

February 1, 2018

The Honorable Roy Blunt  
Chairman  
Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on  
Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and  
Related Agencies  
135 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Tom Cole  
Chairman  
House Appropriations Subcommittee on  
Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and  
Related Agencies  
2358-B Rayburn House Office Building  
United States House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Patty Murray  
Ranking Member  
Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on  
Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and  
Related Agencies  
156 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro  
Ranking Member  
House Appropriations Subcommittee on  
Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and  
Related Agencies  
1016 Longworth House Office Building  
United States House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Blunt, Ranking Member Murray, Chairman Cole and Ranking Member DeLauro:

As organizations committed to promoting positive emotional development for our youngest children, we are writing to ask for your support in funding a groundbreaking new mental health provision that will help young children who are at risk for mental disorders realize their potential. As you work towards a final appropriations agreement for Fiscal Year (FY) 2018, we request that you fund the Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Grant Program at \$5 million, the amount included in H.R. 3358. As the leaders of the Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education Appropriations, you have always shown a strong commitment to caring for our nations' young children, especially those who are most in need. We hope you will help support the foundational development that positive early mental health represents.

In the last Congress, both the House and Senate recognized the importance of the mental health of young children and their families by passing the bipartisan *Helping Families in Mental Health Crisis Act of 2016* as a part of the *21<sup>st</sup> Century Cures Act*. This important legislation includes the Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Promotion, Intervention, and Treatment provision (Sec. 10006), which creates grants that can leverage critically important services in states and communities. These grants will help to change the course for children at risk for mental disorders. By investing in early mental health prevention, identification, and treatment, we can promote positive emotional development from the start and reduce the need for treatment later in life, when it becomes much more difficult, time intensive, and expensive. Infant-early childhood mental health professionals across the country were thrilled with the passage of Sec. 10006 and are eager to get to work; yet the promise of this legislation will not be realized if the grants are not funded.

These grants will meet an immense need around the country. By directing resources where the foundations of strong mental health are laid – with young children, starting from birth- they are ultimately an investment in the future stability and capacity of our nation. For this reason, we urge you to allocate \$5 million for the Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health grants in the final FY 18 appropriations measure, and in doing so, invest directly in the services that will support young children and strengthen communities and our country.

Sincerely,

American Academy of Pediatrics  
American Association for Psychoanalysis in Clinical Social Work  
American Association of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry  
American Group Psychotherapy Association

American Psychiatric Association  
American Psychological Association  
Anxiety and Depression Association of America  
Association for Ambulatory Behavioral Healthcare  
Children's Health Fund  
Global Alliance for Behavioral Health and Social Justice  
Mental Health America  
National Association for Children's Behavioral Health  
NAMI, National Alliance on Mental Illness  
National Association of Social Workers  
Nemours Children's Health System  
The National Alliance to Advance Adolescent Health  
Treatment Communities of America  
ZERO TO THREE