

Dear Member of Congress,

We greatly appreciated the bipartisan endorsement of a significant increase in funding for the Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG) under the budget agreement passed by Congress and signed into law in February. We want to ensure that Congress follows through with its commitment to increase CCDBG funding by \$5.8 billion over two years—\$2.9 billion in additional funding in FY 2018 and in FY 2019. This funding is necessary to enable families to access the affordable, high-quality child care that parents need to work and children need for their healthy development. It is essential that Congress maintain the bipartisan budget deal that includes not restricting available funding and approve an allocation for the Labor, Health, and Human Services Committee that allows for the agreed-to funding increase for Child Care and Development Block Grant as well as support for other early learning programs.

After years of declining funding for child care, this funding increase is desperately overdue. Over 370,000 fewer children received child care assistance in 2015 than in 2006, due to insufficient funding. Low-income families unable to receive help paying for child care frequently have no choice but to use lower-cost—and often lower-quality—care, or are left struggling to pay for their other basic expenses, including rent, food, and electricity bills. In many cases, parents are unable to get and keep a job because they cannot afford child care on their own.

Even those families fortunate enough to receive child care assistance are often still unable to choose the care they want for their children because the payment rates for child care providers are so low – only two states paid providers at recommended levels in 2017. Low rates discourage providers from serving families receiving child care assistance and deprive those providers serving these families of the resources they need to support high-quality care.

Increased CCDBG funding is needed not only to allow states to serve more low-income families and raise provider payment rates, but also to enable states to meet the requirements of the Child Care and Development Block Grant Act of 2014, which passed with broad bipartisan support. This reauthorization law included essential provisions to protect the basic health and safety of children in child care, enhance the quality of care, and make it easier for families to get and retain assistance. States need additional resources to comply with these new requirements and achieve the bipartisan goals of the reauthorization law.

In agreeing to a substantial funding increase of \$5.8 billion for CCDBG, Congress demonstrated a recognition that child care is essential to the well-being of children, families, and our country. It is critical that Congress keep this commitment to families.

Sincerely,

Afterschool Alliance  
American Academy of Pediatrics  
American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees (AFSCME)  
Association of Child Development Specialists  
Center for Community Change Action

Child Care Aware of America  
Child Welfare League of America  
Childcare Resources  
Children's Defense Fund  
CLASP  
Children's Leadership Council  
Division for Early Childhood of the Council for Exceptional Children (DEC)  
Early Care and Education Consortium  
Every Child Matters  
Family Focused Treatment Association  
First Five Years Fund  
First Focus Campaign for Children  
Forum for Youth Investment  
IDEA Infant Toddler Coordinators Association (ITCA)  
IFF  
Jumpstart  
Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC)  
Low Income Investment Fund  
MomsRising  
National Association for Family Child Care  
National Association for the Education of Young Children  
National Association of State Directors of Special Education (NASDSE)  
National Council of Jewish Women  
National Head Start Association  
National Human Services Assembly  
National Indian Child Care Association  
National Migrant Seasonal Head Start Association  
National Organization for Women  
National Women's Law Center  
NETWORK Lobby for Catholic Social Justice  
Parents as Teachers  
People For the American Way  
RESULTS  
Save the Children Action Network  
Service Employees International Union  
SparkAction  
Teaching Strategies  
United Parent Leaders Action Network  
United Way Worldwide  
Voices for Progress  
Wyandotte Nation  
YWCA USA  
ZERO TO THREE