

February 25, 2008

To members of the Senate Finance Committee, House Appropriations Committee and Chesterfield Delegation:

The Chesterfield Business Council of the Greater Richmond Chamber requests your continued support of early childhood education programs as you consider the allocations for this biennium budget.

As business leaders of Chesterfield County we understand that education has both a direct and indirect impact on the quality of life in our county. Whether providing for a competent future workforce, immediate employment opportunities or a lower crime rate, pre-kindergarten education pays and improves our tax base.

Research indicates a return on investment of \$7.14 for each dollar invested in early childhood programs. This link between early childhood development as an economic development strategy that produces economic growth is significant. For example, one study indicates that children who participate in half day pre-kindergarten programs are 35% less likely to repeat a grade by fourth grade. In addition,

- If families and caregivers can provide early childhood development, then children will start school ready to learn.
- If children start school ready to learn, they are more likely to read at grade level by third grade.
- If children read at level by third grade they are more likely to graduate from high school.
- If children graduate from high school, they are more likely to go on to higher education and/or enter the job market as a tax-paying citizen.
- Employable, tax-paying citizens are critical to a vital economy.

By supporting early childhood education programs you positively influence the future of our community. As your constituents and as community business leaders we greatly appreciate your continued support and interest in that future.

Sincerely,



Tracy Kemp Stallings, Chair
Chesterfield Business Council of the Greater Richmond Chamber

