



AMERICAN
PSYCHOLOGICAL
ASSOCIATION

December 18, 2008

Mr. Ian Bassin
Office of the Presidential Transition
Washington, DC

Dear Mr. Bassin:

On behalf of the 148,000 members and affiliates of the American Psychological Association (APA), I am writing to urge you to increase funding for the Child Care Development Block Grant (CCDBG) and the Head Start program in the economic recovery measure during the first 100 days of the administration of President-elect Obama. During this economic downturn, it is critical that we ensure access to quality and affordable early childhood education and child care services for all children and families. Accessibility to quality child care and education is related to financial status, and as families have less disposable income during the current economic downturn, more families are likely to need financial assistance for these services.

Quality child care includes basic safety and health protections, well-educated and well-compensated teachers, low child-teacher ratios, appropriate group sizes that allow children to receive personal attention, age-appropriate curriculum, and parental involvement in children's learning. Child care quality has a significant impact on later child development and successful family functioning. Many studies have shown a relationship between quality of child care and later language and cognitive development, school readiness, social competence, peer interactions, and overall adjustment, and demonstrate that access to quality child care can make a significant difference in a family's ability to work and succeed. For parents to be able to obtain and maintain a job, they must have easy access to supportive and stable child care.

Since its inception in 1965, the Head Start program has provided more than 22 million low-income preschoolers with high quality, comprehensive services to enhance their school readiness and well being. Research over the past four decades consistently shows that Head Start improves children's vocabulary, writing and letter recognition, social behavior, and other skills that prepare them for the rigors of school.

We urge you to increase funding for the CCDBG and the Head Start program to provide quality and affordable early learning and child care services, yielding positive results for all children and families.

Thank you for your consideration of this request. If we can be of further assistance, please contact Krysta Jones, in our Public Interest Government Relations Office at (202) 336-5931 or knjones@apa.org.

Sincerely,

Gwendolyn Puryear Keita, Ph.D.
Executive Director
Public Interest Directorate