



National Coalition For Literacy

2016 Full Members

- American Association for Adult and Continuing Education (AAACE)
- Association of Adult Literacy Professional Developers
- American Library Association
- Center for Applied Linguistics
- Commission on Adult Basic Education (COABE)
- Goodling Institute for Research in Family Literacy
- National Center for Families Learning
- ProLiteracy
- Senior Service America, Inc.
- TESOL International Association
- VALUE USA
- World Education

2016 Associate Members

- Arizona Association for Lifelong Learning
- Adult Learning Partners
- Center for Law and Social Policy (CLASP)
- Montgomery Coalition for Adult English Literacy
- Maryland Association for Adult Community and Continuing Education
- Pennsylvania Association for Adult Continuing Education
- Research Allies for Lifelong Learning
- RTI International

17 October 2016

Ms. Hillary Rodham Clinton
Hillary for America
P.O. Box 5256
New York, NY 10185-5256

Dear Ms. Clinton,

I read with interest Valerie Strauss's October 13 Answer Sheet column for the Washington Post (wapo.st/education2016), in which you outlined your positions on aspects of education in the United States. Thank you for taking the time to respond so thoughtfully and thoroughly to the Post's questions.

I would like to respond specifically to your comments on early childhood education and universal pre-kindergarten. You are proposing access to high quality pre-kindergarten for every four year old in order to "ensure our kids enter school ready to learn." You note that "early development is critical for children, particularly in the first five years of life." Yet there is more to the ready-to-learn equation than universal pre-kindergarten.

Research studies have shown repeatedly that children's success in school correlates directly with the level of education of the mother or primary caregiver (<http://www2.ed.gov/pubs/OR/ResearchRpts/parlit.html>). Most recently, researchers at Georgia State University have demonstrated correlations between specific literacy skills in parents and the emergent language and literacy skills of their children (Taylor, Greenberg, & Terry, 2016). Our children are most likely to enter school ready to learn when their parents and caregivers are able to guide their development of the essential foundational skills.

In your response to the Post's question about early childhood education, you reference the HIPPIE program in Arkansas and Too Small to Fail, both initiatives that recognize the critical role of parents in their children's early education. I would encourage you to broaden your support for parents and caregivers of children at risk, and for those children themselves, by actively promoting adult education and family literacy.

Adult education includes the types of workforce skills and job training efforts emphasized in your platform (<https://www.hillaryclinton.com/issues/workforce-and-skills/>). However, it is much more comprehensive, providing basic reading, writing, and numeracy skills; high school equivalency preparation; English as a second/additional language; civics education; and life skills instruction in areas such as health literacy and financial literacy. In short, it prepares adults to be engaged and

effective parents, workers, citizens, and community members—and it increases the likelihood that their children will enter school ready to learn.

The primary federal funding source for adult education is Title II of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, which has consistently been funded below the authorized level. I would ask that you call for WIOA Title II to be funded at the minimum level called for in the legislation. More than that, I would ask that you consider an investment in adult education and family literacy that goes beyond that minimum.

Your education platform articulates support for Early Head Start and the Early Head Start–Child Care Partnership program, as well as for home visiting programs and affordable high quality child care (<https://www.hillaryclinton.com/issues/early-childhood-education/>). These are important initiatives that, if well implemented, will go a long way toward improving the ability of vulnerable and at-risk children to persist and succeed in school. I hope that you will consider adding the plank that is currently missing from that platform: support for adult education and family literacy.

Cordially,

Deborah Kennedy

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Reference:

Taylor, N. A., Greenberg, D., & Terry, N. P. (2016). The relationship between parents' literacy skills and their preschool children's emergent literacy skills. *Journal of Research and Practice for Adult Literacy, Secondary, and Basic Education*, 5(2): 5-16.