



A CHILD CARE AGENDA FOR CONGRESS,  
THE ADMINISTRATION AND STATES:  
2018-2019 POLICY PLATFORM

A large blue background featuring silhouettes of a tree on the left and a line of children running across the bottom. The text is overlaid on the right side of the image.

# IGNITING POSSIBILITIES PROMOTING INNOVATION

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# ABOUT CHILD CARE AWARE® OF AMERICA

Child Care Aware® of America (CCAoA) is a national membership-based nonprofit organization working to advance the affordability, accessibility, and quality of child care environments and to support the positive development and learning of all children in child care. Founded in 1987, we advocate for child care policies that improve the lives of children and families, lead research that advances the child care and early learning field, leverage technology to help families make informed decisions about child care, and provide professional development for child care providers. CCAoA is the only national nonprofit organization that focuses exclusively on child care and serves as 'our nation's leading voice for child care.' We work with more than 500 state and local child care resource and referral (CCR&R) agencies nationwide. These community-based agencies assist over 860,000 families a year in securing child care and offer training and support to child care providers. In addition, CCAoA is honored to support all branches of the military in their commitment to providing quality, affordable, community-based child care for all military families. CCAoA is uniquely positioned to lead the fight for high-quality, affordable child care because of our strong ties to community-based organizations that are providing child care resource and referral services for families, child care providers, and community partners. Working through our legislative action centers and alongside other committed partners throughout the country, we are working to strengthen our voice by increasing the engagement of parents as we expand our reputation as a trusted advocacy anchor in communities across the United States.



Every family in the United States has access to a high-quality, affordable child care system.



Child Care Aware® of America advances a child care system that effectively serves all children and families. The child care system supports children's growth, development, and educational advancement and creates positive economic impact for families and communities. **Our work is strengthened by a national network of child care resource and referral agencies and diverse members and partners.**

## OUR PRINCIPLES

- We believe the earliest years of a child's life are the most critical and represent the single most important area for investment by communities, states, and the nation. Making this investment requires significant leadership, focus, and funding.
- We believe parents are a child's most important teachers and we embrace parents' central role in child development.
- We believe that child care resource and referral agencies (CCR&Rs) are a critical community-based support that contributes to the advancement of quality, affordable, and accessible child care in nearly every community in the United States. When well-funded, CCR&Rs lay the foundation for a robust, efficient, and effective child care system that meets the needs of children, families, communities, and the child care providers who serve them.
- In partnership with families, we believe that nurturing, responsive, knowledgeable child care teachers are essential to creating dynamic learning opportunities for children and to providing children with the foundation for success.
- We believe that high-quality child care is essential to strong economies and healthy communities. High-quality child care requires public and private sector commitment to affordability and investment in programs and systems that support children's health and development. Families and child care businesses cannot and should not be expected to bear the full cost of quality child care, any more than they should be expected to bear the full cost of a K-12 education.
- Recognizing the disparities that exist among groups of children, we believe that programs and policies should be designed, resourced, and implemented to deliver equitable outcomes for all children in all communities. We believe that strategic partnerships with like-minded organizations are essential to proactively leverage resources, maximize expertise, and create greater gains for children and families.
- We believe that child care and early childhood development is a non-partisan issue and that decision-makers who are able to influence child care systems, services, policies, and funding must have access to clear data and strong research to inform their choices.

## OUR GOALS

- Promote local, state, and federal policies that advance a child care and early learning system that serves all children, families, and communities.
- Build a movement—Child Care Works—that effectively and sustainably advocates for better policies that support access to high-quality child care for all.
- Improve child care regulations so that they are evidence-based and support common-sense practices, while also providing the funding necessary to effectively implement these regulations across all child-care settings as appropriate.
- Strengthen the national child care resource and referral system through state and local CCR&Rs that are designed and equipped to meet the evolving child care needs of families, the professional development and business needs of child care providers, and the resource and connectivity needs of communities across the nation.
- Support equal access to efficient and effective programs that are informed by parents and that meet the needs of today's working families as well as the social, emotional, and educational needs of tomorrow's workforce.
- Promote equal access to high-quality programs for all families to support positive outcomes for later child success.
- Be a leader in the development of State infrastructures that are designed to meet the professional needs of the workforce and the needs of working families, and that support high-quality childhood interactions.

### MILITARY CHILD CARE: SERVING OUR NATION, SUPPORTING OUR TROOPS

In addition to being a leader in the child care advocacy arena, CCAoA is the primary contractor to the U.S. Department of Defense in connecting approximately 200,000 children of active duty families (not including reservists and children of geographically displaced personnel) to resources and subsidies that help them access and pay for child care in the military. Our specialists are usually the first contact military families have with military child care programs. In addition, we maintain a comprehensive database of state-licensed and high-quality (accredited or equivalent) child care providers; educate families about early childhood education standards, state licensing regulations, and indicators of high-quality child care; and ensure that child care referrals are in place to meet the specific needs of individual families.



