



October 13th, 2021

The Honorable Dianne Feinstein
331 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington DC 20510

The Honorable Alex Padilla
112 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington DC 20510

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
1236 Longworth H.O.B.
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
2468 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Subject: Support \$450 Billion for Child Care

Dear Senators Feinstein and Padilla, Madam Speaker Pelosi, and House Minority Leader McCarthy:

Thank you for your efforts to support the child care sector in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. The resources provided to date have been essential to stabilizing many providers and ensuring millions of parents and children have access to safe, high-quality, and developmentally appropriate care. The American Rescue Plan and 2020 COVID-19 relief packages included critical investments in relief. Still, it was not designed to address the long-term structural flaws in our child care system and economy.

Our country faces severe systemic child care supply challenges. The United States has not had comprehensive child care and early education system since a brief period during World War II. Since then, American families have been left mainly to fend for themselves, relying on the underpaid labor of Black, Latinx, Indigenous, and immigrant women so that others can work. Child care is infrastructure. It connects workers and jobs. It makes all other work possible. It supports the positive growth and development of our nation's children.

This is why we, the undersigned members and partners of the Early Care and Education Coalition ([ECE Coalition](#)), urge Congress to look to the example of [other wealthy countries](#) and provide resources for a comprehensive well-resourced redesign of our child care system. Our country cannot Build Back Better

without dedicated investments to increase child care affordability, accessibility, workforce, and physical facilities. In California, for example, [60% of all children lived in a child care desert](#) before the pandemic. The state lost considerable capacity since 2008, when we lost 91,000 of the 1.1 million licensed spaces available in that year, including 30 percent of licensed family child care spaces. Now, due to the pandemic, [4,873 center licenses have closed in California](#). This equates to [1 in 5 Californian](#) working parents leaving work or reducing their work hours solely due to a lack of child care.

Real families, children, and communities are affected every day by the decisions being made. Through the [450 Reasons Why Campaign](#), spearheaded by Parent Voices CA, [many are raising their voices](#) on the crucial importance of a \$450 Billion investment. These are some examples:

"I need child care to do my job as much as I need a road or bridge to get to work. If you don't think child and elder care are infrastructure, I doubt you've ever needed to take care of anyone else in your life." - [Parent, #450ReasonsWhy Campaign](#)

"I am a large licensed family child care provider and serving my community for over 21 years and in the field for over 30 years. Child care is important to everyone cause without quality care parents can't get to work." - [Benu, California Child Care Provider, #450ReasonsWhy Campaign](#)

As negotiations advance, **we ask you to support the allocation of \$450 Billion for child care as a critical element of the budget reconciliation bill.** The \$45 Billion that would come to California from this investment would help realize the recommendations on statewide reports and plans for Early Care and Education(ECE) such as Assembly's Blue Ribbon Commission on ECE and the Master Plan for ECE. Many of those recommendations have remained on the pages of that report because of a lack of funding. These resources would leverage our state's economic recovery efforts: We have the most children, families, and early educators in the nation who will benefit from these funds!

The stakes are high, and we depend on you to champion these resources! They are essential to realizing the full benefits of the Build Back Better agenda's historic investments in the child care ecosystem:

- Ensure families have **access to high-quality, affordable child care** that is available when and where [parents](#) need it, supporting their children's healthy development.
- Investment in the **education and compensation of a diverse ECE workforce** through the [Child Care for Working Families Act](#) model provides child care, after school, and summer care options for both young and school-age children.
- [Treat caregivers and early childhood educators](#) **with respect and dignity** for their valuable and complex work. This includes paying them living wages, benefits, and ensuring parity with elementary school teachers; providing professional development and career ladders to higher-paying early care and education jobs; improving working conditions, with adequate staffing for breaks and time off; ensuring a voice in the system; the choice to join a union and bargain collectively; and other fundamental work-related rights and protections.

- **Expand access to [Early Head Start](#) and [Head Start](#)'s comprehensive services for low-income pregnant women and young children.**
- **Provide equitable access to preschool in a [model](#) inclusive of centers, schools, community-based organizations, Head Start, Early Head Start, and family child care homes, and support a vital, just birth to age five system.**
- **Support safe, energy-efficient, developmentally appropriate [child care facilities](#), especially in child care deserts, and home-based options in all neighborhoods and build the supply needed.**

We appreciate your attention to this critical issue. You can count on our partnership to inform your leadership in ensuring support for the child care sector. For more information, please don't hesitate to contact us: Mary Ignatius, Parent Voice California, mignatius@rrnetwork.org; Ericka Erickson, LIIF/Build Up California, eerickson@liifund.org; and Christopher Maricle, Head Start California, chris@headstartca.org.

Sincerely,

Build Up California
CACFP Roundtable
California Alternative Payment Program Association (CAPPA)
California Association for the Education of Young Children (CAEYC)
CCRC
Child Care Alliance of Los Angeles
Child Care Law Center
Child Development Associates
Child Development Resources of Ventura County, Inc.
Childcare Business Institute
Children Now
Children's Council of San Francisco
Crystal Stairs, Inc.
Early Care and Education Consortium
Early Edge California

EveryChild California
Fairfax-San Anselmo Children's Center
First 5 California
Head Start California
Kathryn Tama Consulting
Kidango
Kids Konnect Preschools
Low Income Investment Fund
Marin Child Care Council
Mission Neighborhood Centers
North Coast Opportunities
Northern Directors Group
Parent Voices CA
Pathways LA
PEACH
Solano Family & Children's Services
United Ways of California
Valley Oak Children's Services

Cc.: California Governor Gavin Newsom, California State Assembly Speaker Anthony Rendon, California's Senate President pro Tempore Toni G. Atkins, Congressman Doug LaMalfa (R), Congressman Jared Huffman (D); Congressman John Garamendi (D), Congressman Tom McClintock (R), Congressman Mike Thompson (D), Congressman Doris Matsui (D), Congressman Ami Bera (D), Congressman Jay Obernolte (R), Congressman Jerry McNerney (D), Congressman Josh Harder (D), Congressman Mark DeSaulnier (D), Congressman Nancy Pelosi (D), Congressman Barbara Lee (D), Congressman Jackie Speier (D), Congressman Eric Swalwell (D), Congressman Jim Costa (D), Congressman Ro Khanna (D), Congressman Anna Eshoo (D), Congressman Zoe Lofgren (D), Congressman Jimmy Panetta (D), Congressman David Valadao, Congressman Devin Nunes (R), Congressman Salud Carbajal (D), Congressman Mike Garcia (R), Congressman Julia Brownley (D), Congressman Judy Chu (D), Congressman Adam Schiff (D), Congressman Tony Cárdenas (D), Congressman Brad Sherman (D), Congressman Pete Aguilar (D), Congressman Grace Napolitano (D), Congressman Ted Lieu (D), Congressman Jimmy Gomez (D), Congressman Norma Torres (D), Congressman Raul Ruiz (D), Congressman Karen Bass (D), Congressman Linda Sánchez (D), Congressman Young Kim (R), Congressman Lucille Roybal-Allard (D), Congressman Mark Takano (D), Congressman Ken Calvert (R), Congressman Maxine Waters (D), Congressman Nanette Barragan (D), Congressman Katie Porter (D), Congressman Lou Correa (D), Congressman Alan Lowenthal (D), Congressman Michelle Steel (R), Congressman Mike Levin (D), Congressman Darrell Issa (R), Congressman Juan Vargas (D), Congressman Scott Peters (D), Congressman Sara Jacobs (D).