

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

**Military Leaders Say Early Childhood
Education is Critical to Readiness**

From: The Committee on Education and Labor

Date: January 12, 2009

Dear Colleague:

Early childhood development and quality early education programs help all of our children, particularly our most vulnerable children, to be ready to succeed when they enter kindergarten and beyond. Studies show that children who attend quality early education programs are more likely to graduate from high school and less likely to commit crimes or receive welfare.

In the 110th Congress, we successfully reauthorized Head Start, to expand access for low-income infants and toddlers and their families to comprehensive education, health, nutrition and social services provided by well-qualified teachers in classrooms around the country. The Education and Labor Committee also successfully passed H.R. 3289, the Providing Resources Early for Kids (PRE-K) Act, which supports states' efforts to improve and provide high quality preschool programs.

On January 8, *Politico* published an article by the former chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Army General Hugh Shelton and former Navy Secretary John Dalton. As General Shelton and Secretary Dalton make clear, early childhood education also is critical to our national security. In their words, “[t]he most important long-term investment we can make for a strong military is in the health and education of the American people” and “[t]he most reliable way to achieve these goals is by providing at-risk children with quality early childhood education.”

High quality preschool is not just an issue championed by early education advocates. A growing number of corporate leaders, foundations, and organizations in an array of fields also recognize the value of quality early education. High level military leaders, like the two who wrote this article, are among those who understand the importance of investing in our children early.

President-elect Obama has pledged significant support for early childhood initiatives and we strongly encourage you to read the above-referenced article (<http://dyn.politico.com/printstory.cfm?uuid=B2E2A177-18FE-70B2-A8D0C36309578A1D>) as we move forward in a new Congress to continue to expand opportunities for our youth to succeed.

Sincerely,

/s George Miller, Chairman /s Dale E. Kildee, Chairman /s Mazie K. Hirono,

Committee on Education
and Labor

Subcommittee on Early
Childhood, Elementary and
Secondary Education

Member
Committee on Education
and Labor