



July 24, 2020

Dear Representative,

The child care industry is facing serious challenges as communities continue to respond to the coronavirus pandemic. While the dedicated field of child care professionals has come together to ensure public health guidance is followed and care is available for essential personnel, more is needed to ensure that child care programs survive in the long term. **Without meaningful federal investment in child care, our nation's economic recovery may be imperiled by barriers for parents as they return to work, and the child care industry may not survive.**

While the \$3.5 billion increase to the Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG) provided by the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act (H.R. 748) has been helpful, it is far from what the child care system needs to survive this crisis. Additionally, loans provided by the Small Business Administration (SBA) are time-limited and have been unable to reach many child care programs.<sup>1</sup> In total, the federal response for child care has been insufficient. **Child Care Aware® of America urges you to support and vote for the Child Care is Essential Act (H.R. 7027) and the Child Care for Economic Recovery Act (H.R. 7327), to provide relief for the child care industry.**

Child Care Aware® of America is a national, membership-based nonprofit organization working to advance the affordability, accessibility, and quality of child care environments and to support the positive development and learning of all children in child care. To advance our mission, we rely heavily on our relationships with Child Care Resource & Referral (CCR&R) agencies. CCR&Rs are part of a nationwide system with touchpoints at the local, state, and national levels. These agencies support the families in their communities by helping them navigate complicated child care systems and by leading initiatives that increase the quality, affordability, and accessibility of child care. With over 400 community-based agencies serving over 860,000 families a year, the CCR&R network is the most trusted place to find child care. Throughout this crisis, CCR&Rs have been a critical mechanism for parents, providers, and policymakers to communicate with one another on child care.<sup>2</sup>

### **Providing Child Care through Reopening and Recovery**

Providing child care during a pandemic comes at a cost. Before COVID-19, Child Care Aware® of America's *Price of Care* report revealed that the price of child care continues to increase, with the average annual price of care in the U.S. ranging from \$8,331 for home-based child care to \$10,451 for center-based programs.<sup>3</sup> However, the cost of providing child care during a pandemic is much higher for several reasons. For example, class sizes in many places are reduced due to public health recommendations and as a result, labor costs increase.<sup>4</sup> Also, child care providers face additional costs for personal protective equipment and sanitizing supplies. **Models show that the cost of safe child care during COVID-19 is equal to 119 percent of the typical cost of home-based care, and 123 percent of the typical cost of center-based programs.<sup>5</sup> Altogether, the cost of supporting providers offering child care for essential**

personnel and facing these additional challenges has been estimated to cost at least \$6.3 billion per month.<sup>6</sup>

### COVID-19 Has Exacerbated An Existing Child Care Crisis

Before the Pandemic:

- In 30 states and the District of Columbia, the average annual price for infant care is higher than in-state tuition at a public four-year college.<sup>7</sup>
- The high cost of child care is a barrier for work for millions of families, resulting in \$57 billion of lost earnings, productivity, and revenue for the U.S. economy.<sup>8</sup>

During the Pandemic:

- A survey of more than 5,000 National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) found that 70 percent of child care providers are incurring substantial costs associated with cleaning supplies and personal protective equipment.<sup>9</sup>
- About 40 percent of respondents are certain that they will close permanently without additional public assistance.<sup>10</sup>
- Working families will potentially face a loss of up to 4.5 million child care slots.<sup>11</sup>

**The only way to mitigate this ongoing child care crisis is with federal investment.** This funding would not only help sustain child care for those families who need access in the immediate term but would also prevent child care programs from closing permanently so that working families can access these programs upon their return to work in the months ahead.

The \$3.5 billion provided by the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act (H.R. 748) was the first step towards supporting the needs of the child care system during this pandemic, but more is needed. **Child Care Aware® of America urges you to support and vote for the Child Care is Essential Act (H.R. 7027) and the Child Care for Economic Recovery Act (H.R. 7327), to provide additional, needed relief for the child care industry.**

Sincerely,



Lynette M. Fraga, Ph.D.  
Chief Executive Officer

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<sup>1</sup> *From the Frontlines: The Ongoing Effect of the Pandemic on Child Care*. National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC). April 17, 2020. [https://www.naeyc.org/sites/default/files/globally-shared/downloads/PDFs/resources/topics/naeyc\\_coronavirus\\_ongoingeffectsonchildcare.pdf](https://www.naeyc.org/sites/default/files/globally-shared/downloads/PDFs/resources/topics/naeyc_coronavirus_ongoingeffectsonchildcare.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> *The Critical Work of Child Care Resource & Referral Agencies During COVID-19*, Child Care Aware® of America, July 1, 2020. <https://info.childcareaware.org/blog/the-critical-work-of-child-care-resource-and-referral-agencies-during-covid-19>

<sup>3</sup> *The US and the High Price of Child Care*, Child Care Aware® of America, 2019. <https://usa.childcareaware.org/advocacy-public-policy/resources/priceofcare/>

<sup>4</sup> *Reviewing State Policies: Child Care Ratios and Class Sizes*, Child Care Aware® of America, July 2, 2020. <https://info.childcareaware.org/blog/reviewing-state-policies-child-care-ratios-and-class-sizes>

<sup>5</sup> Ulrich, Rebecca and Aaron Sojourner. *Child Care is Key to Our Economic Recovery*. National Women's Law Center (NWLC) and the Center for Law and Social Policy (CLASP). April 2020.

<https://www.clasp.org/sites/default/files/publications/2020/04/CKKeytoEconomicRecovery.pdf>

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> *The US and the High Price of Child Care*, Child Care Aware® of America, 2019.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> *Holding On Until Help Comes: A Survey Reveals Child Care's Fight to Survive*. National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC). 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](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)

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> *Coronavirus Pandemic Could Lead to Permanent Loss of Nearly 4.5 Million Child Care Slots*. Center for American Progress, April 2020. <https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/early-childhood/news/2020/04/24/483817/coronavirus-pandemic-lead-permanent-loss-nearly-4-5-million-child-care-slots/>