



For immediate release, November 5, 2014

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Strategies for Children Congratulates Governor-elect Charlie Baker, Looks Forward to Working with Governor-elect Baker to Help Close the Achievement Gap through High-Quality Early Education

Chris Martes, President and CEO of Strategies for Children, issued the following statement:

“On behalf of the Board of Directors and staff of Strategies for Children, congratulations to Governor-elect Charlie Baker. Upon taking office, Governor-elect Baker will have a critical opportunity to help close the achievement gap through increased access to high-quality early education.

Massachusetts is well-poised to solve some of the most difficult challenges in education. Chief among these is the achievement gap. Research shows that this gap takes root as early as 18 months of age, and often persists throughout children’s academic career. Here in Massachusetts, despite incremental progress in narrowing the achievement gap across grades and subjects, large gaps remain, particularly in early literacy.

To close the achievement gap, we must start early. We must act on the latest early childhood research and make increased investments in high-quality early education. This means adequately funding early education and care in Massachusetts, and affording all children under age 5 the opportunity to attend high-quality programs that prepare them well for success in school and beyond. Currently, far too many children do not have that opportunity, particularly in our Gateway Cities.

We look forward to working with Governor-elect Baker to develop and implement a multi-year investment to provide all children with early learning opportunities and a strong foundation for future success. Governor-elect Baker is a supporter of targeted pre-k, as he stated during the campaign. We must expand access to pre-kindergarten programs, while continuing to invest in program quality and the early education and care workforce. We thank all gubernatorial candidates for running and raising these important issues. We look forward to working with Governor-elect Baker to help make this vision a reality for the commonwealth, and becoming the first state to close the achievement gap once and for all.

Our children are counting on us.”