

[your letterhead]

Date

Dear Supervisor ____:

Fairfax County is poised to make a significant investment in early learning through its unique and innovative Office for Children. The County budget proposal for FY2015 includes a \$714,000 increase in local contributions to early learning. **We urge you to include this investment in the final county budget this year.**

This investment will expand options for parents to choose from among good quality, school readiness opportunities for their young children – important not just for preschoolers but beginning with infants while parents are at work supporting their families. The proposal also includes an increase in local matching funds for the Virginia Preschool Initiative (VPI) to provide preschool opportunities for an additional 50 preschoolers from low-income families in community-based settings.

The budget proposal expands early learning opportunities in Fairfax beyond the significant investments in child care assistance and support for collaboration among public schools and high-quality community-based settings. We thank you for your leadership for this investment and leadership for tying the pieces together for a big picture of school readiness.

Here's what additional investment is still needed: In Fall 2012, 16% of kindergarteners in Fairfax County Public Schools did not meet reading benchmarks and approximately 4,500 children under age 5 are living in poverty. This is a small but significant portion of Fairfax's children, and we cannot afford to leave these children behind. Working parents across the income spectrum in Fairfax County need reliable and good quality care.

These proposed investments will take significant steps to improve the quality of private and community-based child care, but, at the same time, the county must also commit to a plan to serve the over 1,400 at-risk 4 year olds in Fairfax who would qualify for the Virginia Preschool Initiative but do not get the opportunity to attend because a slot is not offered in Fairfax. Fairfax is one of two communities in Virginia that leave over 1,000 VPI slots unused.

We urge you to include the proposed \$714,000 investment for school readiness in the final county budget, and to look to the coming years with a plan for significantly expanding VPI participation. We look forward to working with you during the budget process this spring. Thank you for your support for Fairfax County's children and families.

Sincerely,