wisely, spending better, and more flexibly, and focusing on the young people and getting out of this sort of categorical programmatic mindset.

Mr. CASTLE. Thank you.

Mr. HASKINS. I think, first of all, yes, we have a big problem, the same problem we had in 1964 and 1965 when we declared a war on poverty, and that is that a lot of children live in poverty and deep poverty, and their parents' child-rearing practices are not conducive to adequate child development. That is the whole philosophy behind Head Start.

We are much better off as a nation because of Head Start and our investments in preschool programs, but on a 10-point scale, we are 3 or 4. We could do a lot better, and I do not think we can put out, you know, a formula saying, "If you do these five things at the county level, everything is going to be fine."

I think you have to follow the same approach—it is probably not very popular on this committee—that we followed in No Child Left Behind. We have to let the states and localities figure it out for themselves. We have to set up a system that they have incentives to do so and reward good performance and punish bad performance, and that is the kind of system that I outline in my testimony.

I think that is the only way that we are really going to produce change across the whole country.

There will be places that figure it out gradually, like the Minnesota example I gave you, and there are others around the country as well. But if we want to affect change in the whole country, we have to put a system in place that rewards good programs and punishes bad programs or defunds them.

Ms. PHILLIPS. Can I chime in briefly on this?

Mr. CASTLE. It is up to the chairwoman.

Ms. HIRONO. The time has expired.

Mr. Kildee?

Mr. KILDEE. Thank you, Madam Chair.

You know, it is incredible that our predecessors in 1965 wrote such a bill as Head Start, and they did not really realize that the actual—at that time—physical development of the brain depended so much upon that external stimulus. They were really very prophetic. They wrote a great program without the knowledge that we have now on that.

Well, we now know that physical stimulation is an essential part of that development, and we tried to incorporate that knowledge into the recent reauthorization of Head Start, which was a bill which I introduced, and what more can we do because we are really have made some major breakthroughs understanding how the brain is physically developed by that external stimulus? What more can we do?

Obviously, more students would be helpful. How about more Early Head Start? Is there anything to be gained by having the inclusion of maybe some more nonpoverty students in that mix.

Dr. Phillips, would you start responding to that?

Ms. PHILLIPS. I would be happy to. Thank you.

And thank you for your decades of tireless work on these issues.

In Tulsa, we actually looked at classrooms that had mixed-income groups of children versus classrooms that were primarily low-income children. It is a universal pre-K program, so we find, you know, dramatic impacts across the income spectrum, across every single racial group. We cannot find a child hardly who is not positively affected by the program.

So we have a situation there where we have low-income children who are, just because of their neighborhood, in primarily low-income classes and low-income children who are in mixed classrooms with middle-and upper-income children. The low-income children who are in the mixed-income classrooms do better than the children who are in exclusively low-income classrooms.

In all of these classrooms, you have a BA-level teacher, certified teacher, well-paid teacher, and so, you know, there is research in the field at the elementary level as well, though with mixed findings, about the effects of mixing low-income children into a more socioeconomically diverse group. We do always assume that targeting is the right thing to do, and I understand that from an economic perspective, but there are peer group effects, and they do matter. So, you know, that is where the evidence is now.

Mr. KILDEE. I certainly want to keep that focus upon those who are, you know, locked in poverty. This has been one of the great aspects of Head Start.

But there is an interaction. There is child society out there, isn't there, you know, certain things that adults really never have to impart to children. They impart certain things one to another. You know, I will use the home example. My parents never taught me how to play hide-and-seek. My brother, a year older than I was at that time, taught me that.

There is a certain child society out there, and perhaps without losing the emphasis about the special need that poverty children have, perhaps a mixture might be helpful because of this child society that does exist.

You know, we are talking about No Child Left Behind now, and we are wondering how a child going from the fourth to fifth grade or the fourth grade, from one year to another year meets adequate yearly progress, right? There must be some direct relationship between what happens with those Head Start kids and their ability to, in the fourth, fifth, sixth grade, meet adequately progress.

And, Mr. Kolb, you mentioned the interrelation which very often we do not see often enough, right, or do not talk to one another often enough. Do you see Head Start really helping No Child Left Behind as that program is improved and implemented more?

And any of you may respond.

Ms. PHILLIPS. I can give a quick answer just from the FACES data, for example. Dr. Haskins talked about the FACES data, but also in the FACES data is a wonderful chart showing what happens to the children who are in Head Start at the end of kindergarten, and the children who made more progress in Head Start made additional progress and greater progress than the children who in Head Start made less.

In other words, you create this sort of push, and if the push is stronger in Head Start for whatever reason, then they go a little farther and a little faster in kindergarten as well. So I think, right there, just even in that little short-term window, you have pretty compelling evidence that strong gains in Head Start can boost your gains in No Child Left Behind.

Like others have said here, I would love to see greater attention to preschool education in No Child Left Behind. I think you have a remarkable opportunity here with a piece of legislation that is in place to invest where everyone on this panel is telling you you are going to get the greatest investment for your dollar.

Mr. KILDEE. Thank you very much.

And, again, in case I do not get a choice towards the end of the program, I really appreciate, Madam Chair, the panel we have here. I think we have a really great cross-section of expertise out there, and I very much appreciate this.

Thank you.

Ms. HIRONO. Thank you.

Ms. Foxx, you are recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. FOXX. Thank you.

I want to agree with my colleague, Mr. Kildee. I think we have an excellent panel, and I appreciate the comments that you have made.

I want to give you just 30 seconds on my background because I know a little bit about a lot of things, and so I am sort of a dangerous person, but I have a background in education. I was on the

school board. I was on the original Partnership for Children Board in North Carolina, the Smart Start program, and I have not heard any of you mention that, and my doctorate is in higher education and curriculum and teaching, so I have done a little bit of work in the area of human development.

I am very curious that none of you have mentioned something that I think we should do in this country, even having come from a higher education background. We do it exactly backwards. Why is it we pay university professors $150,000 a year for teaching the best and the brightest who make it to the universities, and we are paying people in child care minimum wage?

I think we have it exactly backwards in this country, and how in the world we change that value system, I do not know. But I have always felt that the system is backwards in that respect, and none of you have made that recommendation. So I would like you to think about that in the future.

I also want to say that I am extremely impressed with most of you talking about the issue of accountability, and that is coming from witnesses on both sides of the aisle, and that, again, has been one of my big issues here in the federal government. I think whatever program gets money from the federal government, we need strong accountability.

Now I am hearing a little bit of mixed comments from you. And I am going to quit talking in just a minute and ask my question. I do not believe that there is much debate in what works and does not work in early childhood programs. Now you all might correct me on that, but, again, with my limited background in this area, I think we know a lot about what works and does not work.

