

## Support Investments in Early Education and Working Families

Dear Colleague:

Please join us in urging House Appropriators to support three programs critical to the well-being of America's young children and working families.

Early education and intervention yield a lifetime of positive benefits—not just for our youngest learners, but also for our nation's economy as a whole. These programs provide an outsized return to the American taxpayer, both supporting the economic competitiveness of future generations, and allowing each child an equal opportunity to succeed. Our letter helps ensure that we continue high-impact federal investments in the healthy development and education of our nation's children.

Specifically, we call for the following:

- **Provide an additional \$4.45 billion for the Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG) for Fiscal Year 2020.** CCDBG, the major federal child care program, helps low-income families with the cost of child care and supports States to improve the quality of care. In FY19, CCDBG received a historic funding increase that was long overdue and this funding was maintained in FY20. States committed this funding to address pressing needs, including helping more families with the cost of care, raising payment rates to extremely low-paid child care providers, and supporting implementation of the crucial reforms. Despite this increase, fifteen states have waiting lists or have frozen intake for child care assistance.<sup>1</sup> Increasing CCDBG by \$4.45 billion in FY 2020 – for a total discretionary funding level of \$10.276 billion would allow States to build on their current work to improve access to high-quality care. In FY 2020, this funding increase could provide assistance to as many as 570,500 additional children.
- **Provide increased funds for Early Childhood Programs under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).** Together, Part C and Part B 619 Preschool Special Education programs provide comprehensive services for children with disabilities from birth through 5 years of age. These programs serve over 1.16 million children per year, about double the number served in 1991. As a nation, we have cut our federal investment in infants and young children and their families by at least half. Consequently, we ask that the committee provide **at least \$974,800,000** in FY21 funding for Grants for Infants and Families under Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act and **at least \$683,500,000** in FY21 funding for Preschool Grants under Part B Section 619 of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.

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<sup>1</sup><https://nwlc-ciw49tixgw51bab.stackpathdns.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/NWLC-State-Child-Care-Assistance-Policies-2019-final.pdf>

We hope you will join us in urging House Appropriators to include increased funding for CCDBG and Early Childhood Programs under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

The letter will close **noon on March 9, 2020**. To sign on to the letter, please email [Frannie.Einterz@mail.house.gov](mailto:Frannie.Einterz@mail.house.gov).

Thank you for your consideration.

Katherine Clark  
Member of Congress

Marcia Fudge  
Member of Congress

Donald Norcross  
Member of Congress

Mark DeSaulnier  
Member of Congress

March 13, 2020

The Honorable Nita Lowey  
Chairwoman  
House Appropriations Committee  
H-307, The Capitol  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Kay Granger  
Ranking Member  
House Appropriations Committee  
1016 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro  
Chairwoman  
House Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor,  
Health and Human Services, and Education  
2368-B Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Tom Cole  
Ranking Member  
House Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor,  
Health and Human Services, and Education  
2358-B Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairwoman Lowey, Ranking Member Granger, Chairwoman DeLauro, and Ranking Member Cole:

As you consider Fiscal Year 2021 Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education appropriations legislation, we urge you to include the following high-impact investments in early education, early intervention, and quality child care:

**Provide an additional \$4.45 billion for the Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG) for Fiscal Year 2021.** After a historic funding increase for CCDBG in FY 2018 (which was maintained and expanded in FY 2019 and FY 2020), states have been able to make important progress in addressing the pressing child care needs of children and families. As a result of the 2018 investment, the total number of children on waitlists decreased by 55 percent and over half the states increased payments to providers, with an average increase of over \$100 per month per child.<sup>2</sup> Yet, significant gaps remain. We continue to hear from families across the country that struggle to afford child care and from educators unable to care for their own families because they are not paid enough for their essential work. A continued, significant investment is necessary to address the persistent gaps in the number of eligible children who are served by the program, increase payments to providers and wages of child care workers, and improve the quality and accessibility of care. An additional \$4.45 billion for the program would result in the following:

- **Serve up to 570,500 more children:** By increasing the funding for CCDBG for FY 2021, states would be able to expand access to child care assistance to as many as 570,500 additional children. This would represent a 43% increase in the number of children served compared to FY 2018, the most recent year for which data is available. Even though nearly 14 million children are eligible, only 15% of eligible children

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<sup>2</sup>National Women's Law Center, *Early Progress: State Child Care Assistance Policies 2019*, <https://nwlc-ciw49tixgw51bab.stackpathdns.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/NWLC-State-Child-Care-Assistance-Policies-2019-final.pdf>.

receive assistance from CCDBG and related funding streams. In fact, more than 450,000 fewer children were served by the program in 2017 than were served in 2006.<sup>3</sup> Only in 2018, did we see the small beginnings of a reversal of this 11-year decline with a very small increase in participation from 2017 to 2018. Even with the historic increase provided in 2018, fifteen states have waiting lists or have frozen intake for child care assistance.<sup>4</sup>

