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**COUNTY OF MENDOCINO
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS**

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March 26, 2012

The Honorable Wesley Chesbro
State Capitol
P.O. Box 942849
Sacramento, CA 94249-0001

Dear Assemblymember Chesbro,

I am writing to express my deep concern about proposed cuts to the high quality programs that educate and support our children in the Governor's 2012-2013 Budget proposal.

Governor Brown's budget proposal dismantles the early care and education system and virtually eliminates all early education programs in the state over the next two years, by abandoning efforts to ensure program quality and also cutting funding by \$517 million, which would prevent 62,000 infants, toddlers and preschoolers from having the critical social and cognitive development experiences they need to succeed in school and beyond.

The Governor's proposal decimates both the center-based and voucher side of the early care and educational system. Title 5 centers provide high quality, educational child care services to children across California through locally based agencies who best understand the needs of their communities. Title 5 programs have been proven to provide low-income children with much needed high quality educational opportunities to help them succeed in school. Alternative payment (voucher) programs are critical for working parents who have stayed off welfare, not just families seeking to leave welfare. Cutting funding to alternative payment programs and cutting child care eligibility for families will force many working parents to stop working or job training and go back onto welfare. It will hurt California's economic recovery and raise welfare costs.

The Governor's proposal creates additional levels of "middle men" that would add unnecessary administrative costs and bureaucracy between the state and the community based programs. These additional levels of middlemen would push administrative costs to as much as 40%, which would be another shattering loss to an already extremely reduced child care system.

Among all the other cuts that deal a further severe blow to child care, the Governor's proposal would also eliminate the Resource and Referral program that helps all families find child care that meets their family's needs. The Resource and Referral program also provides training for the child care community and supports the development of additional child care in each county. This is the only service that is available to all families and child care providers. It would be devastating to cut this valuable service, which has been functioning to help families for the past 30 years.

I understand that balancing the budget is a great challenge, but I urge you and the members of the Budget Committee to reexamine the proposed budget and look to strike a better balance between our present financial challenges and the destruction of our children's futures.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

John McCowen, Chair
Mendocino County Board of Supervisors

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