I believe that, to a certain extent, you should give some flexibility, but I also think that if you are going to give out money for programs, you have to make people justify the flexibility that they have because if they are going to go off on tangents, if they are going to ignore the excellent research that is out there, then there has to be a justification for that, and I do not see how you can, again, allow wide latitude if you are going to do this. And the other is I agree about the silos that we have.

Now I would like to ask this question. Has anybody done anything to look at what the cost would be to bring the programs to where you think they should be? And this could be a pretty short answer. You can tell me any billions you are talking about. But what I would like to know is, has anybody looked at putting all those programs into one program, eliminating the administrative costs that exist out there?

I know we have 43 worker training programs in the State of North Carolina. I think there are 73 at the federal level. I do not even know how many early childhood programs, but let us say you collapse all the early childhood programs into one and you say to the states, "We will continue to give you the amount of money the federal government is giving you, but you have to have one administration and one plan," which could have many parts, and then see what happens. Who has done that study or who needs to do that study?

We will start at the end and come up, and please answer fairly quickly.

Ms. PHILLIPS. I have been talking a lot, so I sort of wonder if others would like to go first.

Mr. KOLB. Also, if I had had a sixth minute, I would have gone on to Smart Start and Jim Hunt, Jr., who is one of our heroes at CED, and when we released our first report, Jim Hunt was the keynoter. So we are a big fan of what you all have done in North Carolina.

Second, on the compensation, I could not agree with you more. I have a 10-year-old fifth-grader at home. She had the benefit of having a really good pre-K experience. I have had a lot of education, big consumer. I could not begin to do what those teachers did, and I would come home, and I would say to my wife, you know, "They do not pay those men and women enough for what they do."

On the third point, I do not know if anyone has done it. It needs to be done. But I keep hearing analogies to welfare reform where you actually did break down some of these categories, gave states some flexibility, and you got some—with waivers and other things here in Washington—creative results.

Mr. HASKINS. The major pieces the states already control, and they could do a pretty good job of coordinating those if they would do it. Some states, especially North Carolina, and a few others have done that.

The biggest piece that they cannot control is Head Start because it is funded from the federal government directly to the Head Start authority. In some states like Washington, at least for over a multiyear period, they had success coordinating all those programs. The person that ran the state preschool program was a former head of the Head Start Association in the state, and that helped a lot. But many states, notably North Carolina, have had a lot of trouble, and they have not been able to coordinate the program. So, if you want them coordinated, I think that is a key.

But a second point I would make: There is another way to do it completely separate, and that is have competition and only allow federal funding for programs that have produced success, and then they can figure out how to coordinate it themselves.

Ms. FOXX. Nobody is answering how much money.

Ms. PHILLIPS. I will.

Mr. KOLB. $35 billion was what we estimated.

Ms. FOXX. $35 billion?

Mr. KOLB. For universal pre-K. This was 6 years ago. That is in our report, Congresswoman. It is probably larger than that at this point.

Ms. HIRONO. The gentlewoman's time has expired.

Mr. Hare, you are recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. HARE. Thank you, Madam Chair. It is a pleasure to see you sitting in the chair this morning.

I would just like to maybe ask two questions, one for Mr. Kolb. Many times before this committee, you know, I have talked about the decline in manufacturing jobs as a result of trade policies that do not work, and in 2004—a city in my district, Galesburg, Illinois, had a Maytag plant—we lost 6,800 workers to Senora, Mexico, and it had a devastating impact, as you can imagine, on the community and the local economy.

My question is, in your testimony, you mention the economic promise of investing in early education, and I am wondering can investments in high-quality pre-K serve as a long-term economic development solution for trade-impacted communities looking to create jobs and build, you know, a productive workforce, such as the City of Galesburg?

Mr. KOLB. I think that it is part of the answer. I do not think it by itself will do that, but I think if you do not start at the beginning, you are not likely to get those results.

CED has looked at the whole issue of trade and the impact of globalization, and what we also do not do well as a country is to provide sufficient assistance to those people who, for no reason of their own, are adversely affected by free trade.

On balance, open borders, free trade, going back to Adam Smith who got the arguments right, you know, in 1776, has been a plus for this country, and there have been lots of people who have benefited, but there are also lots of people who have been hurt, as I said, through no fault of their own, and we need to do a better job through adjustment assistance, through insurance, or other programs that CED has talked about in other reports.

But this, I would see, as part of the strategy of trying to make the front-end investment in future productivity.

But if you go through and you train for one thing and then, through no fault of your own, you find out that your skill is no longer valuable, then we need to think about how to help those people with income support and other types of assistance because it is not their fault.

Mr. HARE. Thank you.

My other question is for Ms. Priestly and Ms. Chun, if you could maybe talk about this a bit. According to the National Center for Education Statistics, they report the status of education in rural America, and it says rural areas maintain the lowest level enrollment in pre-K programs when compared to urban and suburban areas.

My congressional district has a lot of rural areas, and, you know, sometimes you would swear that if you do not live in Chicago or Rockford or Peoria that you do not have kids that need pre-K, you do not have people that need health care in the rural communities, and so, you know, in your experience in hard-to-serve areas, what are some of the major barriers in expanding access to pre-K programs?

In other words, what can we do to expand those, and what strategies would you recommend for improving and delivering services pre-K, particularly in the rural communities?

Ms. CHUN. I can start that. In Hawaii, as I demonstrated in my chart, we have a number of rural communities where developing new facilities will be very difficult. We are bringing together families and young children in something, as I said earlier, called parent and child early learning interaction programs in which they come to a neighborhood place, very much donated sometimes by the elementary school, and they have a quality educator. In fact, our Keiki Start program recommends that person actually have beginning with an associate's degree.

But they are from the community and they come up from the community so the families and parents know them, and through this program, we are actually developing new people to go into the field as well as expanding access. We are lucky they can be on the front lawn all year round of the elementary schools, and they do quality interaction activities. So they increase the early education as well as get them ready to go into elementary school and use a good provider as well as we are building the field at the same time.

Ms. PRIESTLY. And I would just say while I happen to live and work in the very populated area of New Jersey, and New Jersey being a small state, we do have rural areas that were of high consideration during our expansion in New Jersey, and I have colleagues who work in those areas.

So, while we are following the same guidelines and accountability measures in how we are implementing it in their areas, everybody has to address it according to the needs of the area, and the first thing we do is, obviously, find the families and find the children and see what the needs are. But we are providing those programs.

Transportation becomes an issue in our rural areas. We have to look at that differently. I am in a walking district, two miles square. Everybody can get there, you know, some way. So I think that is one of the big hurdles.

The support staff, the teachers, everybody—just making sure we have enough staff—is important, as you mentioned, and then training them well to be able to go out in the field there, but it certainly, I think, extends from making sure we are finding all those children who need it.

