

September 16, 2020

Dear Members of Congress:

As the new school year begins, families and educators across the country are in crisis. Congress has not provided the funding necessary to support child care programs and schools in safely delivering high-quality education and care for children of all ages.

As a result, millions of parents are scrambling to make arrangements for child care and distance learning while they work from home or report to work. Some teachers are struggling to begin the school year virtually without needed technology while others struggle with a lack of PPE for in-person teaching, and many are simultaneously trying to balance teaching with caring for their own children. School districts and early learning programs are trying to deliver services that families depend on, from meals to housing support to early intervention and special education programs. Many child care providers have already closed and those that are open are struggling to keep their programs afloat with added expenses and less revenue.

Amidst these challenges, more than 125 national and state organizations, and the nearly 10 million families and educators we represent, will not fall prey to blaming one another for individual choices made within the context of systems that have failed us all; rather, we stand together to collectively demand that policymakers do what needs to be done. ***Congress must immediately pass at least \$50 billion to stabilize child care and \$200 billion for K-12 education.***

Whether we stay home with children, work in a school with teenagers, run a family child care home with infants, strive to both work and parent, or provide child care at a center with four-year olds, we spend our lives caring for young people and this is an especially difficult time to do the critical work we do. While we face incredible uncertainty in almost every aspect of our lives, one thing we are certain about is that Congress has the ability to make this time substantially more safe and less burdensome by providing significant additional federal relief funding for the child care and K-12 sectors.

For years, our care and education systems have been underfunded and undervalued. When the coronavirus pandemic began, parents, teachers, and child care providers stepped up. We learned new ways to help children learn, put our own lives on the line to care for children, and invested our own resources to keep ourselves, our families, our colleagues, and the communities around us safe. While other industries, like airlines, have received a large influx of funds to help them stay afloat, no such rescue package has been available for child care and public education, both of which should be essential public goods.

The House passed a \$50 billion relief bill for child care on a bipartisan basis and included in the HEROES Act an initial investment of \$90 billion for K-12 and higher education. The HEROES Act also included \$5 billion to help students close digital gaps for remote learning and almost \$1 trillion in stabilization aid to state and local governments, some of which can be used to avoid cuts to education. Unfortunately, however, when parents, child care providers, and teachers needed it most, Congress did not follow

through to ensure our safety and success. When child care programs were forced into permanent closures and school districts needed resources to plan for reopening, Congress did not prioritize our needs. This has left the economy reeling, and resulted in exacerbated racial, gender, and economic inequality. Children who have already been made vulnerable stand to be most affected by Congress' failure to invest in the parents, institutions and individuals that care for them and shape their learning. In addition, as women bear the brunt of added caregiving responsibilities at home, we are witnessing decreased female labor force participation, with dire consequences that could last for decades. Finally, because the majority of teachers and child care providers are women, with women of color making up a disproportionate share of the child care workforce, they bear the brunt of the lack of significant federal funding that is putting significant stress on all of our education systems, and pushing the child care sector to its breaking point.

We are tired of hearing that our work is essential while parents, teachers and school administrators, early educators, after school providers, and child care providers are continually expected to bear the full burden to ensure our own safe existence. We are devastated hearing that teachers and early childhood educators are being driven out of the profession or writing wills because they are unsure whether there will be adequate safety precautions taken to protect their lives. We are angry that our nation could lose half of its child care capacity because Congress did not take action to save our child care programs, despite proof that child care is critical for children's healthy development and for parents' ability to work. We are frustrated that students, educators, and families are not being provided with the resources needed to address the mental health, emotional, and physical toll that the ongoing pandemic has taken. We are not interested in symbolic gestures that don't equate to real relief for children, families, child care providers, teachers, and school staff. We need bicameral, bipartisan agreement and passage of significant relief funding for the child care and K-12 sectors now, before it is too late.

We can't safely do our jobs until Congress does its job! We, the undersigned, are united in our call for Congress to pass stabilization funding for the K-12 education and child care sectors NOW. In a world turned upside down by a global pandemic, these backbone institutions need ample financial resources and support to continue serving this generation, the next generation, and their families in ways that keep everyone safe. Our children, our students, our families, our educators, our businesses, and our economy won't safely recover without it.

