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White House Challenges Congress to Help Middle Class, Seeks Increased Child Care Funding



On January 25, the White House announced a number of initiatives aimed at helping the middle class through the economic recession which were echoed in President Obama's State of the Union Address.

First and foremost among their recommendations was an **expansion of the Child and Dependent Care Tax Credit**, which parents can use to help offset their child care costs, **and a \$1.6 billion increase for the Child Care and Development Block Grant.**

More details on funding for early learning programs will be made available on February 1 when the Administration releases the fiscal year 2011 Budget Proposal, which is the first step in the annual funding process for all federal programs.

ECEC has prepared a summary on the Administration's proposal which is available on our [website](#). For an overview of the federal budget process and what comes next, read our [Federal Budget Basics!](#)

Congressional Briefing Held on the Child Care Food Program

On January 26, ECEC co-sponsored a briefing in Washington, DC for policymakers and advocates on the vital role of the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) in providing food and high-quality nutrition for hungry children in child care programs.

The briefing also highlighted the actions needed in the upcoming Child Nutrition Reauthorization to improve CACFP, including supporting the [Access to Nutritious Meals for Young Children Act](#).

Both Senator Kirsten Gillibrand (D-NY) and Representative Paul Tonko (D-NY), sponsors of the Access to Nutritious Meals for Young Children Act, were in attendance.



Leslie Bowerman of Knowledge Learning Corp., an ECEC member, meets with Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand after sharing her stories and experiences about the value of CACFP in child care centers.

You Can Make a Difference! Take Action to Improve CACFP Today!



ECEC is urging child care providers to take action to show their support for the reauthorization of the Child and Adult Care Food Program in Congress this year.

CACFP is a vital program to providers, serving more than two million children in child care settings each day. We need to get the message out from hometowns about the importance of nutritious meals in child care, in this economy and every day.

Write to Your Legislators in Support of Nutritious Meals for Young Children!

Contact your Representative and Senators in support of the Access to Nutritious Meals for Young Children Act.

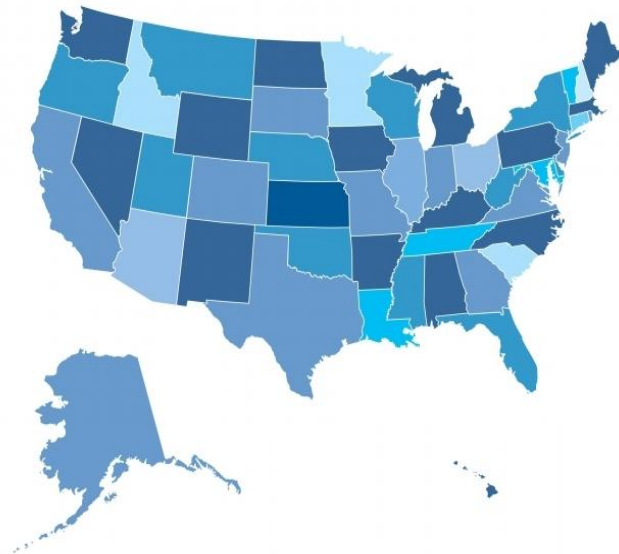
Thanks to those who have already written letters showing their support, Members of Congress are starting to take notice, and many are signing on to cosponsor the legislation. The more letters we send, and the more Senators and Representatives who sign on and co-sponsor the legislation, the more the proposals in the legislation get noticed in the bigger process of the reauthorization of the Child Nutrition Act! [Write to yours today!](#)

For more information on CACFP, and the Access to Nutritious Meals for Young Children Act, visit our [Federal Legislation](#) page!

New Year, New State Legislative Sessions

The start of the new year also means the reconvening of many state legislatures. With over thirty states now in regular session, many are convening to re-evaluate their budgets for the current fiscal year due to larger than expected revenue shortfalls.

Many state advocates are already planning and organizing advocacy days. These are good opportunities for providers like you to make elected officials and their staff aware of everyday program realities.



In **Kentucky**, [Children's Advocacy Day](#) will take place February 18 at the Capitol in Frankfort to gather information on policies affecting youth in the state and to meet with legislators.

In **Florida**, [Children's Week](#) begins April 11 with events in Tallahassee and across the state. Children's Capitol for a Day is April 13.

In **Wisconsin**, the [Wisconsin Council on Children and Families](#) is sponsoring an annual "Advocacy Camp" April 14 and 15 which not only includes a visit to the state capitol in Madison, but also a chance for participants to strengthen their advocacy skills.

In **Kansas**, [Early Learning Day](#) is scheduled to take place in Topeka on February 4th.

If you'd like us to include your statewide child care and early learning advocacy day in a future issue, contact Jennifer McGuire at jmcguire@ececonsortium.org



Policy and You Poll: The Impact of the Economy on Enrollment

Last month we asked you how the economy has affected your enrollment. Almost all of you responded by noting that full-time enrollment is down, more children are attending part-time, and overall, you're seeing fewer children attending your program. One respondent summed it up:

"Parents have had their work hours cut. Families are no longer receiving state subsidy. Parents are cutting expenses. Many are using relatives for care."

Have a story to tell about your challenges as a provider in this economy? [Share your story today](#).

Sustaining Child Care Programs Through the Recession: Listen to ECEC Radio's Latest Broadcast Today!

The recession is making it tough on lots of businesses, including child care, and yet child care is crucial for our economy to recover. [Sustaining Child Care Programs Through the Recession](#), featuring Dr. Mildred Warner, Professor in the Department of City and Regional Planning at [Cornell University](#), and Scott Cotter, President of Childcare Network, explains why subsidized child care programs are critical for working families and critical to our economic recovery. The segment also discusses the long term impact of allowing large numbers of child care programs to fail.



Resources and Events

New Report Highlights State Budget Cuts to Children's Programs

[State Budget Cuts: America's Kids Pay the Price](#), recently released by the National Association of Child Care Resource & Referral Agencies, Voices for America's Children and the Every Child Matters Education Fund, finds that at least 42 states have as a result of the recession cut children's programs. This includes state cuts to child care, Head Start, programs for children with disabilities and public health.

FRAC 2010 Anti-Hunger Policy Conference

March 7-9, 2010 in Washington, DC

Join hundreds of grassroots anti-hunger advocates, including those from child care and early education organizations, for the Food Research and Action Center's three day conference featuring innovative training, networking and advocacy. [Register today!](#)