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February 3, 2016

Senator Mike Gloor, Chairman – Revenue Committee
Room 1524, State Capitol Lincoln NE, 68509

Re: Support for LB 889 – Adopt the School Readiness Tax Credit Act

Dear Chairman Gloor and Members of the Revenue Committee,

Our state benefits when our youngest Nebraskans have the tools they need to succeed at an early age. Voices for Children supports LB 889 because it supports and expands access to early childhood programs for families in our state.

Studies of early childhood education have repeatedly shown remarkably high returns for each dollar invested, particularly for interventions at the earliest ages from birth to five. **Especially for children in low-income households and communities, early childhood education can provide the cognitive and character-building tools that children need to succeed, even in adverse environments.** Access to early childhood education drives lifelong success for children, and can effectively reduce the social costs of not intervening for children in at-risk circumstances.¹

The research on the positive outcomes of children who receive early childhood education is resounding, and yet the data in Nebraska suggests that there is much more to be done. The data show that at every stage, children of color are being left behind, beginning with preschool enrollment and 3rd grade reading proficiency, and ending with teens and young adults who are in school or employed.² **Interventions that promote cognitive and socioemotional abilities can improve educational outcomes as well as long-term health and economic productivity, especially for our children of color and those in impoverished settings.**

LB 889 would expand access to high quality childhood programs by supporting families, professionals, and businesses who are invested in improved outcomes for kids in our state. We thank Senator Mello for bringing this issue forward and urge the committee to advance the bill.

Sincerely,

Julia Tse, Policy Associate

¹ James J. Heckman, "Invest in early childhood development: Reduce deficits, strengthen the economy," The Heckman Equation.

² Kids Count in Nebraska 2015 Report, Voices for Children, 14.