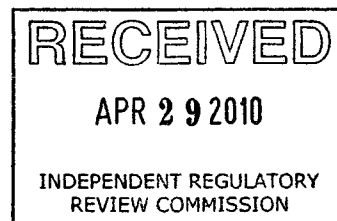


2817

April 26, 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 resubmitted 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. PA 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 is 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 expectation of PA Pre-K Counts, which are included in the regulations require approved providers to collaborate with infant/toddlers 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 Early Intervention 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.

-PA Pre-K Counts is serving a proportionate amount of children receiving Early Intervention services. Approximately 4% of Pennsylvania's three and four year olds are participating in PA Pre-K Counts, with 7.5% of those children receiving Early Intervention services. Across Pennsylvania, between 5%-7% of preschool children are receiving Early Intervention Services.

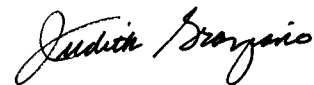
In our Pre-K classrooms, several children have been identified with special needs after they were enrolled in the program. Because of the support services available to these children they were able to continue in the program and make significant strides in helping them to develop to age appropriate levels.

Had they not been in a PA Pre-K classroom they may not have had a referral to the support service they were in need of.

PA 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,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Judith Graziano". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Judith Graziano
President