Mr. HARE. One last comment. I will not go into this. I think you mentioned teacher mentoring programs in your remarks. I think those are wonderful things to do. If we are going to, you know, A, recruit and then retain teachers, regardless of whether it is pre-K all the way up, I think those are wonderful things, and we need to do more of them, and I am hoping as we do the NCLB that we can, you know, really bump up the teacher mentoring programs.

Thank you.

Thank you, Madam Chair.

Ms. HIRONO. Thank you.

Mr. Keller, you are now recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. KELLER. Thank you, Madam Chairman.

And as I was listening to our experts, I was reflecting on my own life. I have three very small children and a fourth on the way in a couple of weeks. So, frankly, I am just happy to be out of the house right now. [Laughter.]

But I was thinking about why they had a good early education experience, and in each case, they had a very high-quality teacher, and it pretty much turned out to be luck on our part that we just ended up with someone who is a great teacher.

Mr. Karolak, can you tell me if parents are out there today and they are looking at early childhood programs, what would be the top three elements that you would recommend to a parent as to what they should be looking for in an early childhood education program?

Mr. KAROLAK. Thank you for the question.

You know, there is no question that the most important determinative quality is the staff. I mean, on some level, all you have are your staff. They are the folks who work with children every day. They meet parents every day. They talk about the learning and development of the child with the parent every day. There is no doubt that is the most important element of quality.

Besides that, though, there are other factors, having a solid curriculum, an intentional curriculum that is backed by research. When I took this job about a year ago, I was, I have to say, surprised. I did not realize how much money was put into curriculum development by the various providers that I represent who are very much large-scale providers, for-profit and not-for-profit.

So having a plan of action for that staff person, the teacher to work with is very important, and I think there are many other factors as well.

Mr. KELLER. So, if we had the top three, it would be teacher quality, number one, a solid curriculum, number two. Is there a number three?

Mr. KAROLAK. I hesitate to rank further down, but I also think that it is really important that you have a developmentally appropriate early learning environment that is experientially rich, that is aimed at young children. We see on both the child care and in some cases in public school pre-K that those environments are not quite right.

Mr. KELLER. What does that mean? Like puzzles that have ABCs? Or what type of environment are you looking for?

Mr. KAROLAK. It is a fallacy to think that focusing on cognitive development alone is the best way to prepare children for school and life. Researchers have found—and we see this every day in our classrooms—that a balanced approach, that is focused on cognitive, social, emotional development, language development, that is what prepares children best, and, indeed, that includes——

Mr. KELLER. Okay. I am just trying to get through that. I do not want to cut you off, but I do not have a—so good teacher quality, good curriculum, some type of positive environment that focuses on lots of things—academics, social development, the whole package?

Mr. KAROLAK. Well, part of that experientially environment is materials, educational materials. Children need to have things to work with, and they need to have people who can encourage them to work collaboratively with other children. That is part of that social-emotional development.

Mr. KELLER. I appreciate that. And you have a doctorate, but if I was going to talk to a regular parent and say, "I want you to pick an experientially enriched environment with collaborative skills," they would say, "What the hell are you talking about?" I mean, the average parent is not going to know what you are talking about. But you know what you are talking about.

Mr. KAROLAK. Well, you should be going to look at that center——

Mr. KELLER. Right.

Mr. KAROLAK [continuing]. Wherever that location is, and you should be evaluating that on your own, but there are resources available through a number of national organizations, also some federally funded——

Mr. KELLER. Thank you.

Mr. Kolb, you said that the federal government sometimes tends to focus on programs instead of people, and I agree with that, and the teacher quality issue is a perfect example. How does a parent know on the front end when you go to interview different early childhood education programs whether this program is going to have a good teacher? And as a parent, I just looked around and asked people, but maybe you have some ideas.

And then, second, do you have any ideas, if quality is so important for the teachers—and I think we agree it is—on how we attract the higher quality folks and, I guess, weed out the folks who are not so high quality? I would love to hear your thoughts on that.

Mr. KOLB. As you asked the question about your three things you would look for, I have first quality of the teachers and the curriculum; second, the environment, just the overall environment. You know, is it playful? Do the children interact? Do they get the curriculum?

The third thing I put down was openness to parents because remember a lot of what happens during a child's life is not just in a preschool or early education environment. It is in the home, and so I think you need to look for what the environment of that school is and if the teachers are open to engaging the parents in what is going on in that young person's life throughout the day and also kind of taking those principles home.

On the issue of quality, I think you have to look at it from a pipeline perspective. I mean, there is a story in the Washington Post this morning, I believe, about what bond traders are making in New York, you know, and some of them are in their early 20s. It is multiples, frankly, of what we pay people in early education. So we need to value those skills and put a higher price tag on those skills, if you will, and then encourage people early on in their careers to look at becoming engaged in early education.

Mr. KELLER. Thank you.

Mr. KOLB. You are welcome.

Ms. HIRONO. Thank you.

Mr. Payne, you are recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. PAYNE. Thank you very much.

Let me thank the panel. I think this has been a very great discussion, and I really had a revelation here. I did not think that Ms. Foxx and I would really be on the same page that much, but I find today with your profound statement about the necessity of having quality people at the early end I could not agree with you more. I knew the longer we stayed here, there would be something that we are going to find in common.

As a matter of fact, from experience, I taught school for a number of years, and I started out as a secondary school teacher, like most men do, and was a coach and all that, but then I was disappointed at the preparation that the kids had, and I said, "Well, let me just try junior high school level," and I went the opposite direction.

And after 3 years in high school, 3 years in junior high, decided I still was not satisfied, so I actually went to elementary school for about 3 or 4 years and taught a sixth-grade level, and I agree that, believe it or not, the necessity to have strong, positive teachers in

elementary school and just getting down to preschool is just as important, and so I would hope that we could do something with No Child Left Behind.

I agree that preschool somehow should be—or pre-K—involved in NCLB. I do not think it will happen as we reauthorize it, but I would like to see something come up perhaps as soon as possible to deal with that.

I coached on the high school level, but then I also coached a little Pop Warner where you take the kids at 7 or 8 years old, and you teach them the fundamentals. Those kids usually avoid injuries, and when you teach them properly at the early age, they become better participants.

So I guess my time is running out.

Let me just ask, Ms. Priestly, in your opinion—and anyone else could jump in if there is any time left—what immediate steps do you think we can make, this committee can make, to increase high-quality early education for all children? What would be some things that you would like to see or you would recommend?

Ms. PRIESTLY. Well, first of all, along with Ms. Foxx, I know now that you said you agree on certain things. The accountability part, the leadership part is so important. We keep talking about, you know, the people in the relationships, and I think the support has to stem, you know, with our collaboration, our collaboration with Head Start and other private providers, just like we are doing today.

I think that has made a big difference in our small district, that the collaboration, having that time to be able to get together and see what we bring to the table and how we can support each other, and what we need, and so, of course, the dollars are important. We need the dollars to support every level right down to those classroom materials that the children interact with every day along with their relationships with the adults.

