



August 12, 2011

The Honorable Patty Murray
173 Russell Senate Office Building
United States Senate
Washington, D. C. 20510

Dear Senator Murray:

The Early Learning Action Alliance is delighted to hear that you have been named the Co-Chair of the newly created "supercommittee" tasked with creating a proposal to address the federal budget. We are glad to have a stalwart champion for children and families and a former preschool teacher in a leadership role in this difficult process.

As a coalition of over 40 early learning-focused organizations representing thousands of children, families, and educators across Washington State, we urge you to stand strong in protecting low-income children and families in the budget debates and negotiations. We support your approach to this work as one that requires balancing: spending cuts must be accompanied by revenue. In order to progress out of this recession, our national focus must be on creating jobs and maintaining economic stability. And as you know, [Nobel Prize Winning Economist James Heckman](#) has noted that "[t]hose seeking to reduce deficits and strengthen the economy should make significant investments in early education.

Even as the immediate discussions are happening, we also remain concerned about budget discussions for FY 2012, particularly the creation of discretionary caps and the potential devastation to critical programs that serve children, including Head Start and child care.

Thank you for your staunch leadership for children and families in Washington. While we know you have an incredibly busy schedule, we request a meeting with you to discuss our shared priorities and how we work together. This would also be a wonderful opportunity for the parents and families who rely on programs like Head Start and child care assistance and have much stake in these budget discussions to thank you in person and help strengthen your resolve for your difficult work ahead.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Leslie Dozono".

Leslie Dozono
Early Learning Action Alliance
718 6th Avenue South
Seattle, WA 98122

P.S. We hope these pictures of a few of Washington's young learners and their families give you strength as you continue to lead for all our nation's kids in the crucial work ahead



The Early Learning Action Alliance is convened by the Children's Alliance.
Learn more by contacting: Leslie Dozono at (206) 324.0340 x20 or leslie@childrensalliance.org