# A CHILD CARE AGENDA FOR CONGRESS, THE ADMINISTRATION AND STATES

## OUR APPROACH: CHILD CARE WORKS POWERED BY CHILD CARE AWARE® OF AMERICA

To accomplish these goals, Child Care Aware® of America is working throughout the United States to advance accessible, affordable, and quality child care by utilizing our united voice and role as a trusted advocacy anchor in communities across America. Through a new, long-term national movement called Child Care Works, we aim to provide a voice for parents/caregivers, grandparents, child care providers, state leaders, policymakers, business and community leaders, and other advocates who want better policies that support quality and affordable child care for all and who are

willing to hold lawmakers accountable so that child care becomes the national priority it should be. Now is the time for this movement and for action to meet and reflect the needs of working families, specifically the needs of millennial parents. At 83 million,<sup>1</sup> Millennials comprise the largest generation in U.S. history, and as they continue to start families of their own, they will transform the nation's child care system. The Child Care Works movement will:



### BUILD CAPACITY

Continue to build robust capacities for state and local CCR&Rs, and further develop our Digital Action Centers to speak on behalf of the families and providers we serve and to coordinate campaigns at the national, state, and local levels.



### ADVOCATE

Develop, incubate, and launch a National Family Network of parents, grandparents, caregivers, child care providers, state leaders, policymakers, and other advocates.



### COMMUNICATE

Equip families with the knowledge they need to make the best care decisions for their child(ren) while also raising general awareness among the public, communities, and policymakers about the critical national need for affordable and quality child care for every family.

## OUR WORK



CCDBG  
Reauthorization  
and Implementation



Budget and  
Appropriations



Parent and Family  
Engagement



Emergency  
Preparedness



Health, Nutrition  
and Obesity Prevention



Research



Child Care  
Works

## OUR PRIORITIES



### INFANT AND TODDLER CARE

Promote greater access  
to high-quality Infant  
and Toddler Care



### WORKFORCE AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Provide ongoing  
support for Workforce  
and Professional  
Development



### FAMILY CHILD CARE

Ensure that ongoing  
support is provided to  
promote greater access  
to high-quality Family  
Child Care



### CHILD CARE RESOURCE AND REFERRAL

Strengthen state  
and local Child Care  
Resource and Referrals  
(CCR&Rs) to support  
the evolving child care  
needs of families

# A ROAD MAP FOR FINANCING AN AFFORDABLE, ACCESSIBLE QUALITY CHILD CARE SYSTEM



Despite 2017 being one of the most politically divisive years in recent history, early childhood advocacy is emerging as a prominent area of opportunity for bipartisan agreement and progress. Ninety-seven percent of Democrats, 89 percent of Independents, and 87 percent of Republicans, when asked, say they favor government investments to make early education and child care more affordable.<sup>2</sup> Even though states are facing budgetary constraints similar to those of the federal government, many have continued increasing their investment in early childhood programs and services.

Across America, CCAoA is working with families and partners to increase attention and focus on child care and early learning policies and to build robust advocacy capacities at the local, state, and national levels.

The next sections discuss the building blocks that are relevant to the well-being of children and families. We are pleased to present this 2018–2019 policy platform, which is informed by our national membership and by the parents and families we serve.

**97%** Democrats

**89%** Independents

**87%** Republicans

When asked, say they favor government investments to make early education and child care more affordable.

# ENSURING AFFORDABLE, QUALITY CHILD CARE FOR FAMILIES



There are more than 20 million children currently in the United States under age five. More than half of preschool-aged children are in child care an average of 36 hours per week. Millions more school-aged children are in afterschool programs. Fewer than one in three children today has a full-time, stay-at-home parent.<sup>3</sup>

Improving access to affordable, high-quality child care is one of CCAoA's top priorities. Child care is essential for working families.<sup>4</sup> But quality early child care does more than support parents who must work or go to school: It also provides important early learning opportunities that can contribute to school readiness, short- and long-term physical health, and positive social and emotional development—all of which are essential to creating an environment able to deliver equitable outcomes for all children in all communities. Quality care can also unleash (or, in the case of poor quality care, place in jeopardy) a child's ability to reach his or her full potential. In short, quality matters.

Unfortunately, child care costs, which have nearly doubled in the last quarter century,<sup>5</sup> are often a barrier to accessing high-quality care; indeed, these costs pose a crippling burden for many families with young children.

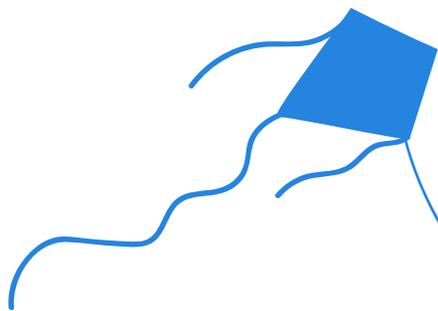
Each year, CCAoA examines state-level data on the cost of child care relative to median income for married couples with children and for single mothers. Our most recent surveys reveal that:

- ✓ In all 50 states, child care costs rival families' annual expenditures on housing, transportation, and even tuition and fees for public colleges. Costs for infant care are more than double the average amount that families spend on food.
- ✓ In 38 states, the cost of infant care exceeds 10 percent of median income for a two-parent family.
- ✓ Sixty-four percent of infants and toddlers who receive subsidized child care assistance through the Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG) program live in families with household incomes below the federal poverty level.
- ✓ The average annual cost of center-based care for an infant was higher than tuition at a four-year public college in 28 states and the District of Columbia.<sup>6</sup>

# ENSURING AFFORDABLE, QUALITY CHILD CARE FOR FAMILIES

An important responsibility working parents face is selecting a child care provider. Unfortunately, for many parents this process can be daunting; they may end up choosing a provider based on convenience, cost, location, and word of mouth, rather than quality. Fortunately, states are developing and implementing tools that are empowering parents and communities to identify and build quality child care.

