



NATIONAL COALITION FOR CAMPUS CHILDREN'S CENTERS

The Voice for Early Childhood Excellence on Campus

April 25, 2013

Dear Secretary Duncan,

The membership of the National Coalition for Campus Children's Centers (NCCCC)¹ would like to voice support for President Obama's Preschool for All proposal. Our members include early care and education program administrators, teachers, and faculty all of whom are directly associated with a higher education, campus based early childhood program. These programs include child care centers and laboratory schools where future early childhood teachers receive training. While each program possesses unique qualities, the membership of NCCCC share a passion for doing what is best for children and families.

As leaders in the field of early childhood, campus programs are models of high quality programming for the larger community. NCCCC members are dedicated to ensuring that families receive the highest quality early education and care for their children and have access to parenting resources to support them in achieving their academic and career goals while juggling family responsibilities.

We believe that the following ideals are foundational to the emerging early education system that will serve our country's children and families:

- Early childhood is a unique and critical stage of life for children birth through age 8 years. Brain research tells us that children at this stage develop at a rate faster than any other stage of life. Early childhood experiences provide the foundation upon which future life experiences and successes are built.
- Early care and education programs must address the *whole child* including: social, emotional, cognitive, physical and language development-through a multi-faceted delivery system. Every child will reach his/her developmental milestones at different rates and therefore programs need to be designed to meet the unique needs of individual children. Curriculum must engage every child in learning that is relevant and meaningful and authentic assessment must be used to not only measure a child's development but also to inform curriculum.
- A professional workforce requires professional level compensation. Research has shown that a well-educated workforce and competitive compensation

¹ The National Coalition for Campus Children's Centers is a nonprofit educational membership organization. NCCCC supports research and activities affecting college and university Early Childhood Education and service settings, family and work issues, and the field of Early Childhood in general.

structure for early childhood professionals ensures positive outcomes for children. Early Childhood Education must be viewed as a separate and specialized discipline, complimentary but distinct from Elementary Education. Training in child development, learning environments, developmentally and culturally appropriate practice, and family and community engagement strategies are key components of an Early Childhood teacher's professional development. Early childhood educators must receive salaries and benefits that are commensurate with the education level, experience, and responsibilities of the position.

- Parents are the child's first teachers. Parenting young children is a unique and often stressful time in a family's development. Resources must be available for parents to support them as they embrace the joys and manage the challenges of raising children to be engaged and successful citizens. Partnerships with highly qualified early childhood educators can mutually impact the success of the parent and child.

As the Preschool for All plan emerges, NCCCC's member are uniquely qualified to:

- Provide models of high quality early childhood programs worthy of duplication.
- Share expertise in early childhood leadership, education, and programming and resource allocation.
- Demonstrate whole child learning environments which model evidence-based practices to support healthy brain development.
- Collaborate with families to ensure every child receives the care and education they need to become confident, competent individuals.

Early childhood is the beginning of the journey of life. Every experience in this stage is a brick in the foundation of future learning experiences and academic success. Our children deserve a commitment from parents, educators, and public officials to providing the best possible start in life. Providing every child with the opportunities needed to achieve his/her fullest human potential requires a significant commitment to the creation of an integrated system of parenting resources, early intervention, and early education and care that is accessible to all.

NCCCC is an organization with the expertise and passion committed to ensuring that the President's Early Childhood Initiatives come to fruition. We look forward to being a part of this important conversation and work.

Respectfully,

Dr. Mary Sciaraffa
NCCCC President