



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: Oct. 2, 2014

Contact: Judith Cebula
317.916.7327 | cebulaj@lei.org

Lilly Endowment Inc. Gives \$22.5 Million to Boost Early Childhood Education Statewide

*\$20M grant to Early Learning Indiana will expand efforts statewide
\$2.5M grant to United Way of Central Indiana will continue efforts in six counties*

INDIANAPOLIS – Early childhood education across Indiana will grow stronger as two organizations continue their longstanding commitment to improve the quality of programs for children birth to age five.

Lilly Endowment Inc. has made a grant of \$20 million to Early Learning Indiana (formerly Day Nursery Association) to enable it to increase the quality and quantity of early childhood education opportunities across Indiana. The Endowment also has made a grant of \$2.5 million to United Way of Central Indiana (UWCI) to support its ongoing efforts to strengthen early childhood programs in Indianapolis and the surrounding counties it serves. The Endowment is a long-time supporter of UWCI's work.

At the heart of these initiatives of Early Learning Indiana and UWCI is a commitment to help more early childhood education programs – whether in communities, congregations, schools or other settings – meet the highest levels of quality under the state's Paths to QUALITY (PTQ) system. In 2007, Indiana adopted the PTQ system, which is overseen by the Indiana Family and Social Services Administration. The system uses the following four-level scale for rating the quality of early childhood education providers:

- level one: health and safety needs of children met
- level two: environment supports children's learning
- level three: planned curriculum guides child development and school readiness
- level four: national accreditation (the highest indicator of quality) is achieved

The Endowment's grant to Early Learning Indiana, a long-time UWCI agency, will enable the 115-year-old organization to help at least 400 early childhood education providers throughout Indiana increase their PTQ levels. It will:

- help providers improve curriculum, build new classrooms and strengthen business practices
- educate and engage parents about the importance of high-quality child care and pre-school programs
- support professional development for early childhood teachers

The grant to UWCI will help support the creation of new classrooms and more high-quality spaces for young children in its six-county region. It also will help centers improve facilities, invigorate staff and teacher development, and strengthen curriculum. UWCI serves Boone, Hamilton, Hancock, Hendricks, Marion and Morgan counties.

In 2012, Lilly Endowment began encouraging providers to improve their PTQ levels through a \$1 million grant to help launch UWCI's 10-year plan to increase the quality and quantity of early childhood education programs. That same year the Endowment granted \$1 million to the YMCA of Greater Indianapolis to create a high-quality preschool in Avondale Meadows, an Indianapolis neighborhood with a high percentage of families living in poverty. In 2013, the Endowment approved a \$1 million grant to Early Learning Indiana for capacity building and to expand its early child care training programs.

Early Learning Indiana will partner with UWCI and other child care providers and organizations across Indiana to strengthen staff and teacher training and educate parents about the importance of early learning.

“These new grants extend and deepen the Endowment’s commitment to improve the quality of early childhood education across Indiana,” said Sara Cobb, the Endowment’s vice president for education. “We know that the children who participate in these high-quality programs will have brighter, more successful futures. Indiana will be better because of it.”

Early Learning Indiana has worked in Indianapolis for more than a century to provide high-quality child care and early learning programs for young children. Caring for young children and their families, Early Learning Indiana leaders have learned the importance of rigorous standards in preparing children for school. This grant will enable the organization to expand significantly its reach across Indiana.

“High-quality early childhood programs are one of the most effective investments we can make in the future of our state,” said Ted Maple, president and CEO of Early Learning Indiana. “Working closely with partners across Indiana, we will do our part to build a system that helps prepare children for school, engages families and allows for the smartest use of public resources.”

UWCI has a long history of advocacy, funding and collaborative partnerships advancing the care and education of young children. “The recent heightened awareness of the importance of early learning in Central Indiana and across the state is providing momentum for this important effort,” said Ann D. Murtlow, president and CEO of United Way of Central Indiana. “We are grateful for the Endowment’s continued commitment to

this effort and for this new opportunity to build and strengthen our collective impact when it comes to raising children out of poverty through education.”

Demand for the highest levels of early childhood programs is expected to increase in Indiana as efforts to educate families about the importance of early learning take hold across the state.

In March, state lawmakers created stronger standards that child care providers must meet in order to receive public vouchers and agreed to increase the amount of voucher payments to families who choose programs with the strongest standards. The state this year funded a \$10-million pilot program targeting 4-year-olds from low-income families in five counties, which include Allen, Jackson, Lake, Marion and Vanderburgh counties. UWCI is administering the Marion County pilot.

In addition, Indianapolis Mayor Greg Ballard in July proposed a \$50 million initiative to expand access to pre-school in Marion County beginning in 2015.

The initiatives of Early Learning Indiana and UWCI will build the capacity for the early learning field to meet this increased demand, according to Kevin Bain, chairman of the state of Indiana’s Early Learning Advisory Committee (ELAC). Bain is executive director and chief executive officer of the Wellborn Baptist Foundation in Evansville.

As chairman of ELAC, he is helping to mobilize state efforts to ensure families can access affordable, high-quality early childhood educational programs. That work includes assessing the quality of early childhood programs and the training and professional development of its teachers.

“Investments of this scale can help transform the landscape of Indiana’s approach to this important work,” Bain said. “The Endowment’s commitment to advancing the quality of providers is a critical element in kindergarten readiness – an essential foundation for the child’s continued educational and workplace success.”

About Lilly Endowment Inc.

Lilly Endowment Inc. is an Indianapolis-based, private philanthropic foundation created in 1937 by three members of the Lilly family -- J.K. Lilly Sr. and sons J.K. Jr. and Eli -- through gifts of stock in their pharmaceutical business, Eli Lilly and Company. However, the Endowment is a separate entity from the company, with a distinct governing board, staff and location. In keeping with the founders’ wishes, the Endowment supports the causes of community development, education and religion and maintains a special commitment to its hometown, Indianapolis, and home state, Indiana.