Most communities have a designated agency that provides child care resource and referral services. In the broadest sense, the mission of state- and community-based CCR&Rs is defined as “doing whatever it takes to make child care work for families and communities.” CCR&Rs, and other agencies that deliver CCR&R services, are key partners of CCAoA. Yet many parents are unaware of the existence of these services due in part to the fact that their promotion is not supported by state or federal funds.



**DOING WHATEVER IT  
TAKES TO MAKE CHILD  
CARE WORK FOR FAMILIES  
AND COMMUNITIES.**



*The mission of state- and community-  
based CCR&Rs.*





## QUALITY RATING AND IMPROVEMENT SYSTEM (QRIS)

QRIS is designed to help parents select early and school-age care and education programs based on quality. According to the National Center on Early Childhood Quality Assurance, the QRIS rating, which is similar to rating systems for restaurants and hotels, can be applied to early and school-age care and education programs that meet a set of defined program standards. Efforts to develop QRIS began in the 1990s, when states started rewarding accredited providers with higher subsidy reimbursement rates. States found, however, that few providers were able to achieve accreditation. Due to large differences between (lower) licensing and (higher) accreditation standards, states saw the need to help providers bridge the gap. At the same time, states were creating comprehensive professional development systems and seeking to align their many different quality initiatives. Since Oklahoma implemented the first statewide QRIS in 1998, more than half of states and the District of Columbia have implemented statewide QRIS, and most of the remaining states are developing or exploring QRIS as a mechanism for organizing quality initiatives into one coherent system. Despite the reauthorization of the CCDBG Act in 2014, which increased requirements related to children's health and safety in child care settings, states are still not doing enough to ensure that all children have access to safe, healthy care settings. Children in unlicensed or unregulated care may not be protected by regulations concerning physical activity time, developmental screening practices, nutrition, or food safety. This lack of oversight exposes children to risks that could potentially lead to long-term health problems or other lifelong negative consequences.



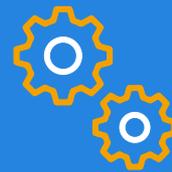
# FINANCING AFFORDABLE, QUALITY CHILD CARE FOR FAMILIES

## INCORPORATING COMPREHENSIVE SERVICES

Get Well Place at Rainbow Station in Richmond, Virginia—a preschool and school-age recreation center for mildly ill kids—is a great “Plan B” for many working parents whose children fall ill and cannot partake in their normal child care arrangements. Founded 20 years ago by Gail Johnson, a registered nurse and former professor of nursing, Rainbow Station is now a franchise with nine facilities in Virginia, North Carolina, and Texas. The Get Well Place is staffed by a pediatric nurse, who dispenses medication and calls parents with updates during the day. Kids are cared for in separate rooms according to illness (there are rooms for respiratory ailments, such as flu; gastrointestinal illnesses; highly contagious diseases, such as pinkeye and strep throat; and rooms for kids recuperating from surgery). Each room is equipped with a reverse ventilation system so no one has to worry that a child with, say, a broken leg will catch the flu. Fees can range from five dollars to ten dollars an hour depending on location. Unfortunately, facilities like this are few and far between. Some are in hospitals or medical centers (such as the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minnesota) but are available to employees only. Others, like Kid’s Care at Northridge Hospital Children’s Center in California, are also open to the community. To find a nearby backup-care center, parents are generally advised to contact their local or state social services agency that licenses child care centers, or to call hospitals directly. “Some have these kinds of facilities but don’t advertise them,” says Johnson.



We know that many families also struggle, in silence, to find quality child care they can afford, believing that these issues only impact them. The reality is, child care is deemed unaffordable in 49 states plus the District of Columbia. In addition, U.S. businesses lose approximately \$4.4 billion annually due to employee absenteeism as the result of child care breakdowns. At CCAoA, when we educate the public and families about the universal challenges of accessing care, we address the need to build a child care and early learning infrastructure that serves children and families “where they are” in terms of parents’ work hours, financial resources, access to social networks, and location. We also focus on elevating the child care profession by advocating for:



## Compensation and Professional Development



## Innovative Funding Mechanisms



## Public-Private Partnerships

“

**ELEVATING THE DISCUSSION AROUND THE CHILD CARE AND EARLY CHILDHOOD PROFESSION IS ESSENTIAL TO PROMOTE QUALITY PROGRAMS AND ULTIMATELY ENSURE POSITIVE CHILD OUTCOMES.**

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The majority of American households spend more than 10 percent of their household income on child care. Nearly one in three families (32 percent) report spending 20 percent or more of their income on child care, and one in five families spend more than a quarter (25 percent) of their income.<sup>7</sup> And Millennials spend even more!

These numbers suggest that the cost of child care is not economically or socially sustainable and is having a profound effect, not only on the type and quality of care that is available to families, but on the daily choices that parents and families face.

The expansion of preschool across states, and new investments by both states and the federal government in early childhood programs, are increasing access to child care for three- and four-year-olds. However, quality care for infants and toddlers is sorely lacking across the United States. Infants, in particular, are at risk due to their vulnerability and need for more personalized care—which makes their care even more expensive and puts access to quality infant care out of reach for lower-income families. Funding programs that offer support for working families is essential to ensure all children have equal access to quality programs and the opportunity for later success.



