

September 2, 2021

The Honorable Senator Patty Murray
Chair, Committee on Health, Education,
Labor and Pensions
U.S. Senate

The Honorable Representative Bobby Scott
Chair, Committee on Education and Labor
U.S. House of Representatives

cc: Members of the Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions
Members of the House Committee on Education and Labor
The Honorable Charles E. Schumer, Majority Leader, U.S. Senate
The Honorable Nancy Pelosi, Speaker of the House, U.S. House of Representatives

The Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee and House Education and Labor Committee pending reconciliation bill presents a crucial opportunity to improve child care in a sustained, systemic way. Your work on this will benefit the developmental, educational, and social-emotional progress of babies and young children, parents who need child care to be able to work and support their families, and the child care providers who have been underpaid for too long.

On behalf of family child care educators across the country, we urge you to prioritize transformational investments and policy for child care in the pending reconciliation bill.

Family child care is the business and practice of early care and education in the early childhood educator's home. Family child care offers the opportunity for one-on-one relationships and responsive and nurturing care in a small group, family-like setting to support positive outcomes for children.ⁱ Additionally, high-quality family child care has been linked to improvements in children's cognitive, social-emotional, and physical development.ⁱⁱ Predictors of quality in family child care include licensing, professional support, training, financial resources, and provider experienceⁱⁱⁱ but these pieces have been undermined over the years, due to insufficient federal funds.

Most importantly, these opportunities are right in our neighborhoods. Seventy percent of children in low-income families in regular, non-parental care receive that care within three miles of their home.^{iv} In communities where price, location and transportation barriers limit child care options, family child care fills a critical need for families. Nationally, one in five children (20%) receiving child care funded by the Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) program are cared for in family child care.^v Family child care providers care for 20% of infants younger than age 1 and 20% of toddlers ages 1 to 3, in CCDF-supported child care.^{vi}

Simply put, family child care is a life line for families and is a critical part of the early care and education system in this country. However, the number of licensed family child care homes fell by 52% from 2005 to 2017^{vii}. From 2014 to 2017, the drop was 22% and family child care educators share that it is the economics, the costs, aging/retirement, and a challenging job to navigate and carry out without sufficient dollars and resources.

Family child care must be included in the details of child care policy to ensure a healthy child care workforce can meet the needs of families and create early childhood development opportunities for young children. An investment in family child care is an investment in the well-being, safety, and economic stability of families.

At a time when our entire economy has been deeply impacted by the ability for parents to work, family child care programs largely remained open through the pandemic, at great risk to the individuals running

those programs and their own families, and at significant financial cost. The American Rescue Plan relief dollars are providing immediate relief, but transformative improvements are needed to stabilize the fragile system for children, families, and providers. Child care is infrastructure. Parents can't work to support their families without child care. Importantly, child care providers need to be paid a living wage and receive commensurate benefits to their public school peers to remain healthy, able to provide high quality care and financially viable.

We urge you to prioritize the following so that family child care can thrive and grow, increasing the supply of high-quality child care and continuing to provide essential services and benefits to families and young children:

- Ensuring that family child care is part of the mixed delivery system for both child care and preK to deliver child care, aftercare, Head Start, Early Head Start, and preK services.
- Ensuring that payments are based on true operating costs for high-quality care, to allow for fair pay and benefits for all child care providers, including self-employed child care providers, that encompasses paid leave and health care.
- Capping costs and guaranteeing access so that no family under 150 percent of state median income pays more than seven percent of their income on child care and families making under 75 percent of state median income pay nothing. Providers would be able to accept any eligible families, eliminating the need for state or local government-operated waiting lists.
- Investing in family child care networks, meaningful quality initiatives including Family Child Care Accreditation, and affordable, accessible training programs.
- Investing in new family child care programs.
- Providing financial incentives and technical assistance to encourage unlicensed family child care programs to become licensed.

We ask you to invest where children are, because child care is early learning and early learning is child care. Please contact us if we can be of assistance or if you would like to meet with a family child care provider to hear their stories and ideas for a better way forward.

