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April 28, 2010

Independent Regulatory Review Commission  
333 Market Street  
14th Floor  
Harrisburg, PA 17101

RE: Pennsylvania Pre-K Counts final omitted regulations (#6-319)

Dear Commission members:

I am writing to express my support for the Pennsylvania Pre-K Counts final omitted regulations re-submitted to you on April 7, 2010 (#6-319).

The quality expectations of Pennsylvania Pre-K Counts, which are included in the regulations, are essential to gaining positive outcomes for our young children. Pennsylvania Pre-K Counts is giving our at-risk children, such as those living in low-income families, those with special needs, and English language learners the strong start that research shows can help them overcome these risk factors and enter school ready to learn.

An important piece of these guidelines are promoting inclusive classrooms.

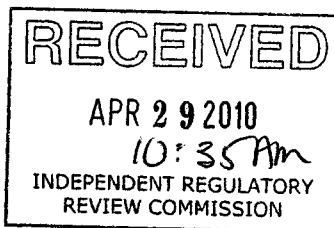
- Research has shown many positive effects of including children with disabilities in early childhood programs. The benefits accrue not only to children with disabilities but also to children with typical development, their families, classroom teachers, and the community at large.
- The quality expectations of Pennsylvania Pre-K Counts, which are included in the regulations require approved providers to collaborate with infant/toddler and preschool Early Intervention services to provide a smooth transition for children entering classrooms, facilitate the Early Intervention services needed for children enrolled in PA Pre-K Counts classrooms, and facilitate identification of children who are not receiving Early Intervention services but are eligible.
- PA Pre-K Counts has been a contributing factor to the increase of EI children in typical settings. Historically, less than 50% of preschool children receiving Early Intervention services received their services in typical early childhood settings. Since the creation of PA Pre-K Counts and targeted efforts to promote inclusion in PA Pre-K Counts classrooms, 15% more preschool children receiving Early Intervention services are enrolled in typical classroom settings.
- Across Pennsylvania, between 5%-7% of preschool children are receiving Early Intervention Services. Approximately 7.5% of children in PA Pre-K Counts are receiving Early Intervention services.

Pennsylvania Pre-K Counts is working because it is providing high quality pre-kindergarten to our at-risk children in inclusive classrooms.

Please approve these regulations in full.

Sincerely,

James Coyle, Ed.D.  
Supervisor, Early Childhood Services



Darry J. Galasso, Ed. D.  
Executive Director

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