# INVESTING IN A SUSTAINABLE AND WELL-PREPARED CHILD CARE WORKFORCE

When parents place their children in the care of others, they entrust providers with their child's safety and overall well-being. Child care providers not only help address children's basic daily needs by providing food and supervised playtime, they are also responsible for helping to stimulate children's social-emotional and developmental growth. The nation's child care workforce currently includes approximately two million adults caring for 12 million children under the age of five.<sup>8</sup> That figure does not include providers who are unpaid or who provide care for school-aged children. The training and professional development of providers directly affects the quality of children's experiences in child care settings, as does the quality of the providers' working environment. Ultimately, investment in the professional development and compensation of child care providers should reflect the value society places on children's future success.

Unfortunately, while people generally recognize that children are America's future and place high value on helping children reach their potential, our collective investment in the human capital and systems that would help make that goal a reality is mismatched with the need. Across the United States, many child care providers continue to earn less than a living wage. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the median hourly pay for child care workers in 2016 was \$9.55 and median annual income was \$21,620.<sup>9</sup> Consequently, many of these workers fall below the poverty level (in 2017, the federal poverty level was \$24,600 for a family of four). On average, child care providers earn less per hour than many other workers within the personal care and related industries, including barbers, hairdressers, baggage porters, and manicurists—even caretakers for non-farm animals such as dogs and cats.<sup>10</sup>

Quality child care depends on well-educated, dedicated, and consistent providers. Research is clear that high-quality, consistent provider/child connections are what makes programs successful. Unfortunately, low wages,

**To keep their doors open while sustaining quality services without prohibitively increasing parent fees, child care providers across the country have been experimenting with different revenue mechanisms, including public-private partnerships, employer-sponsored benefits, and shared service alliances.**

burnout, and a lack of status and recognition have resulted in overall high staff turnover in the industry.<sup>11</sup> This is a problem because a lack of stability and consistency in daily routines can lead to undue stress on a child, which in turn can negatively affect social and emotional development and other outcomes. To stem high rates of turnover, child care providers must have access to appropriate economic and professional supports.

At the same time, providers' budgets are already tight as is. Even though wages are relatively low, payroll still comprises the biggest line item in most programs' budgets, primarily because of the number of workers needed to maintain effective staff-to-child ratios and remain open for up to 12 hours each day.

Though researchers have found that a caregiver's "college education or a specialization in early childhood education alone is not a guarantee of better instruction and improved child outcomes," a combination of factors such as prior educational experience, ongoing professional learning, and a supportive work environment are tied to the quality of care.<sup>12</sup> Well-prepared caregivers are better prepared to offer quality care and rich learning opportunities to children and attract parents to their programs. In addition, offering and supporting training creates a professional environment that can help programs and centers recruit and retain child care staff. This in turn promotes consistency—an important ingredient for child development.

## APPROPRIATIONS

**only 16%** of the Federal Government's Total Budget

is allocated for non-defense discretionary programs, which encompass everything from transportation and infrastructure to health research. As a result, funding for child care is in constant competition with funding for much larger programs. Realizing that federal funding does not provide a reliable stream of revenue, states, communities, providers, and parents are seeking to develop more creative and sustainable models for delivering high-quality, accessible, and affordable child care.



To be effective, training should include multiple pathways and should be ongoing, sequential, competency-based, tied to mentoring or coaching supports, and linked to a career ladder. Continuing professional development should include, at a minimum, the following topics:

- ✓ Child development, learning, and social-emotional development
- ✓ Healthy child nutrition
- ✓ Working with families and the community to make informed consumer choices and provide access to information to support child development
- ✓ Teaching, learning, inclusion, and expulsion or other disciplinary practice
- ✓ Protecting children's health and safety
- ✓ Child abuse prevention, identification, and reporting
- ✓ Program management, including business operations and fiscal management
- ✓ Age-appropriate methods of assessing child development

In research studies, child care providers report that their most pressing training need is coping with challenging behaviors.<sup>13</sup> Training allows providers to foster social-emotional development and appropriately respond to challenging behavior. Without adequate training in child development, on the other hand, it may be difficult to distinguish inappropriate behaviors from behaviors that are developmentally age-appropriate. Early childhood experts posit that developmentally inappropriate behavioral expectations and bias may lead some teachers to mislabel a child's behavior as challenging or problematic, which in turn can result in unnecessary or excessive utilization of certain disciplinary practices such as expulsion.

In sum, providers' prior educational experiences and ongoing professional development must be adequate to provide the quality of care our children deserve and need, and providers' compensation must appropriately reflect their level of professionalism. The United States and its elected officials must commit to a broader dialogue about the child care profession, including appropriate qualifications, pathways to advancement, competency-based training, recruitment and retention, and compensation. Elevating the discussion around the child care profession is essential to promote quality programs and, ultimately, ensure positive child outcomes.



# SUPPORTING CHILD CARE INFRASTRUCTURE THROUGH INNOVATIVE FUNDING MECHANISMS

As a nation, we must be open to incorporating as many tools as possible when it comes to financing child care in a way that simultaneously promotes quality and access. The innovative funding mechanisms being utilized across the country to make child care viable for families deserve a closer look as policymakers, stakeholders, and advocates tackle the gap that exists between need and funding.

The CCDBG Act of 2014 introduced a requirement that states describe how they will increase the supply and quality of child care through public-private partnerships. The law provides voluntary shared services alliance models.

According to the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), public-private partnerships “focus on shared goals that bring together the public sector (federal, state, local, and tribal officials or agencies) with the private sector (families, employers, philanthropies, media, civic groups, and service providers).”<sup>14</sup> At the provider level, this may mean that a private company provides facilities for child care programs or other in-kind support. Such an approach was recently embraced by pharmaceutical giant Eli Lilly, which made a five-year, 20-million-dollar investment in expanding child care capacity and quality, while also providing support for CCR&R infrastructure by funding their leaders to obtain master’s degrees in management.



