

Opening Statement of Rep. Kevin Kiley (R-CA), Chairman  
Early Childhood, Elementary, and Secondary Education Subcommittee  
“Who’s Watching the Kids? How Employers, Innovators, and Parents  
Are Solving America’s Child Care Crunch”

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(As prepared for delivery)

Over the summer, this Subcommittee held a hearing on why child care is essential to helping working parents thrive and local economies grow. We focused on the Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG), the primary federal program supporting child care programs for low-income working families. CCDBG exists to help working parents access affordable child care so they can stay in the workforce and pursue economic opportunities. At that hearing, we heard from witnesses about the importance of preserving parental choice while giving value and dignity to working parents.

But CCDBG reaches only a small fraction of families who need care. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Administration for Children and Families reports that CCDBG serves roughly 1.5 million children. Meanwhile, the National Center for Education Statistics estimates there are about 12.6 million children who have nonparental care arrangements during the week. That gap makes clear that alongside federal and state spending, private-sector employers have an important role to play in addressing the cost and availability of child care for the national workforce.

We also examined the high cost of child care. The national average is \$13,128 annually, and while recent unprecedented federal spending in the child care sector may have propped up providers for a short time, it has not solved the long-term challenges of affordability for families or sustainability for providers.

That is why we heard strong agreement that meaningful progress requires a public-private approach. Employer engagement is a critical leg in the three-part support system holding up our child care market: families, government, and employers each play a role. Today, we will hear from three companies whose innovation is delivering real results—helping families, strengthening their workforce, and supporting the communities where they operate.

CCDBG and private-sector innovation should be partners in meeting the child care needs of America's workforce. CCDBG helps ensure a supply of high-quality licensed providers that families can access. Employer investment can strengthen the stability of those providers and ease child care pressures across communities. We'll discuss both of those dynamics today.

At the same time, protecting the integrity of child care funding is essential because families depend on it. When bad actors exploit the system, scarce resources are diverted away from the parents and children these programs are meant to serve.

CCDBG, while vital, cannot shoulder the full burden of America's child care needs alone. It is part of a broader support system that thrives when public funds are safeguarded and private innovation steps in to fill the gaps.

Employers who invest in child care are demonstrating what long-term commitment can look like—not because government funding is guaranteed forever, but because supporting child care strengthens their workforce, improves productivity, and fuels local economic growth.

Their examples show what is possible when innovation and responsibility meet—and why we should not allow fraud or mismanagement to undermine solutions that working families urgently need.