As the committee, of course, you are looking, you know, nationally, as the Congress, and, of course, the dollars and the laws that follow it. You know, even on our local level, we say if we did not have the guidelines and certain things in code, it would be a lot harder to make sure these programs are of quality because, as you start out and build those relationships, those guidelines from the experts are really important, and it is easier to implement the program.

So, again, I think in your capacity, that is where it stands, provided those regulations are appropriate for young children and the teachers that work with them.

Mr. PAYNE. Great. I thank you very much. I think that the environment, as it was mentioned by Mr. Kolb, is very important, but we do have differences.

The Kerner Commission report, you know, written 50 years ago, I guess, almost, talked about, you know, two societies, poor and rich. We really have to somehow deal with the whole question of poverty, the environment, where kids will learn better. The facilities, the community, the housing, the nutrition, all of these things, I think, go into having a strong education at a beginning level.

And so I would just like to once again, since my time has expired, really thank all of you for your wisdom and, hopefully, we

will be able to get it straight. One thing, I never hear a cry for vouchers in very good school districts. You know, they do not ask for them because the public school is doing the job. I would like to see that really in every school district.

Thank you.

Ms. HIRONO. Thank you.

Mr. Davis, you are recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. DAVIS OF TENNESSEE. Thank you, Madam Chairman.

I would like to thank the panel for being here today. Thank you for your involvement and your concern in educating young children.

Just a small background, my father has a sixth-grade education. I came out of the mountains of Tennessee. My father grew up in the Depression Era, and I was able to put myself through college. I was able to come to Congress, started several business. So just because you are poor does not mean you cannot succeed, and I hope everybody understands that.

The person that started Ford Motor Company, Henry Ford, once said, "If you think you can do a thing or think you can not, you are right," and I use that a lot when I talk to young people back in my district. So I think it is important that we understand that having a family atmosphere, having people around you that want you to succeed, as well as programs at the federal and state level, community level, are all important.

So thank you for your interest in young children.

And with that, I would like to yield the remainder of my time to my good friend from North Carolina, Ms. Foxx.

Ms. FOXX. Thank you, Congressman Davis.

If you believe in mental telepathy, we have a great example of it right here. I was going to make the same comments about poverty that my colleague just made.

I grew up in the mountains of North Carolina in the 1950s and 1960s—I graduated from high school in 1961—and I can tell you that everybody in my class was extraordinarily poor, and I was among the poorest of those. My dad had a ninth-grade education; my mother, a sixth-grade education. They were not unintelligent people. They did not have formal education, just like most of the people in my area.

And when I reflect a little bit on my background and the people that I grew up with, we were all poor, and yet we did not have any government programs at all to help us get out of poverty or to learn, and yet I would put my class that graduated in 1961, of all poor people, up against any high school graduating class right now in terms of their ability to learn and what they did learn.

So I wanted to make that comment about the fact that it is not always poverty, and I see well-to-do people right now whose children are not getting the kind of educational stimulus and background that a lot of poor children are getting. So I think it is wrong that we always focus this on the issue of poverty because there are lots of different ways that you can be impoverished, and you can be impoverished right now, not just with material things, but with the environment.

So that was sort of leading up to the question that I have. I am very much a small government person. However, I am realistic enough to know that we are not going to get rid of most of these

government programs that we have. So it seems to me that what we have to do is to look at how do we balance the role of the government and the role of parents here.

And I will tell you again I taught in a university for 15 years. I told my students everybody could make an A. Not until I had been teaching for a long time did I reflect back. I had almost a perfect bell-shaped curve in grading every single semester. Now it made a believer out of me that it exists. I did not believe it when I started teaching.

So we are going to have that. I do not think we can deny the fact that we are going to have differences in ability and differences in performance, but how do we balance the role of the parents and these well-intentioned government programs in helping our children do better? So any kinds of responses that you can give, I would appreciate it.

Ms. PRIESTLY. Well, I would just start by saying—and then passing it along—we include parents every step of the way, from the very beginning with a family or parent interview, to home visits, to parent education, parent workshop, programs in the classroom, out of the classroom. It is a major, major component where I am, and I think that is important for everyone in whatever way when we are dealing with children who exhibit challenging behaviors or other learning delays that the parents are included in everything we are dong.

Ms. CHUN. I think this goes back to the discussion earlier on what is a quality program, and a quality early education program recognizes that the parent is the child's first teacher, and what they need to do is stem from the home experiences, build on the home experiences, and encourage the parents to remain involved with their young child.

The reality is, in Hawaii especially, and I think around the country, 75 to 76 percent of the parents of our young children are working and need a place for their child to be. So, as this is a workforce reality, we have to make sure that as we develop the programs, we maintain the component. That is the strength of Head Start.

And in the Keiki First program that we are doing in Hawaii, we maintain that role, that parents come with the child. They come in a way that they are involved. If they cannot be there during the day, they are involved and knowledgeable about their child's program, and they are part of the whole picture for a young child.

When I look at later education and we go back and wonder what can we do with families——

Ms. HIRONO. Can you wrap up? The gentlewoman's time has expired.

Thank you.

Mr. Sarbanes, you are recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. SARBANES. Thank you, Madam Chair, and I salute you for your work on this issue and convening the hearing today.

I had a couple of questions that are sort of scattered around, but, Dr. Phillips, I am very intrigued by all the brain research that you alluded to, and I was wondering when does the kind of impediment to good brain development get to the point of warranting characterization as brain damage in a sense.

I mean, nobody talks about it in that way, but I imagine you could point to at least an analogy there to brain damage, and maybe brain damage is when circuits that have already been built are broken as opposed to circuits that do not get built in the first place, but if you could just react to that prism, if you would——

Ms. PHILLIPS. It is a hard question because, in a way, you are asking, I think, about thresholds. At what point, you know, is the damage so severe that you cannot turn it around. Is that a fair characterization?

Mr. SARBANES. Fair enough, yes.

Ms. PHILLIPS. You are right. It is not that circuits are not getting built. What is happening is that they are getting built in a very fragile way. So I think the stress literature is very instructive here. So what happens with a child who is growing up with a persistently depressed parent, for example, going to the importance of parents, who is not able to get beyond that depression to interact in responsive kind of serve-and-return ways, what happens with that child, if you look at their brain, is that their brain looks like the brain of the depressed mother, okay, in terms of its electrical activity. It looks like our brains look when we see a very sad movie. The difference is that our brains recover very quickly when we walk out of the movie, you know, but, you know, you have to fix the mother to fix the baby's brains. Otherwise, they are in that persistent environment.

There is really minimal evidence, except in the visual system and so on, for example, that there is a window that slams shut at some point and there is no point of return where damage cannot be repaired. The brain story is more one of it just gets harder and harder and harder to fix damage that is done when children are young. Going back to fetal alcohol syndrome, you know, I mean, that is the challenge.