## STATE PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP CASE STUDIES: OKLAHOMA & COLORADO



OK

### OKLAHOMA

In 2006, **Oklahoma** established the Oklahoma Early Childhood Project (OECF), which distributes grants for programs that serve at-risk infants and toddlers and are looking to expand or enhance their quality. The state allocates general revenue funds which are then matched by private philanthropic dollars, with the private dollars making up a slight majority of funds. The Community Action Project of Tulsa County (CAP) administers the program, providing technical assistance to participating providers. Grant recipients are required to meet minimum benchmarks with respect to staff educational requirements, pay requirements, and requirements around accreditation.<sup>15</sup> Stakeholders have reported positive child outcomes from this partnership based on a 2008-2010 study conducted by the University of Oklahoma Early Childhood Education Institute. As compared to children in non-OECF programs, children in OECF programs had higher social-emotional development scores and their classroom environments had higher child-teacher interaction scores, among other differences.<sup>16</sup> Oklahoma's program is a shining example of how the public sector and private philanthropies can join forces to invest in providing quality care to at-risk children and families.



CO

### COLORADO

**Colorado** is home to several innovative financing models, one of which is an "investment credit" that can be claimed by employers who provide child care facilities for the benefit of their employees. The employer investment tax credit "is equal to 10% of the employer's investment during the tax year in qualified tangible personal property to be used in the operation of the child care facility."<sup>17</sup> Colorado provides another substantial incentive for private-sector investments in child care for children under age 13 through its "Child Care Contribution Credit." Individuals or businesses that make a contribution to promote child care in Colorado may claim a tax credit of up to 50 percent of their contribution. This may entail donating money directly to a child care program or to a training program for child care providers. Both tax credits help stretch public funds to make child care more available to those who need it.

States may utilize public-private partnerships to leverage public funds and make those funds go further. In Connecticut and Illinois, private foundations have matched state funding for various early childhood initiatives, while across the country large foundations have supported financing models that blend public and private funds to create high-quality early learning centers. In this model, private dollars fund the "supply" by covering facility costs and conducting program evaluations, while public dollars support operational costs.<sup>18</sup>

# SUPPORTING CHILD CARE INFRASTRUCTURE THROUGH INNOVATIVE FUNDING MECHANISMS

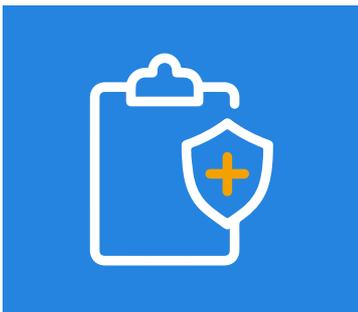
## PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS TO IMPROVE ACCESS, AFFORDABILITY, AND QUALITY IN EARLY CHILD CARE AND EDUCATION PROGRAMS

### PAY FOR SUCCESS



Pay for Success is a public-private partnership in which a state or local government enters into a contract with an intermediary organization, which then contracts with service providers that have proven track records of success. Investors provide up-front capital for the services, and both parties agree to performance metrics for assessing the intervention's success (for example, the metric for an early education project might be a reduction in special education referrals in grades K-12). A rigorous evaluation is conducted to determine the intervention's short- and/or long-term cost savings and, if the success metrics have been met, the investor organization recoups its initial investment (possibly more). If the intervention is not successful, the investor does not receive any payment and the project ends. The goal of this approach is to expand evidence-based interventions to specific under- or un-served populations, while also saving taxpayer dollars. A few cities like Chicago and Salt Lake City have implemented early education Pay for Success programs. This approach has attracted some high-level investors, but it has also drawn push-back from the broader advocacy and non-profit community, which has expressed concerns about, among other things, undercutting public investment in, and support for, public service programs by privatizing them for profit.

### EMPLOYER-SPONSORED BENEFITS



Employer-sponsored benefits may be offered, within the private sector, when companies find it beneficial to offer child care benefits to attract prospective employees. One model companies have used is providing on-site child care for employees. This has the effect of eliminating building and utilities costs, saving parents a portion of what they would pay for child care at the market rate, while also saving parents' travel time to and from child care. Other companies may subsidize the cost of child care through vouchers, reimbursements, and Flexible Spending Accounts—in some cases, even contracting directly with a provider like KinderCare<sup>19</sup> or Bright Horizons.<sup>20</sup> These large-scale providers may also work with private companies to start new programs in locations that are convenient for the company's employees.

### SHARED SERVICE ALLIANCES



Shared service alliances bring together small early care and education businesses to create a centralized infrastructure that ultimately reduces costs, strengthens management systems, creates efficient and standardized processes, and eliminates duplication of services. By bringing small businesses into a larger share structure, these alliances enable them to continue operating independently while benefiting from the cost-savings and resources the larger structure can offer.<sup>21</sup> Shared services alliances, like those coordinated by Early Learning Ventures in Colorado and Early Childhood Innovative Connections in Pennsylvania, enable cost savings by offloading administrative burdens (such as navigating subsidy programs and regulatory compliance), conducting financial reporting and billing, and supplying expertise and other support services to child care providers. Providers share resources (for example, by pooling staff) and information, participate in joint training and professional development, and are able to focus fully on delivering quality services.



