



December 5, 2011

Dear Senator or Representative:

The following members of the CCD Ed Task Force write to urge you to restore funding for the National Center for Special Education Research (NCSER) within the Institute of Education Sciences to \$71 million dollars – its FY 2010 level. This modest investment enhances programs that have broad impact and make a significant contribution to the future workforce of our country.

Since its inception in 2004, NCSER has funded over 180 new research projects in areas that improve the educational outcomes of children and youth with disabilities. For example, these projects include student assessment, autism, literacy, and mathematics and science instruction for children and youth with disabilities. NCSER also importantly has the ability to use part of its budget to ensure that children and youth with disabilities are appropriately included in all nationwide studies. This information is essential to parents, schools and local communities. As we move toward an environment of increasing inclusion in our nation's schools, we must have a solid understanding of how best to serve all students.

Importantly, the research activities funded by NCSER directly respond to needs identified by state departments of education and local communities. Many projects begin when local school districts approach researchers at their local universities looking for ways to improve student performance and outcomes. Indeed, most of the funded projects involve local schools and universities working together to develop better ways to support and instruct children and youth with disabilities. Additionally, they have a direct and lasting impact on the local communities and schools that participate and lay the groundwork for improvements in practice and policy that will be used by states and communities nationwide.

We must restore funding to these important activities because despite all of the good work being done there is an ever growing need to ensure that children and youth with disabilities excel and contribute to society. As you know, the current statistics are alarming:

- The dropout rate for students with disabilities is 23%, more than twice that of students without disabilities (Source: IDEAdata.org);
- Only 11% of students with disabilities scored “proficient” or above in 4th grade reading, and only 16% in 4th grade math. In 8th grade just 6% of students with disabilities scored proficient or above in reading and just 7% in math. (Source: 2011 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP)).

To meet the challenges our nation currently faces, children must achieve at their highest possible level and enter the workforce ready to succeed. The research activities funded by NCSER are one essential way the field of special education and research work to meet these goals.

Therefore, the undersigned organizations urge you to restore funding for NCSER to the FY 2010 amount of \$71 million. Now more than ever the federal government must ensure that practitioners, students and families continue to have access to research-based interventions and information that impacts student achievement in the classroom and lead to a successful career. Thank you for your consideration of our request.

Sincerely,

American Dance Therapy Association

Council for Exceptional Children

Council for Learning Disabilities

Easter Seals

Higher Education Consortium for Special Education

Learning Disabilities Association of America

National Association of Councils on Developmental Disabilities

National Association of State Directors of Special Education

Council for Learning Disabilities

National Center for Learning Disabilities

National Disability Rights Network

National Down Syndrome Society

School Social Work Association of America

Teacher Education Division of the Council for Exceptional Children

The Arc

The Consortium for Citizens with Disabilities is a coalition of nearly 100 national consumer, advocacy, provider and professional organizations headquartered in Washington, D.C. Since 1973, the CCD has advocated on behalf of people of all ages with disabilities and their families. CCD works to achieve federal legislation and regulations that assure that the 54 million children and adults with disabilities are fully integrated into the mainstream of society. For more information, please contact:

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