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February 4, 2014

To: Members of the Education Committee

From: Aubrey Mancuso, Policy Coordinator

Re: Support for LB 992

We would like to express our support for LB 992 to create an Early Childhood Data Governing Body. Early childhood education has been supported by decades of evidence-based research as an important and cost-effective investment with significant individual and societal benefits. A stimulating environment during early childhood is crucial for optimizing the cognitive, physical, emotional, and social development necessary to start our youngest Nebraskans off right on the first steps in realizing their full potential later in life. Therefore, it is imperative that we are able to ensure that the best early childhood services are accessible to those who most need it.

LB 992 would maximize all available resources by coordinating the efforts of those who are directly and indirectly involved with early childhood education, including public agencies, policymakers, providers, parents, and communities. By coordinating the efforts of stakeholders from across the state, we can work towards an early childhood education strategy that is streamlined, widespread, and efficient. We strongly believe that quality data collection and research-based analysis is vital for informing the best policies and practices for children. Understanding the complete picture of where Nebraska's kids stand today will allow us to better shape where they can be tomorrow.

Overall, we believe that LB 992 will allow for an improved approach to early childhood education that strengthens the combined efforts of various stakeholders in working towards a common goal. We urge the committee to advance this bill to be considered by the full legislature.

Thank you.