Sincerely,

National organizations

All Our Kin

American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees

CACFP Roundtable

Center for Law and Social Policy (CLASP)

Child Care Aware® of America

First Children's Finance

MomsRising

National Association for Family Child Care

National Association for the Education of Young Children

National CACFP Forum

National Head Start Association

National Women's Law Center

Partnership for America's Children

Start Early

ZERO TO THREE

State and local organizations

Alabama Family Child Care Association, Alabama

Madison County Home Child Care Association, Alabama
Alaska Children's Trust, Alaska
Children's Action Alliance, Arizona
Arizona Early Childhood Alliance, Arizona
Children's Action Alliance, Arizona
Child & Family Resources, Inc, Arizona
Arkansas Family Childcare Association, Arkansas
Northwest Arkansas Family Child Care Association, Arkansas
California Family Child Care Network, California
Family Child Care Association of San Francisco, California
Alameda Professional Child Care Association, California
Orange County Child Care Association, California
San Diego County Family Child Care Association, California
Child Care Alliance of Los Angeles, California
Pathways LA, California
Crystal Stairs, Inc., California
Child Development Associates, California
Mexican American Opportunity Foundation, California
Childcare Business Institute, California
Connections for Children, California
The Future Supporting Family Child Care, California
Family Resource and Referral Center, California
Child Care Law Center, California
Early Childhood Education Association of Colorado, Colorado
Summit Child Care Association, Colorado
Colorado Association of Family Child Care, Colorado
Pikes Peak Region Family Child Care Association, Colorado
Clayton Early Learning, Colorado
A Caregiver Network, Colorado
Colorado Children's Campaign, Colorado

The Connecticut Association For Human Services, Connecticut
CERCLE, Connecticut
Connecticut Voices for Children, Connecticut
United Way of Connecticut, Connecticut
CT Early Childhood Alliance, Connecticut
Delaware Association for the Education of Young Children, Delaware
DC Family Child Care Association, District of Columbia
Florida Family Child Care Home Association, Florida
Brevard Sunshine Family Childcare Home Association, Florida
Family Child Care Association of Jacksonville, Florida
South Florida Home Child Care Association, Florida
Quality Family Home Child Care of Hillsborough County, Florida
North Florida Family Child Care Association, Florida
Home Child Care Providers Association of Manatee County, Florida
Putnam County Family Child Care Provider Association, Florida
Heart to Heart Pinellas County, Florida
Children's Forum, Inc., Florida
GEEARS: Georgia Early Education Alliance for Ready Students, Georgia
Hawai'i Children's Action Network, Hawai'i
Idaho Association for the Education of Young Children, Idaho
Nutrition Works, Idaho
Economic Opportunity by Jannus, Idaho
Illinois Association for the Education of Young Children, Illinois
Golden Corridor Association for the Education of Young Children, Illinois
Marion County Commission on Youth, Inc. (MCCOY), Indiana
Common Good Iowa, Iowa
Child Care Providers Coalition of Kansas, Kansas
Kansas Action for Children, Kansas
The Family Conservancy, Kansas
Louisiana Policy Institute for Children, Louisiana

Family Child Care Association of Maine (FCCAM), Maine
Maryland State Family Child Care Association, Maryland
Professional Child Care Provider Network of Prince George's Co., Inc., Maryland
Prince George's County Family Child Care Association, Maryland
Maryland Family Network, Maryland
Acre Family Child Care, Massachusetts
Strategies for Children, Massachusetts
United Way of Greater Fall River, Massachusetts
Grove Hall Child Development Center, Massachusetts
Springfield WORKS, Massachusetts
Child Care of the Berkshires, Inc., Massachusetts
Clarendon Early Education Services, Inc., Massachusetts
Enable, Inc., Massachusetts
Imagine That, Massachusetts
Edward Street, Massachusetts
Michigan's Children, Michigan
Minnesota Child Care Provider Information Network, Minnesota
Minnesota Prenatal to Three Coalition, Minnesota
Jewish Family and Children's Service of Minneapolis, Minnesota
West Central Initiative, Minnesota
Kids Win Missouri, Missouri
Raise Montana, Montana
Zero to Five Montana, Montana
Midwest Child Care Association, Nebraska
Children's Advocacy Alliance, Nevada
New Hampshire Association for the Education of Young Children, New Hampshire
New Jersey Family Child Care Providers Association, New Jersey
Advocates for Children of New Jersey, New Jersey
New Mexico Association for the Education of Young Children, New Mexico
ECE on the Move, LLC, New York

