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March 11, 2015

To: Members of the Revenue Committee
From: Jenna Sutton, Policy Associate
Re: Support for LB 645

Early childhood education can have a powerful and lasting impact on children. The first five years of a child's life are critical for healthy development from social and emotional skills, to language and literacy, to brain development. Quality and continuous child care can make a huge difference in every critical area of development during a child's first few years and it can set them on a path toward a healthy and successful future.

Unfortunately, child care is costly and has become the number one household expense for families with children¹, costing more yearly than tuition and related fees at a public college in 30 states as well as Washington D.C.² For low-income families, it is particularly challenging to find quality and affordable child care. Many low-income children do not have the opportunity to benefit from quality early education and this opportunity gap only grows over time.

Child care subsidies have eased some of this burden, but barriers to affordable quality child care still exist. We need to do more to ensure that all our children are receiving quality care without increasing the financial burden on families who are already struggling with the high cost of care. In order to attract higher qualified early childhood educators and keep them in the field, these workers need to be reimbursed more.

LB 645 would allow for increased reimbursement for child care workers without creating more of a financial burden on working families. We urge the committee to advance LB 645. Thank you.

¹ Voices for Children (2014) Family Bottom Line

² Child Care Aware of America (2014) Parents and the High Cost of Child Care