



April 16, 2007

Dear Representative:

We write on behalf of the children, parents, teachers, advocates, and state and local policy leaders who make up Pre-K Now to ask for your support for H.R. 1429 to reauthorize Head Start. The Committee on Education and Labor bill makes significant improvements in this landmark children's program. As you deliberate on this vital initiative for at-risk children, please:

- Retain the Committee provision to require that 50 percent of Head Start teachers obtain a BA degree and certification in early childhood education;
- Require each state to meet the 50 percent threshold, rather than the current language that requires the percentage to be met on a national basis;
- Increase the 1-year authorization for state early learning councils.

Research has shown that teachers with a BA degree and specialized education in early childhood are more effective than those with less formal education. Highly educated and fairly compensated pre-k teachers are more likely to develop strong, responsive, interpersonal relationships with their students, which affects each child's motivation to learn. We pledge our efforts through our state and local networks to build capacity for current Head Start staff to obtain a BA degree. We applaud the Committee for including early learning councils in the bill and look forward to working with our state and local partners to significantly strengthen early childhood education.

Please contact us if you have any questions about the Head Start reauthorization, and please let us know if we can share more information about the important work of promoting high-quality, voluntary pre-kindergarten for all three and four year olds.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Libby Doggett". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, prominent "L" and "D".

Libby Doggett
Executive Director

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kathy Patterson". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, prominent "K" and "P".

Kathy Patterson
Federal Policy Director