In Solidarity,

A Better Balance

Afterschool Alliance

Alliance for Early Success

All Our Kin

American Federation of Teachers

ASCD

Association Montessori International/USA

Association of Latino Administrators and Superintendents (ALAS)

Center for Law and Social Policy (CLASP)

Child & Family Resources, Inc
Child Care Aware® of America
Children Unlimited, Inc.
Children's Advocacy Alliance
Children's Aid
Children's HealthWatch
Children's Home & Aid
Children's Institute
Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning (CASEL)
Common Sense
Community Change Action
Council for Professional Recognition
Division for Early Childhood of the Council for Exceptional Children
Educare Learning Network
ExpandED Schools
Family Enrichment Network, Inc.
Family Values At Work
First Five Years Fund
First Focus Campaign for Children
International Montessori Council (IMC)
Low Income Investment Fund (LIIF)
MomsRising/MamásConPoder
Montessori Public Policy Initiative
National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC)
National Association of Secondary School Principals
National Association for Family Child Care (NAFCC)
National Black Justice Coalition
National Center for Montessori in the Public Sector
National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (NCTM)
National Domestic Workers Alliance
National Education Association
National Summer Learning Association (NSLA)
National Superintendents Roundtable
National Women's Law Center
National Writing Project
Next100
Oxfam America
ParentsTogether Action
Teach Plus
The Education Trust
United Parent Leaders Action Network (UPLAN)
ZERO TO THREE

STATE ORGANIZATIONS

Advance Illinois
Advocates for Children of New York
Annsworth Academy
Appalachian Early Childhood Network
Arizona Association for the Education of Young Children
Arizona Early Childhood Alliance
California Child Care Resource & Referral Network
Capital Area and Illinois AEYC
Capital District YMCA
Center for Children's Initiatives
Children's Institute - Oregon
Christ Presbyterian Preschool
Citizens' Committee for Children of New York
Coalition of Oregon School Administrators
Colorado Children's Campaign
Common Good Iowa
CT Association for the Education of Young Children
DC Association for the Education of Young Children
Early Care and Education Consortium
Early Care & Learning Council
Early Childhood Alliance - Onondaga
EARLY CHILDHOOD OPTIONS
EDGE Consulting Partners
Florida Association for the Education of Young Children
GEEARS: Georgia Early Education Alliance for Ready Students
Georgia Association for the Education of Young Children
GoAEYC-Golden Corridor Association for the Education of Young Children
Good Shepherd Services
Greater Rochester After-School & Summer Alliance
Groundwork Ohio
Hudson Bluehawk Nation Afterschool Program
Indiana Association for the Education of Young Children
Iowa Association for the Education of Young Children
Joyful Noise Child Development Centers Inc.
Kansas Action for Children
Kansas Association for the Education of Young Children
Kentucky Youth Advocates
Lake Magdalene Academy

Maine Head Start Directors Association (MHSDA)
MaineAEYC
Maryland Association for the Education of Young Children
Michigan Association for the Education of Young Children
MT Child Care Resource & Referral Network
North Carolina Association for the Education of Young Children
Nebraska Association for the Education of Young Children
Nevada Association for the Education of Young Children
New Jersey Association for the Education of Young Children
New York Association for the Education of Young Children
New Hampshire Association for the Education of Young Children
Northern Interior Alaska Association for the Education of Young Children
New Mexico Association for the Education of Young Children
Northern Virginia Association for the Education of Young Children
Northwest Florida State College
NYS Network for Youth Success, Inc.
Ohio Association for the Education of Young Children
Oklahoma Partnership for School Readiness
Oregon Association for the Education of Young Children
Orange County Association for the Education of Young Children (OCAEYC)
Oregon Education Association
OSBA
Pennsylvania Association for the Education of Young Children
Puerto Rico Association for the Education of Young Children (PRAEYC)
Rhode Island Association for the Education of Young Children
Schuyler Center for Analysis and Advocacy
South Dakota Association for the Education of Young Children
South Carolina Association for the Education of Young Children (SCAEYC)
Southeast Alaska Association for the Education of Young Children
Southern Arizona Association for the Education of Young Children
Starpoint dba Developmental Opportunities
Texas Association for the Education of Young Children
The Children's Agenda
The Early Childhood Partnership of Adams County
The Joy of Learning
Utah Association for the Education of Young Children
Vermont Association for the Education of Young Children
Virginia Association for the Education of Young Children
Voices for Illinois Children
Voices for Virginia's Children
Washington Association for the Education of Young Children
Winter Park Presbyterian Preschool
Wisconsin Early Childhood Association