

To: House Committee on Human Services and Housing  
From: Dana Hepper, Director of Policy & Program, Children's Institute  
Date: Monday, February 9<sup>th</sup>, 2015  
Re: Support for House Bill 2015, relating to child care

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of House Bill 2015. My name is Dana Hepper, and I'm the Director of Policy & Program for the Children's Institute. Children's Institute's mission is to move research into action by supporting public and private investments in our youngest children birth to age eight.

Before children enter Kindergarten, a child's brain grows to 90% of its adult size. The quality and continuity of a child's early experiences during this sensitive period of brain growth is particularly important as it sets the foundation for all future learning. House Bill 2015 takes important steps toward supporting continuity and quality of their early childhood experiences. There are two provisions of the legislation we want to call your attention to and provide supporting evidence to support.

Subsection (1) allows families to qualify for one full year of eligibility.

For a child, this provides the possibility that he or she would have the same care giver for an entire year. This is an important step in the right direction, and aligned with the research on child development. Children can thrive when they have a strong positive relationship with a consistent caregiver. Research demonstrates that children have better educational and developmental outcomes when they have continuity in their education and care arrangements. While young children's brains are developing, constant adjustment to new surroundings and routines can negatively impact cognitive development.

Subsection (4) allows for lower co-pays for families voluntarily selecting high quality childcare providers, enhanced reimbursement for high quality childcare providers, and requires this provision to be implemented equitably.

This is essential as the rigorous research on the economics of early care and education demonstrates that high-quality programs produce substantial gains in child development and later school performance. These gains then in turn generate long-term benefits to society that far exceed their costs. In fact, federal and state early childhood program policies that promote access only without also supporting increased quality can be detrimental to children's development. High quality early learning environments do face increased costs and HB 2015 helps to address these valuable investments in young children. We are pleased to offer our support.

## RESOURCES

Wallen, M. & Hubbard, A. (2013). Blending and Braiding Early Childhood Program Funding Streams Toolkit: Enhancing Financing for High-Quality Early Learning Programs. Chicago, Illinois: The Ounce. <http://www.ounceofprevention.org/national-policy/Blended-Funding-Toolkit-Nov2013.pdf>

Meyers, M. K., Peck, L., Davis, E. E., Collins, A., Kreader, J., Georges, A., et al. (2002). The Dynamics of Child Care Subsidy Use: A Collaborative Study of Five States. New York: Columbia University, National Center for Children in Poverty.