

U.S. SENATOR BOB CASEY



FIGHTING *for a* **FAIR SHOT** *for* **FAMILIES, KIDS and SENIORS**

Supporting Early Learning for Children

A quality education from early childhood through college is of paramount importance for the future of Pennsylvania and our country. Study after study shows that investments in enhancing learning opportunities for our youngest children are absolutely critical to a child's success. Senator Casey knows that when a child learns more earlier in life child will earn more later in our workforce. These investments are also critical to our nation's continued economic strength. Unfortunately, existing high-quality early learning programs reach just a fraction of the children and families who need them the most. Ensuring all families have access to high quality early learning is a complex problem and Senator Casey believes we need a continuum of policies to solve it.

- Senator Casey introduced the **Child Care for Working Families Act (S.1806)** with Senator Murray, to establish a new federal-state funding partnership to provide high-quality, affordable child care from birth through age 13. This legislation would provide direct financial assistance to working parents to help pay for child care and early learning expenses on a sliding scale based on their income; limit childcare payments to seven percent of a family's income; support universal access to high quality preschool programs for 3- and 4-year olds; and improve workforce compensation by ensuring that all early learning educators are paid a living wage.
- Senator Casey introduced the **Child and Dependent Care Tax Credit Enhancement Act**, which would expand the scope of the Child and Dependent Care Tax Credit, allowing families with an adjusted gross income up to \$120,000 to take advantage of the full credit amount.
- Senator Casey introduced the **Prepare All Kids Act** in the 114th Congress, which would provide at least one year of voluntary high quality pre-kindergarten, with a focus on children from low-income families and children with special needs.
- Senator Casey introduced the **Child Care Access to Resources for Early-learning (Child CARE) Act** in the 114th Congress, which would provide grants to states to expand access to high-quality child care for families with children under age four who live at or below 200% of the Federal Poverty Level.
- Senator Casey profoundly shaped the **Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)**, the 2015 reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. While primarily dealing with K-12 education, ESSA includes several strong provisions for early childhood education pushed by Senator Casey. It provides for newly authorized Preschool Development Grants, a competitive program for states to improve the quality of and access to early childhood education for four year olds in preschool.
- Senator Casey led the fight in ESSA to reauthorize the **Ready to Learn program**. Ready to Learn supports the creation of effective education resources that are distributed by local public television stations on television, online, and through mobile apps to build the math and reading skills of children between the ages of two and eight, especially those from low-income families.
- Senator Casey introduced the **Continuum of Learning Act**, which strengthens connections between existing early learning programs and the elementary grades by helping educators from

early childhood education programs and elementary schools work together so children have a successful continuum of learning and development. Much of this legislation was included in ESSA.

- Senator Casey consistently leads Senate efforts to appropriate robust funding for early childhood education and child care programs, including **Head Start and Early Head Start**, the **Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG)**, **Preschool Development Grants** and **IDEA Parts B and C**. In FY2018, CCDBG funding was increased by eighty-three percent, the largest single year increase in the program's history, for a total of \$5.22 billion. The FY2018 Omnibus also provided \$9.863 billion for Head Start, \$610 million more than FY2017.