The Children's Agenda, New York
Citizen Action of New York, New York
Committee for Hispanic Children & Families (CHCF), New York
Civil Service Employees Association, Local 1000 AFSCME, New York
Women's Housing and Economic Development Corporation (WHEDco), New York
Rising Ground, New York
Child Care Council of Westchester, New York
Brooklyn Community Services, New York
NC Child, North Carolina
Ohio Association for the Education of Young Children, Ohio
Groundwork Ohio, Ohio
Oklahoma Association for the Education of Young Children, Oklahoma
Children's Institute, Oregon
Pennsylvania Home-based Child Care Providers Association, Pennsylvania
Child Care Consultants, Pennsylvania
Pennsylvania Association for the Education of Young Children, Pennsylvania
First Up, Pennsylvania
Rhode Island KIDS COUNT, Rhode Island
South Carolina Association for the Education of Young Children, South Carolina
Black Children's Institute of Tennessee, Tennessee
ADFW Child Care Family Child Care Network, Texas
Texans Care for Children, Texas
CHILDREN AT RISK, Texas
Utah Association for the Education of Young Children, Utah
VT Early Educators Network Milton, Vermont
Let's Grow Kids, Vermont
Vermont Child Care Providers Association, Vermont
Virginia Alliance of Family Child Care Associations, Virginia
Child Care Connections of Richmond, Virginia
Piedmont Region Family Child Care Association, Virginia

Franklin County Family Child Care Association, Virginia
It Takes a Village Childcare Association, Virginia
Infant Toddler Family Day Care, Virginia
Voices for Virginia's Children, Virginia
Virginia Early Childhood Foundation, Virginia
Virginia Promise Partnership, Virginia
Smart Beginnings Greater Richmond, Virginia
Washington Association for the Education of Young Children, Washington
Children's Alliance, Washington
West Virginia Family Child Care Association, West Virginia
Cabell Wayne Family Child Care Association, West Virginia
TEAM for West Virginia Children, West Virginia
Wisconsin Early Childhood Association, Wisconsin

ⁱ NICHD Early Child Care Research Network. (2004). Type of child care and children's development at 54 months. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly*, 19 (2). Retrieved June 13, 2017 from <http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0885200604000389>.

ⁱⁱ U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Commissioner's Office of Research and Evaluation, and the Head Start Bureau, Administration on Children, Youth and Families, *Evaluation of Head Start Family Child Care Demonstration, Final Report, 2000*. Retrieved June 11, 2017 from <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/progrms/opre/resource/evaluation-of-head-start-family-child-care-demonstration-final-report>.

ⁱⁱⁱ Raikes, H., Torquati, J., Jung, E., Peterson, C., Atwater, J., Scott, J., and Messner, L. (2013). Family child care in four Midwestern states: Multiple measures of quality and relations to outcomes by licensed status and subsidy participation. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly*, 28(4), 879–892; Forry, N., Iruka, I., Tout, K., Torquati, J., Susman-Stillman, A., Bryant, D., and Daneri, M.P. (2013). Predictors of quality and child outcomes in family child care settings. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly*, 28(4), 893–904.

^{iv} National Survey of Early Care and Education Project Team (2016). Fact Sheet: How Far Are Early Care and Education Arrangements from Children's Homes? OPRE Report No. 2016-10, Washington DC: Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation, Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Available at: <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/opre/research/project/national-survey-of-early-care-and-education-nsece-2010-2014>.

^v U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Office of Child Care. (2021). FY 2019 Preliminary Data Table 3 - Average Monthly Percentages of Children Served by Types of Care. Retrieved from <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/occ/data/fy-2019-preliminary-data-table-3>.

^{vi} U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Office of Child Care. (2021). *FY 2019 Preliminary Data Table 13 - Average Monthly Percentages of Children in Child Care by Age Category and Care Type*. Retrieved from <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/occ/data/fy-2019-final-data-table-13>.

^{vii} National Center on Early Childhood Quality Assurance. (2020). Addressing the Decreasing Number of Family Child Care Providers in the United States. Retrieved from https://childcareta.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/public/addressing_decreasing_fcc_providers_revised_march2020_final.pdf