

BOILERPLATE OP-ED

We Must Solve Child Care to Build Back Better

With the end of the pandemic in sight, families and child care providers, still recovering from the near-collapse of the entire child care market, are encouraged by the much-deserved attention being given to the essential role that child care and early learning play for families, educators, and our economy. The question is, will the attention come with a meaningful investment to address the root causes of America's child care crisis.

As a [ROLE (e.g., parent of young children, working parent, child care provider, social worker, advocate, etc.)], I [saw/experienced] firsthand how COVID-19 exacerbated our community's child care challenges. The pandemic pushed an already unstable industry to the brink, forcing widespread closures to early learning facilities all across the country - some of which had been around for decades. [SENTENCE ON A CHALLENGE THAT YOU OR SOMEONE YOU KNOW FACED]

I am grateful for the American Rescue Plan and other crucial relief measures from the past year that provided emergency relief to prevent the child care industry from collapsing entirely. However, we must also recognize that our country's child care market was fragile before the pandemic, with challenges in both supply and demand. Relief funding that only intends to keep providers afloat and ensure essential workers could access child care during the pandemic will not be able to address the existential flaws of America's child care market.

Prior to the pandemic, families across the country were struggling to find and afford the care options they need to participate in the workforce. [Half of Americans](#) lived in areas where the supply of licensed child care is scarce, and the [average cost](#) of child care was over \$10,000 a year. We all know coworkers who have had to leave work early or put their careers on pause to take care of their young children. Over coffee, lunch, or drinks, we've had conversations about how difficult or expensive it is to find safe and reliable care.

[INSERT DETAILS ON CHALLENGE THAT YOU OR SOMEONE YOU KNOW FACED PRE-PANDEMIC]

This is all taking place as hardworking providers who are caring for our nation's next generation are struggling to make ends meet. The [cost of providing care and education](#) to young children is considerably higher than providing K-12 education. Yet child care providers can only charge what families in their area can afford, which often translates into near-poverty wages for early educators and ultimately an untenable business model for the child care sector as a whole.

It is time that we, as a nation, confront and commit to resolving the child care challenges hindering many families' economic security, our children's long-term success, and the continued prosperity of America's economy. Making a substantial and sustained investment

in America's child care and early learning system by approving the funding included in the American Families Plan will be a big step in the right direction. As Congress nears the upcoming August recess, members should do everything in their power to pass a significant, sustained investment in child care, and end America's child care crisis once and for all.