



Derby Early Childhood Council
March 2nd 2015

Dear Legislators,

The small investment of \$19,791 made by the state in our council last year, allowed us to **leverage matching funds of an additional \$86,473** for our community for this fiscal year. In recent years the council has also successfully advocated to bring mental health program Child First as well as the Maternal, Infant and Early Childhood Home Visiting program into our community. They are **worth a combined \$721,924**. The ability of a local council to leverage matching funds and advocate for such vital programs provides the state with a huge return on investment.

We are asking you to **continue to support our vital work and restore funding to the Community Plans for Early Childhood line item**. We also ask that you **support House Bill 6004** to strengthen the relationship between the Office of Early Childhood and local councils.

An Early Childhood Council (ECC) provides a **single place for providers to come together to share best practices, resources and data**. It is the hub for early childhood issues in the community and **eliminates duplication of services, aligns plans and missions and adds efficiency**. This cross-sector focus accelerates the pace of change in the community.

Each local council knows its own community and invests the money in the most effective way. It uses data-driven methods to identify community issues and works to implement intentional and specific solutions.

An ECC is **essential in a community for preparing children and their families for Kindergarten**. We reach children and their families from birth through age 9. A council is the link between schools, families and service providers.

A few examples of the work that the Derby Early Childhood Council is involved in this year is outlined below and **would not have happened without the council**:

* Engaged nationally regarded group “Everyday Democracy” in a \$14,000 program currently being implemented in our community and schools to **discuss racial and economic barriers to student achievement and parent involvement**. We have actively engaged community members, students and parents in the process.

* Trained facilitators to run **parent leadership opportunities** in both English and Spanish, ultimately leading to the formation of a parent advisory board in our community.

* Improved Kindergarten Readiness activities within the community - such as a **kindergarten registration event, kindergarten roundtable** - to bring public school and preschool providers together to share best practices and resources, coordinated outreach effort to parents to provide kindergarten readiness support and resources and **Kindergarten Camp** to prepare children for school in the run up to the start of school.

* Provided parent workshops – **including in-home reading workshops** – prevention programs with a social and emotion focus in the schools and summer programs.

Please continue to support our work so we can support our families,

Sincerely,

Beth Colette
Co-Chair Derby ECC
Parent

Michele Holovach
Co-Chair Derby ECC
Early Head Start Manager, TEAM Inc.