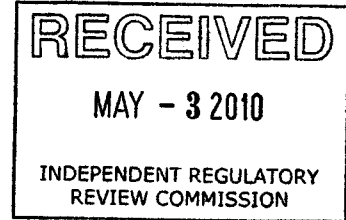


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Independent Regulatory Review Commission  
333 Market Street  
14th Floor  
Harrisburg, PA 17101



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.

Research shows that there are many positive effects of including children with disabilities in an early childhood classroom. The inclusion of these children benefits not only them but also their families and their typically developing peers. Children learn the important lessons of tolerance and understanding when they befriend a child with a special need and become part of the support that helps them to be successful in a classroom.

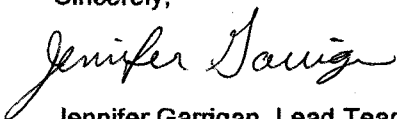
Pre K Counts was designed to make sure that children who were at-risk of poor school performance received a high quality preschool experience to give them a greater chance of being successful when they entered school. Children with disabilities certainly would fall under that at-risk category.

There are several children in our Pre K Counts classroom who have received or are receiving services through our local Intermediate Unit. A support staff comes into my classroom to support both the student and myself as their teacher. We work as a team to create and execute a plan that is most beneficial to the child. The support staff is unable to be with the child on a daily basis and therefore relies on me to implement many of the strategies they put in place to help the child become successful. By doing regular, high quality assessments on all the children in the classroom it is easy to identify when a student is showing signs of having a possible delay or disability. We have a large network of agencies where we can refer these families and support them as they try to find the best interventions for their child.

I have seen tremendous growth in the children with disabilities who have been in or are currently in my Pre K Counts Classroom. These advances are physical, academic, and social. Children who had very limited language are surrounded on a daily basis with lots of language and begin to be able to communicate with myself and their peers. Students with behavioral problems learn a routine and begin to feel safe in a school environment and become high functioning members of the classroom. Without the funding for Pre K Counts these families would not be able to afford a high quality Preschool experience for their children and these children would not have the experiences that will lead them to greater school success.

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,



Jennifer Garrigan, Lead Teacher