



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Legislators State Senator Kenny Yuko and State Representative Kent Smith visit Local Child Care Center

Richmond Heights, OH – December 26, 2017 – State Senator Yuko visited Early Steps Learning Center in Richmond Heights on November 21st to observe early childhood care and education in action. While there, he spoke with Angela Barringer, Director of Operations. The children were delighted to see the local representative and made an American flag and cookies to present to him.

State Senator Yuko has been a native of Richmond Heights and an advocate for education for over 10 years. During his visit he expressed concern regarding having quality care options available for area families. He also discussed how public-schools and early childhood centers could collaborate on transitions for children entering kindergarten.

State Representative Kent Smith visited on December 8, 2017 and had the opportunity to meet with Sharon Jackson, Business Manager. Representative Smith was extremely interested in early childhood intervention and how qualified teachers make a difference. Representative Smith quoted Nobel Prize Winner James Heckman, *“The best way to improve the American workforce in the 21st century is to invest in early childhood education, to ensure that even the most disadvantaged children have the opportunity to succeed alongside their more advantaged peers.”*

Both representatives were interested in how early childhood education made a difference for creating a foundation for children and their success when entering kindergarten. Both also had the opportunity to learn how the impact of state funding allowed child care centers dedicated to quality to meet the demands of hiring degreed teachers, having smaller classroom ratios, and allowing centers to be competitive in offering educators the same benefits as the public-school system.

Visits from local representatives are important in informing them about their local constitutes and the benefits of quality early childhood education. Studies show that up to 80% of a child’s brain development occurs in the first five years of life. When children experience a high-quality learning environment, it can lead to higher outcomes in later years, such as higher high school graduation rates, stronger workforce, lower special education referrals, and lower incarceration rates. Yet child care providers struggle with rising costs such as paying degreed teachers, curriculums, assessments, materials, etc. Providers require additional support from the state and from private industry to provide quality care and education.

Early Steps Learning Center is a member of the Ohio Association of Child Care Providers, which is the collective voice of child care providers across Ohio and the largest association in Ohio dedicated specifically to advocating for child care center owners and directors. OACCP has been facilitating personal visits by legislators to centers in their districts to learn about the critical need for support of high quality early care and education centers.



State Senator Yuko

About Early Steps Learning Center

Early Steps Learning Center is a 4 star-rated child care center in the Step up to Quality Program administered by the Ohio Department of Education and the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services. The Early Steps team consists of qualified teachers and staff who are dedicated to providing exceptional education. ESLC has proudly served Cleveland East Side communities since 2003, with 2 Centers in Richmond Heights and 1 Center in Wickliffe. Teachers and staff are devoted to the Center's *Philosophy of Care*, in which they commit to providing a safe, secure, caring and stimulating environment to help children develop socially, emotionally and intellectually. In addition to curriculum-based educational programs, special programs such as Spanish, Sign Language, and Christian Club give children even more opportunities to learn and grow. And don't forget about fun - learning through play is what they are all about! For more information, visit www.earlystepslearningcenter.com or call 440-944-2223.

Contact:

Sharon Jackson, Business Director
Early Steps Learning Center
440-944-2223

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