That is the neuroscience equivalent of the economist and businessperson saying invest early. It is just more efficient because those circuits have not gotten solidified yet.

Mr. SARBANES. Okay. I am also curious how you see the interplay of early childhood development with this whole new technology era that we have living in, particularly how much technology young children are consuming today, and I would like you to answer—and anybody can answer—in a couple of ways.

One is, you know, what is the harm that is presented by that, but, also, do you envision good uses of technology by young children and starting at what age and at what levels of consumption, because we are certainly moving in a direction where using those tools, I think, effectively to help children learn and to spur cognitive development makes sense.

But trying to find what that happy medium is, is, I think, tricky.

Ms. PHILLIPS. So I have a colleague who actually studies this. I would be happy to give you her name, a couple actually who look at technology with very, very young children, toddlers, and uses of technology. It can be a curse, and it can be a blessing, and it all boils down, like a curriculum, to what happens in whose hands is that technology being put, and in terms of young children, you know, what is the role of the adults who surround them in sort of introducing them to that technology, you know, working with them

around that technology. It depends. I know I sound terribly like a researcher saying that, but, actually—and I am sorry Mr. Hare is not here—technology is also part of the answer to rural families and children.

Mr. SARBANES. Right, right.

Ms. PHILLIPS. You know, huge, tremendously exciting, advancements are being made in long-distance learning that can be applied for teachers, that can be applied to early childhood classrooms. So, again, it is——

Mr. SARBANES. Right. I have run out of time. Thanks very much.

Ms. HIRONO. Thank you.

Mr. Sestak, you are recognized for 5 minutes.

' SESTAK: Thank you, Madam Chair.

I walked in, Dr. Phillips, when you were mentioning a comment—and I am sorry I did not catch it, therefore—on the military and some impacts.

Ms. PHILLIPS. Oh, yes.

Mr. SESTAK. What was that statement?

Ms. PHILLIPS. So the four branches of the U.S. military——

Mr. SESTAK. I did not see it in your testimony, but dare I just——

Ms. PHILLIPS. It is buried somewhere. I can tell you.

Mr. SESTAK. That is okay.

Ms. PHILLIPS. I do not talk about it very much in this particular testimony, but the four branches of the military require every single one of their child care homes and centers to be accredited, NAEYC accredited. This is a voluntary program, but they are a set of comprehensive guidelines. You may be familiar with it.

Mr. SESTAK. Yes, I did note there was some study done.

Ms. PHILLIPS. Yes.

Mr. SESTAK. There are so many studies.

I spent yesterday, you know, at a community pre-K or whatever, with a lot of people talking about this issue. I am quite taken by, as my colleague was, by a lot of the research you have done.

I had to spend the time about 2 years ago with my young 4-year-old daughter in an oncology ward, brain tumor, and I watched, and we were discussing the impact upon these various 2-, 3-, 4-, 5-year-old kids as they went through brain tumors and chemotherapy and radiation and all, and, you know, sat down with some doctors afterwards, and they almost speak like you do about, you know, how is the support from the families and what the impact is upon them, you know, like your analogy, you know, like watching a bad movie, and are they able to come out of it or not. It depends upon the support system.

And I am quite taken in the area here of pre-K, and I very much do agree with the issue of the colleague on the other side about parents and support, but the fact of the matter is our families are being structured as they were 50 years ago, back in the 1960s and the other areas. I spent 31 years in the military, so I am very familiar with what we do there.

My take on all of this is that—and I am not so much asking a question—I am just so taken with what I consider a minimal investment in order to have the cognitive ability of these children to garner so much for our economy for themselves. I mean, every

study I read varies, but if it is $1 in, it is either $7 out or $8 or $6 out or $16 on the outside.

And, you know, as I was sitting here yesterday, I was so struck, you know. No Child Left Behind, up until last year, $54 billion underfunded or $51 billion, and, you know, college affordability going out of sight, and to get attention to this issue is hard because you do not see the deficits that you are creating. It is not a negative impact, so to speak, right there where your kid cannot go to college. It is, you know, so obvious, it is a deficit you are building up in the future.

So I do not have much to add, except I thought all your testimony was tremendous. I have the kids into military all the time. On long-distance learning, you are absolutely right, and there is a lot to learn from it. I have nothing more to add, just I think this is where I would put the marginal dollar when and if we get it.

Thank you.

Ms. PHILLIPS. Thank you.

Ms. HIRONO. Thank you.

Ms. Clarke, you are recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. CLARKE. Thank you very much, Madam Chair. This has been a really stimulating discourse.

It is a very important issue, and as the child of a mother who started her early career as an early childhood educator, I can truly, truly relate to where we are today. It is actually kind of dumbfounding that we are not much further advanced because the daycare movement has been going on for quite some time, and that has evolved into our early childhood education, and in a city like New York, you know, we had really, really struggled around that. I remember parents taking buses to Albany, and I am on there with my lunchbox because my mom is in the movement, and we are trying to make sure that mothers, families have access to early childhood education.

So I want to direct my question, first of all, to Ms. Priestly. Everyone acknowledges the importance of parental involvement, and I want to make sure that we are really talking about all parents because, you know, I come from a very fortunate, two-parent household, and I have had it all my life, but I think oftentimes we do not look at the fact that there are a lot of younger parents out there, there are a lot of caregivers, foster care, grandparents, there are single-parent households, and we know that their involvement in early childhood education is critical. Head Start, for example, prides itself on the success of the participation of parents in the Head Start program.

Can you describe successful parental outreach strategies used by your school district, and I am particularly interested in the strategy used to reach out to parents of English language learners and other parents who have traditionally been less involved in their children's school.

Ms. PRIESTLY. Thank you.

Everything you said is what I experience every day. I actually have a social worker who is under me. That is her role, and I say her role. It is all of our role. That is the thing. It never ends. She helps coordinate. Because we have family workers that are in each of our child care centers in Head Start, we treat that like every-

thing else that we do on a tiered level where we just brainstorm. We get together and we brainstorm, and nothing is thrown out.

Whether we are reaching two parents or we have 100 parents at anything we do, whatever we need, and that is where I started to list between home visits, the parent interviews. It is not about the quantity of time with the parents, the quality of the time from our end, whatever we can do to bring that parent in, not waste their time, go to their homes, meet them on neutral turf. You know, again, we never say, "Oh, we are not going to have any more of those workshops or meetings because only six parents came." Those six parents go out and tell six more parents——

And you mentioned English language learners, especially the cultural aspect of that. At our local Head Start, our numbers have increased dramatically of the English language learner families, and we were not reaching them as well, so, again, we had to sit down and brainstorm, and we started to have—you know, we always have translators—families who came together. They walked the children together. We started with that group, asked them to get some other people, promised child care at night, what time works best for you. We found Friday nights when they pick the children up from aftercare, they will stay.

