



## **Americans should support early educational opportunities abroad**

Submitted by Mary Beth Iduh, CRS Baltimore

As the mother of an energetic, almost 2-year-old daughter, I am heartened to hear my fellow Marylanders strongly support our investment in quality public education for our state's students ("Goucher poll: Marylanders overwhelmingly support paying more in taxes to improve public education," Sept. 23).

We clearly value our children's learning and development and believe it is critically important for the future of both their lives and our community. And for the future of our world, I believe this investment in youth, particularly in young children, should extend well beyond our state and national borders. Most people don't know that since 1990, U.S. international aid has saved the lives of nearly 100 million children, which is an amazing accomplishment. But we need to make sure that children do more than survive; we need to help them thrive. In lower-resourced countries, integrating early childhood development (ECD) into child-focused foreign assistance only costs 50 cents per child per year and we know it significantly improves their long-term well-being.

In fact, the benefits of ECD programming are worth six times their cost. Activities such as reading, singing, playing with colorful objects and eating nutritious meals help stimulate young minds and start children on the right path for lifetime success. ECD can mitigate some of the worst effects that come with children living in poverty, war-torn areas and refugee camps. Yet, our U.S. government does not integrate ECD into international programs for children.



Therefore, I urge readers to join me in encouraging Rep. Elijah Cummings and other members of the U.S. House of Representatives to cosponsor legislation being introduced by Reps. Castro, a Texas Democrat, and Fitzpatrick, a Pennsylvania Republican, that would bring early childhood development to children all around the world. Together, we can help build a strong foundation for vulnerable children to achieve their potential, both here in Maryland and across the globe.

Link <https://www.baltimoresun.com/opinion/readers-respond/bs-ed-rr-education-funding-letter-20190927-kfoykydbqvcndfzpz2asgxdlea-story.html>