

July 31, 2020

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Chuck Schumer
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Majority Leader McConnell, Minority Leader Schumer, Speaker Pelosi, and Minority Leader McCarthy,

We, the undersigned organizations, are grateful for the bipartisan attention that the child care sector has received over the past few weeks. The HEALS Act will offer some relief to the child care sector, but not nearly enough to save our child care system from collapsing. In fact, **the Act's \$15 billion investment would keep the system afloat for less than two months and falls far short of the at least \$50 billion that is needed to stabilize the system.**¹ Further, this bill would leave children and providers unsafe and at risk of exposure to dangerous or unhealthy conditions by giving states discretion to rollback key health and safety provisions. This would only undermine and destabilize the child care industry.

We are grateful to the House's recent passage of the Child Care is Essential Act, which would provide \$50 billion in immediate relief to stabilize the child care sector. As additional negotiations between Congress and the White House continue, we urge you to follow the House's recent lead and provide at least \$50 billion in relief for the child care sector in the next COVID-19 relief package. This funding level is essential: it is the only way to save hundreds of thousands of child care jobs and businesses, give families the support they need to go to work or school, ensure businesses have a stable and available workforce, and ensure that we will have a child care system left to return to after the pandemic is over.

The previous \$3.5 billion included in the CARES Act for CCDBG was important in supporting states to take initial steps in stabilizing child care. But it is now July and with no end in sight for

¹ Becca Ullrich & Aaron Sojourner, Center for Law and Social Policy & National Women's Law Center, *Child Care is Key to Our Economic Recovery* (April 2020), <https://nwlc-ciw49tixgw5lbab.stackpathdns.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/CCKeytoEconomicRecoveryNWL.C.pdf>.

this pandemic, states desperately need additional funding to meet the full range of needs in the child care sector for the duration of this crisis.

The need for this funding grows more urgent by the day as states begin to reopen and parents, educators, and providers are in dire straits. Providers who have remained open or are starting to reopen are facing a nearly impossible task: caring for children in a safe environment that meets public health guidelines, but without the necessary resources to do so. As enrollments—and therefore, revenues—decrease, providers who were already operating on razor-thin margins before the crisis are struggling to figure out how to remain open. On top of this, they will have higher operating costs than before the pandemic to cover the necessary personal protective equipment (PPE) and cleaning supplies to adapt their facilities to meet public health guidelines, find and pay substitute educators when someone is sick, and more.

The stakes are still high if the necessary relief is not provided. According to the most recent survey from NAEYC, 7% of child care programs are expected to remain closed by the end of July because of financial reasons. This number jumps to 22% by the end of September and 23% by the end of December. Only 18% of child care programs expect to survive longer than a year. These statistics are alarming, and without sufficient relief, there will not be a child care system to return to as we look to rebound from this crisis. According to the same survey from NAEYC, approximately 2 out of 5 providers are certain that they will close permanently without additional public investment.² Parents, especially women, will not have the care they need to go back to work or school, employers will be unable to restart without workers, and our economic recovery will be jeopardized. Child care educators, who are virtually all women and disproportionately women of color and immigrant women, will be among the most detrimentally impacted. They are working without the resources they need to do the job well, typically paid poverty-level wages, and many are losing their jobs as providers permanently shutter their doors. In fact, since February, more than 258,000 child care workers have lost their jobs.³ Without well-resourced and supported educators, our child care system cannot operate and failing to support them will leave providers without a workforce and families without providers on which to rely. Families, providers, and educators from all over the U.S. have their own heartbreaking story to share about how the child care crisis is playing out in their lives. We encourage you to use these stories and voices⁴ as your guide as you negotiate the next COVID-19 relief package.

We urge you to provide at least \$50 billion in funding for child care in the next relief package to meet the needs of child care providers, educators, and parents and to reflect the essential role child care plays in supporting our public health response now and our recovery from this crisis.

² National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), *Holding On Until Help Comes: A Survey Reveals Child Care's Fight to Survive* (July 13, 2020), https://www.naeyc.org/sites/default/files/globally-shared/downloads/PDFs/our-work/public-policy-advocacy/holding_on_until_help_comes_survey_analysis_july_2020.pdf.

³ Center for Law and Social Policy (CLASP), Statement for the Record, House Ways and Means Worker and Family Support Subcommittee Hearing: The Child Care Crisis and the Coronavirus Pandemic (June 23, 2020), https://www.clasp.org/sites/default/files/publications/2020/07/CLASP%20Child%20Care%20Final%20W%26M%20Statement%20for%20the%20Record_0.pdf.

⁴ Child Care in Crisis: Stories from the Field (July 2020), https://s3.amazonaws.com/s3.momsrising.org/images/Child_Care_Storybook_New.pdf

Sincerely,

All Our Kin

Alliance for Strong Families and Communities

American Academy of Pediatrics

American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME)

American Federation of Teachers

Caring Across Generations

Center for American Progress (CAP)

Center for Law and Social Policy (CLASP)

Child Care Aware ® of America

Child Welfare League of America

Children's Aid

Children's Defense Fund

Coalition on Human Needs

COFI/ PowerPac

Community Change

Council for Professional Recognition

First Focus Campaign for Children

Forum for Youth Investment

Indivisible

Institute for Childhood Preparedness

Institute for Women's Policy Research

Justice for Migrant Women

Low Income Investment Fund

Lutheran Services in America

MomsRising / MamásConPoder

NAACP

National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC)

National Association for Family Child Care

National Child Care Association (NCCA)

National Children's Facilities Network (NCFN)
National Coalition for the Homeless
National Council of Jewish Women
National Diaper Bank Network
National Domestic Workers Alliance
National Early Childhood Program Accreditation (NECPA)
National Education Association
National Employment Law Project
National Indian Child Care Association
National Urban League
National WIC Association
National Women's Law Center
Network of Jewish Human Service Agencies
New America Education Policy Program
ParentsTogether Action

RESULTS

Save the Children Action Network
Service Employees International Union
Teaching Strategies
The Arc of the United States
TIME'S UP Now
United Way Worldwide
Voices for Progress
ZERO TO THREE