BOSTON – Thursday, March 21, 2013 – Governor Deval Patrick today visited with children and staff at the Community Teamwork, Inc. (CTI) Children’s Corner Learning Center to promote the Administration’s proposed investments in early education that will help grow jobs and create opportunity throughout the Commonwealth both in the near term and for future generations.

“Every child in Massachusetts deserves the opportunity to receive high quality early education,” said Governor Patrick. “We know from educators, from academic research, from years of public policy and from our own experience as parents, that investing in our children at a young age pays huge dividends for them and for our community as a whole."

The Governor’s FY14 budget calls for increased investments in high-quality education in the Commonwealth. A $131 million investment in the early education and care
system will provide funding to work to eliminate the Department of Early Education and Care’s (EEC) current birth to age-five waitlist; expand initiatives to ensure the highest educational quality among providers of early education and care; assist early educators and providers with attaining higher levels of proficiency, skill and quality; increase educational programs and supports for parents and family members to further engage them in their child’s success; and expand efforts to provide comprehensive support services to children and their families. There are currently 2,505 children on the EEC waitlist in Lowell.

“CTI Children’s Learning Center is an outstanding example of what we need more of across Massachusetts,” said Secretary of Education Matthew Malone. “These are the organizations that ensure every child, regardless of their family’s financial means, has access to quality early education opportunities. We must be bold in our approach to invest in these programs so they can grow to serve the thousands of children currently on waitlists.”

Increased investments in the Commonwealth’s early education system will enable the state to prevent developmental and achievement gaps for its youngest residents, and will ensure that students are reading and writing proficiently by grade three. The Governor’s plan will work to close the achievement gaps that still persist in Massachusetts, especially among children of color, those who live in poverty, children with special needs and those who speak English as a second language.

"I applaud and support the Governor’s plan to increase investments in early childhood education and care programs across the Commonwealth, to ensure educational quality among providers of early education and to work toward eliminating the current birth to five waitlist so that all children have the opportunity to acquire the necessary skills to succeed in school and that parents understand the importance of engaging in the education of their children,” said Representative Kay Khan. “By investing in programs like Head Start, we can ensure that prior to entering school children are capable of achieving high levels of skill and proficiency which will make all the difference in their future and help close the achievement gap that continues to exist in Massachusetts.”

“Early education and care plays a crucial role in closing the achievement gap and I applaud the Governor’s commitment to ensuring that quality early learning opportunities are made affordable and available to all children throughout the Commonwealth,” said Representative Alice Peisch.

“Education investments have and continue to provide intrinsic value to our students, communities and Commonwealth,” said Representative Jeffrey Roy. “Having a well-educated workforce has strengthened our economy and provided opportunities for our children to succeed. We need to build on that foundation by increasing opportunities for early learners and close the achievement gaps.”

CTI is a private, non-profit Community Action Agency and a regional non-profit housing agency, which offers an array of housing opportunities and supportive services to low-income families. CTI’s core service area is comprised of Greater Lowell, which includes Lowell and the seven surrounding towns of Billerica, Chelmsford, Dracut, Dunstable, Tewksbury, Tyngsboro and Westford. Some programs extend to other areas of the state including portions of Middlesex and Essex Counties and the Metrowest area.

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