**Topline Messages for Verbal Testimony For 2022-2024 CCDF Plans**

**Step One —** Introduce yourself and explain how your state’s CCDF plan can play an important role in creating a robust road map towards strengthening child care for everyone. Here is some sample language you can use:

*Good [morning/afternoon]. My name is [your name] and I am here today to provide comments on [state’s] CCDF state plan. As a [child care provider/parent/other role], I am an advocate for a child care system that serves all children, their families, and early childhood educators. Child care provides critical development and enrichment opportunities for children of all backgrounds and is a vital building block of our state’s economy.*

*[Add a sentence or two about your personal experience and connection to child care here. Don’t know what to say? Check out these videos from families and providers on* [*CCAoA’s Story Hub*](https://www.childcareaware.org/coronavirus/child-care-and-covid-19-stories-from-the-field/)*].*

*States are in a unique position as they develop their CCDF state plans this year. COVID-19 has shown us how important child care is for our communities, but it has also shown us the hardships it has been struggling with for years. These hardships have only been made worse by the pandemic. The CCDF state plans are also being developed while a historic investment in flexible federal funding for child care has been passed into law. These funds can help us set the stage for years to come by supporting long-term changes in our state CCDF plans that make high-quality child care affordable and accessible for everyone.*

*This hearing provides an opportunity to share what changes can help rebuild child care so it is stronger than ever before and how [your state’s] CCDF plan can help us get there. We need to make sure our state plan includes policies that are child-centered, family-engaged, equity-driven, and community-focused. To accomplish this, I strongly encourage you to include the following recommendations in our state plan.*

**Step Two –** In the next part of your testimony, share which recommendations are most important for the state’s CCDF plan. The recommendations below are ones that CCAoA believes will have the most impact. Use the opening statement to introduce the idea and follow up with the specific recommendations. You may only be able to pick two or three recommendations depending on how much time you will be given, but don’t worry if you can’t fit all of them in — you can submit more recommendations and details in written comments after you testify! Don’t forget to add in any personal stories to connect these recommendations with actual lived experience and how they have or could impact you in the future.

**Recommendations to support a child-centered CCDF plan:**

* **Opening statement**: *Child-centered policies support the social, emotional, physical and cognitive development of all children. This also means having strong health and safety standards in place.* 
  + **Recommendation #1**: *Our state plan should commit to investing in and supporting child care health and mental health consultants. Both play an important role in helping promote healthy and safe environments for young children for physical or social-emotional needs.*
  + **Recommendation #2**: *Our state plan should continue to support the health and safety improvements included in the 2014 CCDBG Act around ratios and groups sizes, inspections, and background checks. We should not try to undo these efforts in an attempt to “fix” the child care supply crisis*.

**Recommendations to support a family-focused CCDF plan:**

* **Opening statement**: *Actual experiences of families should guide the development of our CCDF state plan. To put child care within reach for more families, I encourage our state CCDF plan to consider the following policies:*
  + **Recommendation #1**: *Expand the definition of eligible children and families*.
  + **Recommendation #2:** *Increase income eligibility levels for child care subsidy.*
  + **Recommendation #3**: *Extend eligibility and redetermination periods, including automatic renewals.*
  + **Recommendation #4:** *Permanently waive or significantly reduce parent copayments.*

**Recommendations to support an equity-driven CCDF plan:**

* **Opening statement**: *The CCDF state plans gives an opportunity to make intentional efforts to ensure input is representative of all eligible families and providers and that we put an end to institutional racism, poverty, and lack of opportunity within child care. To achieve equity in the child care system, I encourage our state plan to* 
  + **Recommendation #1**: *Consider alternative methods for determining reimbursement rates, moving away from market rate surveys. Quality child care costs money but many providers base rates on what families can afford. This hurts access and affordability in low-income areas and makes is difficult for programs to provide more costly infant and toddler care.*
  + **Recommendation #2**: *Increase provider reimbursement rates, which incentivize providers to increase capacity, open more slots to subsidy-eligible families, and compensate workers contributing to the sustainability of their businesses.*
  + **Recommendation #3**: *Consider structuring provider payments based on enrollment instead of attendance to provide stability for providers and the way they run their business. When states pay providers based on a child’s daily attendance rather than overall capacity, as many typically do, it makes it challenging for programs to have the financial stability to build up high-quality programs in a community. It can result in providers being less likely to participate in CCDF and instead serve more private-paying families over children with subsidies.*

**Recommendations to support a community-focused CCDF plan:**

* **Opening statement**: *For child care policies to be sustainable, they must focus on the entire community and the role child care plays within it. To support a community-focused state CCDF plan, I encourage our state plan to:*
  + **Recommendation #1*:*** *Support an increase in compensation, comprehensive benefits, and professional development opportunities for child care providers. One of the most effective ways our states can support providers within our communities is by using these funds to increase wages and provide benefits for child care educators.*
  + **Recommendation #2:** *Ensure funding and resources exists to support CCR&Rs to continue and expand their work. CCR&Rs play an important role in offering technical assistance to providers but need additional investment to carry out a host of other supports– including helping providers open and run their businesses, providing ongoing training* *and professional development, and helping providers maintain or meet licensure requirements.*

**Step Three—** This last section includes your concluding remarks, including a quick thank you and one last personal connection. Here is some sample language you can use:

*Thank you for providing me an opportunity to give input to our 2022-2024 CCDF state plan. As a [insert role] and child care advocate, this is personally important to me because [insert reason]. I look forward to seeing a final plan that keeps us moving toward our goal of serving all children, families, and early childhood educators.*