

## **THE TIME IS NOW: WORKING ACROSS THE AISLE TO INCREASE ACCESS TO AFFORDABLE, HIGH-QUALITY CHILD CARE IN THE U.S.**

As Congress convenes to begin serious discussions on an end-of-year funding deal, we at the Early Care & Education Consortium (ECEC) see an immediate opportunity for Congress to support more American families than ever with legislation that bolsters the nation's child care system – a vital need in our country. We know firsthand that the child care sector needs greater resources and reasonable policy changes to increase access to affordable, high-quality child care for all families – especially low-income families who require the most assistance, have the fewest options, and serve as the backbone of our nation's economy.

We at the ECEC want to continue to be part of the solution.

The ECEC has always advocated for greater resources for the entire child care sector – and we've been steadfast in our belief that any child care legislation should prioritize expanding access to high-quality early learning for *all* American families. We believe it is our duty to use our collective voice to advocate for policy improvements that affect the future of child care in our nation.

Throughout the pandemic, we strongly supported funding for child care that would stabilize the industry, make child care more affordable and accessible for all families, and allow us to invest more fully in our teachers. We also supported further investments in new legislation and issued [this statement](#) urging Congress to act. But we were not shy in advocating that new funding benefit families in all states and that funding be based on a comprehensive financial analysis that recognized the true costs associated with high-quality child care. Much of our advocacy was informed by a [December 2021 analysis by the non-partisan Congressional Budget Office \(CBO\)](#).

We have worked and will continue to work with lawmakers on both sides of the aisle to offer recommendations on how we can better support working families. Throughout these efforts, we were unequivocal in our position that more resources are needed to enable providers, large and small, to better serve children and families, invest in teachers, and increase access to care throughout the United States.

It's unfortunate that as 2022 comes to an end, our country is still grappling with what has accurately been called a child care crisis. It's time we take action, and there is an opportunity for year-end legislation to include child care funding. Democrats and Republicans may be close to agreeing on policy changes that could help improve access to and the affordability of child care. Robust funding in a year-end funding deal could help make this vision a reality.

We call on our congressional leaders to immediately address how we can implement strong policies that bring quality to scale, expand child care access to more children, and lower costs for families. ECEC, a voice of our nation's licensed, high-quality child care providers, large and small, is essential to crafting a solution. We will work relentlessly with legislators, businesses, and other advocacy groups on behalf of our nation's children. We have ideas, and are ready to share to help build an improved child care landscape for all American families and communities.