

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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Major New Grant from the Kellogg Foundation Will Fund Partnership To Link Economic Development and Child Care

Washington, DC – The Institute for Women's Policy Research in Washington, DC, the Alliance for Early Childhood Finance and Cornell University in New York, and Smart Start's National Technical Assistance Center in North Carolina, have received a major grant for a project to craft and advance new policy approaches that link child care with economic development.

The three-year project is funded by a \$1,240,000 grant from the W.K. Kellogg Foundation of Battle Creek, Michigan, and will run from 2006 through 2008. Dr. Heidi Hartmann, President of the Institute for Women's Policy Research, called the grant "a critical investment of resources that will help address the undervaluation of care work in our society and the persistent lack of available affordable childcare."

The purpose of this project is threefold: 1) to promote pioneering public policy that applies economic development strategies to strengthen the early care and education sector; 2) to test those ideas at the local and state level by investing in Venture Grants; and 3) to bring these efforts to scale by building a network of innovative leaders from a variety of fields beyond early care and education, including finance, planning, and community and economic development, who can make early care and education a core part of economic development policy.

The project is being carried out by an interdisciplinary team of four collaborating organizations: the Alliance for Early Childhood Finance, Cornell University, Smart Start's National Technical Assistance Center (NTAC), and the Institute for Women's Policy Research (IWPR). These groups bring together leaders in economic and community development and the early care and education field to design innovative economic development policy linked to early care and education. Through a series of small discussion groups and workshops, leaders come together to brainstorm new policy options. The Venture Grants provide funding to encourage communities, cities, and states to initiate new policies and programs that link economic development and child care. Special attention is placed on expanding the community of policy leaders for this work beyond traditional early care and education experts, to include planners, economic developers, and others. The collaborating organizations hope that the project will lead to greater visibility of the economic importance of early care and education, broader utilization of economic development approaches in developing, improving, and expanding early care and education, and greater involvement of a diverse group of professionals in policy discussions on economic development and early care and education.

To date, over 75 states and cities have completed studies or are in the process of conducting research that measures the regional economic importance of the early care and education industry. This research has been a vital first step in framing child care as an economic development strategy. Copies these studies, relevant resource materials, and case studies of various research efforts are available at <http://economicdevelopment.cce.cornell.edu>. Additionally, the Linking Economic Development and Child Care Project team has published reports and articles, and prepared a host of resource materials to support research and policy development that links child care and economic development, which are available at <http://economicdevelopment.cce.cornell.edu>.

Cornell University and the Alliance for Early Education Finance have been key leaders in both academic and policy debates on the economic importance of child care. A special issue of *Community Development: The Journal of the Community Development Society* to be released in June 2006, presents papers by leading academics regarding the key conceptual and methodological challenges in addressing child care's economic impact, and makes recommendations for comprehensive policy reform.

Smart Start's National Technical Assistance Center has been the leading organization providing technical assistance to the early care and education community nationwide. The Institute for Women's Policy Research, a scientific research organization dedicated to informing and stimulating debate on issues of critical importance to women and their families, brings a Washington, DC-based presence to the collaboration to heighten the public policy dimensions of the project. IWPR's previous work on early care and education issues includes *The Price of School Readiness: A Tool for Estimating the Cost of Universal Preschool in the States*, *Building a Stronger Child Care Workforce: A Review of Studies of the Effectiveness of Public Compensation Initiatives*, *The Status of Early Care and Education in the United States*, and *In Our Own Backyards: Local and State Strategies to Improve the Quality of Family Child Care*, all available at www.iwpr.org.

The W.K. Kellogg Foundation was established in 1930 "to help people help themselves through the practical application of knowledge and resources to improve their quality of life and that of future generations." Its programming activities center around the common vision of a world in which each person has a sense of worth; accepts responsibility for self, family, community, and societal well-being; and has the capacity to be productive, and to help create nurturing families, responsive institutions, and healthy communities.

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The Institute for Women's Policy Research conducts rigorous research and disseminates its findings to address the needs of women, promote public dialogue, and strengthen families, communities, and societies. IWPR focuses on poverty and welfare, employment and earnings, work and family, health and safety, and women's civic and political participation. For more information about IWPR, please visit our website at www.iwpr.org.