



The Home Visiting Coalition
c/o Voices for America's Children
1000 Vermont Avenue, NW, Suite 700
Washington, DC 20005

December 10, 2008

The Honorable President-Elect Barack Obama
Office of Presidential Transitions
Washington, DC 20270

Dear President-Elect Obama:

Please accept our heartfelt congratulations on your election. We share the optimism of so many Americans as we look forward to the Obama/Biden administration and the positive changes that lie ahead for children and families.

The undersigned organizations, a coalition comprised of a unique blend of service providers and child advocates, that works to advance legislation that supports high-quality early childhood home visitation programs, commend you for your commitment to early childhood education and home visitation for children and families. We encourage you to include the Education Begins at Home Act, a bill that establishes the first dedicated federal funding stream to support voluntary early childhood home visitation programs, as a key component of your early childhood policy initiative.

Early childhood home visiting services produce measurable outcomes for children and families in many areas including:

- **Improved school readiness and school success:** Children whose families participate in a quality home visitation program demonstrate higher levels of school readiness, higher scores on achievement and standardized tests, and increased high school graduation rates.
- **Increased parental involvement:** Parents who receive home visiting services are more engaged, know what they need to do to prepare their children for school success, and have a stronger sense of parental responsibility in raising their children. Home visiting programs are showing
- particular progress in reaching out to fathers to increase their positive involvement in raising their children.
- **Reductions in child maltreatment:** Parents participating in quality home visitation are more likely to have age-appropriate expectations of their children and to use positive discipline approaches. The research shows fewer documented cases of abuse and neglect among children who receive home visiting services.
- **Improved child health and development:** Families who receive quality home visitation services are more likely to seek prenatal and well-child care and to have their children immunized.
- **Improved parenting practices:** Parents participating in quality home visitation demonstrate more knowledge about child-rearing, have better communication skills and have less parenting stress.



- **Increased crime prevention:** Mothers and children participating in quality home visiting programs are less likely to be involved in criminal activity.

The attached letter signed by over 700 local, state and national organizations across the country is strong evidence of the level of support for this legislation. These organizations, who work with a range of high quality home visiting programs, know first hand the value these services provide for children and families and the unmet demand for these services in their local communities. As you can see from the list of endorsers, a wide range of community-based organizations support and are already implementing home visiting programs; including local school districts, family resource centers, social service and health agencies and child care centers. We are fortunate to have these organizations, representing an extensive infrastructure, poised to expand high quality home visiting services to the children and families in their communities who need these services.

We are thankful to have had the support of both you and Vice President-elect Biden, as two of the 34 Senate co-sponsors of the Education Begins at Home Act (S667) in the 110th Congress. The House version also made great strides in the 110th Congress. With 68 co-sponsors, it was reported out of the Education and Labor Committee earlier this year and is ready to move through Committee again early in the next Congress. With broad bi-partisan support in both chambers (see attachment for complete list of co-sponsors) and strong interest from the Congressional majority leadership, we are very optimistic about the speedy passage of the Education Begins at Home Act in the 111th Congress.

The Education Begins at Home Act is poised to move quickly in the 111th Congress and could, with your support, be an early win for the Obama/Biden administration, and a wonderful first step towards ensuring that parents and children have the tools they need to be successful in school and in life. Our coalition and grass roots home visiting advocates across the country are eager to work with you to ensure expedient enactment of this legislation. Again, thank you for your commitment to our nation's young children and their families.

Sincerely yours,

The Home Visiting Coalition

Child Welfare League of America
Home Instruction for Parents of Preschool Youngsters
Parents as Teachers National Center
Prevent Child Abuse America
The Parent-Child Home Program
Voices for America's Children

Attachment