## COLLABORATION GOES A LONG WAY

Building a child care infrastructure that meets the needs of children and families requires that policymakers and child care providers work together to address the critical issues of provider wages, compensation, and development, and identify gaps between supply and demand across diverse communities and populations. Once they are identified, policymakers and state and local administrators can support providers and communities alike by encouraging policies that increase the number of child care programs and by ensuring that these programs are tailored to meet each community's unique needs.



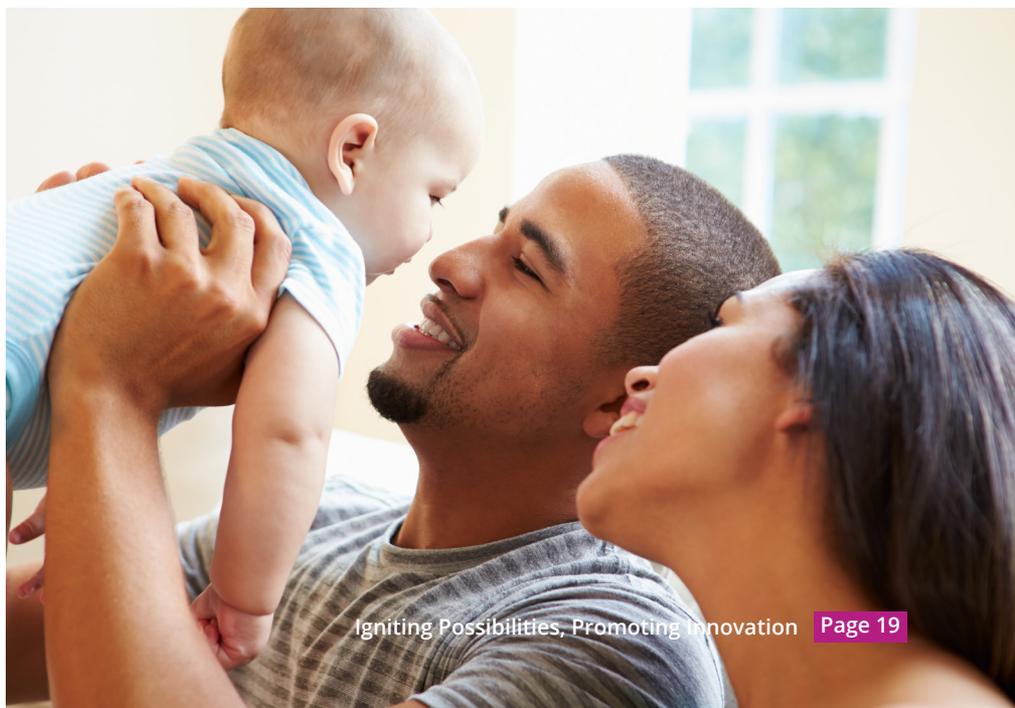
## CONCLUSION

Child care is essential to families across America. At Child Care Aware of America® we are committed to working at the state, federal, and local levels, with our partners, families, and network of resource and referral agencies to give voice to the needs of America's families, and to demand that our policymakers support investments needed to ensure equal access, workforce supports, and access to the programs parents need to be able to work. No one should have to choose between their child, their work, and family necessities. Children should not fall behind before they are even at the starting line. The workers we entrust with children's care and development should be paid wages that reflect their responsibility and importance, and our desire to see positive child outcomes.

**We have the capacity and the resources as a nation to make a difference in the lives of this next generation. What we need is the will to do what is needed, and what is right—and to do so with urgency!**



“ CHILD CARE IS ESSENTIAL TO EVERY SINGLE FAMILY. ”



# RECOMMENDATIONS TO CONGRESS

## ✓ **PASS THE CHILD CARE FOR WORKING FAMILIES ACT OF 2017**

This act would ensure: (1) families have access to high-quality, affordable care that parents need so that they can work and their children need in order to thrive; (2) the child care workforce has access to increased training and compensation and is paid a living wage; and (3) states are able to create universal preschool programs for three- and four-year olds during the school day, and provide a higher matching rate for infants and toddlers.

## ✓ **AUTHORIZE AND APPROPRIATE HIGHER LEVELS OF FUNDING FOR CCDBG**

We recommend at least a \$1 billion increase over FY 2018 level so that: (1) families who need assistance with child care (i.e., the one in six children who qualify but can't access services) are able to get it; (2) states can implement quality supports such as QRIS, health and safety training, and background checks; and (3) HHS is able to collect state data to better understand the child care landscape and identify where resources should be targeted.

## ✓ **ALLOCATE FUNDS SUFFICIENT TO COVER THE COSTS OF SERVICES AND INITIATIVES RUN BY CCR&RS**

This would: (1) provide families with information and consumer education that promote positive and healthy early childhood development, as well as referrals to child care programs that best meet families' needs; (2) support child care provider recruitment, retention, and professional development through targeted training, technical assistance, coaching, and mentoring; and (3) allow each CCR&R to continue to serve as a community resource hub that supports working families and brings community stakeholders, including businesses, together to increase community-based investments.

