



Statement of Support for Increased Investment in Quality Early Care and Education

The future of the state of Louisiana depends on how willing we are to care for and prepare our youngest citizens. High quality early care and education will prepare our students for a smart start in life, enable families to be productive in the workforce, and serve as an economic engine for local communities. That is why we support expanding access to high quality early learning across the state of Louisiana by restoring funding for early care and education.

We believe that young children in Louisiana should have access to high quality early care and education that ensures they are off to a smart start in life. Ninety percent of brain development takes place between birth and age four, wiring a child's brain for future success or failure in school, work, and life. Yet in Louisiana, we know that **more than 40% of Kindergartners start school behind their peers – and those who start behind are more likely to stay behind.** However, **quality early care and education can close this gap** by developing cognitive and character skills when it matters most. For this reason, we are committed to greater investment in early care and education.

We know that a robust and healthy child care system that meets the needs of families allows parents to enter the workforce, stay in the workforce, and be more productive workers. For too many parents, **the cost of child care outweighs the benefits of staying in the workforce,** and unreliable early care can affect a parent's ability to work productively or stay in school or training programs in order to lift their families out of poverty. We are committed to expanding access to high quality care providers that are available to the families of Louisiana.

We support investment in early care and education centers, small businesses that serve local communities. For every dollar invested in early care and education centers, **\$1.78 is generated by the centers for the local economy** in terms of purchased services and goods. An investment in early care and education is an investment in Louisiana's economy. We are committed to ensuring that Louisiana's dollars are spent locally.

We support the use of public funds that result in high returns on investment. The research is clear that investment in early care and education is one of the smartest investments our state can make. High quality early care and education has been shown to result in a **7% to 10% per year return on investment** based on increased school and career achievement, as well as reduced costs in remedial education and health and criminal justice system expenditures. We are committed to effective investments of our public dollars.

We know that Louisianans overwhelmingly support expanding access for early care and learning programs. A recent poll of Louisiana voters - Democrat, Republican and Independent – showed that **more than 80% of those polled throughout every region of the state support expanding early education programs** for infants and toddlers as well as preschoolers in order to prepare students for success and improve overall graduation rates. They recognized that investing in early care and education is a sound fiscal strategy that allows parents to work or pursue further education and support their families.

We understand that expanding access to high quality early learning programs will improve child outcomes, strengthen our families and workforce, and build our economy. For these reasons, we have committed to working together to advocate for additional funding for early care and education programs – to ensure that every child has access to high quality early education programs that meets their needs, prepares our students for success in school, and allows families to continue their training and work.

The following organizations join in support of this statement:

Business Groups

Committee of 100
Committee of 100 of Northwest Louisiana
Greater Shreveport Chamber of Commerce
Jefferson Business Council
Jefferson Chamber
Louisiana Early Childhood Business Roundtable
Monroe Chamber of Commerce
Natchitoches Area Chamber of Commerce
Natchitoches Community Alliance
One Acadiana
Southwest Louisiana Economic Development Alliance

United Ways

Louisiana Association of United Ways
Capital Area United Way
United Way of Acadiana
United Way of Central Louisiana
United Way of Northeast Louisiana
United Way of Northwest Louisiana
United Way of Southeast Louisiana
United Way of Southwest Louisiana
United Way of St. John

Religious Groups

Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Houma/Thibodaux
Bread or Stones
Jesuit Social Research Institute- Loyola University
Louisiana Interchurch Conference
New Orleans National Council of Jewish Women,
Greater New Orleans Section

Advocacy Groups and Community Organizations

Citizens for One Greater New Orleans
Education's Next Horizon
Kingsley House
League of Women Voters
Louisiana Budget Project
Louisiana Policy Institute for Children
Stand for Children Louisiana



Louisiana Association
of United Ways



United Way of Acadiana



St. John United Way



United Way
of Central Louisiana



United Way
of Northeast Louisiana



United Way
of Northwest Louisiana



United Way
of Southwest Louisiana



United Way of
Southeast Louisiana



Capital Area United Way

Contact: Louisiana Policy Institute for Children, Melanie Bronfin, Director
(504) 417-3735 | www.policyinstitutela.org