

Indiana Association of United Ways



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Testimony prepared for Education and Career Development Committee, January 18, 2012
Contact: Lucinda Nord, VP, Public Policy, 317-921-1394 office, 317-502-8504 cell or lucinda.nord@iauw.org
Re: SB268, Advisory Committee on Early Education

The Indiana Association of United Ways represents 62 United Ways throughout Indiana. Together, Indiana's United Ways raise over \$95 million each year to invest in human services and meet critical needs of Hoosiers—including early education and quality child care--that help prepare children for school. Our United Ways support the whole child through classroom instruction, tutoring, mentoring and other school interventions to ensure school success. Indiana's United Ways also recognize that early education is key to school readiness and later success.

laUW supports SB268 to create an early learning advisory committee. We were thrilled with the Interim Committee on Education's unanimous agreement in September about the need for an advisory committee on early education.

Why do we need the Education Roundtable and policymakers to specifically focus on early learning? Simply put, children's success in school is dependent upon early childhood development and learning. Children's brains are nearly developed by the time they reach kindergarten. Appropriate alignment of limited resources and policies can help ensure children reach first grade better prepared.

Indiana currently provides child care and early education programs through federal and state funding, such as Child Care Development Fund, Head Start and Title I, but as in many states, these programs are funded and implemented through different departments. An early learning advisory committee will help coordinate early learning funding and programs. As Indiana embraces innovation and accountability throughout its education system, we must include early learning as an education priority.

Indiana's United Ways recognize that this bill is not the "silver bullet" for improving education. However, the early learning advisory committee will elevate the importance of early education and help align and/or prioritize resources. Indiana's United Ways look forward to working with legislators in the future to help ensure all Hoosier children have access to high-quality early learning opportunities. We need you to send a strong message to the Education Roundtable and policymakers about the importance of early learning. Children's school readiness and overall success depend upon it.

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About Us: The Indiana Association of United Ways represents 62 United Ways throughout Indiana. Together, Indiana's United Ways raise over \$95 million each year to invest in human services and meet the critical needs of Hoosiers in local communities. To learn more about Indiana Association of United Ways' public policy priorities for 2011, visit www.iauw.org/pubpol/publicpolicy.htm

- **2-1-1** – policies and funding for universal access to 2-1-1
- **Education** - children and youth achieve potential
- **Income** - people become financially stable and independent
- **Health** - people's health improves
- **Charitable Sector** - charitable sector is vibrant