## ✓ **ENCOURAGE STATES TO PAY LIVING WAGES AND SUPPORT PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FOR CHILD CARE PROVIDERS**

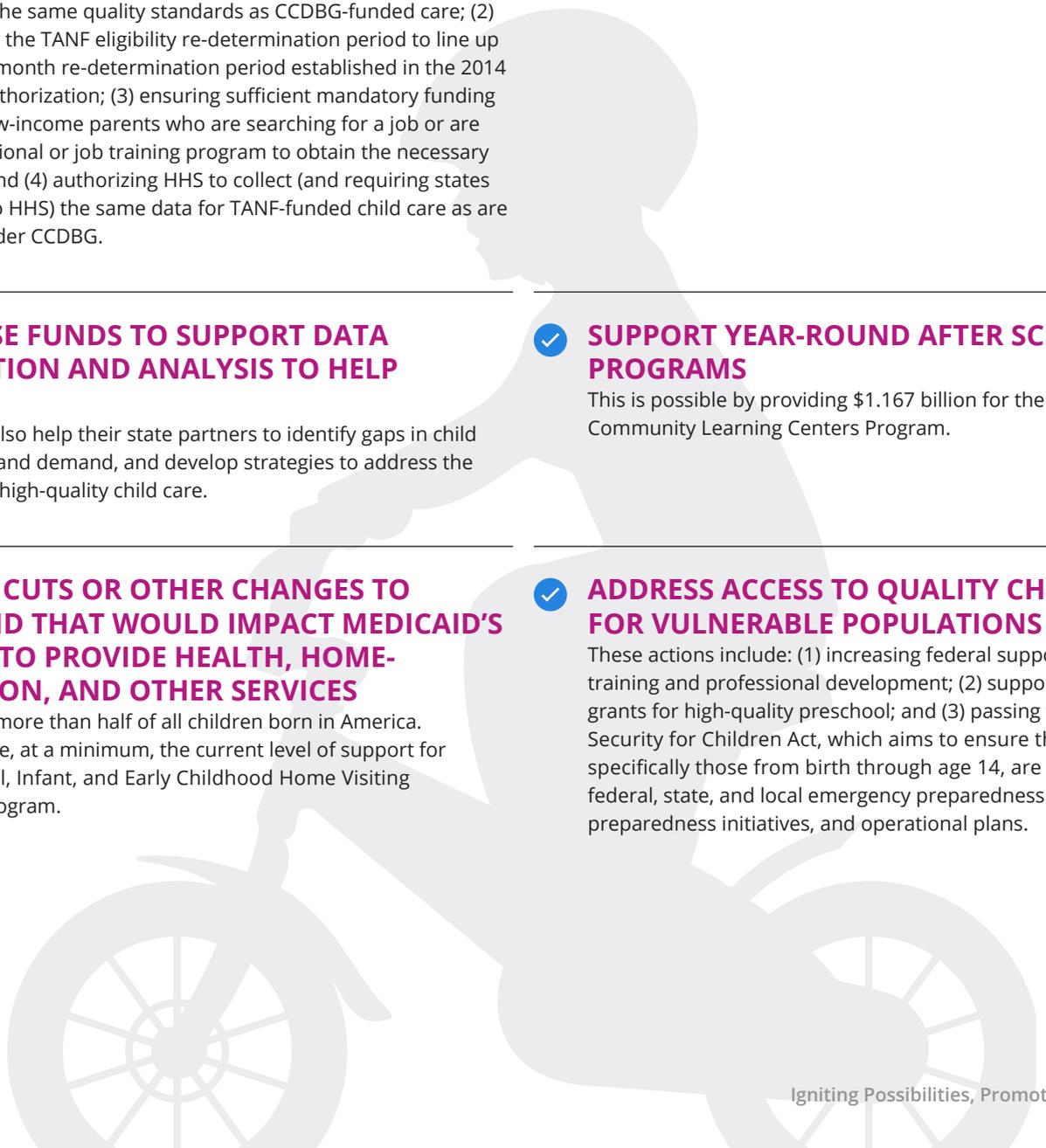
It's important so that these providers are on par with public elementary school teachers. Provide additional supports and incentives for child care providers to obtain the training they need to produce the outcomes we want—namely, that children have the opportunity to reach their full potential.

## ✓ **PROVIDE FULL SUPPORT FOR PROMISING PROGRAMS THAT SUPPORT PARENTS AS THEIR CHILD'S FIRST TEACHER**

These actions include: (1) passing the Child Care Access Means Parents in School Reauthorization Act (CCAMPIS) and make it permanent, as the Clark/Duckworth bill proposes; and (2) supporting a \$9.6 billion appropriation for Head Start to expand existing funding for the Early Head Start-Child Care Partnership program.

## ✓ **SUPPORT FAMILY-FRIENDLY POLICIES THAT ALLOW PARENTS TO WORK AND ALLOW THEIR CHILDREN TO THRIVE**

This would include: (1) passing the Family and Medical Insurance Leave (FAMILY) Act, and (2) supporting incentives for businesses to include family-friendly practices that embrace child care solutions for their employees, including child-friendly worker scheduling, job-protected paid leave, and employer contributions and subsidies for child care.



✓ **MAKE IMPROVEMENTS TO CHILD CARE SUBSIDIES PROVIDED UNDER THE TEMPORARY ASSISTANCE FOR NEEDY FAMILIES (TANF) PROGRAM**

Through (1) requiring states to ensure that TANF-funded child care meets the same quality standards as CCDBG-funded care; (2) streamlining the TANF eligibility re-determination period to line up with the 12-month re-determination period established in the 2014 CCDBG reauthorization; (3) ensuring sufficient mandatory funding to enable low-income parents who are searching for a job or are in an educational or job training program to obtain the necessary child care; and (4) authorizing HHS to collect (and requiring states to provide to HHS) the same data for TANF-funded child care as are required under CCDBG.