You know, again, I have lists and lists of things that we have tried, what works, what does not. We always reflect back on what works, who did we reach, and then at our own meetings, I meet with the center directors in Head Start, everybody. We all meet once a month in a, you know, regular structured meeting, and at that time, that is what we share, you know, how were you successful with your parents.

And then we also have a big movement with transitioning families from early intervention into preschool, from preschool to kindergarten, and then we make sure that we are bringing in people from the community as well as foster parent groups. We cover it all. It is an integral part of our program.

Ms. CLARKE. Very good. That is very encouraging, and perhaps that is a model that can be built out upon across the nation.

Ms. PRIESTLY. I can get you more information.

Ms. CLARKE. Yes.

Much of the testimony today highlights the benefits of early childhood education for all children and its linkage, therefore, to the long-term success of the county. In particular, it is noted that children from low-income households benefit the most from quality early childhood education. Can you explain why children from low-income households seem to benefit the most from early childhood education compared to children from other socioeconomic groups?

Mr. HASKINS. I would say the reason is that the increase in quality——

Ms. HIRONO. Excuse me. If you can just keep your answer very brief because we are out of time. Go ahead.

Mr. HASKINS. Okay. I would say that the answer is somewhat straightforward. The environment in which they are reared in terms of the language they hear, the discipline, the order compared to the high-quality child care center—the high-quality child care center is much better on all those dimensions relative to their home than it would be for middle-class kids.

A lot of people do not like that, but there is a ton of research to show that that is the truth, and, in fact, that is the basic idea behind Head Start, that Head Start can put kids in a center and give them experiences with teachers and curriculum and so forth that they would ordinarily miss out on in their home and that will affect their development, and it turns out that is true.

Ms. CLARKE. Thank you very much, Madam Chair.

Ms. HIRONO. Thank you.

Mr. Holt, you are recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. HOLT. I thank the Chair and commend her for holding these hearings, and I must say all the witnesses have presented articulate and really useful testimony.

But we all feel this frustration. Whenever we talk with constituents who speak their minds to us, they accuse us of being shortsighted and not spending time on or devoting appropriations to what is really important to Americans or making the most efficient use of their resources, and this is, of course, probably best example, when you look at the cognitive benefits and the social benefits and the behavioral benefits. $33 billion calculated some years ago or, say, $100 billion today should not seem like too much, and, in fact, considering the way we have been spending money in the last few years only to hurt ourselves, no one can ever say to me again for a social program, "We just do not have the money," or for an educational program."

But let run through three questions I would like to have answered. I will lay them on the table, and recognizing the limited time, I would like you to run through them quickly.

There is, as Dr. Phillips and others have pointed out, quite a bit of research. One of the questions is are the training programs at the college and university level behind the curve, or are they really up to date in teaching? And this would be for teacher training as well as for teaching those who go into parent training. Are they up to date on the research?

And I would like to ask, Ms. Priestly, what would you say are the most important lessons that New Jersey has learned that we should share with the country, and specifically in special education? Is recognition of the special needs and differentiation more or less important in the pre-K years, or is it, say, equally important as later? In other words, should we have special programs for special students in these years?

Let me let it go at that because there is probably not time for my other questions.

Ms. PRIESTLY. Okay. If I start with your last one about special needs children, I will never stick to the time, but just let me briefly say because, you know, that is one of my pets of this.

I pride myself on the fact that we have—we will fall into the lessons of New Jersey, too. One of the biggest and most important parts of the whole early childhood movement in New Jersey is that—and, in my case, right in my district right now—we have inclusive programs. Our 3-and 4-year-olds—you know, identifying those learning differences and social disabilities and everything is very important, but it is how we handle it.

It is working with the parents, it is the early intervention strategies, it is training the teachers, and what we have done is our chil-

dren are all—except for a couple of self-contained special education classes where the needs at this moment cannot be met in the general education classes, our 3-and 4-year-olds with disabilities are included in the general ed preschool classrooms, but not without support. We have preschool inclusion teachers who go into those classrooms and work alongside of the classroom teacher.

We use it as a consultation model as well. We do teacher training so that they are modeling for those classroom teachers because we know that all the intervention strategies need to happen on a regular basis to make a difference at the same time we work with the parents to see what else can be done at home, and so, again, that teacher education part is very important, and the training is very important.

And then whatever other needs, as I said, are not met in the general ed class, then we provide those services, whether it is additional speech and language therapy, occupational therapy, whatever is identified in their individual education plan.

So that to me is one of the lessons.

The other thing we did is we—I always talk about the tiered approach because you cannot do it all quickly. So, when we worked with the leaders, the supervisors and master teachers and everybody in New Jersey so that they would be able to go back to their districts, get the training and go back and make sure things happened, one of the other things we did was create a preschool intervention and referral specialist team not to identify children and send them to special programs, but to work with the parents and the teachers.

Mr. HOLT. Thank you. Let me ask the others, particularly on the preparation in the teacher training and parent training programs, whether we are current.

Ms. PHILLIPS. I cannot directly address that because I have not looked specifically at that. I know there are concerns about that, but I can give you a couple of observations.

Ms. HIRONO. Can you be sure to keep your response short because we are also going to be called for a vote on the floor in a few minutes.

Ms. PHILLIPS. Okay. Then I will just give you two sentences. The teachers in Tulsa who provided more time on task and provided better instruction for their students got higher grade-point averages out of their BA's in early education and education. That suggests that the teachers who are really getting the most out of their undergraduate educations are doing the best are doing well.

So, clearly, those schools are doing well. We are talking about, you know, schools in Oklahoma. We are not talking, you know, better excellence, but they are not your Harvard School of Education. So, yes, they can do a perfectly good job.

Mr. HOLT. I think Ms. Chun is trying to get a word in here.

Please.

Ms. CHUN. Just real quickly, in Hawaii, we are expanding our distance learning, and with the distance learning, we know we must combine that with mentoring in the classroom. We also realize we must increase the preliteracy abilities of our early education teachers to be able to teach preliteracy concept along with strong child development. We are looking closely at our courses right now

with our community college and how they articulate to our higher education.

Ms. HIRONO. Thank you.

I would like to once again thank all of our witnesses for coming today and enlightening us. I think we are all on the same page on the importance of quality early education.

I would like to add, though, that there was a lot of testimony and discussion about the need for coordination of early childhood services, and that is important, which is why we took numerous steps in the new Head Start law to improve coordination at the state and local levels.

At the same time, though, we know that it is not just coordination. When we look at the fact that 39 states do not require child care providers to have any training before entering a classroom, that oversight and accountability of child care is generally minimal, and, in fact, in California, the Chair noted that programs are only inspected once every 5 years. One-third of the state's pre-K programs do not meet more than half of the key quality criteria. And Ms. Chun explained that Hawaii has literally half of the necessary workforce to provide high-quality care and that low-and middle-income families are priced out of quality child care and preschool experiences.

