

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

April 28, 2021

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro
Chairwoman
House Appropriations Committee
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human
Services, and Education
2368-B Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Tom Cole
Ranking Member
House Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor,
Health and Human Services, and Education
2358-B Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairwoman DeLauro and Ranking Member Cole:

As you consider Fiscal Year 2022 Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education appropriations legislation, we urge you to include the following high-impact investments in early education, early intervention, and quality child care:

Provide an additional \$6.1 billion for the Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG) for FY 2022. After a historic funding increase for CCDBG in FY 2018, which was maintained and expanded in the following years, states have been able to make important progress in addressing the critical child care needs of children and families. As a result of the 2018 investment, the total number of children on waitlists decreased by 55 percent and over half the states increased payments to providers with an average increase of over \$100 a month per child.¹ However, the significant gaps that remain have been widened by the coronavirus pandemic this past year as families continue to struggle to afford child care and educators operate on razor thin margins.

Over a million children are provided a child care subsidy through CCDBG, but it is available to only a fraction of eligible families.² By doubling the amount of funding available through CCDBG, we can double the number of children in families that would be provided child care subsidies. Accessible high-quality child care allows parents to return to work and puts our nation on a path towards economic recovery, especially important after the devastating impacts of this past year.

An additional \$6.1 billion for CCDBG is vital to supporting our nation's caregivers and improving economic mobility for low-income families. Increased investment would result in the following:

¹ Karen Schulman, National Women's Law Center, "Early Progress: State Child Care Assistance Policies" (October 2019) <https://nwlc-ciw49tixgw5lbab.stackpathdns.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/NWLC-State-Child-Care-Assistance-Policies-2019-final.pdf>.

² Linda Smith, Frannie Einterz, Hannah Chong, Colby Thornton, Bipartisan Policy Center, "Accessing Child Care Subsidies" (November 2020) <https://bipartisanpolicy.org/blog/accessing-child-care-subsidies/>

- Serve an additional 1 million children: If Congress were to double funding for CCDBG and use 80% of that funding on direct services, an estimated total of 2.3 million children or additional 1 million children would receive subsidies.³ Today, 14 million children are eligible for CCDBG but only 15% of those children receive assistance from the program and related funding streams.⁴ Despite the historic increase of 2018, more than a dozen states have frozen waiting lists for child care assistance.⁵ A significant increase in CCDBG funding will expand the program’s ability to provide high-quality care to the millions of eligible children who are not currently receiving subsidies.
- Increase payments and wages for providers as well as improve accessibility: While past increases in CCDBG funding allowed some states to make progress, it was not enough to serve all eligible children and families, or enough to raise payments for all providers to the federally recommended level. As of 2019, only four states paid child care providers at the recommended rate.⁶ As a consequence of underfunding, one in six child care workers lost their jobs during this pandemic, which has further threatened child care supply and compromised the ability of this sector to support working families.⁷ By committing to greater investment in CCDBG, states are further incentivized to make changes that treat child care providers as essential to our economic well-being.
- Allow women to fully participate the workforce: According to the Department of Health and Human Services, increases in CCDBG subsidies have the potential to substantially increase workforce participation and employment rates for low-income mothers in the United States. The report found that tripling subsidies above 2016 levels would result in the employment of 652,000 women.⁸ The child care crisis is an economic issue that is disproportionately borne by women. This past year forced mothers to leave the workforce at twice the rate of men due to caregiving responsibilities.⁹ By making strong federal additional investments in CCDBG, we support working women and families.

³ Bipartisan Policy Center, “Justification for Child Care Industry Stabilization and Supporting Working Parents Request” (January 2021)

⁴ Nina Chien, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning & Evaluation at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, “Factsheet: Estimates of Child Care Eligibility & Receipt for Fiscal Year 2015” (January 2019) <https://aspe.hhs.gov/system/files/pdf/260361/CY2015ChildCareSubsidyEligibility.pdf>

⁵ Karen Schulman, National Women’s Law Center, “Early Progress: State Child Care Assistance Policies” (October 2019) <https://nwlc-ciw49tixgw5lbab.stackpathdns.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/NWLC-State-Child-Care-Assistance-Policies-2019-final.pdf>.

⁶ Karen Schulman, National Women’s Law Center, “Early Progress: State Child Care Assistance Policies” (October 2019) <https://nwlc-ciw49tixgw5lbab.stackpathdns.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/NWLC-State-Child-Care-Assistance-Policies-2019-final.pdf>.

⁷ Amanda Holpuch, The Guardian, “One in six jobs lost: the effect of the pandemic on childcare providers” (March 2021) <https://www.theguardian.com/money/2021/mar/09/childcare-providers-coronavirus-jobs-us>

⁸ María E. Enchautegui, Nina Chien, Kimberly Burgess, and Robin Ghertner, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation, “Effects of the CCDF Subsidy Program on the Employment Outcomes of Low Income Mothers” (December 2016) <https://aspe.hhs.gov/system/files/pdf/253961/EffectsCCSubsidiesMaternalLFPTechnical.pdf>

⁹ Bipartisan Policy Center, “New Survey: Facing Caregiving Challenges, Women Leaving the Workforce at Unprecedented Rates” (October 2020) <https://bipartisanpolicy.org/blog/facing-caregiving-challenges/#:~:text=Specifically%2C%20865%2C000%20women%20dropped%20out,likely%20to%20have%20left%20work.>

In addition, we urge you to provide increased funds for the two critical early childhood programs under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). Together, Part C Early Intervention and Part B 619 Preschool Special Education programs deliver comprehensive services for children with disabilities from birth through 5 years of age and their families. These programs serve over 1.16 million children per year, about double the number served in 1991, and benefit all states.

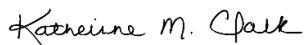
Unfortunately, federal investments in both IDEA Part C and IDEA Part B 619 Preschool have failed to match increases in the number of children served as well as cost of inflation. Consequently, both programs have experienced a significant erosion of funding over the last two decades. Today, federal funding for IDEA Part C is only at \$650 per child, adjusted for inflation. For IDEA Part B Preschool 619, federal funding is at only \$529 per child, adjusted for inflation.

We urge the Committee to significantly increase the federal contribution to funding important investments by providing at least \$722.2 million in FY 2022 funding for IDEA Part C Grants for Infants and Toddlers. In addition, we ask the Committee to provide at least \$537.3 million in FY 2022 funding for Preschool Grants under Part B Section 619 of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.

High-quality early interventions can produce \$7 to \$16 in benefits for every \$1 spent. This substantial return on investment is derived largely from long-term savings associated with a reduced need for special education, improved health outcomes, higher rates of high school and college graduation, decreased dependence on welfare programs, and increased workforce productivity of children who receive a high-quality early education.

We hope that you will fully support these critical investments in young learners, working women, and families.

Sincerely,



Katherine Clark
Member of Congress



Mark DeSaulnier
Member of Congress



Donald Norcross
Member of Congress



Jamaal Bowman, Ed.D
Member of Congress



Marilyn Strickland
Member of Congress



Norma Torres
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Also signed by:

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