



The Child Care for Working Families Act (CCWFA)

S.1354 / H.R.2976

In every region of the country, there are far too many families that do not have access to affordable and high-quality child care. The high price of child care is often the [largest household expense](#) for families and has forced many parents, especially women, to leave the workforce. The Child Care for Working Families Act (CCWFA) would help ensure access to high-quality, affordable child care for millions of families, and would expand federal financial investment in child care which currently does not meet existing needs.

This piece of legislation would lower the cost of child care for families and make care more affordable for those who are most vulnerable. In addition, this legislation would invest in the supply of child care, ensuring that quality is improved, care is available during nonstandard hours, and more slots are available in high-quality preschool programs, for infants and toddlers and in Head Start programs. Finally, the legislation would support the early childhood education workforce by improving compensation for early childhood educators.

Child Care Aware® of America supports the CCWFA. Families need child care to participate in the workforce, and children need a safe place where they can learn and develop. The CCWFA would help ensure access to high-quality, affordable child care for millions of families in every state and community across the country.

This legislation has been introduced in every Congress since 2017. In the 118th Congress, the legislation has updates and additions.



Child Care and Early Learning Program

This program:

- Expands the eligibility for child care assistance so more families automatically qualify for subsidies.
- Removes the income cap for eligibility for child care assistance. Families at or below 85% of State Median Income (SMI) will pay nothing for a child care copayment. The sliding scale gradually increases above 85% of SMI and caps payments at 7% of family income.
- Allows states flexibility in how they expand their programs to serve all eligible children, but must prioritize families at 85% of SMI and below.
- Includes in-home or family child care providers in the legislation's definition of child care providers, with requirements that all providers receiving funds be licensed, participate in the state's tiered system for supporting the quality of child care services (QRIS) if the state has one, or satisfy the requirements for providers described in the Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG). It also provides technical assistance and allows time for providers to work toward becoming licensed.
- Requires additional consultation with organizations representing eligible child care providers, child care associations, child care directors, teachers or other staff, etc., for states on licensing, the tiered system for measuring the quality of child care services (QRIS) and cost estimation models.
- Expands funding opportunities and technical assistance for providers to achieve licensure and improves support for State licensure systems.



Building an Affordable System for Early Education (BASE) Grants

- New in the 118th Congress, this program provides \$9 billion annually to every state to help defray child care providers' costs to operate.
- Child care providers, including all types defined in the Child Care and Early Learning Program section of this legislation, will receive grants from the State and must use funds, in part, to increase staff wages and provide cost-of-living increases and graduated pay increases.
- Funds may also support staff bonuses and benefits, staff professional development, help pay for rent or mortgages, improve the quality of child care and improve access to inclusive and developmentally appropriate care for children with disabilities.



Universal Preschool

- This program further ensures a mixed-delivery preschool program for 3- and 4-year olds where preschool services are available in a variety of settings (including schools, child care programs and Head Start programs).



Head Start Duration and Increased Wages

- This program increases the authorization of mandatory funds based on inflation and new determination of need.
- It authorizes mandatory funding in fiscal year 2024 for the purchase, rental, renovation and maintenance of additional facilities. It authorizes mandatory funding in fiscal years 2024 - 2026 for ongoing purchases of classroom supplies; staff providing services during extended hours; and professional development to staff transitioning to providing services during extended hours.
- It authorizes mandatory funding for fiscal year 2024 and each subsequent year to ensure that Head Start teachers and staff receive wages that are comparable to wages for elementary educators with similar credentials and experience in the state.

Learn more about the CCWFA from the bill's lead sponsors:

Senator **Patty Murray (D-WA)**

Representative **Bobby Scott (D-VA)**