



**For Immediate Release
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Contact: Grace McKenzie, Outreach & Marketing Specialist
1000 Hertel Avenue, Buffalo, NY 14216
Phone: 716-877-6666 ext. 3071
Email: gmckenzie@wnychildren.org
Website: www.wnychildren.org

**Making the Smart Investment
Obama and NY Initiatives Support Early Learners
*Buffalo Joins Hundreds of Other Groups for National Days of Action for Early Learning***

Buffalo, NY – Early childhood education advocates in Buffalo join the national “Early Learning Days of Action” to show support for President Obama’s Early Learning Initiative, which calls for an investment of \$75 billion in early childhood education programs.

Spearheaded by the National Women’s Law Center based in Washington D.C., hundreds of organizations and advocates will participate in the Early Learning Days of Action over the next two weeks. In New York State, ten events coordinated by the Ready for Kindergarten, Ready for College campaign are taking place across the state from May 30 to June 14. The Ready for Kindergarten, Ready for College campaign is coordinated by state and national advocacy groups: Winning Beginning NY, Citizen Action of New York, and the Alliance for Quality Education.

Advocates in Buffalo and Erie County say this national focus on early learning builds on a renewed emphasis in New York, where after years of flat funding, lawmakers approved \$25 million in new money to fund new half and full day pre K slots for children in high need districts. This hallmark initiative is the first effort by the state to fund full day pre K slots.

“President Obama’s Early Learning Initiative supports high quality early learning opportunities for infants and toddlers. It calls for an investment over the next 10 years to increase access to high quality child care to low and moderate income families to help parents maintain employment. In Erie County about 6,000 available slots are open for over 30,000 children in need of care. The demand for child care is great. This initiative will help struggling, working families find quality care and lead to businesses and the community to prosper,” said Marie Cannon, CEO of Child Care Resource Network.

“We know that every \$1 invested in quality pre-K saves \$7 in down the road, which is a terrific return on investment,” said Billy Easton, Executive Director of the Alliance for Quality Education. “In New York State and around the country, early childhood education is being recognized as a critical piece of any plan to improve education as well as economic development.”

At a time when many school districts are facing budget cuts, early childhood advocates say pre-K can help schools reduce spending. The \$7 in savings from the pre-K investment comes from reduced costs in remedial support to fewer children entering the criminal justice system. Research has also shown that students who attend high quality pre-K typically experience higher academic achievement, go on to college and secure higher paying jobs.

“We have known for years that the first few years of life shape a child’s ability to learn for a lifetime,” said Christopher Connor, Board Vice President of University at Buffalo Child Care Center. “Now, President Obama, Governor Cuomo and New York State lawmakers recognizing the need for increased investment in early childhood education. Being a part of this national campaign is an important way to raise awareness and keep building momentum for these initiatives.”

“Access to high quality preschool for all children is essential for school readiness that will lead to success in school and in life. Healthy relationships are key in high quality preschool education. From pre K teachers to parents and children, healthy relationships affect everything. President Obama’s plan addresses this need for social-emotional development creating respectful relationships, and offers high quality pre K experiences to all children,” said Christine Ellington-Rowe, Executive Director of University at Buffalo Child Care Centers.

“We need the entire educational pipeline to work effectively, from early learning experiences to school and after school experiences. President Obama’s plan sets the framework, but it is up to us at the local level to work together and form the seamless pipeline of education, support and resources, so that children become balanced and productive adults,” said Gavin Luter, Coordinator of After School Network of Western New York.

Since 1987, Child Care Resource Network (CCRN) advocates for quality child care and education for all children. CCRN is a nonprofit organization providing child care referral services and resources for families, child care provider registration and licensure, and continuing education for child care providers. Its mission is to support families, child care providers and the community by developing and advocating for high quality, accessible and affordable child care and education for all children.

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