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Judy Palfrey, M.D., FAAP
President-Elect American Academy of Pediatrics
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RE: Recommendations for Federal Early Childhood Investments

Dear Judy,

Thank you so much for the opportunity to provide recommendations to you and the AAP from our experiences in Oregon about new national investments from evidence-based and best practice knowledge that will move the early childhood agenda towards its true prevention potential. Although early childhood science has a good evidence base for preschool education investment that yields considerable economic and developmental health benefit, the birth to three sector, that includes home visiting, childcare, parent education and early childhood preventative mental health, remains weak in an evidence base, but increasingly strong in best practices and promising practices. Nevertheless, there is strong evidence to show the poor health and developmental outcomes for those insured and uninsured infants and young child who experience poor home environments, childcare or parenting practices. Accordingly, the list of recommendations that I wish to bring forth embodies a "wrap-around birth to five investments" that, together and coordinated, promise to yield striking developmental health outcomes.

I would suggest prioritizing early childhood investments along the following:

1. Child Health System
 - a. Universal health and access through expanded medical home as described in Bright Futures
 - b. Expansion of Child Psychiatry Mental Health Consultation for primary practice – MCPAP like models
 - c. Expansion of Help Me Grow (Connecticut) projects – health/early childhood community coordination projects
2. Early Education and Childcare
 - a. Full funding for Head Start and Early Head Start
 - b. Invest in quality childcare
 - i. Provide childcare subsidy tied to childcare quality indicators
 - ii. Support childcare provider education and quality rating scales
 - iii. Expand Childcare health and mental health consultation tied to Childcare Resource and Referral Networks



3. Strengthening Families

- a. Expanded funding for universal home visiting along the Health Families America protocols with strong integration with medical home and public health
- b. Supporting young parent education networks with evidence based parenting education programs

Many states, as our own, have been building increasingly strong alliances and early brain/child development initiatives between the above health and early childhood sectors as envisioned by the “From Neurons to Neighborhood” report. Many communities are poised to strengthen their partnerships, remove barriers, blend funding and build registries and measurement capacities to gather joined child health and developmental outcomes across communities.

Finally, however, truly realizing our dream of improved developmental health outcomes for our next generation of children will require both an information technology infrastructure and a public belief that promotes the sharing of information between parents and the broader health and education community. Accordingly, an investment toward coordinated information management between Integrated Health Homes and the early childhood community through internet-based developmental health registries likewise offers great promise.

The hope of a great future for our youngest awaits us.

Best regards,

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