

CASTLE CONTINUES TO STRESS THE IMPORTANCE OF OUR NATION'S EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION PROGRAMS

Washington, DC -- Delaware Congressman Mike Castle, Senior Republican of the House Subcommittee on Early Childhood, Elementary, and Secondary Education, along with Members of the House Education and Labor Committee continued to examine Early Childhood Education in the United States at today's hearing, "Investing in Early Education: Paths to Improving Children's Success."

At the hearing, Committee Members considered how early childhood education helps put children on the path to success. Witnesses, consisting of program providers throughout the country, had the opportunity to share their insight and experience on successful program strategies.

"Last year, after several years of working on bipartisan legislation, Congress saw a Head Start reform bill that significantly strengthens early childhood education opportunities for disadvantaged children become law," Rep. Castle said. "I was extremely proud to take part in crafting that legislation which reaffirmed the federal commitment to investing in early childhood education and serves those who are already at risk of falling behind before they even begin school.

"Research has shown several things, including how much children are capable of learning from birth through age five. This research also makes it more apparent that when children fall behind in kindergarten, they tend to remain behind throughout their education. For these reasons, I am a strong proponent of federal programs that ensure children are ready to learn effectively when they enter kindergarten, such as the Child Care and Development Block Grant, Head Start, and Early Reading First.

"That being said, it is important that before Congress consider efforts to expand the federal role of early childhood education to promote the role of parents in choosing their child's early education provider, ensuring those students not presently being served by the Head Start program are served first, and guaranteeing that public and providers are running high-quality programs, such as those programs I visited throughout Delaware over the last two months."

Rep. Castle recently visited Head Start Centers throughout Delaware, including the Wilmington Head Start West End Center Head Start Program, the Bear Head Start Center, the Colonial Gardens Head Start Center in Dover, and the Stockley Center's Head Start and Early Head Start programs in Georgetown as well as the Newark KinderCare center.

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