Early Childhood Education  
National Library Legislative Day  
May 5–6, 2014

**ALA’s Position:** The American Library Association (ALA) asks the U.S. President and the U.S. Congress to recognize library contributions to the development of early learning initiatives by specifically including libraries as eligible entities and/or allowable partners as part of any federal early childhood education programs or initiatives.

President Obama’s FY 2015 budget request would provide:

- **$1.3 billion in mandatory funding for Preschool for All** to support grants to States for the implementation of high-quality preschool programs that are aligned with kindergarten-through-12th-grade elementary and secondary education systems.
  - Funds would be used to improve outcomes for children through enhancing the quality of existing preschool programs and expanding the number and availability of high-quality preschool programs.

- **$500 million for Preschool Development Grants** to support grants to States to carry out the activities needed to ensure that every State willing to commit to expanding preschool access has the high-quality programs required to successfully serve 4-year-old children.
  - Preschool Development Grants would address fundamental needs like facility creation and workforce development, as well as quality improvement efforts and the scale-up of proven preschool models.
  - The Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2014 included a down payment on the President's vision to expand early childhood education by providing $250 million for Preschool Development Grants.

In addition, Sen. Harkin (D-IA) and Rep. Miller (D-CA) have introduced legislation (Strong Start for America’s Children Act) that is based on the President's budget request that would provide funding support to states for children from birth through age 4, with an emphasis on 3- and 4-year-olds.

- Senator Harkin (D-IA) has said that he would like to move the Strong Start for America’s Children Act through the Senate HELP Committee as early as May 2014.

**Background:**

Our nation's public library systems are equipped to deliver critical early learning resources to young children and families, especially those most in need.

But, in far too many instances across the country, libraries are NOT able to participate in the patchwork of early childhood education grants and are NOT considered as a resource in helping to design the policies and practices that link children and their families to early learning initiatives.

Early childhood education programming should be designed in ways that allow – and even encourage – a more coordinated and flexible system that maximizes existing early learning efforts across the country, such as those taking place in our public libraries.