November 18, 2019

The Honorable James Risch    The Honorable Bob Menendez
Chairman      Ranking Member
Foreign Relations Committee    Foreign Relations Committee
U.S. Senate      U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510     Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Eliot Engel    The Honorable Michael McCaul
Chairman      Ranking Member
Foreign Affairs Committee    Foreign Affairs Committee
U.S. House of Representatives    U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515     Washington, DC 20515

Subject: Endorsement of the Global Child Thrive Act 2019

Dear Chairmen Risch and Engel and Ranking Members Menendez and McCaul:

As organizations committed to helping all children reach their full potential, we are writing in support of S. 2715/H.R. 4864, the **Global Child Thrive Act of 2019** introduced by Senators Roy Blunt and Chris Coons and Representatives Joaquin Castro and Brian Fitzpatrick. This bipartisan, bicameral legislation would ensure that Early Childhood Development (ECD) interventions are integrated into U.S. foreign assistance programs serving young children and their families. ECD interventions include training caregivers to provide age-appropriate mental stimulation and nurturing care such as singing and reading, playing with colorful objects, and responsive interaction, and enabling health workers to monitor children’s development, early detect children with delays or disabilities, and provide appropriate care and referrals.

The foundations for a healthy and productive life are set in childhood. A child can only reach their full potential under healthy, nurturing, and safe conditions that promote good growth, learning, and development. The cost of inaction is enormous – 250 million children in low- and middle-income countries suffer from poor development due to inadequate nutrition, lack of stimulation, learning, nurturing care, and exposure to stress. Cost effective, strategic interventions made during a child’s early years can mitigate and help overcome the negative impact of poverty and toxic stress.¹

Building the brain architecture of children will result in long-lasting gains that reap benefits, not only for the children themselves, but for their families, communities, and nations. Studies show that investment in quality ECD programs can produce a 13 percent return on investment per year by improving health outcomes, boosting salaries, improving the economy, and reducing a country’s deficit.² By incorporating ECD interventions into current health and nutrition programming, we are making more effective and impactful use of our foreign aid funding.


As organizations serving and supporting children around the globe, we write in strong support of S. 2715/H.R. 4864 and urge your committees to advance this legislation as soon as possible. Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

1,000 Days
Abt Associates
Amal Alliance, Inc.
American Academy of Pediatrics
American Public Health Association
Basic Education Coalition
Bread for the World
ChildFund International
Children’s HeartLink
Child Health Foundation
Children International
CORE Group
Early Childhood Development Task Force
Early Opportunities LLC
Education Development Center
Elizabeth Glaser Pediatric AIDS Foundation
Edesia Nutrition
Feed the Children
Food for the Hungry
Global Campaign for Education – US
Global Citizen
Global Partners United LLC
Global Water 2020
IRD Bangladesh
International Rescue Committee
Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine, Department of Pediatrics
John Snow, Inc.
Life for Mothers
Maestral International
Management Sciences for Health
Mbarara Regional Referral Hospital
Medical IMPACT
National Association for the Education of Young Children
Oregon Health & Science University
Partnership for Early Childhood Development & Disability Rights
PATH
RESULTS
RISE Institute
RTI International
Sesame Workshop
Smile Train
SPOON
The Coalition for Children Affected by AIDS
The De Waal Foundation
The Hunger Project
The LEGO Foundation
UNICEF USA
WaterAid
World Education, Inc.
World Learning
World Vision US
Zero to Three