- **Increase payments to providers and make other needed program improvements:** While recent increases in CCDBG funding have allowed some States to make progress, it was not enough to serve all eligible children and families, or raise payments to the federally recommended level for all providers. Currently, due to underfunding, most states set their initial income eligibility limits below the federal maximum level. In 2019, a family with an income above 150% FPL (about \$32,000 for a family of three) could not qualify for child care assistance in 13 states.<sup>5</sup> Additionally, as of February 2019, only four states paid providers at the Federally recommended rate.<sup>6</sup> By committing to a continued investment in CCDBG, states are further incentivized to make these changes.
- **Allow women to participate the workforce:** According to the Department of Health and Human Services, increases in CCDBG subsidies have the potential to substantially increase labor force participation and employment rates of low-income mothers in the United States. The report found that tripling subsidies above 2016 levels would result in the employment of 652,000 women.<sup>7</sup> Furthermore, the National Women’s Law Center and the Center for Law and Social Policy estimate that increasing funding for CCDBG by \$4.45 billion in 2021 could result in creating paid work for as many as 111,521 caregivers.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>3</sup>CLASP, *Child Care Assistance Spending and Participation in 2016, 2018*, <https://www.clasp.org/publications/fact-sheet/child-care-assistance-spending-and-participation-2016>. An additional 49,400 children lost child care assistance between 2016 and 2017.

<sup>4</sup>National Women’s Law Center, *Early Progress: State Child Care Assistance Policies 2019*, <https://nwlc-ciw49tixgw5lbab.stackpathdns.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/NWLC-State-Child-Care-Assistance-Policies-2019-final.pdf>; National Women’s Law Center, *States Use Child Care and Development Block Grant Funds to Help Children and Families: Update*, September 2019, <https://nwlc-ciw49tixgw5lbab.stackpathdns.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/STATES-USE-NEW-CHILD-CARE-AND-DEVELOPMENT-BLOCK-GRANT-FUNDS-1.pdf>

<sup>5</sup> National Women’s Law Center, *Early Progress: State Child Care Assistance Policies 2019*, <https://nwlc-ciw49tixgw5lbab.stackpathdns.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/NWLC-State-Child-Care-Assistance-Policies-2019-final.pdf>. National Women’s Law Center, *States Use Child Care and Development Block Grant Funds to Help Children and Families: Update*, September 2019, <https://nwlc-ciw49tixgw5lbab.stackpathdns.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/STATES-USE-NEW-CHILD-CARE-AND-DEVELOPMENT-BLOCK-GRANT-FUNDS-1.pdf>

<sup>6</sup>National Women’s Law Center, *Early Progress: State Child Care Assistance Policies 2019*, <https://nwlc-ciw49tixgw5lbab.stackpathdns.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/NWLC-State-Child-Care-Assistance-Policies-2019-final.pdf>.

<sup>7</sup> U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation, *Effects of the CCDF Subsidy Program on the Employment Outcomes of Low Income Mothers*, December 2016, <https://aspe.hhs.gov/system/files/pdf/253961/EffectsCCSubsidiesMaternalLFPTechnical.pdf>

<sup>8</sup> Unpublished analysis by CLASP and NWLC based on CCDF Data.

An additional investment of \$4.45 billion in the Child Care Development Block Grant is vital to supporting our nation's caregivers and improving economic mobility for low-income families. In addition, this increase will expand the program's ability to provide high-quality care to more of the roughly 11.5 million eligible children who are not receiving services.

**Provide increased funds for Early Childhood Programs under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).** Together, Part C and Part B 619 Preschool Special Education programs provide comprehensive services for children with disabilities from birth through 5 years of age. These programs serve over 1.16 million children per year, about double the number served in 1991 and funding currently benefit all states. Unfortunately, federal investments in both IDEA Part C and IDEA Part B 619 have failed to match increases in the number of children served as well as inflation. Consequently, both programs have experienced a significant erosion of funding over the last two decades. As a nation, we have cut our federal investment in infants and young children and their families by at least half. In 1999, IDEA Part C was investing \$1,768 per child and is now only investing \$650 per child, adjusted for inflation. Similarly, in 1992, IDEA Part B 619 invested \$1,484 per child and is now only investing \$529 per child, adjusted for inflation.

Therefore, we ask the Committee to Provide at least \$974,800,000 in FY21 funding for Grants for Infants and Families under Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. This would be an additional \$497,800,000 over FY20 enacted levels. We also ask the Committee to provide at least \$683,500,000 in FY21 funding for Preschool Grants under Part B Section 619 of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. This would be an additional \$289,500,000 over FY20 enacted levels.

High-quality early interventions can produce from \$7 to \$16 in benefits for every \$1 spent. This substantial return on investment is derived largely from long-term savings associated with a reduced need for special education, improved health outcomes, higher rates of high school and college graduation, decreased dependence on welfare programs, and increased workforce productivity of children who receive a high-quality early education.

We hope you will fully support these critical investments in working women, families, and young learners.

Sincerely,

Katherine Clark  
Member of Congress

Marcia Fudge  
Member of Congress

Donald Norcross  
Member of Congress

Mark DeSaulnier  
Member of Congress