



Early Care and Education Consortium

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September 15, 2014

Representative John Kline
2439 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Representative George Miller
2205 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Representative Todd Rokita
236 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Representative David Loebsack
1527 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Senator Barbara Mikulski
503 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Senator Richard Burr
217 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Senator Tom Harkin
731 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington DC 20510

Senator Lamar Alexander
455 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Representatives Kline, Miller, Rokita, and Loebsack, and Senators Mikulski, Burr, Harkin and Alexander,

The Early Care and Education Consortium (ECEC) strongly supports the reauthorization of S. 1086, the Child Care & Development Block Grant (CCDBG). We thank you for your leadership in this bipartisan effort to reauthorize the Act. Reauthorizing CCDBG this year will allow states to allocate increased FY2014 funding to improve access to high-quality early care and education programs for low-income children and families.

High-quality care and learning programs provide opportunities for healthy growth and development that produce positive educational achievement and high economic returns on investment through adulthood. Additionally, CCDBG serves as essential support to working families who need to ensure their children are cared for and learning in a safe and high-quality setting during parents' hours of employment, which often exceed the regular school day and extend into the evening.

As the nation's leading trade association of high-quality, non-profit and tax-paying, licensed child care centers, state child care associations, and educational services organizations, ECEC members share a commitment to high quality, meeting the needs of children from infants through school age, and supporting working families in communities across the country. Representing the voice of more than 8,200 centers operating in all 50 states and the District of Columbia, ECEC is also the largest organized alliance of licensed child care centers in the country. A substantial proportion of the children served by ECEC providers are able to access high-quality care because of the support of CCDBG subsidy dollars.

CCDBG has not been reauthorized since 1996. We strongly urge Congressional action to enact important reforms that will directly address quality improvement, affordability, continuity of care, and cost stabilization measures that will benefit families and support providers, including:

- Stronger health and safety standards for all child care programs that receive federal funding, including required annual inspections of all licensed providers, and annual fire, health and safety inspections of license-exempt, non-family providers.
- Technical assistance given to providers on effective business practices;

- De-linking provider reimbursement from absence policies that destabilize the cost of care for both families and providers;
- Extended subsidy eligibility redetermination periods (12 months);
- A new emphasis on technical assistance to providers around effective business practices, and
- Increased investment in program quality, with additional activities that include wage incentives, tiered reimbursement, Quality Rating and Improvement Systems, accreditation, and focus on school readiness.

Additionally, this bill will help ensure that low income families can access high quality care by benefiting from a mixed delivery model, and choosing high-quality options within their own community.

We thank you for your leadership in this bipartisan effort to reauthorize the Act, which provides a critical pathway to the middle class for serving as a highly productive workforce of today and the becoming the prepared and productive workforce of tomorrow.

Sincerely,

M.-A. Lucas
Executive Director