

NWLC and children deliver 30,000 letters and art work to White House, thanking President Obama for his Preschool for All Initiative ^[1]

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EXCERPTS:

Bold early education plan puts children and families on path to success

(Washington, D. C.) This afternoon, the National Women's Law Center, along with children and members of the Strong Start for Children campaign, will deliver 30,000 letters and colorful pieces of art-created by children, parents and teachers from across the country-to the White House to thank President Obama for his commitment to early learning.

Dear President Obama, I think it is right for everybody to go to Pre-K. If they did not go they would not know what to do in kindergarten. They would not know how to make friends, cut, glue, and play nice. We had pets and we did awesome crafts in Pre-K. I think that all kids should get that. (Nicole, 2nd grader)

The President's plan calls for a new federal-state partnership to provide low- and moderate-income four-year old children with high-quality preschool. The plan also expands high-quality early learning opportunities for children from birth through age three by increasing investments in Early Head Start and child care that meet high standards. In addition, it expands voluntary home visiting programs that support parents with young children. These investments are among the most effective strategies for helping to close America's school readiness gap and ensure that children enter school ready for success.

Dear President Obama, Too many children lack the early development and learning support they need and deserve. Too many families cannot afford the programs that let them work and that nurture young children.

(Mother of two young girls in Greenwich, N.Y.)

"Vibrant art work and handwritten thank-you notes from across the country have been pouring into our office," said NWLC Co-President Nancy Duff Campbell. "The underlying message conveyed in thousands of letters is clear: All parents want their children to have early learning experiences that prepare them for success in school and beyond. By increasing support for home visiting, child care, Early Head Start and prekindergarten programs, the President's bold investment gives children the opportunity to develop the skills they need to succeed in school and in life, provides parents the support and reassurance they need to work, and enables our nation to prosper-both now and in the future."

Dear Mr. President, I am a director of a small cooperative family child care center in rural Minnesota. Here the choices for early childcare are limited and my staff and I work hard to provide quality care. Our families struggle to pay child care bills while my staff and I barely make a living wage. I hope to see effort and money expand this valuable field, and make it accessible to all and sustainable for caregivers.

(Director, Minnesota child care center)

"Research shows that children who participate in early learning programs continue to benefit from this experience for years to come," added NWLC Director of Child Care and Early Education Helen Blank. "These children do better in elementary school, have higher high school graduation rates and enter the job market better prepared to compete and contribute to our economy. It's time for America to invest in a plan that yields high returns for its children, parents and communities."

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