

April 21, 2009

The Honorable Kent Conrad, Chair
Committee on the Budget
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Judd Gregg, Ranking Member
Committee on the Budget
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable John M. Spratt, Chair
Committee on the Budget
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Paul Ryan, Ranking Member
Committee on the Budget
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Conrad, Chairman Spratt, Ranking Member Gregg
and Ranking Member Ryan:

The undersigned organizations applaud your support of home visiting and are thrilled that the House and Senate include a reserve fund for this important program in their FY 2010 Budget Resolutions. We agree that home visitation is an effective, research-based and cost-efficient way to ensure that children have the opportunity to grow up healthy, ready to learn and able to become productive members of society. Investing in this research-proven approach now will mean savings down the road in costs associated with health, education, child maltreatment and criminal justice.

As you reconcile the differences between the House and Senate Budget Resolutions, we urge you to ensure that the home visiting reserve fund is retained. In doing so, we ask that the home visiting reserve fund language in the final budget resolution and the accompanying conference report reflect what we consider to be the core components of evidence-based home visitation services.

We believe evidence-based home visitation services should:

- Serve pregnant women, and/or parent/s or other primary caregivers and their children under the age of entry into kindergarten who are low income or at risk of poor outcomes;
- Be delivered by nurses, social workers, child development specialists, or other well-trained and competent staff, as demonstrated by education or training and the provision of ongoing specific training and supervision in the model of service being delivered; and.

- Have outcomes and research standards which:
 - Demonstrate ongoing positive outcomes for children, parents and other primary caregivers that enhance child health and development; and
 - Conform to a clear consistent home visitation model that has been in existence for at least three years and is research-based; grounded in relevant empirically-based knowledge; linked to program determined outcomes; associated with a national organization or institution of higher education that has comprehensive home visitation program standards that ensure high quality service delivery and continuous program quality improvement; and has demonstrated significant positive outcomes when evaluated using well-designed and rigorous randomized controlled or well-designed and rigorous quasi-experimental research designs, and the evaluation results have been published in a peer-reviewed journal.

Home visiting presents an opportunity to help give our children a healthy start in life, setting them on the path for success in college, the workforce and in life. We look forward to working with you to ensure that as many children as possible benefit from the new program.

Sincerely,

Alliance for Children and Families
 American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry
 American Academy of Pediatrics
 American Humane Association
 Black Administrators in Child Welfare
 Children's Defense Fund
 Child Welfare League of America
 CLASP
 Every Child Matters Education Fund
 Family Violence Prevention Fund
 Fight Crime: Invest in Kids
 First Focus
 Foster Family-based Treatment Association
 Generations United
 GrandFamilies of America
 HIPPY USA
 Institute for the Advancement of Social Work Research
 National Association of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies
 National Association of Counsel for Children
 National Association for the Education of Young Children
 National CASA Association

National Child Abuse Coalition
National Children's Alliance
National Council of Jewish Women
National Exchange Club Foundation
National Foster Care Coalition
National Head Start Association
National Women's Law Center
National Youth Advocate Program
Ounce of Prevention Fund
Parents as Teachers National Center
Prevent Child Abuse America/Healthy Families America
Service Employees International Union (SEIU)
The Parent-Child Home Program
United Way of America
Voices for America's Children