So, when we look at the national picture of standards and quality of child care and pre-K education, we conclude that the big solution is not just about coordination, that is oversimplifying, that we really need to look at standards, and we need to provide, I think, more funding—appropriate standards, and funding and federal support.

So, with that, if there are no objections, the members will have 14 days to submit additional materials or questions for the hearing record, and without objection, this hearing is concluded. Thank you.

[Additional submission by Ms. Hirono follows:]

Prepared Statement of Matthew Melmed, Executive Director, Zero to Three

Chairman Miller and Members of the Committee: My name is Matthew Melmed. For the past 13 years I have been the Executive Director of ZERO TO THREE, a national non-profit organization that has worked to advance the healthy development of America's babies and toddlers for 30 years. I would like to start by thanking the Committee for its continued interest in early childhood education. I would also like to thank the Committee for providing me the opportunity to discuss the importance of investing in early education, particularly for our nation's infants and toddlers.

The Importance of the Earliest Years

Some may wonder why babies matter in public policy. While almost every social policy—from education to welfare reform to substance abuse and mental health—affects infants and toddlers, the impact of these policies on very young children is seldom sufficiently addressed. Instead, policies often focus on the effects of ignoring the needs of infants and toddlers, for example, by having to address the cognitive gaps between low-income preschoolers and their more affluent peers or providing intensive special education services for problems that may have begun as much milder developmental delays left untreated in a young baby.

Science has significantly enhanced what we know about the needs of infants and toddlers, underscoring the fact that experiences and relationships in the earliest years of life play a critical role in a child's ability to grow up healthy and ready to learn. We know that infancy and toddlerhood are times of intense intellectual engagement.[1] During this time—a remarkable 36 months—the brain undergoes its most dramatic development, and children acquire the ability to think, speak, learn, and reason. The early years establish the foundation upon which later learning and

development are built. If experiences in those early years are harmful, stressful, or traumatic, the effects of such experiences become more difficult, not to mention more expensive, to remediate over time if they are not addressed early in life.

All babies and toddlers need positive early learning experiences and consistent quality caregivers to foster their intellectual, social, and emotional development and to lay the foundation for later school success. The years during this most critical of developmental stages may be even more crucial for young children living in poverty.

Of the 12 million infants and toddlers living in the United States, 44%—a staggering 5.4 million—live in low-income families (defined as families with incomes at or below twice the federal poverty level or $41,300 for a family of four).[2] What is particularly troubling, in addition to the rise of childhood poverty, is the fact that very young children are disproportionately impacted by economic stress—that is, the negative effects of poverty are likely to be more severe when children are very young and their bodies and minds are still developing. Infants and toddlers in low-income families are at greater risk than infants and toddlers in middle- to high-income families for a variety of poorer outcomes and vulnerabilities that can jeopardize their development and readiness for school, including learning disabilities, behavior problems, mental retardation, and developmental delays.[3]

Mr. Chairman, my message to you is that babies can't wait! We know that investing in quality early care and education programs for our nation's infants and toddlers promotes healthy development in young children.

Investing Earlier

Although there is a growing interest nationwide in early childhood services in the years immediately preceding kindergarten, for our most vulnerable at-risk infants and toddlers, the achievement gap often emerges long before they reach the preschool door. We know that high quality early learning experiences during the infant and toddler years are associated with early competence in language and cognitive development, cooperation with adults, and the ability to initiate and sustain positive exchanges with peers. With high quality, effective services, those infants and toddlers who are competent, yet at-risk for compromised development, will be better equipped to reach their full potential in life. Without increased investments focused on the availability and accessibility of quality early care and education experiences, many infants and toddlers will continue to be left behind.

Not only do infants, toddlers, and their families pay a price for our failed policies, so does all of society. Effective, evidence-based early childhood policies, programs, and services go a long way in supporting stronger families and communities. They are also fiscally sound investments which can reduce the need for more expensive reactive interventions and governmental supports in the future. In fact, economists have found that for every dollar invested in early childhood programs, savings of $3.78 to $17.07 can be expected.[4] While many of these savings benefit individuals, the public reaps far more of the benefits in terms of reduced crime, abuse and neglect, and welfare dependency while increasing educational performance and job training, leading to higher incomes and a more productive workforce. Playing catch up later in life is expensive and inadequate. We need to address the needs of vulnerable infants and toddlers today. Children who start behind, stay behind!

High quality early care and education programs provide protective buffers against the multiple adverse influences that may hinder a young child's development in all domains. Therefore, it is extremely important to invest in programs such as Early Head Start, the Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF), and Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

Early Head Start

Early Head Start is the only federal program specifically designed to improve the early education experiences of low-income infants and toddlers. The mission of Early Head Start is clear: to support healthy prenatal outcomes and enhance the intellectual, social and emotional development of infants and toddlers to promote later success in school and life. It does so by offering early learning experiences, parent support, home visitation, and access to medical, mental health and early intervention services. This comprehensive approach supports the whole child—physically, socially, emotionally and cognitively—within the context of the family, the home and other child-serving settings.

Research demonstrates that Early Head Start is effective. The Congressionally-mandated Early Head Start Research and Evaluation Project—a rigorous, large-scale, random-assignment evaluation—concluded that Early Head Start is making a positive difference in areas associated with children's success in school, family self-sufficiency, and parental support of child development. For example, Early Head

Start produced statistically significant, positive impacts on standardized measures of children's cognitive and language development.[5] Early Head Start also had significant impacts for parents, promoting family self-sufficiency and parental support of child development. Children who participated in Early Head Start had more positive interactions with their parents than control group children—they engaged their parents more and parents rated their children as lower in aggressive behavior than control parents did.[6] Early Head Start parents were also more emotionally supportive and less detached than control group parents and provided significantly more support for language and learning than control group parents.[7]

Furthermore, a follow-up wave of research demonstrated that a number of the positive impacts of participating in Early Head Start are still demonstrated two years later, showing that children who attended Early Head Start and pre-kindergarten between the ages of three and five experienced the most positive outcomes.[8]

Unfortunately, Early Head Start is reaching only a small proportion of at-risk children and families—only three percent of all eligible children and families are served.[9] Increased funding for Early Head Start will ensure that we reach the most at-risk infants and toddlers early in life when we have the best opportunity to reverse the trajectory of poor development that can occur in the absence of such supports. It will also help us ensure that parents have the supports they need to sufficiently nurture the healthy development of their infants and toddlers.

The Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF)

Second only to the immediate family, child care is the context in which early childhood development most frequently unfolds, starting in infancy.[10] According to 2005 data, 42 percent of one-year-olds and 53 percent of one-to-two-year-olds have at least one regular non-parental care arrangement.[11] The increase in the number of working parents with babies and toddlers comes at a time when science has demonstrated the critical importance of supporting the development and learning of children ages birth to three, and makes the need for quality child care even more significant. However, more than 40 percent of infants and toddlers are in child care rooms of poor quality.[12]

The evidence associating the quality of infant and toddler care with early cognitive and language outcomes "is striking in consistency."[13] High quality child care is associated with outcomes that all parents want to see in their children, ranging from cooperation with adults to the ability to initiate and sustain positive exchanges with peers, to early competence in math and reading—all of which are key ingredients to later school success.

While hours of care, stability of care, and type of care are all associated with developmental outcomes, it is the quality of care, and in particular, the quality of the daily interactions between child care providers and infants and toddlers that most significantly impact development.[14] Elements of high quality infant and toddler child care include: small groups; high staff-to-child ratios; a consistent caregiver; health and safety; and cultural and linguistic continuity.[15] Quality child care is also contingent upon the special training that caregivers receive in the profession of early childhood development.[16] High quality child care where providers are both supportive and offer more verbal stimulation creates an environment where children are likely to show more advanced cognitive and language development.[17] It provides environments and opportunities for socialization, problem-solving, empathy building, sharing and relating.

Research indicates that the strongest effects of quality child care are found with at-risk children—children from families with the fewest resources and under the greatest stress.[18] Yet, at-risk infants and toddlers who may benefit the most from high quality child care are unlikely to receive it—they receive some of the poorest quality care that exists in communities across the United States.[19] The results can be devastating. Poor quality child care for at-risk children may diminish inborn potential and lead to poorer developmental outcomes.[20]

CCDF is a block grant that provides funds to help improve the quality and supply of child care for low-income children and their families. Through the use of subsidies, CCDF helps working parents make informed choices about the most appropriate child care for their children. The infant-toddler set-aside of CCDF, currently prescribed through the appropriations process, has helped states focus on the unique needs of infants and toddlers by investing in specialized infant-toddler provider training, providing technical assistance to programs and practitioners, and linking compensation with training and demonstrated competence. The quality set-aside, currently 4% of the total amount provided under the law, allocates funds to states in order to support and develop innovative strategies for improving the quality of child care. Despite modest increases in federal child care funding, CCDF funds are insufficient to serve all eligible children.

Congress should ensure that all babies and toddlers, particularly those living in poverty, have access to quality child care when their parents are at work. An increase in federal funding for child care would lead to increased investments in quality and would help to ensure that more low-income infants and toddlers have access to quality child care settings. More funding needs to be directed specifically at improving the quality of care for infants and toddlers, including professional development opportunities with infant-toddler content for early childhood staff who work with this age group.

Part C of IDEA

Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) authorizes federal support for early intervention programs for babies and toddlers with disabilities and provides federal assistance for states to maintain and implement statewide systems of services for eligible children, birth through age two, and their families. For young children with disabilities, early intervention provides intensive services and supports to promote the highest possible level of developmental competence. For young children at significant risk, early intervention can protect them against influences that may compromise their development.

Under Part C, all participating states and jurisdictions must provide early intervention services to any child below age three who is experiencing developmental delays or has a diagnosed physical or mental condition that has a high probability of resulting in a developmental delay. In addition, states may choose to provide services for babies and toddlers who are "at-risk" for serious developmental problems, defined as circumstances (including biological or environmental conditions or both) that will seriously affect the child's development unless interventions are provided. Early intervention services under Part C may prevent or minimize the need for more costly services under Part B of IDEA later in a child's life.

Despite the promise it holds for the future, there is a wide variation in the percentage of infants and toddlers enrolled in Part C programs across states. Currently, states carry a significant burden to fund Part C programs, in part, because of inadequate federal funding. The result is that many eligible infants and toddlers do not receive the early intervention services they desperately need in order to reach their full potential in school and in life. Increased investments in early intervention programs will go a long way in addressing developmental delays at a time when we can have the greatest impact on a child's future.

Building the Capacity of our Nation's Early Childhood Workforce

Our nation's early childhood workforce is facing a major crisis. Finding and supporting well-trained early childhood professionals who work with children age birth to five is a challenge; it is particularly difficult for professionals working with children birth to three. There is tremendous variability among the teachers and providers who make up the early childhood workforce (child care providers, Head Start and Early Head Start teachers, child welfare workers, and infant and early childhood mental health professionals). According to the U.S. Department of Education, training for infant/toddler professionals is minimal, contributing to overall personnel problems.[21] The need for more and better qualified providers cuts across a range of disciplines and professions.

One of the most consistent findings in developmental research links the quality of care that young children receive to virtually every measure of development that has been examined.[22] This is particularly true for low-income children who are at-risk for early developmental problems and later educational underachievement. However, unlike programs that exist for elementary and secondary education teachers, the U.S. higher education system lacks a robust infrastructure to develop the next generation of early childhood professionals. We must build the capacity of our nation's early childhood workforce by creating economic incentives—including adequate compensation and loan forgiveness—to enable early childhood providers to seek out training opportunities which will allow them to provide the care needed while reducing the harmful staff turn-over currently plaguing the system. Likewise, it is imperative that colleges and universities are afforded grants in order to infuse infant and toddler coursework into their programs and develop and disseminate distance learning courses.

Conclusion

During the first three years of life, children rapidly develop foundational capabilities—physical, social-emotional, and cognitive—on which subsequent development builds. These areas of development are inextricably related. Yet, too often, we ignore the early years of a child's life in making public policy, waiting until at-risk children are already behind physically, emotionally, or cognitively before significant investments are made to address their needs. We must change this pattern and invest

in at-risk infants and toddlers early on, when that investment can have the biggest payoff—preventing problems or delays that become more costly to address as the children grow older.

All young children should be given the opportunity to succeed in school and in life. Ensuring that infants and toddlers have strong families who are able to support their healthy development will help lay the foundation for a lifetime of success. We must increase federal investments so that infants, toddlers and their families have access to developmentally appropriate early learning programs such as Early Head Start, quality and affordable child care, and early intervention services to help ensure that they are ready for school.

I urge the Committee to consider the very unique needs of infants and toddlers as you invest in early childhood programs.

Thank you for your time and for your commitment to our nation's at-risk infants, toddlers and families.

ENDNOTES

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[14] Ibid.

[15] Lally, J. Ronald, Griffin, Abbey, Fenichel, Emily, Segal, Marilyn et al. 2003. Caring for infants and toddlers in groups: Developmentally appropriate practice. Washington, DC: ZERO TO THREE.

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[19] Ibid.

[20] Ibid.

[21] U.S. Department of Education. 2001. 23rd Annual Report to Congress on the Implementation of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. *http://www.ed.gov/about/reports/annual/osep/2001/index.html* (accessed December 29, 2006).

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[Whereupon, at 12:13 p.m., the committee was adjourned.]

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