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Casey Highlights Economic Benefits of Early Childhood Education

*Posted by Senator Casey's Office
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HARRISBURG, PA— U.S. Senator Bob Casey (D-PA) today met with government and business leaders to stress the economic benefits of early childhood education at the PA Early Learning Investment Commission's (ELIC) 2011 Economic Summit on Early Education.

“Investing in children is not only the right thing to do to ensure children reach their full potential, it will also pay huge dividends for the economy and build a workforce for the future,” said Senator Casey. “That is why I was pleased to join Pennsylvania business leaders and other officials to talk about my proposals to provide access to quality early learning opportunities for all children to prepare them for success in school and beyond.”

As the new Chairman of the Joint Economic Committee (JEC), Senator Casey today reached out to business leaders to identify ways to raise the profile of the payoffs of investing in early learning. Noted economists agree that investing in early childhood education is fiscally responsible because it yields a return of investment of between \$3 and \$17 for every dollar invested, with benefits like reduced need for special education, lower juvenile justice rates, increased high school graduation and college matriculation rates and increased productivity among families.

Last month, Senator Casey introduced legislation to create an early learning challenge fund to encourage states to invest in early learning. The Supporting State Systems of Early Learning Act (S. 470) is modeled after Pennsylvania's experience with early learning and will help to ensure that more low-income children have access to quality learning and development opportunities.

The bill will award competitive grants to states to help them build systems of early learning and require states to develop a tiered program rating and improvement system like Keystone STARS to help parents identify quality early learning providers.

Senator Casey has attended PA ELIC's annual summit every year since its formation in 2008.