✓ **PASS THE PROMOTING AFFORDABLE CHILD CARE FOR EVERYONE (PACE) ACT OF 2017**

This will help provide relief for families by offsetting child care costs via tax credits.

✓ **INCREASE FUNDS TO SUPPORT DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS TO HELP CCR&RS**

This would also help their state partners to identify gaps in child care supply and demand, and develop strategies to address the demand for high-quality child care.

✓ **SUPPORT YEAR-ROUND AFTER SCHOOL PROGRAMS**

This is possible by providing \$1.167 billion for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Centers Program.

✓ **OPPOSE CUTS OR OTHER CHANGES TO MEDICAID THAT WOULD IMPACT MEDICAID'S ABILITY TO PROVIDE HEALTH, HOME-VISITATION, AND OTHER SERVICES**

This affects more than half of all children born in America. Also continue, at a minimum, the current level of support for the Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting (MIECHV) program.

✓ **ADDRESS ACCESS TO QUALITY CHILD CARE FOR VULNERABLE POPULATIONS**

These actions include: (1) increasing federal support for Tribal training and professional development; (2) supporting formula grants for high-quality preschool; and (3) passing the Homeland Security for Children Act, which aims to ensure that children, specifically those from birth through age 14, are addressed in federal, state, and local emergency preparedness planning efforts, preparedness initiatives, and operational plans.

# RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE ADMINISTRATION

## ✓ PROVIDE STATES THE RESOURCES THEY NEED

Additional resources will support states to implement the changes passed and signed into the 2014 CCDBG reauthorization to: (1) promote quality child care by increasing state-level investments in activities to improve the quality of care, enhancing states' ability to train providers and develop safer and more effective child care services; (2) strengthen health and safety requirements in child care programs and providers; and (3) improve access to child care by expanding eligibility for participating families and helping families connect with quality programs that meet their needs.

## ✓ REFORM THE CHILD CARE SUBSIDY ELIGIBILITY PROCESS

This would make it less burdensome and more accessible for parents who work nontraditional jobs (increasingly, these are low-income, dual language, and/or single parents). Create a demonstration project that enables states to apply for a waiver to streamline the process for families working nontraditional hours who apply for child care subsidies.

## ✓ TARGET TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE TO CHILD CARE PROVIDERS IN AREAS OF THE COUNTRY WITH THE LOWEST LEVELS OF COMPENSATION TO HELP PROVIDERS MAXIMIZE THEIR BUDGETS

They can continue to deliver quality, affordable care while also providing the compensation and working conditions that will help them retain staff.

## ✓ FUND A STUDY OR REPORT THAT IDENTIFIES EFFECTIVE STRATEGIES FOR PROVIDING ADEQUATE FINANCIAL AND PROFESSIONAL SUPPORT TO CAREGIVERS

Authorize and fund a federal pilot program that enables states to test these models, including scalable and sustainable models for innovative funding mechanisms and partnerships.

## ✓ SUPPORT RIGOROUS RESEARCH THAT HELPS IDENTIFY STRENGTHS AND ELEMENTS OF QUALITY

This applies in all child care and early childhood settings, and builds an understanding of which models work best for achieving which outcomes as we work toward scaling both evidence-based and promising practices across child care programs.



## CHILDREN ARE AMERICA'S FUTURE

Unfortunately, while people generally recognize that children are America's future and place high value on helping children reach their potential, our collective investment in the human capital and systems that would help make that goal a reality is mismatched with the need.

# RECOMMENDATIONS TO STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENTS

✓ **EXPAND STATE AND LOCAL INVESTMENT IN HIGH-QUALITY EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAMS AND USE OF TIERED QRIS**

This serves as the benchmark for quality early learning and development systems.

✓ **ESTABLISH A WAGE LADDER FOR THE CHILD CARE WORKFORCE TO IMPROVE COMPENSATION**

Incentivize and reward child care programs and workers who reach high levels of performance through financial or other means of recognition.

✓ **ENSURE THAT COMMUNITY COLLEGES AND OTHER EDUCATIONAL SYSTEMS ARE DESIGNED TO PROMOTE AND ENSURE ACCESS TO PROGRAMS AND SERVICES FOR NEW ENTRANTS TO THE EARLY CHILDHOOD WORKFORCE**

This also applies for those seeking to continue and expand their professional development.

✓ **ENCOURAGE PLANNING AND COLLABORATION BETWEEN STATES AND THEIR CCR&RS**

Consider financing models that support the CCR&R infrastructure and CCR&R services, including addressing supply and demand gaps in available child care for migrant, tribal, and homeless families.

✓ **ENCOURAGE STATE AND CITY PLANNERS TO COLLABORATIVELY CREATE POLICIES THAT RE-IMAGINE LAND USE AND ZONING LAWS**

Also included are other regulations that affect the supply of, and demand for, child care in rural, urban, and suburban areas.

“**THE RISING COST OF CARE HAS CREATED A FINANCIAL EMERGENCY FOR WORKING FAMILIES.**”

*Lynette Fraga, executive director of Child Care Aware® of America.*

# ENDNOTE SUMMARY

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## A Child Care Agenda for Congress, the Administration, and States: 2018 – 2019 Policy Platform

### SUMMARY

Across America, CCAoA is working with families and partners to increase attention and focus on child care and early learning policies and to build robust advocacy capacities at the local, state, and national levels.

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